

how to book an interview [p1]

So, you wanna book an interview with an amazing leader? The CEO of Apple? Your local coffee roaster? Here's how you do it!

How To Find People To Interview

You've got the potential to interview anyone—from the President of the United States to your neighborhood barber! When looking for a good conversation, nobody is too big-time and nobody is too small. Here are some ideas on how to start:

First off, set a goal of meeting ten people, and start making a list of potential interviewees.

1. Pick three people in fields related to your interests. Everything that interests you represents a potential interview:

- Think about your hobbies: enjoy taking photos? Look up the people working at National Geographic. Like surfing? Call someone who works for your favorite surfwear company!
- Look around your room: your favorite DVDs, posters, magazines, books, software...find out who's behind all that stuff!
- Check out the "About Us" sections on your favorite websites.

2. Pick three people who work in an area you might be interested in:

- Never had a pet, but think you'd like to be a vet? Find someone that works at an animal

hospital.

- Think you'd be interested in advertising, but not sure what it's like? Look up someone working at a successful ad agency.

- You get the idea!

3. Pick three wild card interviews. These are the impressive, inspiring people you look up to, yet never thought you'd meet—until now! Don't be intimidated by someone's fame or success—that's how we got the courage to talk to Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor.

- Think of your idols, your heroes—who do you find inspiring?
- Flip through newspapers and magazines for ideas.

4. Let someone else pick an interview for you. Your cousin Bob may know an eccentric cake decorator. Your old gym teacher may have gone to school with an NFL Hall of Famer. You've got resources surrounding you, and getting referred by someone is way easier than making a cold call. Here's a short list of people you can ask:

- parents, siblings, relatives
- past employers
- your doctor
- friends and friends' parents
- your neighbors, your parents neighbors
- high school teachers, college professors
- college alumni office
- sorority or fraternity alumni



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5. Stay open to interview opportunities while on the road:

- Meet people at your travel stops. Strike up a conversation with a ranger while driving through a national park. Talk with the waitress serving you your hotcakes. Be willing to chat with anyone, anywhere, anytime!

And remember: don't worry about finding people that match your exact career goals- just meet with anyone you think might have a good story to tell. You never know who you might get inspired by.

How To Find Someone's Contact Info

So you've made a list of prospective interviewees, but how're you going to get in touch with them? We'll show you the best ways to start!

1. Do an internet search. Put your web sleuthing skills to work and try to find this person's website or place of business. If their organization has a website, then they'll most likely have a "contact us" section where'll you'll find a phone number and/or e-mail address.

Also, you can try and guess your target's e-mail address. Suppose you're trying to contact Barney Rubble, the CEO of BedRock, Inc. There are usually only six possibilities:

barney@bedrock.com
barneyrubble@bedrock.com
barney.rubble@bedrock.com
barney_rubble@bedrock.com
barneyr@bedrock.com
brubble@bedrock.com

2. Look in the phone directory. You'll be surprised by how easy it is to get a hold of someone by just calling the general number of their place of business.
3. Call 411. Ask whoever you can to transfer you to the leader you want to speak to.

You might have to speak with operators, secretaries, and assistants (and deal with a few rejections), but if you tell people about the authenticity of your project, you'll be surprised by the support you'll get.

How To Cold Call

Cold calling is simply calling someone you don't know, out of the blue, without an appointment or prior introduction, and asking for an interview. This is where it gets exciting! Now that you've found a general line or personal phone number, we'll show you how to conquer your nerves, pick up that phone, and land that interview.

1. Prepare your pitch: before you dial that number, make sure you've got a solid pitch in your head (or on a piece of paper in front of you). Your pitch is just your intro: who you are, what you're doing, and why. Your pitch should make it clear that you're not selling anything and you're not looking for a job—you're simply looking for advice on how to build your future. Keep it short and sweet, genuine and honest. Think of an attention-grabbing phrase that nails your point home, like "I would love to speak to someone who loves what they do."

Also, use the Roadtrip Nation network to help you get an interview. We give you permission to use our name! Here's a sample pitch:

"Hi! My name is Amy Bush and I'm a member of the Roadtrip Nation network. It's a movement of students who interview leaders to learn how they got to where they are today. We then share the experience with an entire generation of young people at roadtripnation.com. I would love to include [insert amazing leader here] in our project. Do you think he/she could spare some time to meet with me and share his/her story at his/her convenience?"

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2. Get over your nerves: it's always a little awkward and scary when you make your first cold call, but once you get the hang of being on the phone with strangers, you'll be a rockstar! Just remember: the worst that can happen is they'll say no. And that's it. No big whoop.

Gloria, from the Central Route in 2005, recommends a simple exercise to get over your phone fears: call information and ask how to cook a potato. In carrying out this strange task, Gloria found herself talking with numerous operators and getting transferred to and fro while trying to accomplish her simple mission. She had to deal with people refusing to help, people unable to explain the art of potato cookery, and people who became confused by her odd request—and as a result, her phone experience went through the roof! She became so focused on completing her mission that she forgot about her nervousness altogether—plus, she found out how to cook a potato.

3. Making the call: so you've got your pitch, you've got your gusto, and you're ready to cold call some leaders. Here's some valuable tips:
 - Be nice to the administrative assistants! They are the leaders' right hand men and women, so you'll want to get them on your side, helping you book the interview with their boss.
 - Try calling an organization and asking the main operator, "who's the coolest person that works at your company?" and then follow up with your pitch. When the operator tells you who the coolest person is, make sure to get his/her name so that when you contact that cool person, you can say, "The operator James Frannegan told me you'd be the coolest person in

the company to talk to."

- If you don't get a good response after giving your pitch, try to explain what you want from a different angle. If that doesn't work, ask if they can suggest anyone else at the company who might be interesting to talk to.
- Try to schedule an interview at least three weeks ahead of time (that way there's a much better chance of fitting into their schedule). And know when you yourself are unavailable to meet (it can be tough to reschedule if you have to cancel).

Here's an outline of how you're cold call should go:

1. Introduce yourself.
2. Say who referred you or how you got his/her name.
3. Explain your dilemma/situation (why you want to talk to this specific person)
4. State your request (that you want to talk to him/her about his/her road in life).
5. Be clear that you're not asking for a job.

Cold call pointers:

1. Never call on a Monday.
2. Avoid leaving a voicemail until absolutely necessary.
3. If you do leave a voicemail, keep it short and sweet.
4. Be patient. They may not call back right away.
5. Know when to give up! A "no" means no.
6. Avoid the Public Relations and Human Resources departments.
7. Follow up ASAP.