

# Some Helpful Hints on Landing a Job at an Ad Agency

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Working in advertising is rewarding and challenging. But for many people just starting out, the challenge seems to be getting that first big break. There are many ways you can overcome that barrier and land a job at an advertising agency.

## **1. Internships**

Agencies look at interns as potential employees. If you have the opportunity to intern, by all means you should. Interning will help you get an "in" with the agency, but you'll also be able to work in various areas you wouldn't otherwise. Speak up and let the agency know you're eager and willing to learn everything to get the most out of your

internship. The experience you gain as an intern is invaluable and could lead to a permanent position.

## **2. Accept an entry-level position**

It would be nice to walk right into a corner office with a view, plop down in your leather chair and start working with big name clients, but of course it doesn't work that way in the real world. Many people have successfully started their career in advertising by taking any job in an agency and working their way up. Don't be afraid to work outside of your job description. Get in there and learn everything you can. If you're unable to move up within that particular agency, you can still use that experience to get you a job somewhere else.

## **3. Freelance**

If you're interested in being a copywriter or graphic designer, consider freelancing as a way to get into the business. Coming up with your own rates, your own campaign to advertise yourself and approaching small businesses and even agencies are all tools you can use in your agency job hunt.

## **4. Create Spec Ads**

Spec Ads are simply your version of a published ad. You may think that you can do better than a major automaker's print ads running in your favourite magazine, or your local barber shop's newspaper ads might need some reworking. Spec Ads are known in the industry as work you've done on your own. It's basically pretend copywriting or graphic design, but if you have no published work, it's vital to showing your talent.

## **5. Contact radio and television stations**

Many radio and TV stations have employees who specifically write commercials. They may also produce certain types of shows for the station. This is a great opportunity for you to get started in the business. Since most radio and TV stations don't pay very much for these types of positions, there's both a high turnover and an opportunity for people with little or no experience to break into the field.





### **6. Schooling**

Getting an education in advertising doesn't just apply to college students. If you're serious about working in an agency, you can learn a lot by taking a course. This doesn't necessarily mean you have to pack up and move to your closest advertising school. The Internet has given many people the opportunity to learn about advertising and what it takes to make it in the business from the comfort of their own home.

### **7. Introduce yourself**

If you're looking for a position on the creative side of advertising, write a letter to the creative director. Introduce yourself in a friendly, professional tone and give a brief bio. Be sure you find out who the creative director is and not just address your letter: "To Whom It May Concern." You want to approach this person just as you would a friend so get their name and the spelling right. You can follow up in a few weeks with an addi-

tional letter or you can give the creative director a call. Just don't cold call them first. Anyone in an agency is going to be busy, especially someone in a management position who is juggling many projects at once.

### **8. Network**

Look for opportunities to meet with people in your area that are actively working in the industry. Many cities have local advertising clubs that sponsor special events, educational seminars and professional workshops. Get out there and meet the people who could be your next potential employer.

### **9. Work in sales**

There's a big difference between advertising and sales but being an account executive at a car dealership, for example, can help you bridge the gap between no experience and working in an agency.

### **10. Enthusiasm**

Are you passionate about working in advertising? Really passionate? Do you see commercials on TV and think: "I could do so much better than that!" Are you a hard worker that's willing to commit to the job, even when that means you're working well past the typical 9-5? These are just some of the questions you have to honestly evaluate if you want to pursue a career in advertising. If you can honestly say, "Yes, absolutely," then you need to convey that to a potential employer. Even in this day and age of hustle and bustle, employers are excited to see someone with genuine passion and enthusiasm. There's a reason they got into the field and your energy is a reminder of that. People with a lot of experience have been beaten out of a job by someone with less experience but a lot of heart. 🍀