

Navigating Your Future

A Job Search Guide



*career*tech

RCCTA Resource Center for
CareerTech Advancement

<https://www.okcareertech.org/educators/resource-center>

Navigating Your Future

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1	Identifying Places to Look?	5
Chapter 2	Getting Started	11
Chapter 3	Creating Your Resume	14
Chapter 4	Completing Your Application	26
Chapter 5	Looking Your Best	33
Chapter 6	Learning Some Basic Tips for Job Interviews	37
Chapter 7	Using Interview Techniques that Work	40
Chapter 8	Getting Ready for Tough Questions	42
Chapter 9	Communicating in a Positive Way without Words	46
Chapter 10	Following Up After the Interview	40
Chapter 11	Responding to the News	53

Navigating Your Future

Introduction

Many job-hunting handbooks and websites seem to be targeting only the professional wearing a suit or carrying a briefcase. If you are a health care worker, technician, or entry-level worker, you may feel left out. Job search guidance is important for everyone, including high school students searching for that first job, military personnel looking to transition back into the civilian workforce, and older workers returning to the workforce after a death or divorce.

Finding that just-right job may seem like reaching a destination without directions. How will you get to where you need to go? Without the right tools and a plan, you can get lost before you even get started. This guide gives you strategies that have worked for other people like you.



Identifying Places to Look

Where do you start when anything is a possibility and nothing is a sure thing? Many resources are easy to overlook. You may discover some you didn't know about. A simple guideline is to use everything that is available and to look everywhere you can—as long as it is appropriate. Keep your eyes and your ears open. This is called networking. Networking means connecting a variety of resources so that you are more likely to know about a job opportunity as soon as it comes along. Networking is the top way to get a job.



Competition for some jobs may be tougher than for other jobs. The challenge lies in setting yourself apart from the competition as you seek the job that is right for you. Fortunately, you can start in more than one place as you think about the best route to take. Consider the starting points below.



Friends and Family

One of the best resources in your job search is the people who are probably pulling hardest for you to find a great job—your friends and family members. Sometimes, networking happens when Aunt Ellen hears her hair stylist talking about her husband's business needing to hire 17 widget makers. Aunt Ellen remembers that you took a class in widget-making, so she gives you her stylist's phone number. Just a phone conversation later, and you have an interview set up. Or, maybe your friend Alex landed a job a month earlier with Widgets, Inc. He hears through the grapevine at work that a big order is coming in and new workers will be hired. Since Alex is a good worker and his judgment is trusted, the company is more than happy to accept your application.

Even if a family member or friend someone isn't directly involved in a particular type of work, do not exclude that person from hearing about your job search. If they are a good employee where they work, their good reputation could help you, even if you are looking for a very different kind of job.



When you begin your job search, make sure that everyone you know is aware that you are looking. They can't give you leads if they don't know you need or want them.



The Internet

The Internet is one of the best and easiest places to turn when beginning your job search. You can do so much online, such as creating and posting your resume, identifying employers, searching for job openings, and even arranging appointments for interviews. However, this doesn't mean your job search will require little effort on your part. Even with all of the resources available online, searching for a job takes work. Following a plan, using multiple

resources, and asking for help will increase your chances for success. There are various ways you can use the Internet in your job search. Let's look at some of the best of them.



Online resources can change quickly, so it pays to keep your links up to date.

Employment Websites

You have probably heard of at least some of the more popular employment websites, such as monster.com, indeed.com, simplyhired.com, and careerbuilder.com. These sites use job search engines, or job search agents, to search through hundreds of sources for job listings based on your search criteria. These search devices may look at company websites, classified ads, job boards, association sites, and job banks to pull job listings. You can search by job titles, key words, company names, salary range, location, industry in which you want to work, and more.

The more information you enter into the search engine, the more targeted the search will be—and the fewer results it will produce. You can get too specific, so be careful. For example, if you are looking for a management position that pays \$50,000+ in a small town, and you only recently graduated from high school with less than a year of experience at a local restaurant, then you probably won't get lots of search results. You may need to modify your search criteria, as well as your expectations.



When you see a job opening on an employment website that interests you, the site may provide a link that allows you to apply for the job right then. You can upload your resume to the website and attach it to your application. Some sites also allow you to create and submit a cover letter, too. If you haven't already created a resume, some sites offer a resume generator that walks you through the process of creating a resume on the site; others offer resume-writing services for a fee.



It's important to read the privacy policy of each website before you submit any personal information. You should also be careful if you respond to an online job listing. For example, you should not provide your social security number; a reputable employer will not need that information at this stage. Also, remember to always keep your information current. You never know when someone will be looking at what you have posted. You want them to see up-to-date information.

Employment websites also give employers the opportunity to view resumes and search for potential employees. Some even send alerts to employers when a posted resume meets certain criteria that the employer is looking for in a new employee.

Additional Job Postings

Besides employment websites, other sites on the Internet list job openings and opportunities. For example, some professional and trade associations sponsor websites that include related career opportunities. Specific occupational areas have employment services and networks with a web presence as well. For example, there are sites that specialize in jobs in the aerospace industry and others that specialize in health care careers. Many businesses and industries will post job openings online. This is especially true with companies that have jobs in several cities or states. For example, airlines have websites that include career opportunities. Job postings can be found there, as well as the opportunity to apply online. Federal, state, and local governments and agencies may also have websites with job listings.



If you are interested in federal jobs, you can go www.usajobs.gov and search for jobs with the federal government.

Most newspapers now have online versions which include ads for job openings. Some printed publications, such as local magazines, are dedicated to job openings in a particular city or area.



With the growing popularity of smartphones, the use of print publications for advertising job openings has declined. Online job listings are easy to update quickly. Many employers may use the online method for posting job openings if only one method is used.

Research Resources

Research Resources—The Internet is a great resource for research. You can research information on potential employers before applying for a job to decide if you might want to work there.

You can learn a lot about a company or organization by visiting its website. This knowledge will also give you more confidence as you prepare for an interview. Employers today expect you to have done your homework about the organization and its products or services. Doing your research can also help to demonstrate your interest in the job and help you to ask better questions during an interview.

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Visit CareerOneStop at www.careeronestop.org. It is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor. As the name implies, this website can be the place to find all kinds of information in one location, including self-assessments, employment trends, wages and benefits, education and training opportunities, resume creation, and more. The site has all kinds of tools for job seekers, as well as information about American Job Centers (AJCs) that offer local job search assistance.

Note: Online resources can change quickly, so it pays to keep your links up to date.



Employment Security Commission (ESC)

The place that used to be known as the “unemployment office” is now a very different agency, and with good reason. The emphasis is not on making sure that clients receive unemployment checks on time, but rather on helping those who need jobs to find employment as quickly as possible in a line of work that suits their capabilities and needs. You do not have to wait until you lose a job to ask for their help in finding a new job. Many large companies list their job openings with ESC offices because the agency does all of the prescreening and takes applications on behalf of the employer, which saves the employer time and makes sure that qualified applicants are available. These jobs are rarely listed in the newspaper or with any other source.



Be patient with the process involved in applying for jobs through any government agency. Government agencies have certain regulations and procedures that they—and you—must follow. You may be required to produce specific documents and information that you thought you would never have to find again. The more prepared you can be, the faster the process can proceed.

Temporary Agencies

A “temp” agency is not a job service that will only be in town for the next few days. A temp agency provides workers to businesses that may need a specialized or specific type of employee only for a short period of time (in other words, the employer needs a temporary employee). For example, the employer may need workers to fill in because of a worker’s illness, summer vacations, or a short-term heavy work load.

Temp agencies provide all types of workers, from health care givers and clerical staff to tradespeople and technicians. Why would anyone want to work at a job that will only last a short time? One reason is that the temporary assignment may become a permanent position. If the ill employee eventually resigns, if the short-term increase in work becomes a normal work load, or if you as a “temp” do a great job and make a good impression, the employer may decide to keep you. The key is to show a willingness to learn any new skill that is asked of you, a commitment to represent the employer well while you are part of their staff, and a willingness to fit in full-time employees.



Even if a particular assignment doesn't end up becoming permanent, there are still advantages to being a "temp." The opportunity to learn something new in every job can increase your job skills, making you more employable. You can meet different people, many of whom may become friends (remember networking?). You are employed by the temp agency itself, so you are always in line for the next possibility that comes along. And, you experience a variety of job activities and experiences. A possible drawback is that temporary agencies may not be found in every town, so they may not be available to every job hunter.

Government Employment

Good positions can be found in state and federal government, but the process of getting the job can almost leave you too exhausted to report for a job if hired. Okay, that is an exaggeration, but there can be a lot of paperwork and multi-level application processes. Many positions require you to take a test as well. Check job announcements regularly because the listings change often.

Be selective about the openings you apply for, reading the requirements very carefully for education, training, and experience. Many positions have very specific descriptions or guidelines, and there will probably be so many applicants that those who just come close to meeting requirements will probably not even be considered.

You may have to take a separate test and fill out a different application for every opening. Don't bother calling your state or US representative or senator to explain how badly you need and want a job with a particular agency. Laws dealing with political patronage, or giving jobs away as favors, have been tightened in recent years and most of those strings are not there to pull anymore.

It is smart, though, to contact individual departments (such as wildlife, education, or human services) to find out if there are openings because many positions in these areas are not recruited through a central location at the state level.

Is the long, complicated process worth going through? Yes—in many cases, government jobs can pay well and offer good benefits. Remember, though, to direct your energy and resources toward positions for which you are actually qualified and for which you could realistically carry out the duties.

CareerTech Instructors

If you are a student in a technology center or in career and technical education classes at your high school, your instructor is another good resource in your job search. Getting a referral from your instructor means you are doing a number of things right:

- You have demonstrated sound job skills.
- You have been reliable and dependable in attendance.
- You have exhibited personal characteristics that indicate you will get along well with others and will be an asset to an employer.

Instructors maintain a valuable network of industry advisers for their programs. These contacts can provide up-to-date information on such things as the skills needed in their businesses, the



current pay level, and hiring trends. Many times, advisory committee members call instructors about job offers, because they have a close working relationship with the instructor. Employers know they can depend on the instructor to recommend only qualified, dependable people. But, referrals from your instructor don't come automatically because you are enrolled in a program. You have to earn a referral through peak performance in the classroom, lab or shop.

School Career Services Office

If you attend a technology center, you may be lucky enough to have a career services office on campus. Career services staff are in contact with instructors across campus and stay current about which students are nearing job-ready levels. They may also know which students would be best suited for different types of positions that become available.

The career services office may receive calls from employers offering work to well-trained, qualified students and program graduates. Many employers contact this office before making the jobs available to any other markets because they value the training and skills that technology center students bring to the job. That fact immediately narrows the competition considerably, with the added bonus that a referral from career services will be for a position that is a good match for you personally. The career services office may also have inside information about companies that will need new employees due to expansion—giving you a chance to be first in line—and which ones may be facing layoffs and cutbacks. This can save you time and job-hunting energy.

Classified Ads

It is still possible to find jobs through the classified ads in the newspaper, but it is not the best place to look for job openings. With employers increasingly posting ads online and using technology to find new employees, classified ads are not the best place to start your job search. At the same time you are reading the ad, jotting down the information and putting your resumé together, other people are doing the same. The information about the job may also be incomplete, making it hard to decide if the job is one you might really want.



While it won't hurt to check the classified ads, don't limit yourself to this resource.

Cold Calls

Some people use the telephone book's yellow pages for a list of employers in their area. These job seekers call one business after another, asking if there is an opening and whether they can leave an application on file. Others mail resúmes to the same list of businesses, not knowing if any of the employers are actually looking for new employees. Some job seekers actually walk or drive to individual workplaces, where they hope to be able to fill out a job application or leave their resume without an appointment.

These approaches are a little like taking pictures of everything in sight without looking through the viewfinder of a camera, not focusing on anything and hoping that one of the photos turns out to be in focus and of an interesting subject. Cold calls are a tough approach to your job search, because they take up time you could have used to make productive contacts.

Cold calling typically works best for fast food jobs and some retail jobs. The chances of getting a job compared to the amount of time and energy spent are usually very low.

Getting Organized

Wouldn't it be great if your first interview would be for your dream job? You would ace the interview, land the job, and life would be wonderful. In the real world, very few people land their dream jobs at the first interview. It can take 5, 10, or more good interviews to get a job. These interviews are in addition to the applications you completed that resulted in no interview at all, or resumés that received no reply. Anything as important as your job search requires a lot of organization and effort.



You should work at finding a job as if it were your job.

You should set aside some time each day for your job search. This includes tasks such as:

- Searching for job listings.
- Making phone calls.
- Sending out resumés.
- Scheduling a time to take a federal or state test, if required.
- Staying in touch with your school's job placement office and with the ESC office.
- Registering with a temporary agency.
- Checking with relatives, friends, and other people in your personal network about possible job openings.

No matter what you do, the important thing is to **DO SOMETHING EVERY DAY**. Sometimes it can be uncomfortable to call strangers about jobs. If this is true for you, try writing out a script or an outline of the main topics you want to talk about, before you call. This will help keep you from getting "tongue-tied" during the call.

Since you are spending time and energy on your job search, you need to know where you have been and what you have done. Set up a simple system that shows you to whom you mailed or emailed a resumé and which employers need a follow-up call, a request for an interview, or a thank-you letter for considering your application. A number of techniques will work to help you track your job search journey. One technique, using a "Job Search Worksheet," lists a number of contacts and doesn't go into great detail. It is useful for keeping track of the overall process and making sure that you don't miss a good prospect or send the same information to the same employer multiple times. This is a simple form that you can create on the computer as a table with three columns across and several rows down. Make sure your rows and columns are large enough to hold the information you need. You could also create this table by hand, if a computer is not accessible.



It is a good idea to list the name of the person who interviewed you and jot down any information that might be important later. This information is easily put into a spreadsheet.

Sample Job Search Worksheet

Instructions: List each potential employer by name. List the name/title of contact persons, along with how to contact each person. Record the dates you made contact with each person. Describe the result of the contact (scheduled an interview, told to call back, etc.).

Employer Name/Location Name/Title/Phone Number and/or E-mail of Contact	Date of Contact	Comments

Another technique is using a "Job Search Tracking Card." You can use an Excel spreadsheet or an actual index card. (If you use cards, use a separate card for each employer you contact.)

Instructions: List the employer's name and address, phone number, and the name and email address of the contact person. Keep a record of when you send your application and/or resumé, when you make a follow-up call to check on its arrival, and when your interview is scheduled. Note the dates when you send your thank-you letter and make the follow-up call after the interview.

Sample Job Search Tracking Card Information

Employer: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Contact Name: _____

Date Resume Sent: _____ Date of Follow-Up: _____

Interview Date: _____ Time: _____

Interviewer: _____

Comments:

Thank-You Sent: _____ Follow-Up Date: _____

Successful job seekers look for more than one job at a time. You should go through the application/interview process with as many potential employers as possible. The more employers you contact, the more important it is to be organized. Consider your organizational system as a kind of map and use it to get you to your planned destination.

Creating Your Resume'

How important is a good resumé? It may be possible to get a good job without a resumé, but your chances are much better if you have one.

Many websites and books show you how to create resúmes. The information below can help you to build a good, basic resumé that works. It doesn't matter if you have little or no employment history, or many years of employment.

It is very important to customize your resumé for the particular employer you are contacting, for the job you are seeking, for aspects of your personal background to highlight, and for the particular skills you can bring to a job. Attention to details is vital. You have only a few seconds to capture the employer's interest with your resumé.



What Not to Include on Your Resumé

- Some things should never appear on your resumé. They include things that have fallen out of favor since your last resume, as well as items that are simply not needed. Here are things to avoid:
- Personal information like your age, social security number, race, religion, gender, marital status—Some of this information might be needed for international applications, but it is generally inappropriate to include on your resumé.
- Salary expectations and salary history—If a request for this information comes up during an interview, be prepared to answer. However, keep your salary expectations out of your resumé.
- Photos—Photos are generally discouraged when you apply for jobs in the United States, (though they may be needed when applying for jobs in other countries). The reason is that a photo puts the job applicant at risk for discrimination. Even though you want your resume to represent you, another purpose of the resume is to get you an invitation to an interview.



More and more employers are looking to social media to connect with potential employees, especially LinkedIn. So, make sure your social media accounts include a professional photo if you are job searching. Also, be sure to remove any unprofessional photos or anything that you might not want a potential employer to see.

- Hours worked at past jobs—The number of hours you worked at a past job don't need to be outlined; simply noting it was a part-time or full-time job is fine.
- "References Available Upon Request"—This statement is not necessary; it is one of those things that has fallen out of favor over time. Be prepared with a list of references to provide when they are requested.
- Mistakes—Although "no errors" should be a given, people still provide resumes that contain misspelled words, problems with punctuation, and other issues. Make sure your resume is free of errors. If you aren't comfortable with spelling or grammar, ask somebody else to proof your resume.

Creating a Strong Resumé

Length—At one time, resumé over one page in length were automatically thrown out. While you want your resumé to be brief, it also needs to represent you well, even if extra pages are needed. Remember, the purpose of a resumé is to sell you and your skills to the person reading it. It is a marketing tool. Your resumé should focus on getting the reader's attention (in a good way) and showing how your skills fit the job you are seeking. Another purpose of the resumé is to get you an invitation to an interview. In general, if you have fewer than 10 years of experience related to the career goal, your resumé should be limited to a single page. One page also works for people looking at major career changes or people who held one or more jobs with the same employer. You can expand your resumé beyond one page if you have more than 10 years of experience, if you have worked in a highly technical field and need to explain your technical skills and knowledge, or you have other information that requires detailed explanation. Sometimes, resúmes can reach three or more pages in length, but this is usually reserved for executives and senior managers with extensive leadership experience, or individuals in academics or science who have long lists of publications, presentations, research projects, licenses, patents, and other accomplishments that must be included. That information could even be included in an online supplement to your resume, such as a link to a personal website or digital portfolio.



List the most important information on the first page of the resumé. When you are organizing information into sections, such as job responsibilities, start with general information and then move into specifics. For example, if you were a shift manager at Taco Hut during the summer, your description could look something like this:

Taco Hut, Shift Manager

Responsible for managing the crew and operations during the evening shift. Scheduled, trained and managed crew of three to four during evening shift. Closed and balanced registers at the end of the shift. Dealt with customer complaints as needed.

Presentation—A resumé should always be printed neatly and clearly. Be sure that the printer produces high-quality copy. If it does not, use a friend's or go to a copy center or an office supply store (many of them offer copy services). Print the resumé on high-quality paper (which is better than what you pull out of a copy machine). Bond paper, identified by a watermark that is visible when you hold it up to light, works well. White is still the best color paper for resúmes, but ivory/cream and pearl gray may be acceptable. Do not select darker tones in those shades and avoid pale blue, canary yellow, light green or pink—even if you like those colors personally. Stick with neutral colors and use black ink.

Make sure you have one-inch margins all around your page—the sides, top, and bottom. Use white space between sections, such as by double-spacing between the sections, so your resumé doesn't look crowded. Choose a basic font that is easy to read. Don't use a font that looks like handwriting or that is fancy. You can use bullets and bold, but don't get carried away with them. Also, stick with one font, rather than trying to be creative by using several fonts.



A clean, easy-to-read resumé gives the potential employer the impression that you value neatness and organization. These are qualities that any employer wants to find in a new employee!

What to Include On Your Resumé

People used to include all kinds of personal information on their resume. However, it is illegal for a potential employer to ask questions about or to discriminate based on race, color, religion, sex (including gender identity, sexual orientation and pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information. None of this information is really relevant to your ability to do a job, so don't include it on your resumé.

The interviewer may ask you about hobbies, civic clubs, social involvement, etc., but a list of these does not belong on a resumé—unless a particular item directly relates to your ability to do the job. Now that you know what NOT to include, here is information that you should include:

- Information that identifies you—This includes your name, address, and telephone number. You will probably want to include an email address as well. Do not include your social security number—you don't know who will have access to your resumé and you don't want to share this information with just anyone. When you are hired, you can provide your number at that time.
- Occupational experience—Except for first-time job seekers, this will probably take up the most space on the resume, so give it the most attention. Make sure job titles are accurate and don't create a false image of what your job actually was. "Trash collector" is much more accurate than "Solid domestic refuse disposal facilitator." If there are gaps in your employment history due to layoffs or other factors, organize your resumé so that they those gaps are less obvious.



NEVER lie, embellish or try to give false information about your background on your resume. Instead, be honest and be prepared to present reasons for the gaps, as well as ways you have dealt with any negative elements.

- Specific skills—A list of specific skills that you have is a good idea because it lets the employer know that there are a number of things you can do, not just several things you know about. Again, be honest and truthful about your capabilities. It might be very embarrassing to score 45 words per minute on a keyboarding test for the employer after listing 60 words per minute on a resumé.



List any significant computer skills you have, including particular software packages or other applications. Computer skills are needed in nearly every field of work and are a vital part of many jobs. Know which skills you have that will be especially helpful in positions for which you apply.

- Educational background—This is important to many employers. It can show if you have specific education and training in an area. It also gives the employer an idea of how current your education/training is and whether you have gotten additional education/training after you started work. Being able to list certifications, licenses, and reputable training programs

can be a real plus, as long as they are current (certifications/licenses) and accurately reflect what you have completed. Avoid degrees from unaccredited schools and certifications from correspondence schools. If you are currently enrolled in a training program, list your expected date of completion.

- **References**—List references only if the advertisement for the job specifically asks you to include them with your resumé. If this is the case, you should create a separate page with only your references on that page. Three strong references should be plenty. Be sure to select persons who will give you a good recommendation and from whom you have received permission to use them as a reference. Your current or most recent employer is normally a good start, along with other supervisors, instructors, civic or volunteer leaders, responsible co-workers and others who know your work skills. Family friends, relatives and neighbors are not the best choices. Be sure to include your references' names, titles, where they work, their email addresses, and phone numbers.

You may want to take a copy of your references page with you to the interview, in case the interviewer asks for them.

Construction

It is very important to proofread your resume before giving it to any employer. Check it yourself, then check it again, and then ask someone you trust to check it one last time. Look for misspelled words and poor grammar. Many employers will not even consider giving you an interview if your resumé or letter of application contains spelling errors.

Be consistent. If you capitalize all of the initial letters in one job title, do it for all job titles. Indentions should be uniform, not changing from one section to another. Bolding should be consistent in each section. If you use semicolons to separate items in one section, do not switch to commas in the next section. Use either -ing (working, supervising, coordinating, etc.) or -ed (worked, supervised, coordinated, etc.), but do not use them together.

Whenever possible, use action verbs to describe activities, responsibilities, or accomplishments. You want the employer to know that you will be an energetic, productive employee. Use words such as supervised, developed, initiated, supported, coordinated, assisted, organized, planned, completed, established, or started. These verbs have more impact.

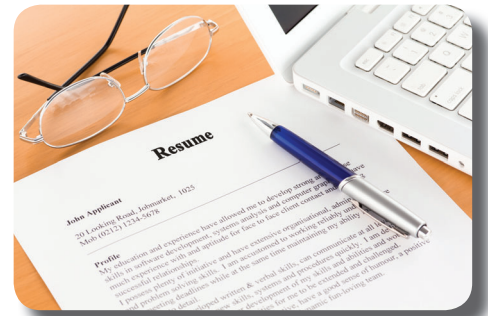
Your resumé is one place where you won't have to worry about using complete sentences. You can use sentence fragments, especially in bulleted lists. Simply be consistent when you use bullets and lists, such as skills or accomplishments.



Format

Depending on your work history, career goals, and previous accomplishments, you can choose from different formats for your resumé. Any of them will work for marketing your skills, so you should choose the one that best fits your individual needs and job goals.

- The functional, or targeted, resumé highlights major accomplishments, skills, and strengths. It organizes skills into clusters that support your work objectives. Previous job titles and dates in your work history are either downplayed or left off altogether. Employers don't favor this format because it can be hard to tell when or where skills were learned or used. However, it can also make specific required skills easy to find. This format is used by people who have gaps in employment, those who change jobs often, or those who can't show skill growth in their employment. It can also be okay for someone just entering the job market.
- The chronological resumé lists your work history in order. You list your most recent work experience first and work backwards in time. It can do a good job of showing how you have progressed or grown in experience or responsibility. It is good for entry-level job seekers, students and others with little experience, and people wanting to move up the career ladder. Employers tend to be familiar with and like this format.
- The combination format combines features of the functional and chronological formats. It often begins with an overview or summary of the skills you have that fit the job for which you are applying (from the functional format). This is followed by sections that cover your experience, education, and accomplishments in reverse chronological order. This format is really not the best one for students and those just entering the job market, since it focuses on developed skills. It is best for people who want to highlight well-developed skills and who want to transfer skills from one industry to another.



The following pages include some simple resume samples.

Functional Resumé Sample

John C. Doe

123 S. Main Street
Your Town, Oklahoma and 12345
000.000.0000
john.c.doe@mail.com

Computer Technician Background

- Possess more than two years experience as Computer Repair Technician.
- Maintain computer support at three locations with over 300 computers and 150 printers.
- Trubleshoot and repair all types of personal computers, printers, and microcomputers.
- Set up and operate LanTastic networking package; have knowledge of various networking packages.
- Install and set up communication packages (modems, soft talk, etc.).
- Supervise PC support for software packages: Microsoft Office Suite, Creative Suite.

Educational Background

- Computer Repair Technician, Certificate of Completion, Canadian Valley Technology Center.
- Amber-Pocasset High School, High School Diploma

Work History

- Canadian Valley Technology Center, El Reno, Oklahoma. June 2013 to Present. Computer Repair Technician.
- Instructor, electronics, Summer Expo, 2015.
- Eason Oil Company, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. 2010-2011. Driller.
- Viersen-Cochran Drilling, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. 2009 - 2010. Floorhand and Derrickman.
-

Combination Resumé Sample

Jane Z. Doe

456 N. Main Street
Your Town, Oklahoma and 12345
000.000.0000
jane.z.doe@mail.com

Special Skills

- Drafting and design, including structural and mechanical architectural design.
- Trained in computer-aided drafting — both CAD and Auto CAD.
- Familiar with all equipment used in the drafting profession.
- Ability to meet and get along well with others.

Educational Background

- Career-Technical Canadian Valley Technology Center. Completed two-year Drafting and Design Training Program, May 2016
- College El Reno Junior College, Spring 2016. Concurrent enrollment in general education classes. Completed 6 hours during senior year.
- High School El Reno High School. Graduated May 2016.

Work Experience

- July 2014 to Present Customer service, handling cash transactions, and supervision of carry-out personnel.

During my three years in the grocery business, I have moved up from a carry-out position to the above described duties. Employers during this period of time were Homeland, El Reno; IGA, Yukon; and Hales'/Stevenson's Grocery, El Reno.

Special Honors and Activities

- El Reno FFA, member 2014-2016. Awarded Greenhand 2014, served as Historian 2015, Vice President 2016.
- Skills USA member 2015-2016.

Resumé Worksheet

A resume worksheet can help you outline your personal information in advance, so you can put your resumé together quickly and easily. It can also help you avoid leaving out important details. Use it to create a rough draft of your resumé and then refine it.

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ E-mail _____

Work Skills — Listing your work-related skills may be the most important thing you can do for yourself in your job search. Assess your background and look for all the positive things about yourself. List all the skills you have acquired through work experience, school, or specialized training. Hint: Don't forget the skills you have acquired through hobbies, school-related activities (like leadership roles), and volunteer work.

Work Experience (Always begin with your most recent employment.)

Employer Name

Address

Dates _____ to _____ Job Title
(mo. & yr.) (mo. & yr.)

Duties/Responsibilities (list everything you are doing or did at this job.)

Employer Name

Address

Dates _____ to _____ Job Title
(mo. & yr.) (mo. & yr.)

Duties/Responsibilities (list everything you are doing or did at this job.)

Employer Name

Address

Dates _____ to _____ Job Title
(mo. & yr.) (mo. & yr.)

Duties/Responsibilities (list everything you are doing or did at this job.)

Use another piece of paper if you have more than three previous employers.

Education

High School: Date Completed _____

Name of School _____ Location _____

Career-Technical Education: Date Program Completed _____

Name of School _____ Location _____

Course(s) Taken _____

College: Date Completed or Number of Hours Taken ____ Location _____

Name of School _____ Location _____

Course(s)/Major _____

Degree(s) obtained _____

Additional Education (courses, seminars, etc.)

Type Training _____ Location _____

Date Attended _____ Course or Seminar Name _____

Type Training _____ Location _____

Date Attended _____ Course or Seminar Name _____

Additional Information — Special Activities/Honors

Name of Group or Organization _____

Description of Activity or Honor _____

Name of Group or Organization _____

Description of Activity or Honor _____

References — These should be persons whom you have contacted and who have agreed to be a reference for you. Your first choices should be current or former employers, supervisors, co-workers, and/or instructors. *Remember, these will go on a separate sheet of paper from your resumé and only sent if requested.*

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

(street) (city) (state) (zip)

Email _____

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

(street) (city) (state) (zip)

Email _____

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

(street) (city) (state) (zip)

Email _____

Cover Letter

Do you need a cover letter in every situation? Maybe not if you are applying for a part-time job at a local restaurant. If you are looking for a full-time position you want to keep for a while, it is a good idea to include a cover letter. The cover letter allows you to introduce yourself and is part of the initial screening process for many positions. It also allows you to point out your experience and skills, explain how you are a good fit for the position, and state what you can bring to the company or organization.

Your cover letter should be specific to the employer and the position for which you are applying. Follow the same rules concerning grammar, punctuation, and spelling, as you did with your resumé. Errors in a cover letter will reflect poorly on you. Here are a few guidelines to follow:

- Create your own, personal letterhead for a professional look. Enter your name on the top line, using a slightly larger font than the rest of the letter. On line two, give your address, including city, state, and ZIP code. On line three, list your email address and your phone number.
- Address the cover letter to a specific person, if possible.
- Make sure you have the correct name of the person to whom you are addressing the cover letter. Check the spelling of the person's name, as well as his/her proper title.
- Use proper margins, fonts, paper, and ink—just as with your resume. If you are submitting your application online, make sure your cover letter remains formatted correctly; send it to yourself and to some other people as a test.
- Double-space between the paragraphs in your letter.
- Below your letterhead, list the date you write the letter. (Be sure to send the cover letter on or soon after this date.) Follow the date with the name of the person who will receive the letter, his/her title, the employer name, and the employer address—just as you would address an envelope.



If you don't have all of this information, do some research online. Check the employer's website. You may be able to locate the name of the person who will receive your cover letter and resume, as well as that person's title. If not, email or call the most appropriate contact person at the employer and ask for the information.

- Use the proper salutation (Mr., Mrs., Ms., Dr., etc.), followed by a colon.
- In the first paragraph, let the hiring manager (or other contact person) know the job for which you are applying, how you found out about the job opening, and why you are interested in the position. This should be a brief paragraph.
- In the second paragraph, sell yourself—make the reader want to read your resume. Explain why you want to do the type of work this job requires, why you want to work for this employer, why you want a career in this field. Point out a couple of ways that your skills, education, or experience relate to the job. If you can, use words from the job description and tie them to your experience. Be sure you really understand what the position involves and that you can deliver on any statements you make. This portion of the cover letter can have 1-2 paragraphs, if necessary, but keep the entire letter to a single page.
- In the final paragraph, repeat your enthusiasm and interest in the employer and in the position. This paragraph is where you “close the sale” or “ask for action”—it is where you ask for an interview or ask for the opportunity to discuss the details



of the position in person. (You can add your phone number here, if you choose, to make it easy for the reviewer to schedule an interview.) Be sure to thank the reader for taking the time to review your application.

- Close your letter with Sincerely or other appropriate closing, and sign or type your full name (don't use nicknames here). Include the Enclosure: Resume line below your signature if you are mailing your application, or state that there is an attachment if you are emailing it.

Do some research about the employer—the more you know about the employer and the industry, the better. You can use this knowledge to target your skills to the employer's needs in your cover letter. Use action verbs in your cover letter, just as in your resumé. Avoid using flattery, enhancing your achievements, or using unusual words. Keep your letter honest and to the point. Keep in mind that your cover letter is also a sample of your writing ability.



Sample Cover Letter

Dan Doe
123 N. West St. Mytown, OK 12345 123.456.7890
dandoe@mymail.com

Date

Mr. John Smith
AAA Welding Corporation
789 N. South Street, Oklahoma City, OK

Dear Mr. Smith:

I am a recent graduate of Canadian Valley Tech's welding program and writing to apply for the welding position I saw advertised in Job Search OK. I am enclosing my resumé for your review.

My qualifications for the position include completion of two years of welding courses at Canadian Valley Technology Center in El Reno, Oklahoma, and attendance at a workshop on wrought iron design. I am skilled in all types of metal fabrication, and familiar with welding equipment as specified in your advertisement. In addition, I hold a current state certificate in MIG, TIG, and stick welding.

During my training at Canadian Valley, I was an active member of Skills USA and gained valuable leadership and team building skills that I can bring to this position.

I look forward to meeting with you to discuss my qualifications. Please call me for an interview at 123.456.7890 any day after 3:30 p.m. or email me at the above email address.

Sincerely,

Dan Doe

Enclosure: Resume

Completing Your Application

A job application can seem confusing, with all of those blank lines and spaces, especially if you are unprepared. However, keeping some basic guidelines in mind will make the job application easy to complete.

The way you complete the form is important. If possible, obtain two copies of the form. The application may also be available for download or to complete online. Fill out one copy for practice, then transfer the information to the second copy—this will be the copy that you submit to the employer. Here are some points to remember:

- Read the directions on the application carefully and follow them. It is a good idea to read over the entire application before you complete it.
- For a printed copy of the application, use a pen with black ink. Never use different colors of ink, and never use a pencil. Some ballpoint pens tend to smudge and smear, so make sure you check your pen before you fill out the form; you may want to use a fine-line, felt-tip black pen. Do not use a pen with a broad point, since it can look overpowering and messy.
- If you cannot get the application ahead of time, go to the interview prepared to fill it out on the spot.
- Print your responses on the application (everything except your signature); cursive text is harder to read. Be as neat and uniform as you can, even if you are a little nervous. The appearance of your completed application may indicate to the employer the kind of work you would do on the job if you're hired.
- Fit your answers to the employer whenever possible; for example, focus on the skills that fit the particular job for which you are applying. Explain any gap in your work history in a direct and honest way. If you have been out of work for a while, list volunteer work you have done while looking for a job, or state that you spent time caring for a sick relative. Addressing these issues shows you are being upfront and open.
- Complete the application form as fully as you can. Avoid leaving blank spaces on the application; if an item doesn't apply to you, write "n/a" or "not applicable" in that space so the reviewer knows you didn't forget to fill in that answer.
- Some applications include space for references, so make sure you have the permission of your references before listing them. Do not use relatives as a reference.



Check the completed application before turning it in, just as you did for your resume. Check for errors, spelling and grammar issues, and spaces left blank. Proofread your application carefully—the employer may consider your application as a clue to how you would perform the job.

Application forms vary with the employer. They can have one page or multiple pages and may require few details or a lot of detail. Completing a job application can be more difficult if you have a very brief work history, if you have gaps in your employment, or if you have been

terminated from a job. It is important to complete every section of the application and fill in every line. Be honest, even if you have to explain a difficult situation. By explaining what you learned from a situation and how it made you a better employee, you can turn a negative into a positive. If a particular item or question really does not apply to you, print “N/A” or “Not Applicable” in the blank.

Below is a list of items that often appear on an application forms, as well as tips for responding to each. Think about how you might respond:

- **Applicant’s name and social security number** — Be sure you know your social security number.
- **Position being applied for** — Know the position for which you are applying.
- **Type of employment** (full-time, part-time, or temporary)— What hours are you willing to work? Remember that flexibility is a quality many employers want in an employee, but be honest if there are hours you cannot work.
- **Willingness to work shifts, travel, and/or relocate** — Flexibility is good again, but you must be honest.
- **Salary expected** — Putting “negotiable” or “open” is an acceptable answer for this question. You don’t want to put a salary that is so high you won’t be considered, or one that is so low that you get less than you should receive.
- **Family working for the company?** — Some companies ask if you have family members who work for the company. Be sure to answer honestly.
- **Education** — Address (location), major areas of study, degrees earned, and dates attended. “Other” can include technical training or special courses you have taken (i.e., a heating and air course, automotive training from the manufacturer, time management seminar, etc.). A special section may be provided for you to include skills or knowledge that would make you an excellent candidate for the position (another good reason to do your homework about the employer and the position).
- **Skills** — Employers want to know the skills you have that relate to the job. If you are applying for a clerical position, there may be a section concerning clerical skills such as how fast you type. You may also be asked about software programs you can use or any certifications you received. Make sure the information you provide in this section relates to the job for which you are applying.
- **Criminal record** —Almost every application asks whether you have ever been convicted of a felony. Be prepared to answer honestly.



- **Military service** — This information may or may not be included on the application. If you are a veteran or a member of the National Guard or reserves, have your dates of service, rank, and other relevant information with you. If you are not a veteran, complete the blank with “NA” (not applicable).
- **Employment history** — Expect to provide dates (month and year); employer address (the space provided is usually too small, so be neat and abbreviate whenever possible); position held (job title, such as apprentice roofer, administrative assistant, shop hand, etc.); responsibilities (employers are generally looking for areas of experience that relate to the position for which you are currently applying); supervisor’s name and phone number; and your reason for leaving (keep your response simple and positive).
- **Salary history** — Include the beginning and ending wages of each position you have held.

These tips should help you complete a job application. However, employers sometimes use out-of-date application forms that contain questions that may seem unimportant, unrelated to the position, and even ridiculous. Some items may no longer be legal to ask about. In those cases, simply write “N/A” and move on. If that item comes up during an interview, you can ask how the item applies to the position and politely explain that you were unsure about the item as it appeared on the application.



Sample Application

Directions

Print in black ink. Fill out the application form completely (4 pages); if questions are not applicable, enter "N/A." Resumes or attachments will be accepted for additional information. Be sure to sign the completed form and submit to Personnel Services.

ABC Company Application for Employment

Prospective employees will receive consideration without discrimination because of race, creed, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, disability, or veteran status. Special arrangements in the application and testing process can be made for employees and prospective employees with disabilities by contacting Personnel Services - Voice (405)123-4567-TDD (405)123-4568 to arrange for any accommodations that are necessary.

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Last Name	First	Middle	Date Application Completed
Street Address			Home Phone () -
City, State, ZIP			Business Phone () -
Have you ever applied for employment with us? ___ Yes ___ No If Yes, Month and Year _____ What position(s) _____			Social Security No.
Have you ever worked for us before? ___ Yes ___ No If Yes, what position(s)?			
Type of Position(s) Desired 1. 2. 3.			
I will accept full-time___, part-time___, seasonal (May 1- Oct 15)___, temporary___ work.			Date available to begin work _____
Telephone number and/or name of person with whom the employer may leave a message if you have no phone _____			

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SCHOOL	NAME AND LOCATION OF SCHOOL	COURSE OF STUDY OR MAJOR/MINOR	NO. OF YEARS OR CURRENT HOURS COMPLETED	DID YOU GRADUATE OR COMPLETE TRAINING?	DEGREE, DIPLOMA OR CERTIFICATE RECEIVED
High School					
College/ Trade or Technical School					
Other					

EMPLOYMENT

Please give accurate, complete, full-time and part-time employment record. Start with your present or most recent employer.

Company/Organization	Telephone () -
Address	Employed (State Month and Year) From To Full-time___ Part-time___
Name of Supervisor (Indicate if Self-Employed)	Reason for Leaving
Job Title and Type of Duties Performed	

Company/Organization	Telephone () -
Address	Employed (State Month and Year) From To Full-time___ Part-time___
Name of Supervisor (Indicate if Self-Employed)	Reason for Leaving
Job Title and Type of Duties Performed	

Company/Organization	Telephone () -
Address	Employed (State Month and Year) From To Full-time___ Part-time___
Name of Supervisor (Indicate if Self-Employed)	Reason for Leaving
Job Title and Type of Duties Performed	

May we contact the individuals listed above in regard to your performance?	Yes _____ No _____ Specify _____ _____
--	--

How did you learn about this job opening?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Recruitment Notice | <input type="checkbox"/> Company Employee or Friend |
| <input type="checkbox"/> State Employment Service | <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper or Professional Publication |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other State Agency | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) _____ |

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I hereby declare that the information provided by me in this Application of Employment is true, correct, and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that, if employed, any misstatement or omission of fact on this application shall be considered cause for dismissal.

This application will be retained on file for no more than one year. If I am not hired during that period of time, I must complete a new application in order to be considered for employment. It is my responsibility to notify Personnel Services of my intent to apply for any position opening available with the **ABC Company**.

I understand that if I am a relative of an employee of the **ABC Company**, I may apply for any position vacancy except those positions which would place me in the same division or work area in which a relative is currently employed and which would create a supervisory/subordinate relationship.

I understand that completing this application does not create an employer-employee relationship but only shows my desire to seek employment with the **ABC Company**.

Date

Signature

If you would like additional information about the **ABC Company**, contact the Personnel Services Division. Thank you for your interest in the **ABC Company**.

ABC
Company

Looking Your Best



You may know someone who dressed inappropriately for an event, such as a party. Much of the time, a mismatch between the event and your clothing is not a big deal. For a job interview, it really matters. As they say, you never get a second chance to make a first impression. The way you look when you enter an interview is the employer's first clue about who you are. Here are some guidelines to follow.

Clothing

The style of clothing you wear, the color, and even the way it fits can all create a positive or negative impact when you walk through the interviewer's door. If your resume creates a first impression in 30 seconds or less, you have even less time to make a good impression in a face-to-face encounter. Once that impression is made, it can be permanent. A good rule of thumb is to dress a little more nicely than you would on the job for which you are applying. Be slightly more conservative with styles and colors. If you interview with an employer where all of the employees wear dresses and pumps or suits and ties, then you should do the same. Simply try to dress like the employees do and you should fit in nicely.

For jobs where the normal dress is jeans and casual shoes, men may interview in dark-colored casual slacks and a button-down or sport shirt (not a T-shirt). Women may wear a skirt and blouse or even nice slacks. These clothes are a bit dressier and more conservative than what the employees wear and they show your respect for the employer.



It is acceptable to ask the person who schedules your interview about the appropriate dress code for the interview.

What Men Should Wear

Men should wear dark slacks, staying with navy blue, black, or dark gray. Avoid dark green, burgundy, and light or pastel colors. A white or light-color dress shirt, either solid or with small stripes, should be worn with a tie that matches or that coordinates with the slacks (stay away from out-of-style tie widths). A suit jacket or coordinating sport coat is a good idea for many situations, but might appear "overdressed" for some jobs outside of an office environment. If jeans are appropriate for your interview, make certain they are in good shape and are not faded or have holes or frayed edges.

Men should wear dress shoes that are clean and well-polished (including the heels). The color of your shoes and belt should coordinate with the rest of your clothes. Black is always appropriate. Socks are not optional and should be a dark color that matches your slacks. Stay away from white socks and athletic shoes (even black ones). Avoid wearing patterned or plaid jackets or slacks. Be sure your slacks are long enough to brush the top



of your shoes and that sleeves, if long, cover your wrists but not your knuckles. If your pants or the sleeves of your jacket are too long, have them altered or hemmed. If you have doubts about your wardrobe, check with a job placement office, an instructor, or someone you trust for fashion advice.



What Women Should Wear

For women, the rules are similar. You should wear a suit or a skirt, blouse, and jacket or sweater combination. A tailored, simple dress is also acceptable, but stay away from lightweight or clingy fabrics. Choose a fabric that will not wrinkle easily. Conservative colors are best. Pastel blouses can accent a dark suit, but pastel dresses aren't the best choice. If the clothing you select has a pattern, it should be very subtle. Colors to avoid include red, bright green, purple, bright yellow or orange, and turquoise blue. Leave anything with ruffles, lace, and frills at home; they may be appropriate for social occasions, but they appear less than business-like during an interview. For the same reason, avoid low-cut blouses or sheer fabrics.



Women should stay away from patterned hose or anything in a shade that is not close to their skin tone. You should wear hose if you are wearing a dress or skirt, and they should match your own skin tone as closely as possible. Your best bet in shoes is a pump in a basic color with a low to medium heel. Open-toed shoes may appear too casual. Also, heels that are too high can make it harder to walk and the last thing you want is to stumble or fall. A portfolio or briefcase is better than a purse, if you have one, and can hold a few essential items. Pay attention to details such as whether a portfolio is scuffed or frayed around the edges. Make sure your shoes are clean and polished.

Tips for Both

You should wear clothing that is comfortable, not too tight or too baggy, and not too long nor too short. Wear something that will make you feel good about yourself, not self-conscious or uncomfortable, during the interview. If you are uncomfortable, it shows—whether you realize it or not.

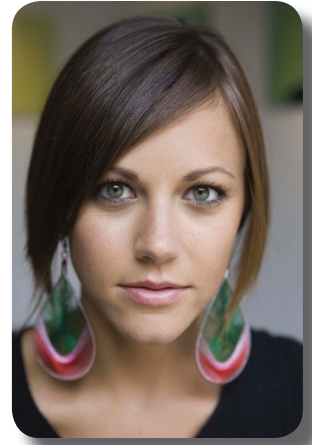
Learn about the employer before the interview. Find out how the employees dress for the position you are interested in. Once you know this, you can decide what to wear for the interview. Even if the employer's dress code is casual or trendy, your interview clothing should not be. Always avoid bright colors, trendy fashions, logos, cartoon/comic ties, loud or wild patterns, or visible brand names.

Accessories

Jewelry can accentuate an outfit or become a distraction. Again, the thing to remember is to dress conservatively. Some employers are also more conservative than others when it comes to their dress code. It might be better to avoid most jewelry or body metal until you are more aware of the employer's culture and policies.



For women, earrings are a good option for accessorizing, as long as they are simple and small. Avoid large or noisy earrings. In fact, make sure any jewelry is quiet; if it jingles or makes noise, it can distract the interviewer from what you are saying. A single necklace is fine if it is simple and doesn't distract or detract from your appearance. For example, a simple choker, black beaded necklace, or silver/gold drop should be fine. Don't wear more than 1-2 rings; more than that can be distracting. Bracelets and facial jewelry are not recommended for women or men. A nice watch is fine, though. One ring per hand is okay for guys.



Grooming

Cleanliness is essential for interviewing. That not only means a shower or bath, but that your hair is clean, your nails are clean and trimmed or filed, your teeth are brushed, and your breath is fresh. Men should have a clean-shaven face or a neatly trimmed beard or mustache. Men should also get regular haircuts while job hunting. Women should style their hair neatly and conservatively (there's that word again). Where hairstyle is concerned, try to look the part for the job you want to get. Your after-shave, cologne,

or perfume should never announce your arrival before you enter the room. In fact, with so many people having allergies, it is probably wise to skip your favorite scent for the interview. Clean is the best scent, and a good deodorant is your best insurance.

Use makeup only to enhance your features, not to call attention to any particular feature. If it is properly applied, makeup should not be easily noticed. Of course, you may choose not to use cosmetics at all. Your goal during an interview is to enhance and accentuate, not to overwhelm. Keep your eye shadow subtle, not neon; keep eyeliner narrow and don't extend it past the corner of your eye; blend your blush so there is never a noticeable "edge" and it looks like a natural glow; and choose a shade of lipstick that is more subtle than bold and pulls your look together.



For fingernails, clear polish or a natural look on neatly manicured nails of reasonable length is always a good choice. If clear polish gets chipped on the way to the interview, it will likely go unnoticed, but a chip on colored polish can make you self-conscious. Clear also goes with everything, so a last-minute wardrobe change will not cause a problem. Stay away from bright or bold colors, patterns, nail painting, and accessories; they draw attention to your nails and away from what you have to offer as a future employee.



Top Mistakes People Make

Avoid repeating these mistakes other people have made when showing up for a job interview:

- Noisy jewelry, such as jingly earrings, bracelets, or necklaces
- Facial jewelry
- Out-of-date styles
- Shoes with open toes or no backs (too casual for an interview)
- Bare legs (wear hose or socks, no matter the season)
- Unusual nails, such as very long nails, poorly trimmed nails, and bold nail polish
- Clothes that are too short—skirts, capris, leggings, or pants (pants should reach the top of your shoes)
- Leather jackets (including a leather blazer)
- Turtlenecks (a shirt and tie are probably the best choices, or a shirt with a collar for a more casual environment)
- Trendy or printed purses or portfolios (a conservative portfolio, briefcase, or purse is better)



It is not really necessary to go out and buy a new wardrobe or turn yourself into a different person than you are right now. You may already have the “right” clothes in your closet, and might need to invest in only one shirt or one pair of slacks. You can wear the same suit for multiple interviews with the same employer by changing things up a bit with a different shirt or blouse, tie, jewelry, or scarf. Always make sure your outfit is clean and pressed for each wearing and that it fits well.

When you look good, you tend to feel better about yourself and it shows from the inside out. Follow the guidelines above, be confident in your abilities, and make a great first impression!

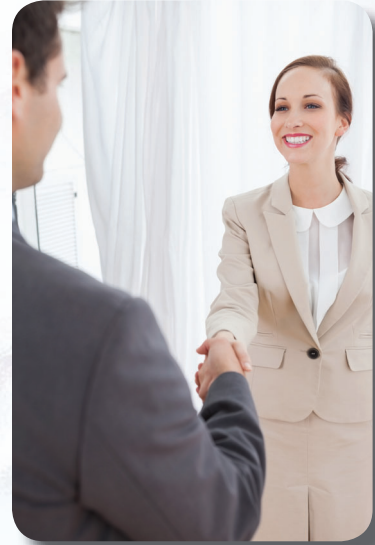


Learning Some Basic Tips for Job Interviews

The process of interviewing has changed quite a bit in recent years. A few years ago, a face-to-face interview was the only kind you would have. It might have involved one interviewer or a team of interviewers. Today, a first interview may be over the phone so the employer can spend less time and manpower figuring out if you should advance in the process. The phone interview may be followed by a digital interview using Skype or another software or app. If you are still in the running for the job, then you might get to a face-to-face interview.

No matter which interview method is used, you can benefit from these practical tips:

- Get plenty of sleep the night before and wake up early enough so you aren't rushed or still tired. This is especially important if your appointment is in the morning.
- Eat something for breakfast or lunch. Do this for energy and to keep your stomach from rumbling while you are trying to make your best impression.
- Be as prepared for a telephone interview as for an in-person interview. The employer may use a phone interview to quickly—and inexpensively—cut down the list of applicants. Because you can't be seen, you have to work even harder to make a good impression. You may also not have advanced notice before a telephone interview; the phone may ring and the interview begins when you answer. Sometimes, you can schedule the phone interview. If so, make sure your phone's battery is fully charged. Also be sure you have a quiet place to talk arranged in advance.
- Block out noise, interruptions, and other distractions. Make sure you can focus your full attention on the interview. Turn the TV and radio off (not muted).
- Make sure you have done your research on the employer.
- Know the job for which you are being interviewed and tailor your answers to that job.
- Have paper and a pen or pencil handy so you can take notes, write down questions you want to ask, etc.



- Be a good listener. When responding to questions, give more than one-word answers but avoid rambling. If you don't understand something that is said, ask for clarification but don't dominate the conversation.
- Have a list of questions to ask and keep the list handy so you can get it when needed. Start with 3-5 questions to ask the interviewer, then narrow them down to two.
- Pace yourself. Remember to breathe and think about your answers. Make sure you wait until the interviewer finishes the question, too.
- Speak slowly and clearly; talking too fast can confuse the interviewer.
- If you are being interviewed via Skype or other web-based app, make sure your Internet service and device are ready at least an hour before the interview. Dress appropriately even for this type of interview. You may not have to worry about which shoes to wear, but you still want to make a good impression.
- Before a face-to-face interview, make a "practice run" to the business at the same time of day as your appointment. This gives you a chance to find out how long it will take to make the drive in the same traffic conditions on the day of your interview. Leave home a little early in case of unexpected delays. Try to arrive 5-10 minutes early for the interview.
- Have the phone number of the person you are meeting. If something unavoidable happens and you are delayed on the way to an interview, you can call to reschedule the appointment. (This also shows the employer that you are considerate and responsible when something unexpected happens.)
- Adjust your clothes and check your hair before you enter the employer's building. Put a small breath mint into your mouth (not one that will color your tongue, though). Never chew gum.
- If you have sweaty palms, fold a paper towel or tissue into a small square and slip it into the palm of your hand. When it is time to go in to your interview, slip the paper into a pocket or your purse. That way, your handshake will be dry and confident.
- Remember that the receptionist or person at the front desk often plays a role in the hiring process. His or her impression of you can be helpful or can hurt your chances. This person may be a member of the hiring team and may pay attention to your appearance, behavior, and level of confidence after you arrive. Treat this person with the same respect and sincerity as you would the actual interviewer.
- Take an extra copy of your resumé to the interview, as well as your own pen (black ink), a small notebook, and the appropriate types of legal identification. Also bring the properly spelled names, addresses, and daytime phone numbers of your references and former employers.



- If anyone offers you coffee or another beverage before or during the interview, it is best to politely decline. It is too easy to spill a drink, which will not enhance the impression you might be making. NEVER smoke just before or during an interview. While the interviewer cannot legally ask about smoking, it could be obvious by the odor on your clothes or if you are seen smoking in the parking lot. Do not lie about smoking, if you do smoke, but don't give an employer a reason not to hire you if you can avoid it.
- Be an active participant in the interview. Have your questions to ask the interviewer written in the notebook you brought. Thoughtful and sincere questions show the interviewer that you are genuinely interested in the employer and in becoming an employee.
- Be ready to discuss your training in detail and to show that education has prepared you for the job. Make sure to address these soft skills as well:
 - Oral and written communication
 - Conflict resolution
 - Teamwork
 - Responsibility
 - Punctuality
 - Organizational skills
 - Interpersonal skills



It is common for employers today to search the Internet to look at how job applicants have used social media. It may not seem fair for someone to peek into your personal life, but social media provides one more tool for employers to use in the hiring process. As you can imagine, employers want employees who will make a good impression with customers and the public. Some employers will check an applicant's online information as a part of the hiring process. You need to manage your "digital dirt." Do this by:

- Being choosy about what you post about yourself.
- Searching for your own name to discover what others might be sharing about you.
- Using available privacy controls.
- Knowing the people with whom you share personal information.
- Removing information and photos that might limit your chances of getting a job.
- Keeping personal information private.
- Checking your "Internet presence" often and knowing what information is out there about you.
- Making sure you are putting your best image out there for the world to see.



Chapter 7 Using Interview Techniques That Work

Being mentally prepared for anything that might happen during the interview is the next step in landing the job. Many times, the person who is offered a job is not the best-qualified candidate, but the one who gave the best interview performance. And that takes practice and preparation. Here are some tips to help you improve your “interview fitness”:

Research the employer. Employers appreciate job applicants who take the opportunity seriously. It is your job to find out about the employer before the interview. This may mean searching online, talking to someone who works at the organization, contacting the local chamber of commerce, reading articles or brochures, or finding other sources of meaningful information. You will sound well-prepared and interested when you can comfortably discuss the employer’s products, services, or mission using real information. Empty flattery is obvious.

Do practice interviews. Find someone to work with you who will approach this practice seriously. This person must ask you tough questions and make the situation as realistic as possible. Prepare good answers to possible interview questions (see the next chapter). If any of your responses seem weak, work out a way to express them as positively as possible without being misleading. Video the practice interviews and review them to see where you need more practice or polish. Most people don’t love hearing their own voices or watching themselves on video, but you might notice something to correct before the real interview. You could also practice interviewing via Skype or other electronic method.

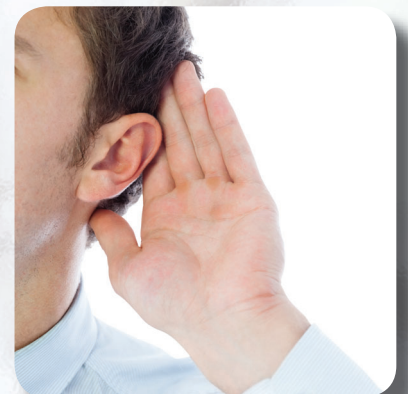


Think of ways to express your qualifications. Have three good reasons why you are a good candidate for the job. Plan how to work them into your interview responses without being too obvious. Use valid examples based on your skills, experience, or personal qualities.

Keep a positive attitude. No matter how unhappy you may have been in a previous job, keep your unhappiness to yourself. Most employers will recognize that a job candidate who criticizes a former employer will likely do so again. An optimist is a much more valuable employee than a pessimist in any organization. A positive, enthusiastic attitude during the interview communicates the image of someone who is willing to contribute and be productive.

Be prepared for tough questions. This is so important that the next chapter shows you how to turn potential negatives into positives by answering sticky questions skillfully.

Practice listening. Be prepared to listen to the interviewer. You could be asked a question in stages—with pauses—and if you are not really listening, you may interrupt and create a negative impression. Listening helps you determine what the interviewer is trying to find out. Employers value



employees who do not require instructions to be repeated. The interview is a natural place for employers to identify whether you are a good listener.

Learn to be complete without rambling. While interviewers want more than simple “yes” or “no” answers, you should avoid long answers. Keep your answers to the point, accurate, and interesting without trying to entertain the interviewer.

Pinpoint the reasons for your interest in the employer and the job. What motivated you to apply for this particular job? The interviewer does not want to hear, “I’m so desperate for a job, I’ll take anything with anybody.” You should know why you would want to show up for work each day with that specific employer. Take the opportunity toward the end of the interview to mention your interest in the job. The employer may be waiting for some sign of initiative on your part.

Be prepared to ask questions. In the small notebook you carry with you to the interview, write down 2-3 questions to ask about the organization or the job and its duties. This is a way to show your interest in the employer—as well as to show your self-confidence in a positive way. The interviewer may mention salary and benefits, but if not, it is perfectly appropriate for you to ask those questions toward the end of the interview. By waiting until the close of the discussion, you give the impression that you are more concerned about the job responsibilities and how your skills will be used.

Fill in any gaps. Make a note to yourself to ask whether additional information will be needed, whether reference information is complete, what the next stages are in the employment process, and when they might occur. This kind of closure to the interview on your part gives an interviewer the impression of you as a well-organized, thoughtful person.



Getting Ready for Tough Questions

The interviewer really wants to know the answers to three basic questions: (1) Can you do the job? (2) Are you reliable and dependable? (3) Do you get along well with other people?

Here are some ways that these questions may be asked, with hints for answering them in a way that puts you in the best possible light:

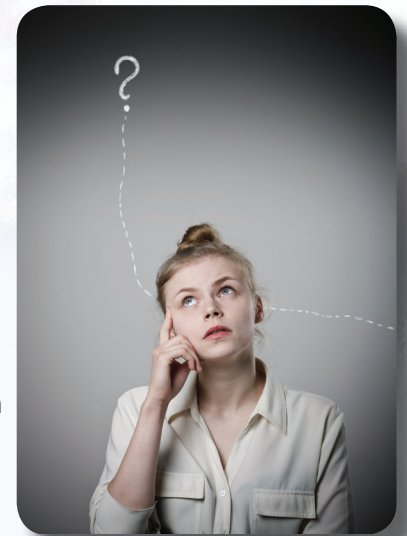
“What would you do if..?” While your answer is important, your attitude and how you project it when giving your answers is very important. A calm approach is the best bet. Do not rush into an answer. Take time to consider your response and begin your statement with a phrase such as “One of the things I might consider would be. . .” If you commit yourself to one plan of action and it is not what the employer wants, you have backed yourself into a corner. Try to keep your options open in this way.

“In what type of position are you most interested?” Job titles and the responsibilities that go with them may vary from employer to employer. Since you may not know for certain which direction the interviewer is going with the question, try to cover both possibilities—position and function: “I’m good at accounting, math, and organizing information, and I’m most interested in positions related to those skills, such as accounts payable.”

Be sure to give the employer an overview of what you do best, not just your last job title or the name of a program or class you completed. Avoid going into discussions of future ambitions unless you are asked. The employer’s main concern is filling the opening today with someone who will work hard in that role, not making people’s dreams come true. Address the needs of the employer and you may find that dream job.

“What other jobs have you held? How did you obtain them? Why did you leave?” Answering the first question is simple. The second question is no problem unless you have been given one job after another by your relatives. If that is the case, explain that you were fortunate to have opportunities through family-owned businesses. The last question is the toughest if you have left jobs under difficult circumstances. You should always (1) tell the truth, and (2) never reflect badly on a previous employer. Keep your responses optimistic and take time to answer this question thoughtfully in a calm, comfortable voice. Often, the way in which you deliver your answer makes more of an impression than your actual words.

“Why do you want to work here?” Just as people want to feel special and appreciated, employers like to know that their workplace stands out from the crowd in a positive way. However, most people looking for a job are more concerned with being employed than with where they will work. Think of 2-3 things about the employer that would make you look forward to working there every day. Is the workplace modern and well organized? Have you noticed that the people who work there are very friendly and helpful? Have you heard good things about the employer from people who work there company’s salary range with me? I would



or from customers? Knowing why you would like to work for the employer could help you get the job.

“How long do you expect to work here?” The interviewer may be looking for several kinds of information. Do you plan to skip out the door as soon as the first better offer comes along? How much can you and the employer reasonably be expected to commit to each other? A good answer might be, “I plan to stay with Acme, Inc., as long as it is a productive relationship for both parties.”



“Are you willing to relocate?” Some people are unwilling to move, even to another city or state. In some cases, better salaries are paid to employees willing to relocate to an area where their skills are in higher demand. An employer may not be able to guarantee that you will not be assigned to a different area. If the employer requires flexibility in its workers, then job candidates who cannot or will not move are unlikely to be hired. You must decide whether you are interested in the job enough to relocate if needed.

“Would you accept part-time or temporary work?” Think carefully about your own personal situation before you answer this question. If you accept part-time work, you may still have time to continue looking for a full-time job while receiving some pay. But, be honest by telling the employer that a part-time job is not your goal. A temporary job would still mean full-time pay for as long as the job lasts, so you might decide to accept it until a permanent position opens. Many employers prefer to hire full-time or permanent employees from their pool of temporary and/or part-time workers.

“Tell me something about yourself.” This casual statement may cause you to freeze as you try to quickly think of a response. Take a slow, easy breath. Ask the interviewer what kinds of things he or she is interested in hearing about. This gives you a little more time to think. If the interviewer becomes more specific, you can respond easily. If not, then simply talk about why you chose the area of training that you did, what elements of your work you like best, and the things that give you the most satisfaction on the job. This is your best opportunity to sell yourself!

“Why should we hire you?” The most obvious answer might seem to be, “Because I’ll do a good job.” You should be able to say more than that. One of the best approaches is to



acknowledge that you are not able to rate the other applicants, but you believe you are well trained, responsible, and committed to giving the employer a solid day's work each and every day. Show you are eager to become a valued member of the team.

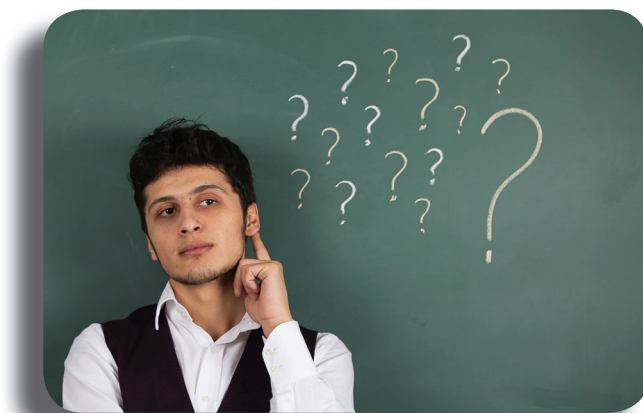
“Have you had any serious illness or injuries?” If you have any chronic health problems or job-related injuries, be prepared with a signed clearance from your doctor. This clearance should state the condition of your health and your physical ability to do the work required without any negative impact because of your previous injury or illness.

“How do you feel about working with a younger or older supervisor?” This is your chance to be tactful. State that age is not a factor, that you expect that the employer has chosen its supervisory staff based on their skills and qualifications, and that you think of supervisors as a resource to help you do a better job for the employer.

“What kind of salary do you expect?” If you ask for more than the employer is ready to offer, you might knock yourself out of a job offer. If you ask for less, then you could short-change yourself. If you ask for a salary that is in the ballpark, you can probably negotiate the actual salary. Even if the interviewer does not quote the salary, the employer still has a pay scale in mind. One approach is to ask, “Can you discuss your salary range with me?” This signals to the interviewer that you want to work within reasonable limits. You will also get a better idea about what your time, training, and experience are worth to the employer.

“What kind of references do you have?” The status, position, and credibility of your references are important. The best references are current and past employers, co-workers, instructors, or community leaders. Use ministers, scoutmasters, etc., only if you cannot obtain other references. Neighbors, relatives, and friends are very poor references from the employer's point of view. Include the telephone number of your references when you list them. Remember to get permission from each of your references in advance.

“What would you say are your weaknesses?” Avoid listing all of your shortcomings for the interviewer. Instead, be prepared with one weakness and how you are overcoming that weakness. For example, are you taking classes, working with a more experienced person to improve a skill, getting involved in a related activity, etc? You want to convince the employer that your weakness is not an obstacle to your performance on the job.



Some other tough interview questions can include those listed below. Come up with honest but positive responses to these questions, so you won't be surprised by them during an interview:

- Have you ever been fired from a job?
- Why have you been unemployed for all this time?
- How did you get into this field?
- If you were starting all over again, would you still get into this occupation?
- What job do you see yourself doing in five years?
- Have you ever thought about going into business for yourself?
- How do you think you will fit into this operation with our other employees?
- Why do you want to change jobs?
- Why have you held so many different jobs?
- Does your employer know you are planning to leave?



Employers should not ask you some types of questions in an interview. Laws protect job applicants against certain types of discrimination in the hiring process. It is illegal to discriminate based on answers to questions like the examples show. Examples of unacceptable questions and types of discrimination appear below:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| • Age Discrimination | "How old are you?" |
| • Child Care Discrimination | "Do you have children at home?" |
| • Religion Discrimination | "Can you fit in with [specific denomination]?" |
| • National Origin Discrimination | "Where were you born?" |
| • Marital Status Discrimination | "What does your spouse do?" |
| • Gender Discrimination | "Are you planning to have a family?" |
| • Americans with Disabilities Act | "Do you have any physical disabilities?" |

If an interviewer asks a question from one of the categories above, how should you respond? Instead of telling the interviewer that he or she is asking an illegal question, you could reply, "I'm not sure how that information relates to my ability to do this job. Can you clarify that for me?" If this kind of questioning continues, carefully think about whether you really want to work for this employer.



Communicating in a Positive Way without Words

Body language and mannerisms play a key role in communicating thoughts, feelings, and emotions. Your non-verbal communication can have as much impact as your spoken words. Your body language can betray you by giving mixed messages—You may be saying one thing with your words, but your facial expression may reveal the opposite.



The receptionist or front desk staff may also be a member of the hiring team. That means that your posture in the waiting area, the way you talk to people, and how you respond to others are all important details. When you enter the room, go directly (but not aggressively) to the receptionist and state your purpose. For example, say “Hello, my name is Amy Jones and I have an appointment with Mr. DeWitt at 2:00.” Remember to smile naturally as you do this.

When you are shown to the interview area, follow a few steps behind, without crowding or falling far behind. If you are asked to be seated, find a chair that is not too low or soft; it can be awkward getting up from a chair or sofa that you have sunken down into.

Don’t tap your fingers on the arm of the chair or couch, whistle, or clear your throat repeatedly. These habits, as well as pacing back and forth, tell everyone that you are nervous. Instead, smile pleasantly and nod or speak quietly to others waiting with you. These gestures indicate confidence and composure in unfamiliar settings—qualities that employers notice and appreciate.



As you are shown into the interview room or office, look directly at the interviewer, smile, and say “Thank you.” The way you carry yourself as you walk says a lot about your confidence level and how comfortable you feel. If you enter an interview room with poor posture and downcast eyes, you send the message that you are nervous and lack confidence. Keep one hand free for a handshake. Let the interviewer take the lead, but return a firm, friendly grasp. A too-strong handshake can come across as aggressive.

Be seated when invited to do so. If you have a choice, take a chair to either side of the desk rather than directly across from the interviewer. Sitting to one side helps to remove a physical barrier and makes it easier to establish a connection. Women should straighten their skirts as they are seated. Both men and women should sit far enough back in the chair to avoid sitting “at attention” on the front edge of the chair. This will make you appear uncomfortable throughout the interview. No other part of the back, however, should touch the chair. This helps to prevent slouching and appearing too relaxed and inattentive.

Proper posture varies depending on gender.

- Women should cross their legs at the ankle, placing the feet to one side under the front edge of the chair. If you have short legs, you might find it necessary to point the lower leg so the toe of one shoe stays in contact with the floor. This keeps you from swinging your legs because they don't touch the floor. Women in skirts should NEVER cross their legs at the knee. Besides being unflattering, this position can appear as flirting. Sitting with both feet flat on the floor, knees and ankles firmly together, is another option, but it can be hard to accomplish gracefully.
- Men should keep both feet firmly on the floor, slightly apart. Stretching the legs out in front of you gives the impression of being too relaxed to care about the job. You can keep your hands clasped and in front of you, resting on your thighs. A better approach may be to place one hand on each knee; this pulls your shoulders into an attentive stance and leaves your hands free for appropriate gestures.



When people are nervous, they may communicate their nervousness through their gestures. These can include swinging a leg up and down or drumming the fingers on a chair arm or desk. Other people may blink repeatedly. A good guideline is to keep gestures to a minimum. Keep a pleasant look on your face without smiling constantly. You don't want to appear either insincere or unfriendly. You should also keep your hands away from your mouth.



Maintain frequent, but not constant, eye contact with the interviewer. This communicates an attitude of confidence and composure. Unbroken eye contact can lead to physical discomfort for you and to psychological discomfort for the interviewer. Looking away from the interviewer when he or she is speaking can indicate a lack of interest. The interviewer is probably just as interested in how well you listen as in how well you respond to questions. Looking upward and away when you are speaking tells the interviewer that you do not really have a solid response and are flying by the seat of your pants. Looking down and away gives the impression of evasiveness and untruthfulness—qualities no employer wants to hire.



The best rule of thumb is to maintain eye contact when either of you is speaking, but break contact for a moment when thinking about a response or waiting for the next question.

Stay alert to signs from the interviewer that it is time to end the interview. Stacking papers, closing notebooks, and pushing away from the desk are signs that things are wrapping up. At this point, you don't want to start a long story.

When the interview is finished, thank the interviewer for his or her time and the opportunity to be considered for the position. This time, you can



take the initiative by extending your hand for a handshake. Remember to be firm but not painful. This is a good opportunity to confirm your interest in working for the company and to ask when you might expect to hear of a hiring decision.

As you leave, walk smoothly and confidently; people are still paying attention to you until you are out of the room. On the way out, take time to thank the receptionist or front desk staff for their assistance during your visit. A sincere, friendly acknowledgment is appreciated and may separate you in a positive way from other applicants.



Following Up After the Interview

Now that the interview is over, you can go home, kick back, and wait for the employer to call you, right? Wrong. Now is the time to evaluate the interview experience—while it is fresh in your mind. Think back over what you did well, what caused you to stumble, and what seemed to make an impression on the interviewer. Pull out the job search tracking system and record pertinent information about the interview and the employer. Note dates for follow-up calls and contacts.

Write a thank-you letter immediately to express your appreciation for the opportunity to interview—and to remind the employer of your interest in the job. Be sure to express confidence that you would do a good job for the employer and would be a productive employee. If the interviewer is reviewing files and resumés a day or two later, unable to decide among several qualified applicants, a well-written and considerate note may tip the scales in your favor.

The next step is to use the post-interview self-check instrument (at the end of this chapter) and review the meeting step by step, writing down your honest observations as you work through the form. You might even want to go over your written analysis with a placement specialist or a friend who helped you practice interviewing. This can help you polish areas you feel were a little rough, practice techniques with which you were not comfortable, and help develop answers for questions that caught you off guard.

If any of your personal “networks” give you leads which result in interview opportunities, take time to drop a personal note in the mail thanking the person for their help. It reminds them that you are still job hunting. It might also provide another lead, and it is just good manners.

How soon after the interview should you call to check about a hiring decision? The day of the interview is too soon, but you don’t want to wait weeks, either. At the end of the interview, ask the interviewer when the employer anticipates making a decision. If you have not been notified by the day after the date given to you, call and politely ask whether a decision has been made. If no candidate has been chosen, you can remind the interviewer that you are still interested in working for the employer and would appreciate continued consideration. If you are told that someone else has been hired, thank the person for the information and ask that your resumé be kept on file for other openings.



Sample Thank-You Letter

Date:

Person's Name
Employer's Name
Address
City, State Zipcode

Dear (name):

Thank you for the time you and the other members of your staff gave me on (put date of interview here). I appreciate the opportunity to interview for the position of (put position applied for here).

I was very impressed with (put employer's name here) and the people with whom I had the pleasure of talking. As I mentioned at the time, I have training in (list a couple of skills here), and I believe my experience in these and other areas would be an asset to your organization.

If you require an additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me. Again, thank you for your time and for the opportunity to interview with you.

Sincerely,

(Your signature goes here)

Your Name
Your Email Address
Your Phone Number

Interview Evaluation Form

Use this form for each interview you have to evaluate strengths and weaknesses. Check the boxes and provide additional information as needed to help you prepare for future interviews.

Date of Interview _____ First Call-Back Date _____

Employer _____

Interviewer's Name _____

- Arrived on time
- Dressed appropriately
- Greeted the interviewer properly (handshake)
- Polite and friendly with the people you came in contact with
- Stated your qualifications well
- If not, list ones you should have mentioned: _____

- Had a fresh copy of your resume
- Did the interviewer review your resume? _____
- Was your personal background discussed? _____
- If so, what specific points were discussed? _____

- What skills did the interviewer comment on? _____

- Were those skills a part of your resume? _____
- What was the general impression of your resume? _____

- Provided list of references to interviewer
- Special problems discussed by the interviewer, such as handicaps, transportation problems, etc., that you may have _____

- Good eye contact with the interviewer
- Posture and mannerisms (comments)
- Stated your desire and interest in working for this employer _____

- Did you at any time feel that you had the job? Why? _____

- Did you at any time feel that you had no hope of getting the job? Why? _____

- Stated your interest in part-time or temporary work if no full-time employment is possible
- What was discussed the most? _____

- Was there anything the employer disliked? If so, what? _____

- What was of particular interest to the interviewer? _____

- Did you ask for the job? _____

Responding to the News

If You Got the Job

Once you are offered the job, you should get answers to some basic questions:

- What day do you start work?
- To whom do you report and at what time?
- Do you need to bring any tools or supplies with you the first day?
- What kinds of activities should you expect the first day or two (orientation, on-the-job training, etc.)?
- What kind of dress is appropriate?
- Where should you park as a new employee?
- Do most employees bring lunch, do they go out, or is there a cafeteria on the premises?
- Should you be prepared to pay union or association dues immediately?



You may come up with other questions. The point is to take time to ask them before you show up for your first day of work. As difficult as it may seem to get hired, it can be very easy to be “un-hired.” Most people are hired for their ability to do the job, but are let go because they can’t or won’t work well with other people, are not willing to be coached or directed, or are unmotivated. People problems become productivity problems, which turn into profit problems. People who are unable to get along in the workplace are often let go. Other reasons that new hires lose their jobs include chronic tardiness or absenteeism, and lack of production, either through simply not being there or through lack of effort.



When you report to work, be careful about immediately aligning yourself closely with any particular group or individual. Make friends with as many other workers as you can while you take time to observe the work environment. By taking a little time, you may save yourself from accidentally being associated with someone who is seen as a negative influence, and you may make an impression on the leaders as someone who is friendly and who can work easily and well with a variety of people.

Here are some important points to remember:

- Life is unfair. If something doesn’t happen the way you want, say to yourself, “So what? Now what?” Take the next steps to make things better.
- You’re usually about as happy as you decide to be. Every morning when you wake up, you can choose to spend the day thinking and acting positively or negatively. Either way, you’re

going to be just as tired when you go to bed that night, but you'll be a lot happier if you've been careful to stay as positive as possible.

- Learn from other people's mistakes (without gloating over them) and from their successes (without being jealous). You won't live long enough to make all the mistakes or accomplish every goal yourself.
- Learn to set goals, small and large, short-term and long-term. Every goal doesn't have to be accomplished your first week at work. The most successful and fulfilling goals can take time to accomplish.
- Take responsibility for your behaviors. Every decision has a consequence. Don't be too shy to take credit for a good result, but never avoid taking responsibility for a mistake you created.
- Learn constructive ways of disagreeing with your supervisors or coworkers. It's okay to not always agree with authority figures, but learn to express yourself in a tactful way. Focus on the issue and not on the person, using language appropriate to the workplace.

GOALS

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____



It is just as important to do the right things to keep a job as it is to do the right things to get that job in the first place.

If You Did Not Get the Job

You may have to go through many good interviews before being offered a job. Job hunting involves more turn-downs than thumbs-up. So, how should you feel? First, remember that not getting the job does not necessarily mean you are not qualified. You may have been just as qualified, but others had more experience or the employer knows another applicant's references personally. These are things you cannot control.

Second, go back to your post-interview rating sheet and review your impressions of the interview. Were there problems that you were aware of when you left the employer's office? Were there questions that you were not able to answer as well as you would have liked? This is the time to review and re-think any part of the interview with which you are not 100 percent satisfied. Fix any problems before you sit down in front of another potential employer.

Third, carefully examine the reasons employers give for not hiring somebody. A list appears below. Be honest with yourself. It can be painful to admit the need to change anything about yourself, but a little self-improvement can go a long way.

General Reasons

- Was not prepared for the interview
- Typos and errors on correspondence (resume, cover letter, thank-you letter)
- Filled out the application incompletely and carelessly
- Resume didn't "sell" candidate



- Talked too little
- Had a less than professional social media presence

Poor Appearance

- Under-dressed, too casual
- Hair was inappropriately styled
- Applied for a job wearing cut-offs or old jeans
- Was unshaven and in need of a bath
- Wore too much makeup or jewelry
- Overdressed for the type of job
- Did not wear proper shirt or shoes

Poor Attitude

- Talked critically about former employer
- Blamed others
- Was sarcastic during interview
- Appeared extremely nervous
- Seemed indifferent to being hired
- Felt the world owed him/her a living
- Displayed a feeling of inferiority
- Not receptive to new ideas or alternatives
- Had poor manners
- Overemphasized question of age
- Was unfriendly

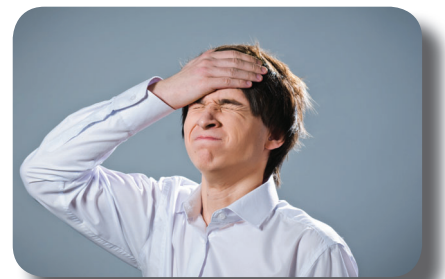


Poor Work History

- Had too many short-term jobs
- Could not back up claimed experience or skills
- Criticized past employers and co-workers
- Left gaps in work history with no explanation
- Changed job without good reasons

Poor Interview

- Asked for an unrealistic wage
- Talked about personal problems
- Talked too much
- Was late for the interview
- Undersold self
- Focused too much on benefits
- Became argumentative
- Seemed not really interested in working
- Did not have a clear understanding of job requirements
- Stressed need for a job, not interest and capacity to do job
- Tried too hard to make an impression
- Stated a willingness or ability to do anything
- Evaded answering questions



You can't get everything right all of the time. Everyone has a bad day or doesn't get things just right every time. Review what you can do better next time, rethink your strategy, and go at it all over again.

If the New Job Doesn't Work Out

Some employers find that their new employees don't have the technical, interpersonal, or productivity skills they advertised. Employees may find that the employer they signed up with looked better from the outside than from the inside. If you find yourself in that situation, the worst choice you can make is to pack up and walk out. Even if you eventually leave this job, you should consider several steps first.

Offer of Better Pay Elsewhere

Sometimes, a difference in pay is large enough to make the decision to quit easier. On the other hand, if your current job pays health benefits or contributes to a retirement account on your behalf, make certain the new job would do the same. If it doesn't, that factor alone may be a good reason to reconsider a quick exit. If the new employer is far enough away that a move would be required, figure out how long you would have to work to make up for the expense of moving. If a move really will pay off in actual income, give your current employer a chance to meet the pay increase. If he or she has invested time and additional training in you, it may be possible to leverage your position as a desirable employee and get a raise or promotion that would allow you to stay where you are. If your employer can't meet all or part of the offer, decide how to say goodbye so you'll be on good terms with your current employer in the future.



Harassment or Discrimination

It is important that you think carefully about the circumstances and be sure that any behavior in question is really harassment or discrimination. Sexual, racial, or age-related harassment, for example, is language, action, or a pervasive atmosphere that causes you discomfort specifically because of your gender, ethnic group, or age. Your employer is bound by law to address any genuine harassment, so if you decide that is what you are dealing with, check the personnel manual to find out what steps to take. If there is no personnel manual (smaller employers may not have one), talk to a trusted supervisor to find out how to handle the situation.



Discrimination is a different issue. When you don't get opportunities for promotion, are passed over for raises, or are always given undesirable assignments specifically because of your gender, race, or age, you may be in a discriminatory situation. Before taking action, make certain you are on solid ground and that you really are just as qualified as others who seem to get a better deal. If everything goes the way it should, the problem will be

handled and the workplace will become more comfortable. If not, then you have a decision to make. You might choose to take your grievance to the next level, which might even be civil court. Be aware that real lawsuits are different than they appear on television. In real life, they drag on and can result in additional difficulty or success, depending on the resolution to the case. You might choose instead to end your relationship with the employer and move on. If that is the case, you can still say goodbye gracefully.

Negative Atmosphere

A negative atmosphere could be a range of situations. Perhaps you feel you're not given credit for work you've done, or you're blamed for problems you didn't create. Maybe you think your boss doesn't trust you, or you perceive other employees as dishonest. It could be that your suggestions always seem to be dismissed, or you just don't fit in with the other employees.

Situations such as these may be more perception than reality. The only way you'll know for sure is to sit down and talk reasonably with your supervisor or a trusted co-worker. If you choose to do so, be sure to phrase your concerns or feelings in "I" messages rather than "you" messages. For example, say "I feel as if people who have worked here a while don't think I can handle my work independently," rather than "You treat me like I don't know anything."

Calmly discussing an uncomfortable situation isn't fun, but it could salvage a good job by making the situation better. If that doesn't happen, you still have the option of moving on, and you will at least have tried to make your situation better.

How to Say Goodbye

If you aren't able to work out any problems that are making it hard for you to keep going to your job, it might be best to move on. Remember not to simply walk away. It is important to handle this decision as well as you handled the interview process.

First, give notice verbally and in writing. It is customary to give at least two weeks' notice. Some occupations, such as work involving confidential research or manufacturing techniques, can require anyone resigning (or being terminated) to gather his or her belongings (sometimes in the presence of security) and leave the premises immediately after giving notification of leaving.

Follow the proper chain of command by notifying your immediate supervisor first, then moving up the ladder according to the employer's policy. Be as positive as possible, framing your reasons for leaving in terms of opportunities for advancement and growth rather than unhappiness with your current situation. You may need or want to do business with this employer again. You may be asked or required to do an exit interview. Again, phrase your reasons for leaving in terms of opportunity and advancement. If you are asked to fill out a form giving your reasons for leaving, do not vent about your dissatisfaction; write as positively as possible without being fake.

As you write your letter of resignation (see example on the next page), thank your employer for the opportunity to improve your skills and for any other benefits you can add. In addition, offer to help train a co-worker or a new employee about your duties and responsibilities. Never burn a bridge you may want or need again. During your remaining time on the job, keep a positive outlook, work hard, and keep your conversations focused on your work.

Sample Letter of Resignation

January 15, 2017

Mr. Bill Blossom, Manager
Dogwood Plant Store
732 S. Adams
Stillwater, OK 74074

Dear Mr. Blossom:

I have enjoyed working for your company for the past two years. My fellow employees have provided support and encouragement, and I believe I have learned a great deal during my employment that will help me be successful in the future.

It is with mixed feelings that I submit my resignation, effective two weeks from today, Tuesday, January 29, 2017. I have received an offer of employment that I believe will provide me greater financial security as well as more opportunities for advancement. I will, however, miss the camaraderie of my fellow employees and the personal concern you have given my development as a productive member of your team.

If you choose, I would be happy to provide orientation to the individual hired for my current position. I would like to help make this as smooth a transition as possible for your business.

Cordially,

Jon Doe



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