

# COMMUNICATING with Employers

When you are looking for a job or internship, it is wise to follow professional guidelines for communicating with employers. Communicating with employers calls for a more formal communication style than talking with friends and family. Review these standards to ensure that employers will view your message favorably.

## Phone Etiquette

Employers frequently request that you call them to determine your interest and initiative. When you call, you may get a voicemail message. Be prepared with a script to use in response to a voicemail message. The following is an example of a voicemail response:

Give your name and relevant background info:

*Hello [person's name]. This is John Torero. We met at USD's Career Expo yesterday.*

Give purpose of call:

*I am calling to schedule an information interview at your convenience.*

Close the message:

*Please call me back at (619) 555-5555 (say the phone number slowly, or say it twice). Again, this is John Torero calling to arrange a time to meet for an information interview. Thank you.*

Note: Be certain that the voicemail message employers hear on your phone sounds professional.

## FAX Etiquette

Occasionally an employer requests a faxed response. Always include a cover sheet when faxing a resume. It determines who gets the fax and how it is interpreted. To create a useful cover sheet:

- Include your name, phone number, fax number, and email address.
- List the recipient's name. Many businesses have fax machines in separate locations.
- Always complete the "number of pages sent" section so that recipients will know whether they have received all the sheets.

## Email Etiquette

Email messages can be cover letters, thank-you notes, or other types of formal correspondence. Compose the email as a business letter – in a well organized fashion, using proper grammar, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling. Divide the email into two to four brief paragraphs, and be succinct. Ideally, the entire message should fit on a single screen (i.e., not require the reader to scroll down).

When sending a resume to an employer, always include an email message. Your message is the "cover letter" (see *Cover Letters* handout).

**Over →**

## Email Structure

### Subject:

Always include a subject, and be very specific.

#### Appropriate

*Application for position as Sales Manager at XYZ Industries  
Request for information regarding social service internship*

#### Inappropriate

*Job at XYZ industries  
Need info*

### Salutation:

Begin your message with a respectful salutation and a colon (not a comma). For example:

*Dear Mr. Rodriguez:*

*Dear Ms. Thompson:*

*Dear Dr. Simon:*

Attempt to identify the person you are emailing. If this is impossible, begin with:

*Dear Recruitment Coordinator:    Dear Internship Coordinator:    Dear Hiring Manager:*

### Closing:

End the message with “Sincerely” or “Cordially,” followed by a “signature” that you create on your email program. This signature should contain the same contact information that appears at the top of your resume. For example:

*Sincerely,*

*John Torero  
123 Elm Street, Apt 333  
San Diego, CA 92108  
(619) 555-5555  
jtorero-08@sandiego.edu*

### Attachments:

If you are sending an attachment, name it appropriately. For example, with a resume:

#### Appropriate

*JohnToreroResume.doc  
AliciaAlcalaResume.doc*

#### Inappropriate

*Resume.doc  
MyResume.doc*

## Email Do's and Don'ts

- Select a professional email address for all career-related correspondence. First and last name are always safe. Avoid hyphens, periods, underscores and letters and numbers that can be confused (i.e., 1, l, I, 0, o). Avoid cute titles, sexual innuendos, and references to personal interests in the email address you use for job search purposes.

#### Appropriate

*johntorero@sandiego.edu  
johntorero@hotmail.com*

#### Inappropriate

*guymagnet@sandiego.edu  
surferboy@gail.com*

- Emails are never anonymous. Do not send emails that contain anger or sarcasm.
- Read your message aloud before sending it to ensure that it carries a positive tone. You want to come across as respectful and approachable – not demanding, impatient, or disrespectful. Humor can also be easily misinterpreted in emails.
- Before emailing your message to an employer, send it to yourself to determine that it appears professional and well organized.
- Avoid slang, obscure abbreviations, and overly informal language.
- Do not use all capital letters in your sentences.