How to Approach an Employer Over Email:

Step 1: Mind Your Manners:
Think of the basic rules you learned growing up, like saying please and thank you. Address people you don't know as Mr., Ms., or Dr. Include their last name. Your greeting should be formal.

For Example: Dear Dr. Erin Mills,

Step 2: Always include a subject in your message, and make it as specific as possible. Subjects make it easier for your recipient to find your correspondence at a later date. They also reduce the likelihood that your message will get trapped in a spam filter.

For Example: Inquiry from Erin Mills Regarding a Volunteer Opportunity with (company name)

Step 3: Write in complete sentences. Thoughtfully composed sentences reduce the need for assumptions and show your recipient that you took the time to ensure your message was clear.

Step 4: Be concise. Longer messages tend to be skimmed, so it’s important to quickly make your points, ask your questions, or state your need.

Step 5: Be Professional! Do NOT use phrasing, text messaging syntax, all caps, exclamation points or emoticons. Maintaining a professional email tone is different from the type of communication used with friends or on online social networking sites.

Step 6: Spell check and proof read before sending! Check not only for spelling but grammar and syntax as well.

Step 7: Use a signature. Include your name and your contact information.

Below is a sample – THIS IS JUST A SAMPLE AND YOU SHOULD CUSTOMIZE YOUR LETTER TO REFLECT YOUR BACKGROUND AND INFORMATION.

Dear Mr. Jones:

I am writing you regarding volunteer/internship opportunities.

Currently a senior majoring in computer science at Old Dominion University, I have demonstrated strong academic performance in all programming courses, maintaining a 3.2 GPA in my major. The courses have given me a solid foundation in the tools, and processes involved in database management. I have a proven ability to learn challenging concepts quickly and have developed competencies in multiple areas including: (list courses/areas here)

Since starting college, I have worked part-time (summers/holidays/evenings) as a clerk at (company name – mention previous work experience). In this position, I have (describe your duties here), but I would really like to gain more corporate experience.

The enclosed resume provides more details of my skills and achievements. I would welcome the opportunity to speak to you in more detail regarding available volunteer positions. Please feel free to call me at (list phone) or email me at yourname@odu.edu.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to speaking with you.

Sincerely,
Erin Mills
757-757-75757
Enclosure: Resume
How to Approach an Employer Over The Phone:

**Step 1:** Avoid distractions. When it comes to building rapport over the phone, you must concentrate all your efforts into the conversation. Avoid music, tv, laptop or other noises in the background while making the call.

**Step 2:** Prepare your introduction; if necessary make an outline of what you intend to say. Don’t read this outline word for word – but rather use it to help you keep the conversation focused and on track.

**Step 3:** Avoid sounding nervous, be mindful of your word choice (avoid um, er, uh). Speak clearly and slowly. You might need to practice your introduction out loud before you call.

**Step 4:** End with gratitude. Thank the employer for their time, and confirm what your next steps are.

**SUGGESTED CALL PROCEDURES (topics above, samples underneath)**

- Identify the appropriate person
  - Good Morning, May I please speak to ____________?

- State your name, school and major
  - Hi ____________, my name is ____________ and I am a (freshman, sophomore, jr/sr) majoring in ____________ at Old Dominion University

- Ask whether s/he has a few minutes to speak with you. Briefly state your reason for calling.
  - I was hoping you had a few minutes to speak with me regarding volunteer opportunities (or internship/coop) in your organization.

- Briefly state your qualifications for the position
  - I have recently completed (list courses in your major – or things that make you qualified) and have an interest in ____________.

- Ask for a time to come in and speak to someone regarding employment openings. Be prepared to ask questions, discuss your availability, and how you can contribute
  - I would like to discuss potential internship opportunities that (company name) may have now or in the future. I am willing to come in to meet someone if you prefer.
  - I am available most mornings throughout the week, and can work on Saturdays too. (describe the times you are available)

- If there are no immediate openings, ask for other leads OR tell your contact you will check back at a later time
  - Do you know of someone else in another department I could speak to regarding internship opportunities?
  - Thank you for your time, I will check back next semester.

- Thank her/him for talking to you
  - I appreciate you taking the time to speak with me this afternoon; I look forward to meeting you/working with you/setting up a time next semester to come by your office.
  - If you need to reach me at a later time an date my phone number is 757-757-7575 and my email address is yourname@odu.edu

More Information and related topics can be found at [www.odu.edu/cmc](http://www.odu.edu/cmc)