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Good telephone etiquette essential to your job search

Sixty to 80 percent of all jobs are found through networking. That means that if you are in the job market you should be spending most of your job search time networking — being on the telephone.

There is a certain telephone etiquette that you should follow in making those networking calls.

Stay Focused: Remember that looking for a job is a full-time job, and you should be willing to spend eight hours a day in job-search efforts. Mornings between 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. are a good time to call when you can get the actual person rather than the voice mail.

In his book "What Color is Your Parachute," Richard Nelson Bolles claims that job hunting through one's connections, combined with researching prospective employers before contacting them, leads to a job for 86 percent of job seekers who try it.

If you were referred to an employer, make that the first thing you tell the em-



ployer. For example: "My name is Jack Smith, and I was referred to you by John Jones, who suggested that I contact you. I am in career transition and I am an experienced accountant. Do you have few minutes?" It is important to get permission to speak before giving your "60-second commercial."

Whenever possible, conduct a "warm call": Send a cover letter with your résumé a week or so before calling. This way, the employer may have had a chance to review your résumé and would be more open to talking with you.

Get to the Point: When you do get to the hiring manager, don't waste any time.

First, explain the reason for your call, your name, the job ad, referral source, for starters.

Be prepared in case the employer wants to have a conversation with you. Have your résumé on hand so that you can refer to it along with your calendar to set up interviews and a note pad.

Try to emphasize what you can do for the company. Do not initiate any discussion regarding benefits or pay. Speak clearly and stay focused in answering the questions that are asked.

Leaving Messages: You will often have to leave messages for employers. In doing so, be succinct and speak slowly and clearly. Warm the call by providing name, occupation and phone number to be reached. Be sure that your own message machines are professional sounding (no singing or kids voices, etc).

Keep in mind that many employers will not return calls from people they don't know; they may be too busy.

Answering the Phone: When you answer the telephone, be sure to sound enthusiastic and friendly (even though you may have just gotten out of bed). Employers look for people who have positive attitudes. Perhaps you may wish to have a mirror near the phone; smiles do come across on the phone.

Some employers may be slow in responding to your initial contacts. Be patient. Find a spot near the phone to keep all the items handy — pencil, pad, appointment book, copy of your résumé, etc.

It's easy to forget something or get nervous when you are talking with a prospective employer. Keeping pertinent information handy will help you to remember items.

Be sure to tell members of your family who may be answering the phone to take good messages. Have a small bulletin board and write the date, name,

phone number, company name and time when taking messages.

If you give your cell-phone number and receive a call when it may not be convenient, it may be best to have the message go on the voice mail and return the call when it is more convenient for you.

Common Courtesy: Remember your "please" and "thank you." It is sometimes said that employers do not owe you a phone call. When you do get an employer to talk to you on the phone, be grateful. Sending a thank-you note could make a difference in getting that job.

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