

Note: If reading is hard for you, you can talk to us instead. Call 6262 5400



Tip Sheet:

Responding to job ads by phone

Why would I need to respond by phone?

Sometimes, employers will insist that applicants call before they send in their application. They do this for a range of reasons, like:

- They want to assess your skills over the phone, or how you communicate with others
- They are trying to make note of who is really interested in the job enough to make the effort to call
- They are using the call to find out more about you before they need to make decisions based on applications only
- They have complex information to share about the role which wasn't able to be included in the job ad

Whatever their reason, if you are asked to call first, you should.

It's a great opportunity for you to find out more about the organisation and the role too, so that your application is the best it can be.

Often employers will provide a phone contact but make calls optional. If you can gather some insightful questions it is always good to make the call - it shows you are keen and gives you the opportunity to build the relationship before you are just a piece of paper in a pile of applications.

Preparing for the call

You should always take the time to prepare for the phone call. Here are some tips to help you feel calm and confident before you pick up the phone:

- Read the job ad really well and make note of any questions you have about the role.
- Research the organisation online, and make note of any questions you have.
- Make sure you have a quiet area away from other people and noise. Children, vacuum cleaners, traffic and music can all be very distracting to you and the employer.
- Have a list of questions you want to ask (we have some examples below), but also think about how you would answer some questions they might ask you.
- Practice making the call by pretending with yourself or other people. Once you do this a few times you will feel more relaxed about the real thing.
- Have a pen and paper ready to take notes so you don't forget the answers or ask things twice.
- Make sure your phone is charged and has credit.
- Check that you have a clear and professional message bank greeting in case they call you back.
- Know what your availability is or have it available somewhere to look at (not on the phone you will be talking on at the time). This will be helpful if you need to leave a message for them to call you back, or if they happen to ask you to come in for an interview based on your call alone.

What should I ask?

You should write down any questions you have after reading the job ad and any other information you have been given, like the company website, a position description, or selection criteria.

This is your chance to find out as much as you can about the job so that you can tailor your resume and cover letter, but also so you can decide if it is the right role for you.

Some other ideas for questions are listed here. Make sure you check that the answers to these questions haven't already been given to you in the job ad or other documents:

- Is the role still available?
- How would you like to receive my application (e.g. email, online form, hand delivered)?
- Is there a Position Description (PD) or Selection Criteria I could look at?
- Are there any additional details about the job which weren't included?
- Where will the role be located? (The job might not be at their main address)
- How is the team structured? (e.g. Who would I report to, and who else might I be working with?)

Some bonus tips:

- Take the time to make sure you are calm and relaxed before making the call, or it will show in your voice.
- People sound friendlier when they are smiling, so try to smile during the conversation.
- Be polite at all times, and don't speak over the top of the employer.
- Don't eat, drink, smoke, or chew gum while you are on the phone.
- Don't speak with other people while you are on the phone with the employer - you should be in a private quiet place.
- Speak directly into the phone and don't use headphones, speakerphone, or handsfree in your car.
- Write words like 'breathe' and 'slow down' on your notes to remind yourself not to get too fast or out of breath when you are speaking.
- Don't be under the influence of drugs or alcohol when you make the call, or answer a call back. If you are under the influence, or in an unsuitable environment when they call back, you are better off letting it go to message bank and calling them back as soon as possible.
- Answer the phone politely with your name if you have any calls you are expecting from employers.
- Don't leave it too long to return missed calls from them. 24 hours is the absolute maximum you should make them wait.
- Don't make appointments you can't keep. If you aren't available, ask politely if there is another possible time.

What if I need help?

Our team at Workskills is here to help and this is just a small sample of what we can do to support you gaining employment.

In order to access our full range of support you will need to be assigned to us through Centrelink, so when you're asked to choose a jobactive provider, think of the Tasmanian company helping Tasmanians – Workskills.

If you are looking to access our service or just need some direction, contact our team at Workskills on **6262 5400** or emailing Employment@workskills.org.au