



## The Call for Employability

*The graduate's short guide to career management*

My first managerial job was the result of a telephone call. I was a struggling musician at the time, pivoting between performance and recording without much income. I had also just got married. To bolster my wages I taught 'popular guitar' at the North London Institute of Adult Education, and later ventured into the market research industry as a part-time telephone interviewer. It was here that I discovered other musicians, actors and students all looking for booster income and it was in this industry that I learnt the power of the telephone.

Persuading directors of companies to spend 15 minutes with me on the phone became a fun challenge which I was pretty good at and was soon promoted to unit supervisor. A few months later I started to look around for a full-time job. I got hold of the industry directory and started calling round companies in London. I telephoned a company in North London and spoke to a director who said that they had no vacancies but that she knew of a company in East London who were looking for a Telephone Centre Manager. This one telephone call led to a 20 year managerial career in market research that culminated in my becoming Quality Director of a large global research firm.

The knowledge and skills I gained in the MR industry enable me to set up *The Energy of Conversation* and even now, a significant portion of my work has been triggered by a telephone call, typically with a follow-up meeting. Over the years I have come to learn one truth: everything starts with a conversation and so the quality of that conversation determines everything.

So what is *employability*? For me it is about suitability (having the qualifications, skills, experience etc.) and likeability (having a personality that will appeal to the culture of the organisation, the line manager, clients, colleagues etc.). I also see employability as having two sub-headers:

*Personal employability* - the potential of an individual to get work from an employer

*Corporate employability* - the potential of an organisation to get work from a client

In both cases the employer and the client are investors, buyers. To understand how to increase your employability – whether you are representing yourself or a company - a simple strategy is to step into the shoes of the buyer, define what it is you really want/need, walk up to the ‘shop window’, assess the goods on display and evaluate them against the set of standards you have drawn up.

So if you are looking to work in marketing, imagine you are a marketing director looking for new recruits. Draw up a list of *essential qualities* covering qualifications, experience and skills – this list should contain your minimum requirements. Then draw up a list of *impressive attributes* – this list should contain additional items that will make your ideal candidate really stand out from the crowd. Now – stepping back in your own shoes – you are ready to conduct a self-assessment and work on filling any identified gaps.

When you have secured a job interview, take a look at [The Nine Steps](#) guide to preparing for an interview. You may end up working for an organisation that has offices in different counties or even different countries. How will you communicate with them? The quality of your communication may well determine your success.



## **The Energy of Conversation**

Dedicated to Learning & Improvement

[www.TheEnergyofConversation.co.uk](http://www.TheEnergyofConversation.co.uk)