How to contact your leads

There are two ways to contact leads: by email and by phone. You could dive in and make a cold call, or you could send an introductory email and then follow it up with a phone call. The pros of an email, is that it lets your lead think about your request and is less intimidating for you BUT it’s also less personal and could be deleted. The pros of the phone is that it’s quicker and more personal BUT is more intimidating for you and comes out of the blue for your lead.

Regardless of how you contact your leads, remember these guidelines:

✛ Know what you want to say about yourself and your skills
✛ Listen carefully, respond appropriately and acknowledge your contact’s needs and concerns
✛ If you set up a meeting, arrange a specific time on a specific day
✛ Let your contact know that even if there are no current opportunities, you would value a meeting to talk about future opportunities
✛ If you aren’t able to set up a meeting, offer to email your résumé, ask for referrals, or ask if you could contact the person again in the future
✛ Always be polite

Contacting your lead by email

✛ Be polite and to the point
✛ Make sure to include a phone number and email contact
✛ Be clear about what you hope to learn from the lead
✛ Consider following up with a phone call

Email samples:

Dear ____________,

My name is _____. I have a BA in _____ from UVic and I’m doing some research around careers in _____ to find out if this might be a viable career for me. I’m not looking for work at this point but I was hoping to get your take on what a career path in this area might look like. Would you be open to meeting with me for 20 or 30 minutes so I could get your perspective?

Thank you for your time.
Dear __________,

My name is __________. I just completed my BA in __________ at UVic and I'm in the process of connecting with various organizations to introduce myself and find out about current or future work opportunities in the area of ____________. I was hoping you might be able to refer me to someone in the ______________ area of your company.

I am really keen to find employment as a _______ with a small company, so that I can have the opportunity to do all sorts of tasks, rather than specialize in just one area at this stage. I would like to stay in British Columbia but I would relocate to Vancouver or the lower mainland, if need be. If you hear of any opportunities through your work or through friends, please could you pass on my résumé, or alternatively, give me the person's name so that I may make direct contact?

Please let me know if you have any questions about this request. I will follow up with a phone call in a few days.

Thank you for your time.

Contacting your lead by phone

+ Introduce yourself to whoever picks up the phone. This might be a receptionist, or it might be your lead. Be upfront about why you're calling by introducing yourself and stating the purpose of your call. Ask if it is a good time to talk; if not, ask when it might be convenient to call back

+ If you reach the receptionist, state your reason for calling and ask to speak to someone in the department most closely connect to your career area. Receptionists are sometimes required to screen calls before providing information, so be prepared to explain your process. Be upfront and honest.

+ If you are told that the organization isn’t hiring right now, ask if you might be able to speak with someone about future opportunities.

+ If you're directed to Human Resources, make sure to take down the name of the person that you speak with, and ask if you can also get the name of someone in your department of interest.

+ If you are directed to an online application system, indicate that you will follow through on that suggestion and then ask if you can also get the name of someone in your department of interest.

+ If the receptionist is unable to refer you to someone else, be gracious and thank the receptionist for the help.

Phone conversation sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YOU</th>
<th>Good morning Ms. ABC. My name is __________. I have a background in chemistry and some experience in promotions. I'm in the process of connecting with various employers to introduce myself and find out about upcoming work possibilities in the marketing area. I'm not expecting that you have any openings right now, but I wonder if you would be open to meeting with me for 15 or 20 minutes to talk about what's happening at AdvanceTech and also get your perspective on current trends and opportunities in the field?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ms. ABC</td>
<td>I can tell you right away that we're not hiring now and I don't anticipate that will change at any time soon. So, I don't think a meeting at this point would be particularly helpful. I also just don't have the time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YOU</td>
<td>Certainly. I understand this isn't the best time to connect with you. I was just reading on your website about your recent merger with BioTech and I appreciate how busy you must be. Would it be better for me to check in with you in a month?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. ABC</td>
<td>Honestly, I can't see things being any different in a month's time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YOU</td>
<td>I understand. I wonder if you can suggest anyone else in the field that I should be speaking to?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. ABC</td>
<td>Well, you may want to contact Jamal Greely over at EnviroTech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YOU</td>
<td>Jamal Greely at EnviroTech. Thank you. I'll get in touch with him. May I mention that you referred me?</td>
</tr>
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</table>
What type of response will you get?

Every conversation will be different. Some will be short, business-like and to the point. Others will be longer and chatty. Here’s what your conversations might look like:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ms. ABC</th>
<th>YES, that’s fine.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YOU</td>
<td>Great. I really appreciate your help. I’ll keep my eye on your website and if I see any significant changes in the next three months or so would it be alright to touch base with you again?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. ABC</td>
<td>You can do that. I don’t foresee any changes but I guess I can’t totally predict that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YOU</td>
<td>I understand. Thanks for all your help, Ms ABC. Goodbye.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Introduce yourself and request a meeting

- Offer to email résumé and follow-up within a few days
  - YES
  - No
    - Offer to email résumé and follow-up within a few days
      - YES
      - NO
        - Ask for referrals inside or outside the organization
          - YES
          - NO
            - Determine best date to follow-up and best mode of contact
              - YES
              - NO
                - Ask permission to use their name when contacting referrals
                  - YES
                  - NO
                    - Determine timeframe for future contact
                      - YES
                      - NO
                        - Always thank them for their time and help
                          - YES
How many times should you contact a lead?

This depends on whether you reach your desired contact right away. It’s a good idea to try both voicemail and email if you aren’t able to make voice contact. Always indicate when you will try contacting the person again, and make sure to follow up. But don’t be pushy!

In your first message, introduce yourself, state your purpose and indicate when you’ll make contact again (1-3 days). In your second message, refer to your first message and indicate when you’ll make contact again (1-3 days). Before you reach out a third time, check with the receptionist to find out if it’s appropriate to keep calling, and if there is a good time to try again. In your third message, indicate that you hope to connect in the future.