The BIG Idea

- What companies might be interested in someone with my talents and skills, and how can I find out more about them?

AGENDA

Approx. 45 minutes

I. Warm Up: Contact Call Evaluation (5 minutes)

II. Who's Hiring? (10 minutes)

III. Company Research (20 minutes)

IV. Wrap Up: Cold Calls and Job Lead Follow Up (10 minutes)

MATERIALS

❑ **STUDENT HANDBOOK PAGES:**

- Student Handbook page 47, Networking Call Evaluation

- Student Handbook page 48, Who's Hiring?

- Student Handbook pages 49-51, Research Questionnaire

- Student Handbook page 52, Cold Call Script

- Student Handbook page 53, Job Lead Worksheet

❑ Laptop and LCD projector

❑ Overhead projector (optional)

❑ Phone book

❑ Computers with Internet access

OBJECTIVES

During this lesson, the student(s) will:

- Research to find companies in their fields of interest.

- Research a specific company in preparation for an initial phone call.

- Prepare to make a cold call to a company of interest.

OVERVIEW

The lesson begins with students reflecting on the previous week's assignment of calling a contact in their personal network. Next, students learn why and how to research companies, and discuss the advantages of using the phone book and the Internet. Using the Internet, students find five companies where they might like to work, and conduct research on one of them. The lesson concludes with practicing cold calls and reviewing how to use a job lead chart to keep track of job hunting information and activity.

PREPARATION

❑ Make arrangements for students to use the computer lab.

❑ Familiarize yourself with the Madison Square Boys and Girls Club's website, www.madisonsquare.org, or choose a local example as described in the **IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS** below.

❑ List the day's **BIG IDEA** and activities on the board.

❑ Make the following handouts into overhead transparencies or copy onto chart paper:

  • **Student Handbook pages 49-51, Research Questionnaire**

  • **Student Handbook page 53, Job Lead Worksheet**

  • Make a transparency or a scanned document of a relevant page from the phone book for **Activity III, Company Research.**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The hidden job market refers to jobs that are not advertised publicly. Statistics estimate that as many as 80% of jobs are not advertised.* Among the various strategies for tapping into the hidden job market, one of the most effective is contacting an employer directly, or "cold calling" and selling yourself to them. According to career expert Richard Bolles, the strategy of direct employer contact (calling listings from the Yellow Pages) has a 69% success rate. **

Making a cold call at precisely the right time sometimes results in landing an interview before a vacancy for a position is even advertised. For cold calls to be successful, however, there are preliminary steps that job seekers need to take. First, they should identify companies where they want to work, and that have the types of jobs that match their skills and interests. The next step is to research the targeted companies more deeply and identify how their skills are relevant to each company they will call. Job seekers can use this research to market themselves most effectively.

Making cold calls is not easy even for a seasoned employee. Calling a company where you don't know anyone can be nerve-wracking and intimidating. The best way to get better at it is to practice.

*SOURCE: "Hidden Job Market," © 1996 - 2009 CareerPerfect.com.

**SOURCE: http://www.jobhuntersbible.com/articles/article.php?art_item=024, "14 Ways to Look for a Job," ©1996-2009 by Richard N. Bolles.

IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS

For **Activity II**, one facilitator used the Yellow Pages, challenging students to quickly find five businesses that might hire a lifeguard. An incorrect answer (companies that sell swimming pools) provided a teachable moment re: entrepreneurship, and a potential opportunity to distribute business cards.

For **Activity III**, you may wish to replace the Madison Square Boys and Girls Club with a local example. One facilitator provided informational materials from a nearby state park, asking students to list summer jobs that might be available. Students completed the remaining activities based on the job that most appealed to them.

For **Activity IV**, if you are short on time, students may do individual company research as homework.

ACTIVITY STEPS ··

I. Warm Up: Contact Call Evaluation (5 minutes)

1. [Once students are settled in their seats, have them open to **Student Handbook page 47, Networking Call Evaluation.** Encourage them to think about the network calls they made this past week, and evaluate the experience by completing the checklist and answering the questions.]

2. [After students complete their evaluations, prompt a class discussion about their experiences. Encourage students to explain their responses. For example, if a student had a good call, encourage him or her to say how the contact was helpful. Alternatively, if a student had a negative experience, have him or her explain what made it that way.]

II. Who's Hiring? (10 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** If your networking call was successful, it may have led to a new idea about where to look for work. Toward the end of class, we'll talk about how to follow up on this lead. Remember, networking is one of the top two job hunting strategies. Right now, I'd like to direct your attention to the other top job hunting strategy. Who remembers what that is?

   [Students respond. If needed, remind them that the other "best" strategy is calling companies directly to see who is hiring.]

   SAY SOMETHING LIKE: In today's lesson, we are going to discuss this strategy: where you can find lists of potential employers, what you might want to know about them before you make your call, and what to say when you reach them.

2. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Let's start with an example. Imagine that Chris, a high school senior, wants a summer job working with children. He's already calling everybody he knows for job leads, but he read the Richard Bolles article and knows that the most successful job candidates use more than one method. His next strategy is making direct phone calls to summer camps that might be hiring.

   Where might Chris find the names of camps or youth organizations where he could work? [Give students a chance to respond.] That's right! The phone book and the Internet are two excellent resources.

3. [Project the phone book page transparency on the overhead, or if you scanned the page, use your laptop to display the page on your LCD projector. Ask students how phone books are organized. Point out that the Yellow Pages organize companies by category. Ask students to identify the categories on the projected page.]

4. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** The phone book and the Internet are both helpful tools for researching companies. What are the advantages of using the phone book? [Let students respond. If they need help, point out that the phone book is organized alphabetically by category, making research easy. Yellow pages are local, so you know the companies are nearby.] What are the advantages of using the Internet? [Let students respond. If they need help, point out that using the Internet allows them to cast a wide net, enabling them to see many and varied options. They can also get more information about companies using the Internet.]

5. [Have students open to **Student Handbook page 48, Who's Hiring?** Now, using your laptop, project the Google home page on your LCD projector. Ask what key words Chris might use to find possible places to work this summer. If students suggest "Summer Camps" or "Day Camps," guide them to also include the city to narrow the list to local places. For today, use "the Bronx." Then click "Search" for a list of results. Let students know that they should not begin work on identifying five companies of their own until you explain the next step.]

III. Company Research (20 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Let's suppose Chris has at least one company where he'd like to work. The idea could have come from one of his networking contacts, which he needs to follow up on. Or it could have come from a list like the one you're about to create. Let's suppose he's learned that the Madison Square Boys and Girls Club in the Bronx runs a summer camp, and may be hiring counselors. What do you think Chris should do next?

   [After students respond, explain that before Chris calls the Boys and Girls Club, it would be helpful to learn more about their summer program. Ask students why knowing about the company might be an advantage, making sure the following reasons are included:
   • Researching the organization helps you determine whether it is a place that you want to work, and a place that would be interested in your skills.
   • You can find a phone number and contact information if you don't already have it.

- Gaining information allows you to speak knowledgeably about the organization when you do make contact, and it gives you confidence for making the call in the first place.

Research makes the job of cold calling easier, like a study guide helps you prepare for a big test.

2. [Use your laptop and LCD projector to model locating the Madison Square Boys and Girls Club of the Bronx online (or other local program you may be using as a substitute). Information on Camp Madison can be found at www.madisonsquare.org, under "Club Houses." Direct the class to **Student Handbook pages 49-51, Research Questionnaire,** and briefly discuss the five questions located in part I. Note that these questions provide enough detail for students to call a company for the first time, whether the lead comes from their list of companies or somebody in their network. Next week, students will use the questions on part II to find the type of information they'll need before going on an interview.]

3. [Give students 15 minutes to create their list of five companies on **Student Handbook page 48, Who's Hiring?,** and answer the first five questions in part II on **Student Handbook page 50, Research Questionnaire,** about one of these companies. When they're finished, they'll have a chance to rehearse the conversation they might have when they call this company. Allow students to work for 10 minutes, warning them when five minutes remain.]

IV. Wrap Up: Cold Calls and Job Lead Follow Up (10 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Now that you've identified five companies where you might consider working, how do you find out if they are hiring? Calling a company where you don't know anyone is known as "cold calling."   This is different from calling a contact from your network — presumably someone who knows and likes you. Cold calling makes many job hunters really nervous. But for the bravest job hunters, this technique can lead to leads nobody else knows about. You will get better at this with practice. Before you know it, you will be turning your cold calls into hot leads!

Last week we reviewed how to call a contact you know. Today we'll practice how to make a call to someone you don't know, or a "cold call."

2. [Have students open to **Student Handbook page 52, Cold Call Script.** Have them fill in the blanks with their information. Then invite volunteers to use the script to model making cold calls in front of the class.]

3. [Now project **Student Handbook page 53, Job Lead Worksheet,** on the overhead and walk through it, pointing to each section as you speak about it.]

4. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** A **Job Lead Worksheet** is one way to keep track of information about each company you contact. [Make the point that it is not the ONLY way; there are other organizational methods]. It looks like the **Networking Log** from last week, but it is different. The **Networking Log** is for listing referrals, or new people to call, as provided by your contacts. The **Job Lead Worksheet** is for keeping track of each company you contact. A contact name is a person with whom you speak. Often, when you make cold calls, companies will transfer you from one person or department to another. You can begin to build relationships with people at the company by writing down the names of the people you speak to. That way, the next time you call, you can ask for a specific person. Writing down phone numbers, e-mail addresses, and fax numbers is also important so that you do not need to rummage through old notes to find what you are looking for, and it reduces the risk of losing important contact information.

   In the **Position** section, list any jobs you know or learn about and identify how you learned about them. Lastly, **Response** is where you write information concerning how you follow up. For example, if you e-mailed or sent a resume or cover letter in response to the call, you note the date you sent it here. If you are to call back or receive a call from a contact, note when this will happen and with whom. You may also want to put dates and times of calls and meetings in your personal calendar.

5. [Spend the last couple of minutes assigning the homework for next week. Instruct students to contact the company they identified in the previous activity. Remind them to use the **Cold Call Script** to practice what to say before they call. And remind them to record all information on the **Job Lead Worksheet.**]

Networking Call Evaluation

Congratulations on making your first job hunting call! How did it go? Check the box that best describes your experience, and then answer the questions below.

❑ Very comfortable

❑ Sort of comfortable

❑ Uncomfortable

❑ Worst thing I ever had to do

❑ Didn't make the call

1. What did you learn about making networking calls from this experience?

_____

_____

2. What do you think is the next step in your job hunt?

_____

_____

Who's Hiring?

Use a search engine like Google to find places you might be interested in working. Be sure to include keywords that describe what type of work you're looking for (examples: summer camp, clothing store, restaurant) and the area where you're looking for work (examples: Bronx, Fargo ND, Bismarck ND).

What?
Keywords (describe type of work):

_____

Where?
Keywords (city, state, or area in which you want to work):

_____

Based on your Internet search, list five companies where you might be interested in working.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Research Questionnaire

Choose a company to research. Use the company's website to answer the following questions.

Name of company: _____

PART 1 (GET THIS INFO BEFORE A COLD CALL.)

1.   What is the website address?

_____

2.   Why are you interested in working here?

_____

_____

3.   What skills or experiences do you have to offer this company?

_____

_____

4.   What kind of job would you like to do at this company?

_____

_____

5.   What more do you want to know that is not on the site?

_____

_____

PART 2 (GET THIS INFO BEFORE YOU WRITE A COVER LETTER OR GO ON AN INTERVIEW.)

1.   What is the company's mission?

_____

_____

2.   What products does the company make or what services does it offer?

_____

_____

3.   Who are the company's customers or clients?

_____

_____

4.   What is the company's history? (Include recent news.)

_____

_____

5.   What is the company's environment or culture like?

_____

_____

6.   Who is the company's CEO, president, or executive director?

_____

_____

Extra for Experts

7.   Who are the company's biggest competitors?

_____

_____

8.   List two facts about the department you would like to work for.

_____

_____

Cold Call Script

To the person who answers the phone:
*(Ask whom you're talking to, so you can address the person by name if you need to call back. Write down the person's name on the **Job Lead Worksheet**.)*

My name is _____. I'm graduating from _____ High School in June, and I am interested in working in _____ (*type of work*). Who do you recommend I speak to in that department to find out about hiring needs?

Once you are on the phone with the person you need to talk to, say the following:

My name is _____. I'm graduating from _____ High School in June, and I am interested in working in _____ (*type of work*). I have experience in _____. Do you know of any opportunities where I would be a good addition to your organization?

Job Lead Worksheet

Use this page to keep track of information for each company you contact.
Employer
Company Name:
Contact Person:
Address:
Phone:
E-mail:
Fax:
Position
Job:
How did I find out about this job?
Response
Date Sent, E-mailed, or Faxed Resume/Cover Letter:
Follow-Up Date:
Results and Other Useful Information:

SOURCE: Creative Job Search Guide, © 1994 - 2012 by Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development: http://www.positivelyminnesota.com/JobSeekers/Creative_Job_Search_Guide/index.aspx