

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24, 1996

500 already Matched  
Register To Be Matched

**jobnet**  
HUMAN RESOURCES ONLINE

1-519-438-6770

**LONDON CAMPUS**

**TORONTO**  
School of Business

Helping You Build a Better Life

**667-4000**

# Careers

## The fine art of the call-back: Making your move

### THE FRIENDLY CALL-BACK

- ▶ Get over the fear of being rejected; believe in yourself; be positive.
- ▶ Be polite, courteous and respectful.
- ▶ Don't be in a hurry to get through to someone.
- ▶ Be prepared. Know what you're going to say and how you're going to say it. Career counsellor Jonathan Creaghan suggests starting the conversation with a line such as "is this a good time for you?"
- ▶ Don't let voice-mail or a recording throw you. Get your message out just the same. Also, don't be caught off guard if the person who interviewed you or handled your resume answers the phone.
- ▶ Be succinct, but not blunt; look for signals the employer may want to talk to you about the opportunity; seize openings to ask questions, make impressions.

Calling an employer to check your status shows you're serious and is an opportunity to make personal contact.

**By Howard Burns**  
*Free Press Business Reporter*

Job seekers are hurting themselves by thinking the hunt is over once the resume has been sent in.

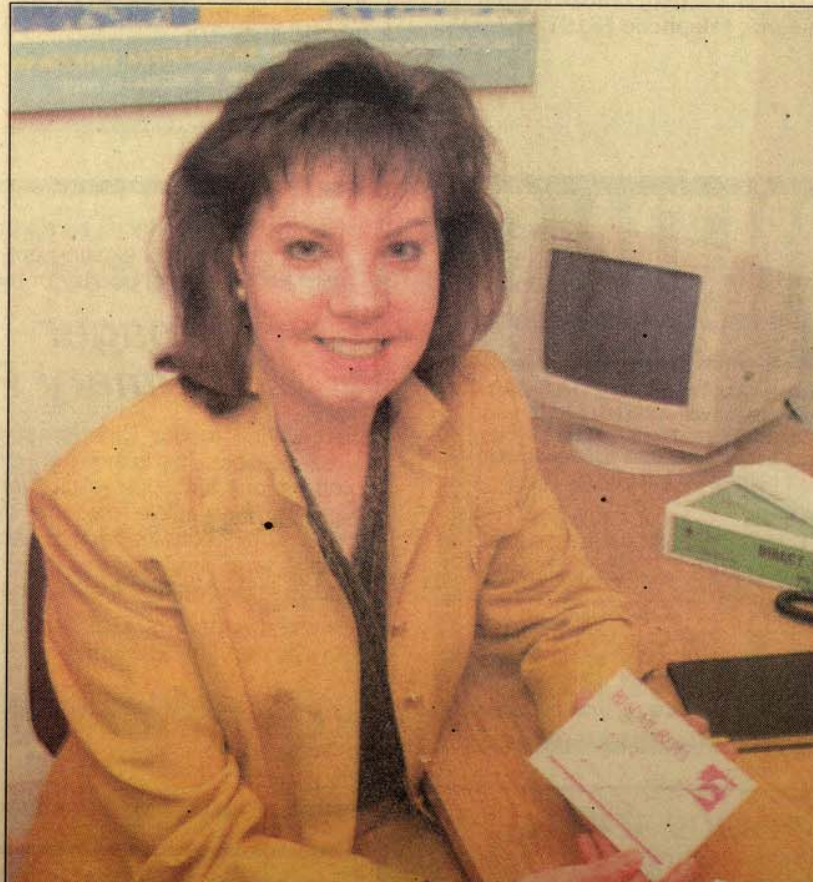
Observers agree: Unless the employer has declared such a move verboten, a simple, polite follow-up call to check your status is a crucial part of the process.

Jonathan Creaghan, a career counsellor in London, recounts the case of a client who hadn't heard back.

When his client called the employer he found out he had been selected for an interview but hadn't been contacted because his resume had been misplaced.

Creaghan says the follow-up is just as important as the resume package because it adds another dimension to a faceless candidate.

Suddenly, there's a voice to attach to the resume, a manner of speaking, a demeanor — even if only over the phone.



"If in fact it's moving along very quickly, it's certainly an opportunity for somebody to make a contact," says Patterson.

Ideally, a job hunter should talk directly to the person doing the screening.

Although it can work to a candidate's advantage on occasion, an unscheduled visit to the employer is fraught with more risk.

"In most cases, though, you are sort of imposing on somebody else's schedule at that point, and sometimes don't get the best opportunity to present yourself well," says Patterson.

Tamelynda Lux, a career and marketing consultant, has come up with a way to efficiently spur employers into responding to a resume.

Much like a postcard, it is designed to be sent in with a person's resume.

It includes a place for the employer to indicate what the next step in the process will be, if any, and then pop it into the mail back to you.

Lux views the product as-part of a follow-up strategy that applicants can design for themselves.

The self-addressed, stamped card can be completed in check-off fashion by the person doing the screening, says Lux.

Applicants who get the card returned to them at least know where they stand for the moment, says Lux.

*continued on page 2...>*



► A call is usually better than paying a visit to the employer, especially for management-level positions; the latter may be more of an imposition.

► Be patient. It sometimes takes longer than you think for a company to sift through applications; be sensitive to the fact the employer's timetable may be much different than your own.

A call-back (five to seven working days after responding to a job ad), may just help push your resume from the "C" to the "A" pile, the one within the manager's grasp.

"It's not worth sending a resume in unless you're prepared to follow-up. It's critical. You have to be in their conscious mind all the time," he says.

"As for the fear (of rejection), if they believe they have something to offer, believe in their skills and their strengths, then making the phone call is not as difficult."

Tom Patterson, a human resources



SUSAN BRADNAM / The London Free Press

### Tamelynda Lux has designed a resume reply card as part of a strategy for following up on a resume.

consultant at James E. Thomas and Associates, says the rules are slightly different if you get an interview.

In such a case, a candidate should listen carefully to what the interviewer says at the conclusion of the session.

Often, a time frame is revealed, instructions given.

On an application sent in on speculation or in response to an ad, it's not unreasonable to call the employer in roughly a week's time to confirm the resume has been received intact.

The employer can select from answers ranging from "we will be calling you to set up an interview" to "there are currently no opportunities available."

If the response on the card is anything other than the desired one, a further contact is suggested, says Lux.

In some cases, a follow-up letter expressing continued interest and including added information would be appropriate.

"They should keep working on it," says Lux.

## Advice: CAREERS



Bob Totten,  
Totten &  
Associates Inc.

### Not bragging

**Q.** When I get into an interview, I have trouble talking about strengths or accomplishments, even though I have generally done well career-wise and personally. What can I do about this? I feel uncomfortable "bragging."

**A.** Your question is a very common one. Most people have been told, especially when growing up, that it's not "nice" to brag or that modesty is a virtue. To boast about ourselves is seen as being obnoxious at worst or, at very least, disagreeable.

Because of our early learning and even current societal pressures, we seem to be programmed to downplay our assets. Your task now is to overcome this learning to a point where you can give a good account of yourself and maintain your dignity at the same time.

Consider what a potential employer is trying to do in an interview. The interviewer wants you to report about the assets which you think are important. Keep this in mind — you are reporting facts. These facts may be just what the employer needs to be convinced that you are the right candidate for the job.

Before attending your next interview, list at least five things you have achieved or accomplished in the last five years. Think also about your current talents, write them

down and be prepared to tell how these assets could apply to the job you are seeking. It often helps to be able to measure your achievements in terms of savings to your employer, for example, or as a percentage increase in sales, or reduction in customer complaints, etc.

Being able to report your strengths is not bragging. It is simply reporting factual information which reflects well on you and which will go a long way toward helping an employer choose you for the job.

Careers is a weekly section of The Free Press. Address comments or suggestions for future columns to:  
**Careers**  
c/o John Miner  
The London  
Free Press  
P.O. Box 2280  
London, Ont.  
N6A 4G1  
Or fax  
(519) 667-4528