



Sample Phone Script for Calling Businesses

I. MAKING THE CONNECTION

- Hi, this is [NAME] with [COALITION].
- [NAME] gave me your name and suggested I speak with you about a project/event that [COALITION] is working on that may be of interest to [COMPANY]. Do you have a few minutes right now to talk?
- Great. Are you familiar with National Adoption Day?

Tips:

- Whenever possible, reference a contact name in your introduction. This includes anyone at the company who may have helped you by providing you with a contact name: *“Beth Smith in the human resources department gave me your name.”*
- Make sure they have time to talk. If it is not a good time, ask them when you can call back. You may need to push this point: *“Is there a convenient day and time when I can call you back?” “Would you like me to call your assistant to set up a call?”* Try to avoid letting them call you back – they rarely do. If they suggest this option, wait a week, and then try them again. You do not want to be too pushy, but if they have not called you back within a week it usually means they do not plan to call. You should try one more time. Approach this callback gently: *“I really appreciate your time; I know this is a busy time of year for you.”* You can also ask them if there is someone else in the company with whom you should speak.
- Be prepared to leave a voice mail message. Remember to leave your name and number at the beginning of the message and keep the message short: *“This is [NAME] with [ORGANIZATION] at (888) 888-8888.”* (Enunciate the number clearly and slowly; many of us tend to speak too hurriedly on voice recordings.) *Beth Smith gave me your name and suggested I speak with you about a project/event that we’re involved in that may be of interest to [COMPANY]. I will try to reach you again later in the day (or other specific time). I look forward to speaking with you soon.”*



II. WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU WANT

- [COALITION] is working to sponsor an annual celebration and information campaign that highlights the joys of adoption and encourages individuals to form families through adoption. The day will help the thousands of children in foster care get the permanent, loving families they need.
- The number of children in foster care in the United States has reached staggering proportions. There are approximately 513,000 children in foster care, and more than 129,000 of these children are currently available for adoption. Yet, the majority of foster care children are never adopted. They remain in government custody until the age of 18.
- Our goals are to finalize thousands adoptions nationwide, and join courts and communities in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico to celebrate and honor families that adopt, to raise awareness and encourage others to adopt, and to build collaboration among local adoption agencies and organizations. We would like [COMPANY] to help us! [ADD SOMETHING COMPLIMENTARY ABOUT THE COMPANY SUCH AS THE GREAT WORK THE COMPANY HAS DONE WITH ANOTHER GROUP OR NOTE THEIR SUPPORT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY ISSUES/CAUSES].
- On November 21 [COALITION] is planning a National Adoption Day celebration in your community. I'd like to talk to you about ways that [COMPANY] could participate and help children find loving, adoptive homes.
- For example, [COMPANY] could display outreach posters in its stores during the month of November, provide refreshments or encourage employees to volunteer [PROVIDE A FEW SAMPLE IDEAS THAT ARE APPROPRIATE TO THE COMPANY.]
- Is this something that would be of interest to [COMPANY]?

Tips:

- Tailor your program description based on the person's knowledge. If they are familiar with National Adoption Day, spend less time on the description and emphasize the point that many children in foster care are eligible for adoption but never get placed in permanent homes.
- Keep your descriptions simple and avoid using terms or acronyms.
- Do your homework on the company so that during your conversation you can highlight a related issue or cause the company supports or recognition it received for its work in the community. For example, "[COMPANY]'s commitment to children through its work with the Children's Miracle Network is impressive. It's one of the reasons we think [COMPANY] would be a great partner on National Adoption Day."
- Have two or three outreach ideas ready to share with a company during your conversation. This will give the contact person tangible ideas for outreach activities so they have a better sense of how you would like them to participate.
- Don't forget to make "the ask." You want to find out if they are interested in learning more and getting involved. Do not expect to confirm a company's participation on the first call; it rarely happens. Most companies will want you to send additional information that they can review before making a decision.

III. ADDITIONAL POINTS YOU CAN WEAVE INTO A CONVERSATION

- We will recognize the businesses and organizations that participate in our celebration in our media materials and at our event on November 21, 2009. [SHARE A FEW SPECIFIC BENEFITS WITH THE COMPANY.]
- [COALITION] is interested in building a partnership with [COMPANY]. We are interested in exploring how [COMPANY] can use its existing communications channels, such as your company newsletter or Web site, to help celebrate adoption and encourage others to adopt.

Tips:

- Stress the ease of involvement for a company. The easier it is for them to be involved, the more likely they will say yes. Let them know if you plan to provide sample outreach materials.
- Companies are accustomed to being asked for money. If you are not asking them for a contribution or a sponsorship fee, let them know up front. They will be surprised and happy!
- Pay attention to the flow of the conversation. Be prepared to talk about some of the benefits the company will receive by participating. If the company *does not* ask you about the benefits associated with its involvement, you may want to weave this information into your conversation. This lets the company know that you are thinking of its interests as well as your own. For example, *"In addition to thinking about different outreach ideas on our next call, we can also discuss the benefits of your company's involvement, such as having a banner and signage at the event and inclusion of your company's name in our media materials."*

IV. WRAPPING UP THE CALL

- Thank you for taking time to speak with me today. I'm very excited to explore the possibility of working with [COMPANY].
- Is there anyone else in the company that you would like me to talk to about this project?
- Is there any additional information I can provide?
- When would you like me to follow up with you? Later this week, next week? [TRY TO CONFIRM A DATE AND TIME BEFORE YOU GET OFF THE PHONE.]
- If you have any questions or need further information before our next call, please call or e-mail me. [PROVIDE CONTACT INFORMATION. USE YOUR DIRECT PHONE LINE IF YOU HAVE ONE.]

Tips:

- Be sure you have a next step before you end your call, such as setting a date for your next call, sending program information or setting up a meeting.
- If your contact was made through friends or colleagues, keep them in the loop on your progress. If they know the company contact well, they may be willing to place a call on your behalf or remember to mention your name and program the next time they see the company contact.