



Follow Up: Confirm Your Candidacy

“Success comes from taking the initiative and following up...” — Anthony Robbins

Don't wait to be noticed.

Contacting an employer to follow up on your job application or interview can be intimidating. What if you say the wrong thing? What if you call the wrong person? What if you call too soon—or too late? Still, knowing how to follow up is essential to a job search. Done right, you can learn the status of your application and even reiterate your interest in the position to the right person. Done wrong, and you come across like a pest, desperate, or worse.

Know the company, role, and players

Before contacting a company or potential employer to follow up on your job application, you need to be absolutely familiar with the organization and details of the role. You can review the company's website for key information, news, organizational leaders, and clients. If inquiring about an open position, know exactly what's required from candidates. Identify whom you're trying to reach; many companies list hiring and department key contacts, including HR/Recruiting, online. Use social media tools like LinkedIn to locate and reach out to hiring managers, or call the company and ask to speak with that person. Use your elevator speech to quickly recite what skills you have to offer the company, and be prepared to ask one or two intelligent questions about the position.

Call, email, or social media?

In general, email is best when following up on a job application. It's less obtrusive than calling, and you can craft what you want to say without being put on the spot. Plus, unlike snail mail, it can be easily forwarded to others in the organization. Keep it brief, professional, and TYPO FREE! Have a clear Subject line so your email doesn't end up in the junk folder. Calling is fine if you've already interviewed in person, have a good relationship with the employer, or do not have an email address. Connect with professionals on LinkedIn and ask to meet to discuss your résumé or potential opportunities in your industry; avoid using less professionally-focused social media sites. For retail or food service applications, you might follow up in person. Otherwise, avoid just “dropping in.”

What to say and how to say it

Hiring managers are typically very busy. So highlight “what's in it for them” when you call. Keep your introduction short, explain why you are calling, and get to the point. A sample script might be “Hello, my name is Jane Smith. I am calling in regards to the open Design Assistant position at your agency. I am a recent Graphic Design grad who has interned on campaigns for several auto and beauty companies and was hoping I could speak to someone about the role.” Or, introduce yourself and say, “I am calling to confirm that my application for the junior designer position was received.” These scripts quickly and directly explain a) why you are calling; b) what you have to offer; and c) what you are looking for.

Rehearse what you are going to say ahead of time so that you're not caught off guard during your call. With practice, you'll quickly refine your calling “script.”

Patience, perseverance, or pest?

As a general rule, allow several days to one week after the anticipated receipt of your application or your interview to follow up (unlike thank you notes after an interview; those should be sent right away). This allows the employer time to obtain the appropriate information and/or to review your application. When applying, check for specific contact instructions; candidates who can't follow directions may be eliminated. Plus, if you wait too long, you risk being forgotten. There's also a fine line between being enthusiastic and pushy, inquiring and harassing. If you have interviewed for a role, you can follow up a maximum of two times regarding the position. And, if there's *still* no response, conclude with a polite “I understand you must be busy. Thank you for your time” type of final reply. Then move on; other opportunities will be awaiting your attention.



i n a nutshell:

Be patient, yet proactive, timely, not timid when following up:

- **Research contacts; be familiar with job and company details**
- **In general, allow 2-3 days or a week to follow up; if provided, follow contact instructions**
- **Be prompt; a well-timed response demonstrates interest and enthusiasm**
- **Craft brief, professional emails with clear Subject lines; keep calls to the point and polite**
- **Don't send gifts, overdo things, or appear desperate**
- **Don't overwhelm or annoy; limit follow-ups to 2 times max**

So take charge for job search success. Follow up, and follow through!