

# BENNINGTON

## Tips for Professional Calls

Sometimes the telephone is the first “person to person” contact you will have with an employer, so it is important to be professional. An unprofessional phone conversation or voice mail message can hurt even the most talented candidate in a job search.

Here are some tips to remember when making and receiving professional calls.

### Making the call

- Be prepared. Know who you are calling and what information you need. Anticipate information they may need from you and have it ready.
- Make the call from a quiet place and have paper and pen ready to take down important information.
- Politely introduce yourself and briefly state the reason for your call. If you know to whom you need to speak, ask for him/her.
- Get the name of the person answering the phone.

*“Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am a Bennington College student and am calling to check on the status of my application for the XYZ internship. May I please speak with \_\_\_\_\_?”*

- Always thank the person to whom you spoke for his/her assistance.

*“Linda, thank you for your assistance today. I look forward to hearing from Pat.”*

### Leaving a message

If your contact is unavailable, ask if there is a better time to call. You may also ask if you can leave a message. Avoid leaving multiple, or long detailed messages.

- When leaving a message, remember that someone will be jotting down the important information.
- Speak slowly and clearly, perhaps a little slower than you would normally speak.
- State and spell your name, phone number and purpose for your call. Indicate when would be the best time to reach you.
- It is a good idea to repeat your name and number at the end so the listener can write it down or check it.

*“Hello, this is Jane (brief pause) Smith (brief pause). I am a student from Bennington College. My number is (slowly) 8-0-2 (brief pause) 4-4-0 (brief pause) 4-3-2-1. I am calling to check on the status of my application for the XYZ internship position. The best time to reach me is after 3 daily. Again, this is Jane Smith at 802-440-4321 and I look forward to hearing from you.”*

### Receiving Calls

Once you have started sending out your resume, any call you receive could potentially be an employer. Here are a few tips so that you do not unexpectedly make a poor impression.

- Always answer your phone professionally. Unless you are certain of the number that is calling you, do not assume that the caller is someone who knows you. If necessary, move to a quiet space quickly.

*“I am glad you called, would you be able to hold on for a moment while I move to a quieter room?”*

- Be sure you know to whom you are speaking. Ask if you missed the name and organization, or if you are unclear about something.

*"I am sorry; could you please give me your name again? I'm not certain I heard you clearly."*

- Smile. They cannot see you, but if you are smiling, you are more likely to sound positive and upbeat.

### **Receiving messages**

Answering machines and voicemail boxes should be changed (if necessary) once you begin your job search. Employers do not want to sit through 5 minutes of your favorite band, or start talking after your recorded "Hello" only to hear "Gotcha!" halfway through their introduction.

- Messages should be brief and clear.

*"You have reached the voicemail of Alex Bell. Please leave a brief message and I will return your call promptly."*

- If you share a phone with another person, come up with a good system for taking messages. Keep paper near the phone; agree to take down the name, organization and number of any caller and where these messages will be left for the recipient.
- Always return employer calls promptly.

### **When to call**

- Wait around a week to 10 days after sending application material via mail before following up with a call; this can be shortened to 3 days to a week for email.
- The best time to call is generally in the morning between 9 am and 10 am.
- Typically, it is best not to call between 12 –2 pm since this is when most people take lunch.

**Questions?** We're here to help! Reach out to [fwt@bennington.edu](mailto:fwt@bennington.edu) or [Genbook](#) to make an appointment for a mock interview or to go over more points in detail.