

# How Do I Make That Killer Call?

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Experts in business communication will tell you that next to public speaking, making a phone call strikes fear in the hearts of even the most seasoned executives. They call this phenomenon "telephone reluctance." To overcome this phobia, we've assembled a list of telephone tips. Review these points, plan your calls, practice what you are going to say and start dialing.

1. Say "hello" and acknowledge (and note) the name of person you are speaking with.
2. Tell why you are calling and who you wish to speak with. If you are conducting a follow up call, quickly describe previous communications.
3. Assess the status of your candidacy, confirming whether your fax or mailed documents were received, and, focus on identifying appropriate next steps.
4. Request an appointment for a job or informational interview, be assertive about this, if the person you are speaking with cannot schedule one, request suggestions for next steps, additional resources or referrals.
5. Thank the person you are speaking with and confirm spelling of all names, mailing and e-mail addresses, phone and fax numbers.

## And don't forget...

1. Never be impolite, impatient, or pushy. You can always call back if you don't get the information or results you expect.
2. Stay focused and know what you want before you call. Goal-oriented conversations get the best results. Be realistic about what can be achieved with each call.
3. Whenever possible, ask to see or speak with someone "who can tell me about entry level options."
4. Always write, e-mail, or fax thank you notes.

## What if I get an answering machine?

Don't be shy, always leave a message. Ask for "confirmation that you received my resume and cover letter," or for "information about the position recently posted on the Internet." Leave your name and number.

## How do I develop a Conversation Outline?

Use the above list to develop a "conversation outline," but don't try to memorize a script. Below is a basic sample. Create your own and don't wait until it is perfect to give it a try. The more phone calls you make, the more natural you will become and the easier calls will be to make.

## Conversation Steps

1. Say "hello" and acknowledge (and note) the name of person you are speaking with.
  - *"Hello, my name is .... And, your name please?"*
2. Tell why you are calling and who you wish to speak with. If you are conducting a follow up call, quickly describe previous communications.
  - *"I am calling about the marketing assistant position and I would like to speak with the director of marketing, please."*

or:

- *"I saw on the Internet that your firm offers wonderful entry-level sales options. Is there a specific person who could tell me more about these positions? Good. That person's name, phone and fax number is? Does he/she have email?"*

3. Assess status of your candidacy, confirming whether your fax or mailed documents were received, and, focus on identifying appropriate next steps. Be assertive about this -- request an appointment for a job or informational interview. If the person you are speaking with cannot schedule one, request suggestions for next steps, additional resources or referrals.
  - *"I e-mailed a resume to ... of your human resources office. Can I speak with Mr./Ms. ...? I would like to confirm that the resume was received and clarify next steps. Ask to see the appropriate person, "I'd like to schedule an appointment with Mr./Ms. ..."*
4. Request an appointment for an employment interview or information conversation. If the person you are speaking with cannot schedule one, request suggestions for next steps, additional resources or for a referral.
  - *"Yes, I understand that decisions regarding formal interviews won't be made for a few weeks. In the meantime could you refer me to someone who is in a sales position? I would like to informally learn about what it is like and ask questions about their experiences. Who would you suggest I speak with?"*
5. Thank the person you are speaking with and confirm spelling of all names, mailing and e-mail addresses, phone and fax numbers.
  - *"Thank you so much. You have been very helpful. If I have additional questions would it be appropriate to call you again? Again, Mr./Ms. .... is the best person to contact and their phone and fax number is... Is that correct?"*

Create additional outlines and rehearse with friends and family. Let common sense be your guide, but start now!

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