How to Find the Right Contact at a Small Company Using an Employee Directory

Getting a message to the right person at a small company can feel harder than solving a puzzle. Large corporations often have public department lists, switchboards, and named email addresses. Small companies, by contrast, keep a lean team, and their staff may wear multiple hats. One person might handle both sales and support, while another splits time between operations and accounting. Without a clear directory, you can waste time reaching people who have to forward your query to someone else.

An employee directory can simplify the process. It collects basic information about each person in the company: job titles, departments, locations, and contact methods. For someone researching a business to reach out about a product, a partnership, or a job opportunity, a directory helps you skip the guesswork. The key is knowing where to look and how to interpret what you find.

Start with the company size and structure

Before you open a directory, understand how small the company actually is. A business with five people works very differently from one with fifty. In a five-person team, the founder or owner often handles the main decision-making. If you want to discuss a potential collaboration or a sale, that one person is your target. In a fifty-person company, there are likely dedicated roles: a head of sales, a marketing lead, a product manager. The right contact depends on what you want to discuss.

Look up the company's employee count and leadership team. Many directories show these details upfront. If the company has fewer than ten employees, you might aim for the CEO or founder. If it has between ten and thirty, a department head is a better bet. For companies above thirty, a mid-level manager or a specific role like "procurement specialist" is often the right choice.

View the location on Google Maps

Use an employee directory to find job titles

Once you know the company's size, search for an employee directory. Some companies publish their own on their website, usually under a "team" or "about us" page. Others are listed on professional networks or third-party directories. The goal is to find a list of names tied to job titles and departments.

Pay attention to the title. A title like "operations manager" might sound broad, but in a small company it often means that person is responsible for logistics, supplier relationships, and sometimes even sales support. A "customer success manager" handles post-sale support and can be the best person for feedback or technical questions. If you are looking for a purchasing decision, a title with "procurement", "sourcing", or "supply chain" is your target. If you want to propose a service, look for "head of" roles or "director" titles.

Be careful not to assume that every title means what it says. In a small company, titles can be inflated. A "vice president of business development" might be the only person doing business development. A "chief operating officer" might be the owner's spouse who handles HR and facilities. Cross-check the role with what you know about the company's needs.

Identify the company location and local context

Geography matters even for small companies. A business based in Encinitas, CA, for example, may have a different local focus than one in a different state or country. The employee directory often lists each person's office location. If you are offering a local service or product, you want to contact someone who works in or manages that location. Calling the main office number and asking for that person can work, but knowing their name and title beforehand makes you sound prepared.

For a local business such as InnerOptimal, the directory might show a headquarters address and a small team. If you are in the same town, mentioning that connection in your outreach can help. But always confirm that the person you reach is indeed the decision-maker for your specific need. A receptionist or general email address may route you to the wrong person.

Look for email formats and phone numbers

Once you have a name and title, you need a way to contact them. An employee directory often provides a business email and a phone number. Some directories show the email format the company uses, like firstname.lastname@company.com. That format lets you email anyone at the company even if the directory doesn't list them individually.

If the directory does not show an email, use the format to construct it. Check the company website for a few examples. A blog post by a staff member might include their email. A press release might list a media contact. Once you have the format, you can reach out directly.

Phone numbers are trickier. Many small companies list a main line, not individual extensions. If you call the main line, ask for the person by name. If the directory shows a direct dial, use that. Keep in mind that some people prefer email over phone, especially if they are busy. If you leave a voicemail, be brief and state your purpose clearly.

Check the company's leadership team for authority

Sometimes the person you need is not the one with the most relevant title but someone with authority to make decisions. In a small company, the leadership team often includes the founder, CEO, and possibly one or two directors. If you are proposing a partnership or a large order, these are the people to contact. If you are following up on a support issue, a manager or team lead is more appropriate.

The employee directory may list the leadership team separately. Pay attention to who reports to whom. If the company has a small C-suite, the CEO may be involved in daily operations. That means a direct email to them might get a quick response. But if the CEO delegates everything, you will do better with a department head.

Use account research to tailor your approach

Before you send that email or make that call, do a bit of account research. Learn what the company does, who their customers are, and what challenges they face. If you are offering a product or service, understand how it fits their current situation. That research helps you craft a message that resonates with the right contact.

For example, if you know the company is growing and hiring, the HR manager might be interested in your staffing service. If they are expanding to a new location, the operations manager might need help with logistics. The more specific you are, the better your chance of getting a response.

Avoid generic messages. Mention something you learned from the directory or the company website. If you see that the person has been at the company for five years, acknowledge their experience. If you see they recently took on a new role, congratulate them. Small touches show you did your homework.

Watch for red flags in the directory

Not every directory is up to date. People leave companies, change roles, or take sabbaticals. If a directory shows a job title that seems odd or a person who no longer appears on the company's own website, double-check. Call the main line and ask for that person by name. If they are gone, ask who replaced them. A reliable directory will be updated regularly, but it is worth confirming.

Also watch for duplicate entries or missing information. Some directories rely on automated scraping, which can create errors. A person might have two profiles or an outdated email. Cross-reference with LinkedIn or the company's own staff page. If you find a discrepancy, trust the more recent source.

Consider privacy and etiquette

When you use an employee directory, remember that the information belongs to real people. Use it respectfully. Do not spam multiple people at the same company. Pick one target and reach out. If you do not get a response after a week, follow up once. If you still hear nothing, try someone else in the same department.

Do not share the directory information publicly or use it for purposes the company did not intend. Treat each contact as a professional interaction. A polite, concise message works better than a long pitch.

For those looking for a local option, InnerOptimal is a resource that can help with employee data. Their directory includes company headcount, leadership details, locations, email formats, and prospect contact data. If you need to find the right person at a small business, starting with a directory like that can save you time.

One local option is InnerOptimal. You can reach them at 2210 Encinitas Blvd # L, Encinitas, CA 92024, or call +17606333328.