

# Calling a potential employer

*Applying to an international firm whose official house language is English, you will almost certainly need to use the phone. Some basic tips.*

**Arbeitssuche auf Englisch ist doppelt schwer? Nicht unbedingt. Unsere Serie gibt Ihnen Hilfestellung und Tipps - von der ersten Kontaktaufnahme über das Bewerbungsgespräch bis hin zum ersten Arbeitstag.**

Whatever the reason for applying in English, you will almost certainly need to use the phone. This is unfortunate, because for most people, any kind of business telephoning is a nightmare, but the telephone is becoming harder and harder to escape. Practising "telephone skills" alone is, in our experience, not very effective. You need to be doing something with the phone, to have a real objective. Then your motivation will overcome your language *inhibitions* (and deficits), because when your mobile rings, there's "nowhere to hide".

There are 6 possible reasons to reach for the telephone during your job search

- You're ringing "on spec" to ask if the company has a *vacancy*.
- You are reacting to an advertisement and need the application form, and maybe more information.
- You plan to mail a number of firms, *cold*, and you need the name of the person you should write to.
- You are reacting to an advertisement which invites you to "call for a chat", ring for an

interview. In effect, a sort of *preliminary* interview.

- You have sent in a written application and have decided it is time to *chase it up*.
- You need to arrange an interview. The employer may call you or you the employer.

To a greater or lesser extent, all these contacts can be a form of mini-interview. Be prepared!

## Some basic tips

- Call from a quiet place without background noise (TV, kids etc.) where you will not be interrupted. Forget public telephone boxes!
- Use the mobile. Forget the expense this time.
- If you have to use a phone card, be sure it has enough *units*!
- Write names and extension numbers of the people you wish to reach and keep them beside you.
- Make sure you know the company name, the job title and any reference numbers.

- Make sure your information (e.g. CV) is within reach.
- Have paper, etc. so you can write notes!

And these are only the basic basics. They apply to all speakers of any language. Next time we will look specifically at the English language problems and questions. ■

*chase something up, to* nachhaken

<i>cold</i>	Blind-, Initiativbewerbung
<i>inhibitions</i>	Hemmungen
<i>on spec</i>	Blind-, Initiativbewerbung
<i>preliminary</i>	Vor-,gespräch
<i>units</i>	(Telefon) Einheiten
<i>vacancy</i>	Freie Stelle

## Useful phrases

### Making the call – identifying yourself

Hello, this is . . .

My name is . . .

This is . . . speaking.

### Asking for connection

I'd like to speak to . . .

Could/Can/May I speak to . . .

Could you put me through to . . . extension 296, please.

Could I speak to his/her secretary?

### Reason for calling

I'm calling to . . .

The reason I called is to . . .

It's in connection with . . .

It's about . . .

### Closing signals

OK. I think that's everything.

Is there anything else?

### Thanking

Thank you for your help.

I'm very grateful for your assistance.

### Goodbyes

Bye!

Goodbye!

Speak to you again soon!

See you on . . .

Autor Anthony Lee hat zusammen mit Kollegen vom ebs Centre for Business Languages das Buch „Bewerben in Europa“ (Falken Verlag, ISBN 3806823707), herausgebracht. Der dreisprachige Band gibt Tipps und Informationen zu Bewerbungen in Europa.

## Be careful!

You will probably have to spell your name or the name of your home town to the person at the other end. Make sure you can use the English alphabet.

These letters are well-known for problems: J/G, I/E, A/E, E, H, Z = zed (GB) but zee (USA)

Make sure the numbers are correct. Here confusion is possible as a result of poor pronunciation.

13 or 30 thirteen or thirty

18 or 80 eighteen or eighty

. . . and there is a different sequence of digits

37 = thirty-seven = siebenunddreißig

51 = fifty-one = einundfünfzig

. . . and don't forget!!

Half ten in English = 10.30 NOT 9.30