

OUTREACH PLAYBOOK

From application to offer: the job seeker's system for getting seen, getting interviews, and closing them

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The one idea behind this playbook: most applicants apply online and wait. Almost nobody calls. The applicant who applies *and then* reaches a real decision-maker is competing against a much smaller field.

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1. The Process at a Glance

Every job lead moves through the same five stages. Skipping a stage is the most common reason good candidates never hear back.

Stage	What you do	Goal
1. Apply	Tailor your resume to the job description, then complete the application fully, exactly as the employer asks.	Get into their system with a resume that matches what they asked for.
2. Reach out	Call immediately after applying. Walking in is even better, if practical.	Reach the decision-maker. If you can't, get their name and when they'll be in next.
3. Connect	Get the decision-maker on the phone, in person, or by email.	Get a name, a contact, and an interview.
4. Interview	Use the Present-Past-Future pitch and STAR+ stories.	Show value, not just qualifications.
5. Close and follow up	Ask about next steps. Send a thank-you within 24 hours.	Know the timeline and stay top of mind.

Why this works

Applying online is necessary but not sufficient. Your application gets you into the pile. Your call gets you out of it.

Stage 1 in detail: Tailor the resume

Never send the same resume to every job. Before you apply, adjust your resume to the specific job description so it clearly matches what the employer is looking for.

- **Keywords:** use the same words the job description uses. If the posting says "customer service" and "scheduling," your resume should too. Many employers screen resumes for these words.
- **Accomplishments:** show what you achieved, not just what your duties were. "Trained 3 new hires" beats "Responsible for training."
- **Numbers:** quantify wherever you can: customers served per shift, calls answered per day, years of experience, dollars handled.
- **The goal:** the closer your resume matches the job description, the better your chances of being matched to the role and called for an interview.

2. Choosing Your Channel

For most entry-level roles, effectiveness ranks **1. In person**, **2. Phone**, **3. Email**, **4. Social Media**. This depends on the industry, so use judgment.

Channel	Strengths	Weaknesses	Best for
1. In person	Shows the whole you: appearance, energy, handshake. Hardest to ignore.	Needs transportation. The decision-maker may not be there when you arrive.	Retail, food service, salons, gyms, local shops, front desk roles.
2. Phone	Fast. Real-time. Few applicants do it, so you stand out. High rate of leading to interviews.	Gatekeepers. Calls can feel uncomfortable at first.	Retail, office, medical offices, small and mid-size businesses.
3. Email	Scalable. Lets you attach a resume and explain in detail.	Easy to ignore. The only channel where you can't tell if contact was actually made.	Corporate roles, follow-ups, sending a resume after a call, proposals.
4. Social Media (LinkedIn and other apps)	Very similar to email: scalable, lets you reach a specific person by name and share your background.	Very similar to email: easy to ignore, and you can't be sure the message was seen.	Office and professional roles, finding decision-makers, following up after a call.

When the ranking flips

- **The posting says "no calls" or "no walk-ins."** Respect it. Ignoring it shows you can't follow instructions. Use email instead.
- **Large corporate employers with central hiring.** The front desk can still help if you use the phone script properly and ask for the decision-maker. You can also find names and contact emails with tools like LinkedIn and hunter.io.
- **Timing:** morning is always best, for both phone calls and in-person visits: between 8am and 10am, depending on the business's hours. This holds for most industries. Never walk in during a rush.
- **Roles that are mainly written work.** A well-written email can be a work sample in itself.

Coach's note

Combine channels. The strongest sequence is usually: apply online, then call, then send an email to the name you got on the call. Each channel covers the others' weaknesses.

3. Phone Outreach: The Core Script

This script has a high success rate for getting interviews, especially for retail and office jobs. It works because the opening question is short, polite, and easy to answer, and it gets you two pieces of information at once.

Your goals on every call

Main goal: get the decision-maker on the phone.

Secondary goal: if they aren't available, get the decision-maker's name and when they'll be in next.

Best time to call: 8am to 10am, depending on business hours.

Step 1: The opener (to whoever answers)

Script

*"Hi, my name is **[First and Last Name]**. I'm reaching out today to find out if the **[Position Title]** at **[Company Name]** is still available, and who the best person to speak to about it would be?"*

The question does two jobs. It checks whether the role is still open (a fair, normal question), and it asks for the decision-maker without sounding pushy.

Step 2: When the decision-maker comes on

Script

*"Hi **[Name]**, my name is **[First and Last Name]**. I applied for the **[Position Title]** and wanted to check if it's still available. I have **[skill or experience taken directly from the job description]**, and I'm really interested in the role."*

- Pick **one** skill or experience that matches the job description word for word. One strong match beats a list.
- Then stop talking and let them respond. Silence is fine.
- Before hanging up, ask for the next step: "Would it be possible to set up a time to interview?"

Names are GOLD

Always try to leave the call with three things:

1. The decision-maker's **name**.
2. Their **contact info** (direct phone or email).

3. When they're available to speak.

Example: The decision-maker isn't in

Who	What they say
Job seeker	"Hi! I'm calling to find out if [Company] in [Town] is still hiring for a [Position], and who the best person to speak to about it would be?"
Operator	"I'm not sure. The best person to talk to would be Sally."
Job seeker	"Awesome! Would Sally be available to speak now?"
Operator	"Sally isn't in right now."
Job seeker	"OK, thank you! Do you know when she'll be in next?"
Operator	"She'll be in tomorrow at 2pm."
Job seeker	"Great, thank you. I'll call back tomorrow at 2. Does Sally have an email address I could send my resume and a short introduction to?"

Then do exactly what you said: call back at 2pm. Keeping a small promise to a stranger is the first impression of your reliability.

Voicemail script

Use the same core script, then leave your phone number at the end.

Script

"Hi, my name is [First and Last Name]. I'm reaching out today to find out if the [Position Title] at [Company Name] is still available, and who the best person to speak to about it would be. My number is [phone number]."

When they say "Just apply online"

This is the most common response. It doesn't always mean no. Often the person answering simply isn't the one doing the hiring.

Script

"Thank you, I just did! I was curious who would be the best person to reach out to if I have questions about the role, and what their contact info would be?"

If they still won't share a name or contact info, thank them and move on to the next lead.

Don't get discouraged: the call tells you how urgent the role is

Not every call ends in an interview, and that's fine. The phone script is also a way to find out **how urgent a role is**.

- If the employer says *"Thank you, but we'll be reviewing applicants and we'll get back to you if interested,"* that's OK. The role isn't urgent. Keep making calls.
- Employers who are serious and urgent are the best targets. They're the ones who say "Can you come in Thursday?" Calling is how you discover them.

4. In-Person Outreach

In person is the most effective channel because the employer sees the whole package. It's also the hardest to pull off, so plan it.

Before you go

- **Transportation:** confirm how you're getting there and back, and how long it takes.
- **Timing:** mornings, 8am to 10am, depending on store hours. If you can, call first to ask when the manager is in.
- **Dress:** one step above what employees there wear.
- **Bring:** printed resumes in a folder, a pen, and your 30-second introduction ready.

At the door

Ask for the manager or decision-maker first. When you're speaking with them, use your 30-second introduction:

30-second introduction

*"Hi! My name is **[Name]**. I wanted to introduce myself in person because I saw that you had an opening for the **[Position]**. I have **[skills and experience]** and thought I could be a good fit for the role. Would it be possible to schedule a day and time to meet and discuss my background in more detail?"*

- If the manager is there: give your 30-second introduction, hand over your resume, and ask about next steps.
- If not: ask for the manager's name and when they'll be in. Leave a resume with a short note addressed to them by name.
- Either way: write down who you spoke to, and follow up within two days.

5. Email Outreach Templates

Use email to send a resume, follow up after a call, or reach a name you can't get on the phone. Keep it short: an email that fits on a phone screen gets read. The same templates work for LinkedIn and other social media messages.

Finding names and emails

Use **LinkedIn** to find the names of managers and decision-makers at a company.

Use **hunter.io** to find a company's email address format and the contact emails of specific people.

Template A: Follow-up after applying

Template

Subject: **[Job Title]**

Hello **[Name or Company] Team**,

My name is **[Your Name]**, and I'm reaching out about the **[Position Title]** position at your **[Location]** location. I applied through your website **[number]** days ago.

[1 to 2 sentences on your hard skills, matched to the job description.] For example: I graduated from **[Program]** in **[Month]** with **[Certificate]**, and I'm trained in **[specific tasks from the posting]**.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration,

[Your Name] | [Phone] | [Email]

Template B: Applying directly by email

Template

*Subject: **[Job Title]***

*Hi **[Name]**! I hope you're doing well.*

*My name is **[Your Name]**, and I'm reaching out to apply for the **[Position Title]** position.*

*I worked as a **[Previous Role]** at **[Company]** for **[X]** years and currently work as a **[Current Role]** at **[Company]**. I would love to work for **[type of business, e.g. a health club]** like **[Company]**, and I enjoy **[2 to 3 tasks from the posting]**.*

I've attached my resume and cover letter for your review.

Thank you,

[Your Name] | [Phone] | [Email]

Template C: After a phone call

Template

*Subject: **[Job Title]***

*Hi **[Name]**, thank you for taking my call today. As promised, I've attached my resume for the **[Position Title]**. **[One sentence on your strongest match.]** I'm available to interview **[2 to 3 specific days and times]**, and I'm flexible.*

*Thank you, **[Your Name] | [Phone]***

Template D: Warm introduction (someone referred you)

Template

Subject: **[Job Title]**

Hi **[Name]**, I hope you're doing well. **[Referrer's Name]** at **[Event or Organization]** mentioned that you'd be the best person to speak with about **[the role or opportunity]**.

[2 sentences: what you offer and why this employer specifically.]

I'm happy to talk by phone or video. I'm available **[Day, Date, Time window]**, **[Day, Date, Time window]**, or **[Day, Date, Time window]**, and I can be flexible.

Thank you, **[Your Name]** | **[Phone]** | **[Email]**

Template E: Short follow-up nudge

Template

Subject: **[Job Title]**

Hi **[Name]**, I hope you're doing well! I wanted to follow up on my message from last week about **[the role or opportunity]**. If you have time this week or next, I'd be happy to talk more. Thank you again, **[Your Name]** | **[Phone]**

Email rules

- **The subject line is always the job title.** Nothing else. A blank subject looks like spam.
- **Offer specific times** rather than "let me know when you're free." It makes yes easy.
- **A follow-up should be shorter than the first email**, not a copy of it. Don't resend the whole original.
- **Proofread names and spelling twice.** Misspelling the reader's name ends the conversation.
- **Email is the one channel where you can't confirm contact was made.** Pair every important email with a phone call.

6. Follow-Up Rules and Cadence

Most applicants never follow up at all. Following up once puts you ahead. Following up with a plan puts you in a different category.

When	What
Day 0	Apply online.
Day 1 to 2	Call. Use the core script. Get a name, contact info, and best time to reach them.
Same day as call	Send Template C (or A if you couldn't reach anyone).
Day 5 to 7	If no response: call again at the time they told you the decision-maker is in.
Day 10 to 14	Send Template E (short nudge).
After that	Move it to "inactive" in your log and keep applying elsewhere.

Coach's note

This schedule is a starting point, not a law. track what actually gets responses in your Outreach Log (Section 11) and adjust.

Rules

- **Do what you said you'd do.** If you said you'd call at 2pm, call at 2pm.
- **Polite persistence, not pressure.** Two to three follow-ups is professional. Calling every day is not.
- **Never stop applying** while you wait on one employer.

7. The Interview: The First 90 Seconds

Interviewers often form an impression within the first few minutes. This section is about controlling that impression.

The Elevator Pitch: "Tell me about yourself"

Use the **Present, Past, Future** model so your answer is structured and professional. Aim for 30 to 60 seconds.

Part	Template
Present	"I'm currently a [Title/Role] at [Company] , where I focus on [main responsibility] ."
Past	"Before this, I spent [X] years in [industry] , where I built a strong foundation in [Skill A] and [Skill B] ."
Future	"I'm now looking to use my [skill] to help a company like yours [specific goal from the job description] ."

No current job? Start with what you're doing now: a training program, volunteering, a certificate in progress.

Body language that matters

- **Virtual interviews:** eye contact means looking at the camera lens, not the screen. Use a stack of books to keep the camera at eye level.
- **Before the interview:** take two minutes somewhere private to stand tall, breathe slowly, and loosen up. Many people find this helps them feel calmer and more confident.
- **The active listener lean:** leaning slightly forward shows engagement. Leaning back can look bored or overconfident.
- **Hands:** keep them visible and relaxed. Don't fidget with a pen or your phone.

Disclosure is your choice

Whether to mention a disability, and when, is entirely up to you. You're never required to disclose. If you choose to, the strongest approach connects it to a strength, a reason for your interest, or a specific accommodation you need. If you have questions about accommodations, talk with your coach before the interview.

8. Answering Questions: STAR+

Most job seekers have heard of STAR. Most use it poorly. Here's how to do it well.

Part	How to do it well
Situation	Keep it to about 10% of your answer. Set the scene in one or two sentences. Skip workplace drama.
Task	Name the specific challenge you were responsible for.
Action	The most important part. Use "I," not "we." Explain what you did <i>and why</i> .
Result	Use numbers when you can. "We saved money" is weak. "We cut overhead by 12% (\$15,000 a year)" is strong.
+ Connect	Close by linking it to the job: "That's the kind of attention I'd bring to your front desk."

For entry-level roles, numbers can be simple: customers served per shift, calls answered per day, days without a missed shift.

The weakness question

Avoid fake weaknesses like "I'm a perfectionist." Interviewers have heard it a thousand times.

Example

Formula: a real, minor skill gap + the specific steps you're taking to fix it.

"In the past, I struggled with public speaking. To work on it, I joined a local Toastmasters group and volunteered to lead our monthly team briefings. My confidence has grown a lot, and I'm still practicing."

Reverse interviewing: questions for them

An interview goes both ways. Prepare three value-based questions:

1. "What does success look like for the person in this role after the first six months?"
2. "How does the team handle busy periods or tight deadlines?"
3. "What's one thing the previous person in this role did that you'd like to see continue?"

9. Closing the Interview and After

The "Next Steps" close

Never leave an interview without knowing the timeline.

Script

"Thank you so much for your time today. I'm very excited about this opportunity. What are the next steps in your hiring process, and when might I expect to hear back?"

The thank-you note (within 24 hours)

Template

Subject: [Job Title]

Hi [Name], thank you for meeting with me today about the [Position Title]. I especially enjoyed hearing about [one specific thing they said]. It confirmed that I'd be a great fit, especially with my [one key strength]. I look forward to hearing from you about next steps.

Best, [Your Name] | [Phone]

Mention one specific detail from the conversation. It proves you were listening and makes the note impossible to mass-produce.

Staying in motion after the interview

- **The "Next" mindset:** assume you didn't get the job until the offer is signed. Keep applying. This prevents all-eggs-in-one-basket anxiety.
- **Follow up on their timeline:** if they said you'd hear back in a week and you haven't, call or email on day 8.

10. Pitching a Proposal (Case Study)

Outreach isn't only for job openings. One participant used this same system to pitch a volunteer workshop to disability-service organizations: teaching adults to build a free personal portfolio website. The goal was teaching experience and a professional reference toward a career in technology instruction. The same rules apply: find the decision-maker, lead with value to *them*, and propose a clear next step.

What the outreach looked like

- **Cold email** to a program contact found through a county directory of agencies.
- **Warm email** naming the person who referred him at a job fair table.
- **Asking a connector for a contact:** when a voicemail to the decision-maker went unanswered, he emailed the outreach coordinator he'd already met and asked for the decision-maker's email address.
- **Follow-ups** after one week, offering three specific time windows.

Preparing for the call: weak vs. strong answers

Before the first call, he rehearsed every question the decision-maker was likely to ask.

Their question	Weak answer	Strong answer
"Tell me about yourself."	A long life story.	30 seconds: degree, current role, and a personal reason for caring about this work.
"What exactly are you proposing?"	"A workshop where they build a visually stunning portfolio."	"A hands-on workshop where your students build a simple site that showcases the work they've already done in your program, so they leave with a link they can put on a resume."
"Who is this for?"	Guessing, or a group that doesn't match their students.	Be confident: "This is for your students who are interested in adding value to their application process and want to increase their likelihood of getting interviews."
"How long is it?"	"I'm not sure, whatever works for you."	A direct answer, prepared and known beforehand: "1 hour and 15 minutes."
"What do students need?"	Not knowing.	"A computer and an email address they can log into. If some don't have email, please let me know."
"Is it accessible?"	"Yes, it's easy."	An honest answer about the tool's limits, plus a plan for students who need support, plus a question about the adaptive tech they use.
"Why for free?"	Only "I want to help."	"I have a passion for this, and I enjoy practicing these skills. If all goes well, I would love a reference and a testimonial."
"How would we know it worked?"	"It'll get them hired."	"Every participant leaves with a live link added to their resume. I can follow up in 60 days to see who has used it in applications."

Their question	Weak answer	Strong answer
"What's the next step?"	Waiting for them to decide.	He proposes it: "Could I come in to take a tour and see the space?" Meeting in person builds the relationship and shows you're proactive, which increases their trust in you.

The lessons

- **Research them first.** The strongest answers referred to the organization's own existing course.
- **Know your answers before the call.** Length, requirements, and who it's for should be direct and confident, not figured out on the spot.
- **Always propose the next step yourself,** and make it an in-person visit when you can. Don't leave it to them.

11. Tools

The Outreach Log

Track every lead. If it isn't written down, it didn't happen, and you won't remember who said to call back at 2pm.

Date	Company	Position	Applied ?	Channel	Spoke with	Decision-maker + contact	Best time	Next step + date

The Interview Cheat Sheet

Keep one page on your desk during virtual interviews (or review it right before an in-person one):

My 3 strongest STAR stories (bullet points only)	
1.	
2.	
3.	
Interviewer names	
3 questions to ask them	
1.	
2.	
3.	
Reminder	Breathe. Smile. Ask about next steps.

Want help putting this into practice?

Reading a script is the easy part. Saying it out loud to a real decision-maker is where most people freeze. At O'Brien CMC, job seekers rehearse these exact conversations, from the phone opener to the first 90 seconds of an interview, in realistic virtual reality settings with a trainer, before they do it for real.

VR Vocational Training

One-hour classes, one-on-one or in a small group of up to 3. Practice job interviews, phone calls and workplace conversations, and get feedback right away. For teens 14 and up and adults.

ACCES-VR Pre-ETS

Pre-Employment Transition Services for eligible students: coming soon.

Book a class

Online	obriencmc.com/book
Phone	201-528-3254
Email	clientsupport@obriencmc.com
Visit	42 Memorial Plaza, Room 124 Pleasantville, NY 10570



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