UCAN: Cold Calls and Emails

UChicagoGRAD
What We Fear...
Agenda:

- Why is this hard?
- What’s...your...agenda?
- Who ya’ gonna’ call?
- What to say?
- What comes next?
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Asking for things ain’t easy
Asking for things ain’t easy

- Isn’t it cheating?
- Do people really want to talk?
- Can I really just ask a CEO for a job??
- What can one conversation do?
- Do they want to hear twice?
- But academia is different...
“LOL”
Agenda:
- Why is this hard?
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- What comes next?
What’s your agenda?
What’s your agenda?

- Set clear objectives
- Realize what’s possible
  - Connections/introductions
  - Resume Review
  - First steps advice
  - …a job….?
- So: start early
- Make it easy to help you
The Four-Month Timeline

FEBRUARY 9: Initial Outreach

FEBRUARY 28: Initial Coffee/Chat

March 5: Follow Up / New Connection(s)

April 1: Update on dissertation progress

May 1: Job posted

July 1: Start Date?
Agenda:

- Why is this hard?
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Obvious:
EVERYONE.
Areas to Consider

- Position
- Program
- Potential to help
- Proximity to your goals
- ARE YOU CURIOUS?
Judge your affinity.
Create a Hierarchy...

- Your program, your desired career
- Your program and looks interesting
- Not your program, but interesting career
- UChicago graduate alum, your career
- UChicago alum/Undergrad alum
- Graduate alum from your field
- Generally interesting person

...but don’t be dogmatic
Gray’s Okay!

- Cast a broad seniority net
- Insider/Outsider Knowledge
  Entry level employees provide a different, but often equally useful kind of insight
- Busy People Get Things Done... and sometimes fewer people email them.
Start at LinkedIn

Michael Washburn
Director of Programs at New York Council for the Humanities
New York, New York | Nonprofit Organization Management
Current: New York Council for the Humanities, Freelance
Previous: The Graduate Center, City University of New York (CUNY), Cultural Policy Center, The University of Chicago, DePaul University
Education: The University of Chicago

People Also Viewed

Sara Ogger
Executive Director at New York Council for the Humanities

Hilary Dobel
Tutor at Borough of Manhattan Community College & Freelance Translator

Adam Capitainio
Program Officer at New York Council for the Humanities

Laura M. Browning
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grad.uchicago.edu
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Fire away.
Agenda:

- Why is this hard?
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Common Mistakes

Hi
My name is
What?
Are you serious?
Be aware of your audience
Common Mistakes

- Dissertation/Thesis-fest
- Me, me, me, my, my, my, I, I, I
- 1000 words will convince you!
- “I don’t have [x], but…”
- “I know you are VERY busy.”
- “If you can’t talk, that’s okay.”
- I will not ask for anything, sir!
- Best, a Gmail stranger
- Goodbye forever.
Dear Michael -

I'm a current student in the MA Program in Humanities at the University of Chicago. I work on post-9/11 literature, and am studying the ways in which short fiction in particular has changed over the past decade. After finishing the program, I'm interested in entering work in the public humanities, potentially in an outreach role.

I found your contact information in the alumni directory and wanted to reach out about your work at the New York Council for the Humanities. I was interested to see the range of programs that UCH supports in New York and farther afield, particularly when it comes to literary studies. And I was wondering if you might have time in the next two weeks to chat on phone about your trajectory into the organization after UChicago.

I'd be grateful for any advice you might have. At this point, I'm still exploring a range of options, and I'd be interested to hear your thoughts on nonprofit work generally, and the humanities in particular. I'm happy to work around your schedule and can follow up in a few weeks if that's easier.

Thanks and looking forward to talking soon.

Sincerely,

A-J

A-J Aronstein
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Lecturer, Humanities Division
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Convey:
- Curiosity
- Flexibility
- Warmth
- Persistence
Agenda:

- Why is this hard?
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Track Assiduously

- Last
- First
- First contact
- Follow-Up (bad contact?)
- Result
- Next Steps
- Notes
- Turn connections into more
Do not get discouraged!
Follow-Up Assiduously

- RE: instead of a new subject
- Be useful
- LinkedIn connection
- Send links, updates
- Check in by replying to original email thread
- All follow-ups should be brief
- Let them know if you apply
Goals

- Make an advising appointment
- Draft initial email
- Identify/contact 10 leads
- Secure 5 informational interviews and 10 more!
Questions?

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