



1 APPROACH # 1: KNOCK KNOCK

1.1 Process

Just walk in.

You will probably feel very anxious.

However, if you happen to be a student you have all the excuses in the world!

Be very nice with the receptionist, smile, smile and smile. Do not push, do not insist, just smile.

1.2 Advantages/Pluses/Positive points

- Gets the attention of people because it is unusual
- Moves faster/engages with others
- Offers/Provides more control of the situation
- Proves your enthusiasm
- Provides access to everyone and everything if successful
- Shows that you have character and personality (and courage!)
- Shows your commitment

1.3 Drawbacks/Minuses/Negative points

- Is an “all-or-nothing” strategy
- May be extremely difficult, especially in large companies
- May generate a bad/pushy/aggressive reputation
- Offers a very short window to make an impact
- Opens door to rejection: person met with may (well) say no!
- Proves to be illegal in some countries

1.4 Recommendations for action

- Be persistent and not easily put-off
- Bring a solution to a hot issue
- Choose the right type of person (i.e. a sales background more amenable to cold-calling)
- Find commonalities (i.e. people, hobbies...)
- Give “bribes/small gifts” to assistants, or charm them
- Prepare well/Study ahead of time



2 APPROACH # 2: MEETING BY ACCIDENT

2.1 Process

Identify the place, events, clubs, pubs...where the person you want to meet, usually goes to.

For instance, in London, every financial institution or bank has 2 or 3 pubs that they visit late in the day, after work.

Go there and run into the person you want to meet or ask someone ... who knows someone...who...

2.2 Advantages/Pluses/Positive points

- Does not have competition (unique approach)
- Is informal, offers natural context and makes it easy to get information
- Offers face-to-face interaction
- Provides you with an original insight
- Shows your empathy for your counterpart

2.3 Drawbacks/Minuses/Negative points

- Could be surprising, since you never know what your counterpart's attitude will be
- Is difficult since person you want to approach is always/often busy
- Is sometimes out of context
- Suffers a low conversion ratio

2.4 Recommendations for action

- Ask if you can share an idea/topic that may concern them; one you are working on
- Do your research (Why is the target there? Why do people go there? What is the type of event?)
- Have a valid reason to be there
- Introduce yourself with a catchy pitch
- Offer your card (hoping she/he offers her/his card in return)
- Prepare your approach in a way that is comfortable to you

3 APPROACH # 3: TELEPHONE CALL

3.1 Process

Get set [see our paper on using the phone to get an interview].

Call the organization.

If you run into the telephone operator, say your name 2 or 3 times and ask to speak to the assistant of the person you want to meet with.

Once you're connected with this personal assistant, tell them that you do not want to bother Mr./Ms XXX, that you know that he/she is very busy and then, and ask for a meeting. Be ready to give the reason for this meeting (only if they ask for it). Of course, do not say that you're looking for a job but simply raise 1 or 2 technical issues that might be of interest to the person you want to meet with.

Leave your name, but avoid giving your phone number (so that they cannot come back to you in order to cancel this meeting).



6 Unsolicited Approach Strategies for the Hidden Market: Processes, Pluses, Minuses and Recommendations Page 3 sur 5

3.2 Advantages/Pluses/Positive points

- Eliminates distance
- Is flexible in communication (change on the fly)
- Is rather short
- It's easy (no cost) for both parties
- Offers instant answer (they answer your call or don't)
- Provides direct feedback

3.3 Drawbacks/Minuses/Negative points

- Does not offer visual clues (Counterpart is hard to read)
- Is rather intrusive
- Offers your counterpart an easy/short exit
- May fail since person approached can be busy and reject you for reasons not having to do with you
- Suffers from lack of trust

3.4 Recommendations for action

- Ask if "now" is a good time
- Express your "right to contact" (refer to a name of a person who suggested you call)
- Give a clear, specific reason for the call, make it sound attractive
- Identify yourself and your goal so you are perceived as self-confident
- Let some time go by before calling your counterpart again (or the PA) so you do not appear pushy

4 APPROACH # 4: LETTER

4.1 Process

This is the old traditional approach, using hardcopy.

You use a letter.

Type it.

Send it either by post or by special carrier.

It is not such a bad approach, since this way of proceeding is not used anymore and or, at least, is very rare.

4.2 Advantages/Pluses/Positive points

- Can work up one and then adapt it slightly and send to a few companies
- Has more chance to be read since there are less letters and more emails
- Is rather old fashioned/conservative/formal and shows respect
- Is unique, stands out, is different (not that many people do it any more)
- Shows more effort on your part and is harder to throw out

4.3 Drawbacks/Minuses/Negative points

- Costs more than emails
- Does not provide acknowledgment of receipt
- Is rather slow
- May be diverted to PA/HR and not get to the manager
- May get lost easily



4.4 Recommendations for action

- Apply using a letter to positions in organizations with formal establishment
- Include your contact details (email, phone)
- Put PLC, so only CEO opens
- Send your letter only if you have specific function/title/full name/address

5 APPROACH # 5: E-MAIL

5.1 Process

This is a very common (and usually) very unsuccessful approach since any decent and sound manager gets 50 to 150 e-mails per day!

If you really want to send an e-mail, the best time to do it is Tuesday and Thursday:

- afternoon [once their incoming emails box has been emptied]
- or late afternoon, just before the manager goes home.

All the other times of the day and days of the week, you will face fierce competition.

5.2 Advantages/Pluses/Positive points

- Allows you to be different (tailored to your style and to the specific recipient)
- Does not take too much time to prepare once the basic format/message is done
- Enables you to be in control of the process
- Can get notification when it is opened
- Makes sure your email goes to the right person
- Offers easy accessibility

5.3 Drawbacks/Minuses/Negative points

- Can be easily screened out or deleted
- Don't know how it will come up (format) on the receiving side (e.g.: Blackberry)
- Is equivalent to a "Cold call", and may get filtered out
- It is up to other side to contact you back, hence you loose control of initiative
- Suffers from huge volume of incoming e-mail (lost in the pack)

5.4 Recommendations for action

- Close e-mail with clear next step (what will happen next)
- Format it simply, separate paragraphs
- Make first stage short, with option for more information
- Make it short, catchy, to the point and with content
- Offers solutions to their issue(s)
- Show you understand their key issues
- Make subject line stand out: write something catchy/appealing/attractive



6 APPROACH # 6: PERSONAL ASSISTANT BY PHONE THEN EMAIL TO PERSONAL ASSISTANT + PDF DOCUMENT FOR DECISION MAKER

6.1 Process

First, call the personal assistant of the person you want to meet with.

Then tell him/her that you would like to send an e-mail to their boss, but you know that he/she is very busy.

Say that your e-mail is "strategic/confidential" but "not very urgent."

Ask the personal assistant if you could e-mail him/her an e-mail [as a cover email] and attach to it a PDF document for their boss.

Tell the assistant to pass your PDF on to the boss only and only when the time is really appropriate (taking one's time is better than rushing).

Send you correspondence: email+PDF

6.2 Advantages/Pluses/Positive points

- Allows preparation beforehand
- Conveys most of your message
- Is easy to follow-up and allows you to build relationship with gatekeeper
- Offers personal contact over just an email message. Gets the PA on your side
- Reaches the person when she/he is free
- Uses PA as information source

6.3 Drawbacks/Minuses/Negative points

- Does not offer control on timeframe (quick response is unusual)
- Is one more obstacle (intermediary, gatekeeper) to convince, to target right message
- May be difficult to identify the correct PA (gatekeeper)
- Message could be diverted if PA doesn't like you
- PA may be too busy
- Personal touch with decision maker content is not dynamic

6.4 Recommendations for action

- First few lines should be interesting and engaging
- Make gatekeeper/PA feel important
- Produce a PDF document which is: relevant, with outcomes and benefits
- Thank the PA for their help/contribution and always send a thank you note