

# Making a Call to Ask About Work Experience

For many young people, making this first, important contact with a company or individual can be a daunting experience – very daunting really just thinking about it, not too bad making the call, but a real sense of achievement when the call is completed, whether it was successful, or not.

So what is the best way of making a call? Some people are already quite confident and will not find it a problem, but if you are part of the majority who are nervous about using the telephone to speak to someone you do not know, the following might be helpful.

- Take a clean sheet of paper and write a list of the information you need to convey during the call, for example your name, the name of the school you attend, the dates of work experience, what you are hoping to do, a contact number or address the company can reply to, if you have to leave a message.
- Make sure you have a pen handy so that you write down any information given to you.
- Remember that it is very important that you make a good impression, as at this stage the individual to whom you are speaking will probably have no other information about you, so this is your big opportunity to paint a positive picture of yourself.
- What an employer will be looking for will be someone who is polite, organised, speaks clearly and someone who shows an interest in their business. Unless you are phoning an individual, be prepared to explain what you are looking for several times, as you will probably speak to a receptionist initially and will then be put through to someone who may be able to help.

Take a look at our conversation points (below) to see if you could use these in a telephone call to help you gain a placement.

If you are really worrying about making a telephone call, remember that the person at the other end cannot see you and that the worst thing that can happen is that they will say, 'sorry we cannot help'. So, try the following as an outline for a possible conversation and do not be put off if you get several refusals, your confidence will improve as you use the telephone more and you will probably find that, fairly quickly, you will not need to use this outline as you develop your own style:

*Hello, my name is John Brown and I attend Thorpe St Andrew School and Sixth Form in Norwich.*

*I am really interested in working in retail/school/garage and I was wondering if there is any chance you might be able to help me with a work experience placement during September this year.*

If the employer says 'no', say 'thank you' and 'goodbye'. If they say 'yes', they might ask you what areas of their business interest you and the dates of the placement, so: *Work Experience is from Monday 3 September to the Friday 7 September 2018.*

Before they say 'yes', they may ask you to put your request in writing. That is where your speculative letter and CV come in. You need to ask who you should address and send forward the letter and CV to (this is where you may need the pen and paper).

Before you finish the call, if the company says 'yes', you need to ask who you should forward the Insurance Form to. Explain that:

*My school has asked me to complete an Insurance Form to finalise my placement, if I send this to you, please could you fill this in and return it to the school? The name and address of the person you should send it to are on the form.*

When it is appropriate, you could close the call by saying something along the lines of:

*That's great, thank you for all your help, good-bye.*