

Advice on Applying to Organisations (or How to Promote Yourself)

I have just had some really useful feedback from a local business with regard to contacting a prospective Work Experience placement. With this in mind I have compiled some pointers to help you apply to organisations. This advice is also extremely important to take on board for future college, university and job applications. All the following points are relevant to your future and worth taking the time to learn and put into practice now.

The initial contact is extremely important and leaves a strong impression on the person contacted. Be it how you dress when approaching in person or how you word your letter or e-mail. This will either open the contact up to the possibilities of taking you for your placement or close the door.

- **Research the organisation/s** you are applying to using websites and search engines etc. The information learned can be used either when talking to or writing to them. Be aware of the company as a whole and any areas within the company you are especially interested in. It is also important for you to be able to tell them how you can contribute to their organisation and what skills you can bring that will be useful to them.
- When going for an interview or meeting a prospective employer, no matter what type of job you are going for, **a smart, clean and tidy appearance** will always give a positive impression.
- Always **look people in the eye and smile** even if you are nervous and don't know what to say.
- Try and **expand on answers** you give rather than giving one word replies. If the person you are talking to has to work hard at the conversation they are not going to be left with a positive impression. I know some people will find this difficult but it is really worth trying to work around this problem.
- It is worth having in mind some questions you may wish or need to ask.
- When making a phone call **speak clearly and at a steady pace** (too fast and they will not understand what you are saying and you will have to repeat yourself). **Listen** carefully to what they say and write notes. Have an idea of what you are going to say i.e. what your name is, your school, what you are

calling about, who you would like to speak to and the dates of the work experience week (as in this case).

- If you are going to email the company, please still **write an application letter** and attach it to the email. It is also worth starting **a CV** even if you don't have a lot to put in it at the moment. You can find templates online. Fill in what you can including the personal statement and then over time add to it. Keep it safe as you will need it again in the future. Make sure you include any part time jobs you have had, DofE, Ten Tors, sports and other teams, clubs and experiences. Anything that can show team work, leadership, people skills can be very advantageous. Try and show off your personality through you interests etc.
- When writing an email and/or letter **ensure that grammar, punctuation and layout is correct.** Ask someone (parent, English teacher, tutor) to proof read it for you.
- Where possible **find the name of the person you are trying to contact** (this can make a real difference) – you can find this out by phoning to ask who you should write to, by checking their website or possibly looking at Yell.com/BT Phonebook if a small business. This applies to both letters and emails.
- Emails should start with a Dear *Preferably name of recipient* or Sir/Madam. As with letters, try to make email specific to the company you are contacting even though you are only writing a few lines i.e.

Dear

I am a Year 10 pupil at Uffculme School, Cullompton. When I was researching possible places for me to carry out my work experience week in July, I came across your business. I was very interested in (comments about some aspect of their business that you especially attracted to or interested in. Please find attached a work experience application letter.

I look forward to hearing from you

Kind regards

(Name)

Email address

- Either when writing your letter or speaking to the contact **tell them about what you will be able to do for them.** Tell them you are hardworking and willing to help with (whatever is useful to their business), promote skills you have that will be beneficial to them e.g. computer skills, design skill, people skills, and let them know why these skills will be useful to them. It is worth the effort to expand on these abilities and not just make it a bare list e.g. I am an Art prefect at school, where I have to tidy and organise the equipment and help younger students with their Art projects during lunch so I will be able to help you with The above will also come in very useful with university, apprenticeship and future job applications.

It is worth making the extra effort now and in the future as it can mean the difference between success and failure in getting a work experience placement, university place, apprenticeship or a job.