



Cold canvassing

There are many people who can help you in your job search. Chances are that there is someone in your social circle (parents, relatives, friends etc) who knows of possible job openings. If you find you have limited industry contacts, you can always create some for yourself.

Cold canvassing is the process of directly approaching employers, by visiting or phone calls, and marketing yourself to them. The best way to do this is to think about the skills that you have and how they are relevant to the companies that you approach.

Job advertisements in newspapers and on the internet sometimes receive hundreds of applications. A cold call or a visit in person at the right time can tap into the hidden job market before a vacancy is advertised.

Cold canvassing can be a good way to find part-time work, particularly in small business, where employers don't have the time to go through the full advertising, interviewing process, but could use some help in their busy times.

Personal visits tips

Visiting employers can be scary, but remember if you are polite, very few people in business will bite your head off for trying. Here's what to do:

- Choose a geographical area in which you would like to work and visit the organisations in that area that have work that will suit you;
- Be polite and don't be too pushy;
- Be well presented, neat and clean;
- Offer to wait or come back later if they are busy;
- Explain as succinctly as possible how you, with your skills, could benefit their organisation;
- Have a fresh, up to date copy of your resume with you to leave with them, which has all your contact details;
- If they invite you back again, make sure you go and are punctual;
- If they don't request another time to see you, call in again just to check if anything has come up (this also reminds them about you).

Cold calling tips

Cold calling is not easy, but can get results. Here's what to do:

- Make a list of the organisations you want to work with and research the kind of work they do;
- Tailor your resume to suit each organisation;
- Write a practice phone script, highlighting your skills and saying why you are the perfect employee for their organisation;
- Be polite;
- Receptionists can provide useful information about the company, before they put you through to someone, ask them for the name of that person;
- If you speak to the recruitment manager, ask for their full name, position title and a time to follow up the call;
- Follow up the call when you said you would.

Cold canvassing is not successful every time, be prepared for knock backs, but don't be disheartened. Being in the right place at the right time may get you that job.



Covering letters



A cover letter is **not** a job application – it's a short, tailored letter that should accompany any resume you send to a prospective employer.

Whether you are applying for a specific, advertised job or you are marketing yourself (through cold canvassing) for possible future work, your cover letter aims to:

- introduce yourself and highlight your key selling points (skills, experience or achievements);
- encourages the reader to discover more about you through your resume; and
- includes decisive actions i.e. requesting an interview (for a specific job) or meeting (to discuss more general work prospects)

Always try to address your letter to a specific person rather than a 'To whom it may concern' letter. This means more work for you, but also more chance of success. You may need to call an organisation and find out who you need to address your letter to, and you may need to spend some time researching a company (using the internet or other means) so that you can make your letter *relevant* to a specific job or company.

You maximise your chances of getting an interview by writing a solid concise cover letter. Demonstrate you understand the job requirements, you have matching skills and experience and you are genuinely interested and enthusiastic about this specific opportunity.

There's no one formula for writing a great cover letter. It depends on what's expected in your field, the industry and the sector. It also depends on you and the approach you are taking to your job hunt.

Remember

The aim with any covering letter is to keep it brief (no more than a page).

Applying for specific positions

Employers receive many letters and get very adept at scanning applications for key information. The information that's important to them is whether you meet the criteria for the job through:

- your skills and abilities;
- your background and experience;
- your personal profile; and/or
- your training and academic track record.

There are many ways to highlight that you are the right person for the job. Focus on what the employer is looking for and show them – initially through your covering letter and then in more detail through your resume – that you are the ideal candidate.