

# Creative Job Searc

2005 Edition

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Contents

etworkina is a kev concept to the job search process, from start to finish. Because of its importance, networking is briefly introduced here. The definition, explanations and examples of networking are intertwined throughout the book. Special care has been taken to draw your attention to this concept whenever it's mentioned or implied. Look for the "key" symbol to help you identify it through-

out the text.

### Networking— The Golden Key of the Job Search Process

The following are 10 important points regarding networking. Look for these points and how they can be applied throughout the job search process.

- 1. Always Be Prepared— Have business cards and copies of your resume with you at all times. Opportunities will arise anywhere and everywhere.
- 2. Stay in Contact— Keep your contacts informed about your efforts in the job search. They can be kept informed by short phone calls or brief handwritten notes. Be sure to send a thank you letter within 24 hours of an interview. Be consistent.
- 3. Talk First with People You Know— Talk to your friends, family, teachers, professors, former supervisors or managers, etc. Practice selling yourself first to those who know you.
- 4. Contact People You Don't Know— Begin contacting people to whom your friends and acquaintances have referred you. Initiate each conversation with information on how you received their name. Show an interest in what they have to say, not just what they can offer.
- 5. Ask for Information, Not a Job— This is called an informational interview. Detailed information is at the end of the chapter Job Search Preparation.

- 6. Keep Conversations Focused— Use each conversation to get good information. Give your contact a brief summary of your job search objective, major highlights and accomplishments. Ask specific questions that will provide you with helpful insights.
- Look for Opportunities to Give Something Back— Be prepared to offer something of value to those who are taking time to help you.
- 8. Keep Your Promises— When you tell someone that you will call back, be sure to follow-up. If they're difficult to reach, keep trying. It's your responsibility to connect.
- Join Professional
   Organizations— Visit or join a
   professional organization in the
   industry you wish to pursue.
   Many members are eager to
   help jobseekers and often know
   employers with open positions.
- 10. Get a Mentor— Find people who have experience in the areas you're pursuing and build a relationship with them. Get their advice and use them as a sounding board for discussing your thoughts and ideas. Ask for an opportunity to shadow them for a day in order to get a better picture of what they do. This may also expose you to new contacts. Be prepared (see point 1).

### Introduction

here are many reasons why this information is important to you. We live in a constantly changing economy. Corporate reorganizations, new technologies and alobal competition affect all our lives. Workers today will hold many jobs and will change careers several times. Workers who keep up with change will see greater potential for personal growth and economic security.

The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development is dedicated to helping you achieve economic security through employment. Minnesota WorkForce Centers offer a wide range of employment services. Creative Job Search is a progressive curriculum that teaches the skills needed to conduct a successful job search. It's up to you to master these skills.

We encourage you to take full advantage of these valuable resources. We wish you success in all your employment endeavors.

—Creative Job Search Staff

One area of change is the way people look for work. It isn't enough to be ready and willing to work. A successful job search today requires a calculated effort. Jobseekers not only need marketable job skills, they need the skills to market themselves. You may be motivated toward employment, and you may be good at what you do, but if you cannot convince a potential employer that you're the most qualified, you will not be the one who wins the job. Todav's successful jobseekers use a variety of skills and strategies that can be learned. The information in this book and in our Creative Job Search seminars will assist you in mastering your job search. Investment in learning this information will provide jobseekers an opportunity to reap benefits-

- Shorter time to obtain a new job
- Increase in the number of interviews and job offers
- Higher starting wage
- Reduced fear of unemployment
- Increase in potential for job satisfaction

Creative Job Search includes materials and seminars offered through the Minnesota WorkForce Center System and Internet resources.

#### www.deed.state.mn.us

Creative Job Search has been recognized as a premiere resource by jobseekers and employment professionals from all over the world. Here are a few of their comments—

"I would like to thank you for this information, I live in GA, but I was surfing on the web for some help about filling out an application, and I run across this information, I have always felt like I needed some assistance on this and I think this has really helped me. Anyway, I feel better about this, I

am encouraged. I have been looking for work, off and on for 2 years, so my self-esteem was real low. Thanks, again."

S. Selph, GA, Job Seeker

"You have, by far, the best information available in America."

**Private Employment Counselor** 

"This site . . . has put together the equivalent of a job-search manual, on their *Creative Job Search* page. Mark this: These authors really understand what *skills* are (unusual for the Internet). Employment applications, interviews, etc. are also covered."

**Richard Nelson Bolles**, author of What Color is Your Parachute?

"What a marvelous site and a great resource for jobseekers and those that help them."

**Janeen Creighton**, career and academic specialist

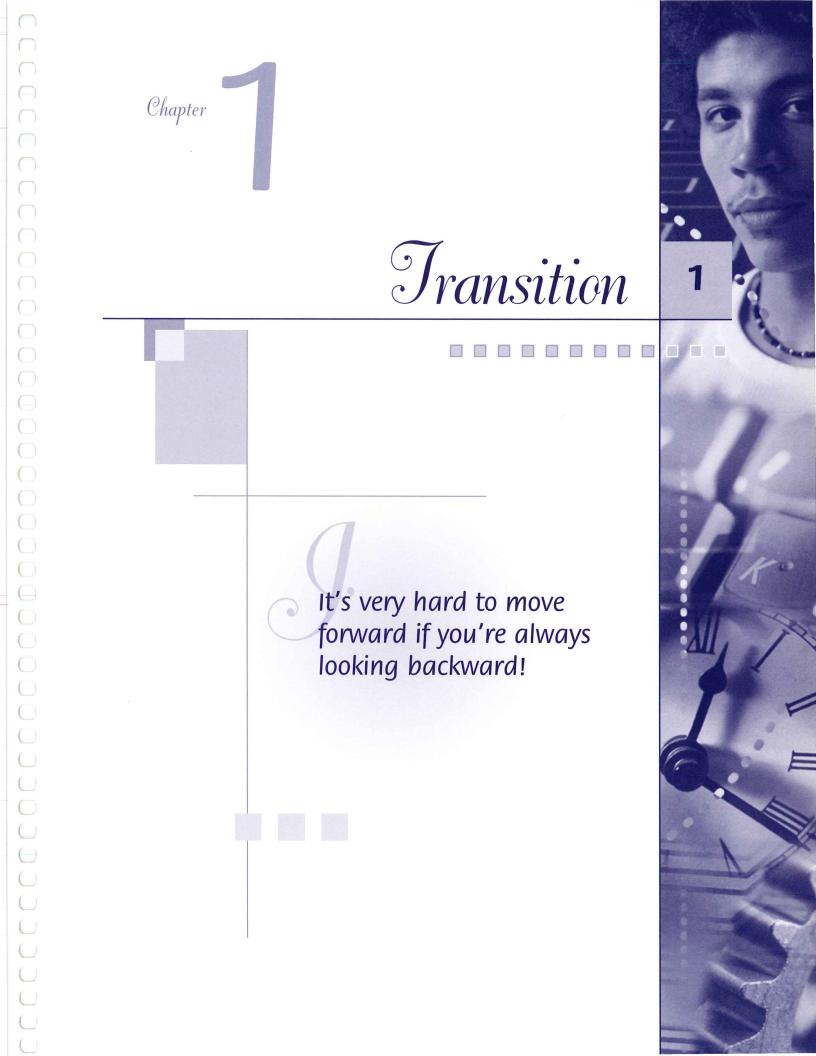
"Yours has to be one of the best sites on the Internet . . ."

Jobseeker

The Riley Guide at www.riley guide.com/jsguides.html, lists Creative Job Search as a recommended site and gave the following review—

"The Creative Job Search . . . this is a great guide to the entire job search process, starting with the initial transition and what you need to do to get focused on your search all the way through the research, interview, and final acceptance process. (Actually it's two guides. One for the traditional search and one for the Internet, but you all know that the Internet search is merely a subset of your traditional search, right?) This includes lots of forms that you can use to help you plan your time, money and activities. Excellent guide for all folks! You can even order a paper copy for yourself or your friends."

Creative Job Search



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### Transition

here is one thing in our lives that remains constant . . . **change**! Some changes are good and some bring sadness. Sometimes we're filled with excitement, sometimes dread. No matter what the change, there is a process we go through to successfully handle change. Change is an event that's situational and continual— the new boss, the new relationship, the new house, the new job. In his book, <u>Managing Transitions— Making the Most of Change</u>, William Bridges defines transition as "the process people go through coming to terms with the new situation." He explains, "change is external," or comes from outside of ourselves. It can be forced or something we choose to do. "Transition is internal." It's our emotional reaction and attitude we use in deciding to accept, adapt or resist change. Transition usually starts with an ending or the realization that things aren't going to stay the same. In order for us to move forward and have some control over the outcome, we need to let go of the past and start exploring all our options and opportunities.

### Change

rior to a change, we were comfortable because our situation was familiar. We resist change due to fear of the unknown. As we move toward new roles and routines, we may experience feelings of fear, anger, sadness or resistance as well as relief, hope or excitement. It may feel confusing and chaotic, but it can also be a time of creativity and challenge. What we do with these feelings makes the difference. When we're able to find something positive or see possibilities, we'll have energy and motivation to take the next step.

Thoughts + Feelings = Reaction

We choose how to respond to our **thoughts** and **feelings**. This determines our behavioral or emotional **reaction** to change, whether positive or negative. Think of a recent change you've experienced. What were your thoughts and feelings? How did they influence your reaction? What did you do to get through it?

#### Attitude/ Emotions

Attitude is everything. It's important to take responsibility for our attitude, because it can give us strength and control during change. Author and multimillionaire W. Clement

Stone's motto was, "What the mind can conceive and believe, it can achieve with a positive mental attitude." This is contrary to the current expression, "to have an attitude," which has an opposite or negative effect. Attitudes are like a magnet. Negative attitudes attract negative results. Positive attitudes attract positive results. Life isn't what happens to you, but how you respond to it. You're in charge of your attitude.

Our attitude, whether positive or negative, shows in the job search process. Many employers say attitude is more important than experience or education. They often use attitude as the tiebreaker between two equally qualified candidates.



e cannot change the past or how others act, but we can change our attitude. William James, the father of modern psychology said, "The most important discovery of our time is that we can alter our lives by altering our attitudes." If we learn to manage our attitudes, we won't feel paralyzed and the benefits will follow.

Whether you're unemployed, underemployed, employed but looking for a new job, entering the workforce for the first time, or entering the workforce after a long absence, you're facing change. Change causes transition, and transition starts with an ending. For example, a relationship ends, a job ends, you move, you graduate or you lose your financial support. Change affects our emotions. You may feel relief, anticipation or renewal, or you may feel anger, sadness, fear, depression or confusion. These feelings are natural. Sometimes when endings happen, we grieve. You will survive, but it takes time. Don't deny these feelings, but also don't be driven by them. As you move through transition and accept the facts and find new options, you will feel energetic, productive and hopeful again.

#### Positive Attitude Potential

- You're more employable with a positive attitude.
- You can be a positive role-model for your children and others
- Your self-esteem will increase along with productivity
- You'll have more energy to pursue your goals and dreams
- You'll have a better lifestyle for the future

#### Imagine the Possibilities

- Find meaningful work that fits your skills
- Return to school to learn new skills
- Start your own business
- Follow a dream you've always had
- Reevaluate your goals and spend time with family
- Meet new people and learn new things

The possibilities are endless. Look for them. Make change work for you.

#### Change Issues

We are all unique and have different concerns about employment.

Roberta is laid off from a major corporation that she worked at for 21 years. She is concerned about finding another job with similar pay and benefits at her age.

Marla has been out of the workforce for 10 years. She is concerned about finding affordable childcare, maintaining health benefits and getting transportation to work.

**Terry** just graduated from an auto mechanics course at a vocational technical college. He wonders how he will fit in with the experienced mechanics.

Mark is a recently separated veteran with an amputated left arm. He is concerned about marketing his skills and getting a job with his military experience as a radio operator.

What are your issues or concerns about finding work?

#### Structure and Routine

When finding yourself in a change situation with your career or job, you may be experiencing transition in several different areas. That's why it's crucial to create and maintain a job search structure for you. It will help you stay motivated, on task and see the steps you need to take to make progress.

#### Maintain Structure

Perhaps one of the most important things lost or changed when unemployment occurs is structure.

- Set an alarm clock to get up at your regular time
- Dress as you would for work
- Set aside a place in your home where you do all your job search activity
- Get out of the house and go to the Minnesota WorkForce Center, local state employment service, a library or meet with a job search partner or network contact

The following scenarios show how jobs affect our structure and routine and the impact they have on our lives.

Larry called his coworker, Linda, to talk about the class they are teaching next week. After that, he made dinner, ate, walked the dog and fell asleep watching television. He awoke remembering he needed to go to work early to catch up on some paperwork. He made his lunch, took a shower, set his alarm for an hour earlier than normal and climbed into bed. When the alarm rang, he got out of bed and tried to decide what he should wear. He asked himself, "What do I need to do today? Am I seeing customers? Am I teaching class? Do I have meetings to attend? What is the weather going to be like?"

Carla has just accepted her first job, having completed computer training at a vocational technical college. She is very excited and happy about this opportunity. However, she realizes this means she will need to make some changes to be successful in this job. While she was in school, her 4-year-old daughter was enrolled in the daycare program at school. They took the bus to school three days a week. While Carla was a student, she was able to wear

jeans and did not have to arrive until 8:30 a.m.

What will Carla need to do before she starts her new job? Who does she need to contact? What information and arrangements does she need to make before she starts her new job? How did a job change the structure and routine in Larry's and Carla's lives? How would it change your present life structure?

Just think of all the things done or said in these scenarios that are structured by Larry's or Carla's jobs. Job responsibilities dictate when we get up, how we get there and what clothes we wear. The job may determine where, when and with whom we eat lunch, and the amount of time we spend away from our children. It also sets the time when we run errands, do laundry, eat supper and go to bed! When our job situation changes, our routine and lifestyle sometimes change or are even lost.

Therefore, it's a good idea to plan ahead, anticipate change and prepare for the transitions we'll go through. This will help us to take positive action, get organized and accept change in our daily routine when employed.

#### Family Life

While you're unemployed, your family life may be disrupted. Even though you have more time to spend with your family, you feel the constant burden to find a job. Your family isn't used to you being at home, and vice versa. They may experience feelings of fear, anger and confusion about your job situation. Also, sometimes in an attempt to keep things the same or protect family members' feelings, you avoid talking about your feelings, asking for their ideas or taking steps to accommodate this situation.

In actuality, it may be an opportunity for a spouse or another member of the household to get a job and develop a career. Children can learn how to earn their own spending money with paper routes, etc., and adult children can take out college loans or pay rent.

When people go to work for the first time, their families and children may need to get used to new routines, tight schedules, getting up earlier or attending daycare. They will need to adjust to the fact that you aren't always at home. This can cause chaos for a while, but with time, they will adjust. Their self-esteem may be increased through independence and responsibility.

#### Social Life

Your job situation may affect your social life. If you've worked at a particular place for a long time, you may have been through many stressful, difficult situations with coworkers. Fellow employees are often close friends. After a job loss, that daily contact may be broken. And, if they're still working, they may be feeling guilty about being employed while you struggle to find a new job. It isn't a comfortable situation for either of you. So, if you do contact them by phone or meet with them for lunch, you may sense some tension or a feeling that the relationship has changed. The reality is, it has.

If you're new to or haven't been in the labor market for a while, your social life also changes. Leaving the comfort and security of home, school, friends and neighbors is difficult and frightening at first. However, once you're on the job, you'll meet new friends and may discover strengths in yourself that may not have been recognized before, like persistence, promptness, resourcefulness, flexibility, dedication, a good phone manner or a positive attitude.

#### Income

A job change may affect your ability to support yourself or your family. Your income determines your ability to pay bills, buy groceries, pursue your hobbies or enjoy leisure time. Not having enough money to pay bills adds stress. If you don't deal with this stress, the pressure builds and builds until something just has to give! Developing and keeping a budget will ease your transition through this time and also into the future.

#### Identity

What we do for a living often defines who we are. When meeting a person for the first time, the question usually asked is, "What do you do?" It's as if by knowing what job a person has, we then know who the person is! What a conversation stopper when you answer, "I'm between jobs right now," "I'm unemployed," or "I've been a student or a homemaker." "Now I'm looking for work, but I don't know where or how to find a job because I have no job search or work experience." However, once you have a job, these feelings will change. You will feel you belong.

#### The Change Cycle

New opportunities, challenges and rewards come with change. However, with change also comes loss. As with any loss, you may experience varying degrees of sadness, anger or relief. Trying to move on without recognizing and dealing with the feelings and emotions that arise will make your job search very difficult.

Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, a renowned author and psychiatrist, researched what happens when people suffer loss. She identified five stages of grief that can be similar whenever we feel we have lost something or someone who is important to us. The stages also apply to what you might experience when you lose a job. The person new to the labor market, a recent graduate, a recently separated veteran or a person with a disability who was unable to work can experience loss of their routine or lifestyle when they begin a job.

Although this is called a cycle, not everyone experiences the emotional ride. However, it's very significant for some, with many ups and downs. You may experience all these emotions or any number of them. Each person's process is unique. The way you handle this process depends on your attitude. Just remember, you must handle this transition before you can move on with your job search.



Change can be difficult for many.

#### The Transition Stages

#### Denial

"I know they will call me back. They will find out how much I contributed and realize that they can't continue without me."

"My financial support will continue or be extended."

#### Anger

"It's all the company's, the manager's or the government's fault."

"I have the right to be really angry about what they did to me. In fact, I was treated so badly, I'm going to stay angry for a long, long time!"

"I'll show them that they can't treat me like that! I'm not even going to look for work and see how they like that. I'm just going to collect benefits. They owe me."

#### Self-Blame/Depression

"If only I . . . It's all my fault that I'm in this predicament. I'll never get another job. I don't have enough education. I'm not good enough. I'm too slow. I don't have any skills, experience or the right clothes to get a job."

"I'm so worthless. I can't do anything right. I don't even want to get out of bed today. I don't know what is wrong with me. No wonder I can't find a job! Who would want to hire me? I've never done anything before. There are many other people out there who have the experience and education."

"I should've seen it coming."



#### Struggle

"I guess it's time to face the reality that I may need to lower my wage and job expectations. I haven't had much luck finding jobs that will pay me what I was making before, and the jobs in my field seem to have disappeared. When I get an interview, something always goes wrong."

"I try to be positive, but it's so hard. Sometimes I just don't know what I'm going to do. Maybe if I send out enough resumes, I'll get a job."

#### New Hope

"What can I learn from this? I accept the facts as they truly are, and I'm ready to move on."

"My old job isn't there. I have skills, abilities and talents. I'll find something, maybe even better, or I'll try something new."

ne thing to remember is each person goes through change differently. The time spent in each stage will vary, as will the sequence of the stages. No matter how the process plays itself out in your life, it's the right process for you. Also remember "this too shall pass," if you allow yourself the time to deal with each stage.

#### Things That Have Changed

Let's examine the way you're feeling about your employment situation. Now is the time to be truly honest about those feelings.

Many of us were taught that if we worked hard, gave 110 percent to the employer, went the extra mile and did our very best, the company would take care of us and we'd enjoy a comfortable retirement. Suddenly, that was no longer the way companies did things. More and more employers let long-term employees go. Along with the layoff comes the cancellation of life, health and dental insurance. The pension some of us were counting on to make retirement dreams come true ends up being spent to pay bills for health insurance, mortgage and car payments. This isn't at all what we expected. And even if this wasn't your plan, whatever happened to being treated fairly?

If you're new to the labor market or haven't worked for a while, you might wonder where the decent paying jobs are. You're ready, available and looking for work, but there are no jobs.

#### **Exercises**

The exercises in this chapter ask you to take an honest look at where you are in the process. They cover some very personal feelings. Therefore, complete them in a place where you feel safe. The exercises don't need to be finished in any given order and they can be "for your eyes only."

Say or write down what's on your mind about your last job. This doesn't have to be sensible or logical . . . no one else needs to see this. How do you feel about your job situation? Write what you're feeling. Don't censor yourself; just let it out. (If you're having trouble identifying your feelings, the words listed on page 11 might be helpful.)

What changes have occurred in your life over the past 12 months and how do you feel about these changes? The changes may have occurred in your employment situation or in other areas of your life. No matter what the changes may have been, it's valid to look at how you feel about them.

o exist is to change, to change is to mature, to mature is to go on creating oneself endlessly."

Henri Bergson, French philosopher

#### Things That Have Changed

	What has changed?	ı feel	What was lost?	ı feel	What are the opportunities?	ı feel
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#### "Feeling" Words

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Sad	Scared	Angry	Ashamed
Depressed Despairing	Afraid Alarmed	Aggravated Agitated	Embarrassed Idiotic
Disheartened	Anxious	Annoyed	Inadequate
Dismal	Apprehensive	Belligerent	Shameful
Dismayed	Fearful	Betrayed	Worthless
Distressed	Frightened	Bitter	
Empty	Horrified	Defiant	Hurt
Hopeless	Insecure	Disgusted	Disappointed
Lonely	Intimidated	Exasperated	Distrustful
Miserable Mournful	Panicky Shaken	Frustrated Furious	Insulted
Powerless	Terrified	Hateful	Victimized
Sorrowful	Worried	Hostile	Wounded
Unhappy	Wolfied	Incensed	
omapp)	Confused	Indignant	Others
Calm Challenged Cheerful Confident Content Delighted Ecstatic Enthusiastic Excited Glad Gleeful Joyful Joyous Optimistic Peaceful Proud	Ambivalent Baffled Bewildered Indecisive Overwhelmed Perplexed Puzzled Troubled Uncertain Unfocused Unsettled Unsure  Guilty Apologetic Regretful	Infuriated Irate Irritated Mad Obstinate Outraged Peeved Perturbed Rageful Rebellious Resentful Seething Spiteful Surly Upset Vengeful Vindictive	Apathetic Bored Curious Defensive Discontented Discouraged Envious Exhausted Hesitant Hopeful Indifferent Jealous Mischievous Powerful Restless Strong Tense Tired
Relaxed Relieved Satisfied	Remorseful		Tired Uneasy Vulnerable

# Tips for Managing Feelings

#### Talk to Others

Now that you've identified your feelings, how do you deal with them? Talking them out with others often helps. You could talk with a friend, family member, employment or school counselor, minister, social worker or psychologist (someone you know and trust). Let them know you don't want or necessarily need advice. All feelings are valid and acceptable. You just need to have someone listen to you. Ask for constructive feedback if you want it.

### Support Groups If you have a support group or

If you have a support group or job club in your area, don't hesitate to attend. It can provide you with much needed nonjudgmental support from others going through the same things. You may also find valuable tips, job leads and an opportunity to network and get new ideas. Inquire at your Minnesota WorkForce Center or local state employment service for dates, times and locations of support groups.



#### Write a Letter

If you're uncomfortable expressing your feelings, write them down. Write a letter to your former boss, telling her/him exactly how you're feeling. Write down how you're feeling about starting to look for work and the changes it has brought. Don't worry about the content or structure of the letter, because you aren't going to send it. Writing it down may release some anger you might be experiencing. This will help restore the feeling that you're in control of your life. After you've written the letter, read it aloud and then dispose of it. You could rip it up into small pieces and then burn it. You could wad it up into a ball, bat it around outside and throw it in the trash. Just do something to get rid of it. A recent study found that people who write about their anger get another job faster than those who don't.

#### Breathe Deep

When you've completed writing your letter(s), sit down with both feet on the floor, close your eyes, take a long, deep breath, picture a peaceful, pleasant place, then exhale completely. Repeat until you feel relaxed and calm.

#### Physical Exercise

Anger is a natural emotion, but it can be destructive. Therefore, we need to recognize it and take steps to control it. One way to handle anger or negative feelings is by doing something physical. You could go outside and exercise, play basketball, take a vigorous walk, go bowling, play baseball or tennis, workout or clean the house, garage or car. You can decide to walk away from your aggravating situation by doing something else like positive self-talk,

counting to 100, diverting your attention or talking to someone. As you use these positive ways of dealing with your feelings, your anxiety will lessen and your health and mood will improve. You won't be as likely to take things out on your family, friends or pets. However, if you feel you can't contain your anger and may hurt yourself or others, put your children in a safe place and then call your local crisis center.

#### Face Your Fears

It's normal for everyone to be afraid of something, but fear can be our biggest enemy. If we allow it to rule our lives, it can keep us from realizing our goals, dreams and true potential. Fear can make false events appear real. Sometimes we create excuses for ourselves so we don't have to face our fears and take a risk. For example, "No one will hire me because I am . . . too old, lack experience, have been on

#### Dealing with Fear

- Recognize everyone is afraid of something.
- Identify your fears. Figure out exactly what you're afraid of (rejection, success, failure or what others might say). Naming your fear can reduce its power.
- Talk with someone you trust. Are you being realistic in your own self-evaluation?
- Recall your strengths and successes. How have you handled other fearful situations?
- Evaluate how likely your fears will become reality. If the worst happens, how terrible will it be?
- Write an action plan to ensure it won't happen. Fear is absence of a plan. Action is the best remedy.
- Take a low-risk action. If you fear interviewing, practice interviewing with a friend or counselor.
- Use affirmations and selftalk. Visualize a positive, successful outcome.
- Face your fears. Take the risk. You can do it! You're ready! Go for it! Remember, Babe Ruth struck out many more times than he made home runs. Abraham Lincoln had many setbacks before he was elected president.

After you've confronted your fears, you'll be surprised how your confidence will be strengthened.

welfare, etc." These things don't have to stop you.

Counseling

It's necessary to work through emotions. You can get stuck in your emotions and create negative patterns that will hinder your job search and career. If the previous suggestions don't help you handle your anger, depression, fears or anxiety so you're able to do an active job search, it's a good idea to talk with a professional counselor, psychologist or psychiatrist. Everyone's stress level and pressures are different. Don't be reluctant to get the help you need. The sooner you take action to get help, the sooner you'll feel better.

Counseling can be very helpful in broadening your perspective, finding new ways of looking at the situation and getting the support and encouragement vou need.

#### Resources

Check with your Minnesota WorkForce Center, local state employment service or local county information referral center to obtain a listing of local resources that can help you during this time. The list may include free job search support groups and area agencies that can provide help. For example, in Minnesota, the United Way operates First Call for Help, a resource available 24-hours a day.

#### Stress Management Techniques

People are often unsuccessful in their job search because they haven't dealt with their feelings surrounding a job change. If not dealt with, feelings have a way of creating stress and can sometimes cause illness. Therefore, it's extremely important to use healthy ways of handling stress. Here are some suggestions.



ou can't sell yourself to a new employer if you're still angry with the last one!

### Put a checkmark by the techniques you can do during your job search.

- Get organized— create a structure for your job search.
- Exercise daily— walk, run, jog, swim, bike, dance, etc.
- Eat healthy— eat three balanced meals a day.
- Reduce junk food, sugar, caffeine and watching television.
- Avoid alcohol, drugs and smoking.
- Stay positive— use positive self-talk and affirmations, list your strengths, be with supportive people.
- Get plenty of sleep.
- Write in a journal or diary your thoughts and feelings, what you learn and your progress.
- Take a warm bath— it calms you and gives you time alone.
- Attend job support groups or clubs— share ideas, tips, stresses and accept and give praise.
- Be flexible— stay open to new ideas, think creatively, take risks.
- Take one thing at a time.
  Plan and prioritize.
- Make one change at a time. Many changes add stress.

- Relax daily— take time to do something you enjoy.
- Reward yourself when you accomplish certain job search activities and goals.
- Learn something new.
- Accept what you cannot change, change what you can, forgive self and others.
- Be thankful— find things to be thankful for.
- Say NO when you need to take care of yourself, set limits with friends and family.
- Express feelings— laugh or cry, admit your true feelings to your-self and someone your trust.
- Volunteer— doing something for others increases your self-esteem, your network and your skills.
- Find humor— watch comedies and comedians, children at play and find time for play.
- Manage time— keep schedules, set goals and time tables, use a calendar.
- Meditate on your own spiritual truths or on peaceful thoughts.
- Visualize achieving your goals, your future position, your role and situations to come.

#### Identity Worksheet

Who are you? It's easy to respond by naming the roles we play. But do those roles truly define us? Since our roles in life often change, we can maintain a healthy self-image by learning to recognize ourselves apart from those roles.

In the following exercise, think about how you'd describe yourself without using the roles you fill. For example, a person might say they were sociable, stubborn and thoughtful. Maybe they'd use words such as mystical, confident and playful. Use words that you feel truly describe you.



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## Making Ends Meet



et's be honest. When we find ourselves unemployed or underemployed, the most pressing thought is how we're going to pay the bills! It's hard to survive in today's world with little or no money. There are some practical things you can do to keep your head above water.

First, develop a realistic budget. By doing this you will find out just how much and to whom you owe money. Listed below are some steps to setting up a budget.

- Using the worksheets on pages 18 and 19, gather all your bills. Go through each of them and record the name of the creditor, the total amount you owe and the amount of any monthly payments.
- List any bills that aren't due monthly, such as car insurance or water bills. Looking through your checkbook will help you to remember these bills.
- Consider all the items you purchase with checks (food, rent, entertainment, gas, medication, etc.). Review your checkbook for common expenses. Write all these down.
- When you've listed all your bills, compare the amount you owe each month with the amount of income you'll have. Don't be discouraged if you have more in the expense column than in the income column. We'll provide you with some suggestions about how to pay these bills.
- Take a good, hard look at your expenses. Are there obvious places where you can cut corners? How about the number of times you've eaten out in the past month? How many trips to the store resulted in your purchasing only items you

- absolutely needed? Can you reduce entertainment expenses? It's important to allow yourself some entertainment each week, but it doesn't always have to cost money. Consider items you can cut and items that must remain in your budget.
- Now that you've cut some "fat" out of your expenses, consider what you can truly spend on the bills you have. For example, if you have a credit card bill with a minimum monthly payment of \$100, can you pay \$50 or \$75 each month? Don't worry about the credit card company yet, just put down what you think you can afford to pay. After you've done that, compare the expense total with the income total. Getting closer?
- Once you have the income and expense columns equal, contact your creditors and explain what's happening.
   Let them know your intentions to put forth a good-faith effort by continuing payments on these accounts. Making these contacts with creditors can help you to maintain a better credit rating.
- If you want more advice on budgeting during this time,

- contact the nearest University of Minnesota Extension Office, Minnesota WorkForce Center or local state employment service. They can give you valuable information and helpful suggestions.
- If you need credit advice, contact the Consumer Credit Counseling Service, a nonprofit service in some communities.
- If you owe child support, check to see if your county has a "Parent's Fair Share Program" for financial assistance.
- Save your receipts, because some job search expenses can be deducted from your income tax.
- If you're receiving Unemployment Insurance (UI), you're required to report on your tax forms the amount of UI you receive during the filing year. Depending on the amount of other income you earned during the filing year, you may be required to pay income tax on the UI. It's a good idea to contact the Internal Revenue Service or other tax professionals when estimating the amount you may need to put aside for payment of this tax. You can choose to have taxes withheld from your UI benefits.

#### Tips For \$aving Money

- Use public transportation, Rideshare or carpool.
- Find low-cost auto repairs.
   Some technical colleges do auto repairs at reduced prices.
- Have a garage sale.
- Rent out an extra room.
- Sell the adult toys (boat, jet ski, snowmobile, cabin).
- Sell collections or the extra car.
- Make gifts instead of buying them.
- Work odd jobs, take part-time or temporary work or become an independent contractor.
- Teach your skills at community education centers or to other local groups.
- Sell your arts and crafts.

- For recent graduates, get a deferment on school loans until you find a job.
- Shop at discount stores and thrift shops.
- Go to the dollar movies, rent movies or borrow them from the public library.
- Use discount coupons or share services like babysitting, repairs, typing or rides.
- Check your investments and insurance policies.
  - ✓ You may be over-insured or can increase your deductible.
  - ✓ Your credit cards may have a clause that allows for payment of your minimum monthly balance while you're unemployed.
- Attend concerts, museums and art galleries on reduced price days.



#### Budget Worksheet

псоте	Present Income	Anticipated Income
Wages/Unemployment Insurance	\$	\$
Interest		
Savings		
Child Support		
Loans		
Other		
Monthly Total	\$	\$

xpenses	Present Expenses	Anticipated Expenses
HOUSEHOLD		
Rent/Mortgage		
Furnishings/Equipment		
Maintenance/Repair		
Taxes		
UTILITIES		
Electricity		
Heat		
Water/Sewer		
Telephone		
FOOD & GROCERIES		
Food at Home		
School/Work Lunch		
TRANSPORTATION		
Car Payment		
Gas		
Maintenance/Repair		
Bus/Taxi		
MEDICAL		
Doctor/Dentist		
Prescriptions		

#### Budget Worksheet (continued)

Expenses	Present Expenses	Anticipated Expenses
Total	\$	\$
(Carried Forward)		
CHILDCARE		
CLOTHING		
Laundry/Dry Cleaning		
PERSONAL CARE		
Hair Care		
INSURANCE		
Automobile		
Home/Renter's		
Life		
Medical		
RECREATION & ENTERTAINMENT		
Cable TV		
Movies/Rental Movies		
Magazines/Newspapers		
Cigarettes/Alcohol		
Gambling/Lottery		
Eating Out		
GIFTS		
CONTRIBUTIONS		
INSTALLMENTS		
Department Store Credit Cards		
Bank Charge Cards		
Loans		
CHILD SUPPORT		
Children's School Expenses		
JOB SEARCH		
Postage		
Copies		
Resume Paper/Supplies		
MISCELLANEOUS		

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#### "What to Keep"

Now that you've looked at your budget, consider what you need to keep and what has to go. Most of us think about eliminating entertainment and hobbies when money gets tight. This may not be a good idea. You may need to keep activities that provide a release from tension and stress. For example, now may not be the time to give up

your health club membership. Working out is one way to reduce stress and maintain a positive outlook. Looking your very best as you're seeking employment may require keeping your appointment with the hair stylist/barber. Staying in touch with coworkers and friends is an excellent way to network during this time. Perhaps you

will want to continue having lunch with them occasionally.

List the activities in your life that provide relief from stress, help maintain a good selfimage, enable you to continue communicating with people, etc. Then decide if the activity is one you can keep in your schedule— or not.

### "What to Keep" Worksheet

Activity	Keep or Not
1.	
2.	The state of the s
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	n de la compania del compania del compania de la compania del compania de la compania de la compania del compania de la compania de la compania de la compania del compania
10.	
11.	
12.	
13.	
14.	
15.	



#### **Affirmations**

Affirmations can help you obtain your goals and dreams. Repeating positive statements about yourself will help you stay focused, motivated and create ways to achieve your goals. If you repeat them out loud several times a day, you will believe them and avoid falling into negative self-talk and actions. Since your

thoughts and beliefs direct your actions, you will feel good about yourself, look confident and have a sense of control over your future. Choose one affirmation each day to use in all your activities. See if you become more positive about yourself and your life. Try writing your own unique affirmations.

- I am in charge of my own life and fully able to change
- I am talented and capable
- I am capable of meeting any challenge
- I repeat affirmations daily to stay motivated and achieve my goals
- I am happy, healthy and calm
- I am full of enthusiasm and vitality
- I am proud of myself because . . .
- I am learning not to blame
- I set goals in every area of my life and review them daily
- I focus on my strengths, accomplishments and goals
- I succeed by making the most of my time
- I am taking control of my thoughts and my life
- I choose the way I respond to outside events
- I take action that will improve my self-image
- I have a clear mental picture of my goals and ideals
- I am relaxed, confident and creative
- I am successful in my job search because I believe in myself and my goals
- Every day, in every way, I am getting closer to my goals

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Chapter

# Job Search Preparation

Be prepared . . . a must for every jobseeker.



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# Job Search Preparation

### Organization

successful job search requires organization and effort. You cannot simply walk out the door and wander around asking about jobs. Nor can you look for work only when you feel like it or when it's convenient. Planning and organizing are critical to job search success. For those who are accustomed to self-directed activities, this won't be difficult— but for those who are used to having someone else organize their activities, this will require mastering new skills. You may not consider yourself an organized person, but you can learn this skill. Organizing your job search will save you time and effort. Good self-management and organization skills are valuable resources no matter what your experience might be.

You will need to develop a new routine to be successful in your job search. You may have to create a new set of priorities and schedules. Be aware that there will be many things that will distract you. Just about anything will sound better than looking for work. Don't be fooled; your number one priority is finding that new job. Don't let anything get in your way.

#### Time and Job Hunting

Before we look at the finer points of organizing a job search, we need to make something clear—looking for work is hard work! It takes time and energy to be successful. Most people work a 40-hour week. If you're unemployed, those hours are available for your job search. If you're employed but seeking new opportunities, you need to make time for your job search. Be consistent in the amount of time you spend each week looking for a job. Don't spend 40 hours one week and then nothing for the next two weeks! The hardest part is

getting started. Once you get the momentum into your search, you will want to keep moving forward.

Don't think of yourself as unemployed. You have a joba full-time job. If you're employed, think of your job search as a part-time job. You're engaged in a very calculated sales and marketing campaign designed to sell your skills and experience to a prospective employer. You're now self-employed— you're the boss. It's up to you to make sure the job gets done. Set your schedule and stick to it. The only reasons you wouldn't conduct your job search would be the same reasons you'd use for not going to work.



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Search Preparation

#### Advance Scheduling &



Successful jobseekers have mastered the art of managing their schedules. Job search scheduling and goal setting should be done daily and weekly. Establish measurable goals. For example, block out the hours you've committed to the search and identify what you plan to accomplish. If you set 9-11 a.m., Monday, for library research, your goal could be to identify 10 new employers you can pursue. Tuesday's goal could be contacting the 10 new employers you identified Monday. Tuesday, 1-3 p.m., may be scheduled for making direct telephone contacts. Be realistic, but challenge yourself.

### Make Yourself Accountable

Create an area in your home where your entire job search is centered. This will help you feel like looking for a job when you're in that area. If you keep all your job search equipment, supplies and information there, you will stay organized and ready to look for work. (See the *Checklist of Job Search Supplies*.)

Check your progress at the end of each day and week. See if you accomplished your goals. When you do, commend yourself and decide if you can set tougher goals next time. If you didn't accomplish your goals, explore why and decide what you need to do to succeed in the future. Maybe your goals were not realistic— you tried to do too much. Learn from this and plan more realistic goals for the future. It may be a good strategy to involve someone else in your search. Talk with a trusted friend; give them permission to hold you accountable to your plans. Attending a job club would also enable you to discuss your job search with others.

#### Keep Accurate Records

If you're conducting a serious job campaign, you may make hundreds of contacts and generate new opportunities daily. Don't simply rely on your memory. You need to have and maintain a filing system, just as you'd make a grocery or "To Do" list. There are a variety of systems you can use including alphabetized three-ring binders, small pocket calendars and notebooks. Check your local office supply or discount store for examples. Just keep it easy to use and maintain. (See the Checklist of Job Search Supplies.)

#### Location

The number of jobs available in your field will likely be much greater if you are willing to consider commuting or relocating to other areas. Where you work is a very personal decision with implications for family,

friends and even your way of life. At times, advancement in an organization is only possible through relocation. If you are considering relocation as an option, there are a number of websites that have tools which help you plan that move. Use a search engine to look for "relocation resources."

#### Checklist of Job Search Supplies

Having the necessary tools and supplies available for your job search will help manage your job search time. Below is a sample checklist of helpful job search supplies.

- O Notepads (Scratch Pads)
- O Sheet Protectors
- O Sheet Dividers
- O Notebooks
- O Pocket Calculator
- o Stamps
- O Envelopes (different sizes)
- O Paper (draft and quality)
- O Address Book
- Calendar (desk and pocket sizes)
- O Printer Ink Cartridges
- Pens (blue, black and red ink; erasable)
- O Pencils
- Correction Fluid (use sparingly)
- O Correction Ribbons
- **O** Erasers
- Stapler/Staples
- O Paper Clips
- O Staple Remover
- O Business Card Holder
- O Three-Hole Punch
- Manila File Folders
- O Hanging File Folders



This symbol indicates a connection to networking.

### Job Seeking Activity Goals

Filling out this sheet will help you plan and achieve your job goals.

Period:	to	

Activity	Goal (# or date)	Actual (# or date)
Contact Minnesota WorkForce Center (WFC) or local state employment service		
Familiarize yourself with the WFC Resource Area		
Review electronic job search tools		
ttend job search training sessions or related training		
Research employers or go to the library		
Attend support groups/job clubs		
Read local newspapers		
Read trade journals		
Read other publications		
Network		
Make cold calls (phone/in person)		
Complete/update resume		
Send cover letters/resumes		
Attend job fairs		
Participate in informational interviewing		
Talk to someone every day about your job search		
Attend professional organizations		
alk to your references and write your reference sheet		
Make follow-up phone calls		
Follow-up on job leads		
Interview with employer		
Send thank you/follow-up letters		101 Sp. 2 Mars
Other Activities (list)		

People don't plan to fail, they fail to plan.



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Search Preparation

#### Job Search Schedule Sample

Week of September 7

Time	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
8:00	Shower and dress. Read the newspaper.	Shower and dress by 8:30. Set goals for the day/week.	Same as Monday.	Same as Monday.	Same as Monday.	Same as Monday.	Go to the farmers' market.
9:00	Read Sunday paper. Get to the ads by 9:30.	Respond by phone to Sunday ads.	Make networking calls.	Return calls. Schedule appointments.	Attend Job Club.	Return calls. Schedule appointments.	
10:00	Take a walk, play with the kids, etc.	Get info for writ- ing responses to ads. Go to the Minnesota WorkForce Center.	Make networking calls.	Attend Job Fair.	Attend Job Club.	Make networking calls.	
11:00	Have some fun!	Write cover letters. Make changes on resume.	Return calls. Schedule appointments.		Do informational interview.		
12:00	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
1:00		Appointment	Appointment	Check out Minnesota WorkForce Center Resource Room computer.	Appointment	Research the employer for the interview next week.	
2:00		Appointment	Appointment	Call on leads obtained at Minnesota WorkForce Center.	Appointment	Research the employer for the interview next week.	
3:00		Appointment	Appointment	Appointment		Research the employer for the interview next week.	
4:00		Walk	Walk	Walk	Walk	Walk	
5:00		Evaluate today. Review tomorrow. Send thank you notes.	Same as Monday.	Same as Monday.	Same as Monday.	Same as Monday and review the week.	

	Job	S	ea	rch	P	rep	arc	itio	n
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#### Job Search Schedule

Week of

Time	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		,					

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Job Search Preparation

# Networking Log

It's important to document and follow-up all job leads. Use this sheet for keeping track of all your networking activity. Always ask if your contacts will suggest another contact. Keep the ball rolling!

In making your network contact, did you

Contact Name	
Employer Name	
Address	
Action Plan	
Email Address	
Follow-up	
Summary of Conversation/Contact	

#### receive other job leads? If so, list them below. Contact Names Received Name Name Position Position **Employer Employer** Phone Phone Fax/Email Fax/Email Name Name Position Position **Employer Employer** Phone Phone Fax/Email Fax/Email



No matter where you get your job leads, it's important to keep track of them. Follow-up on each lead, which may provide you with other job leads. Don't be afraid to ask for other contacts or leads.

Employer	
Phone	
Fax/Email Address	
Position	
How did I find out about this job?	
Response	
Date Sent or	
Faxed Resume	
Follow-up Date	
Results and Other	
Useful Information	

Search Preparati

# Research

Research is another important part of your preparation. When some people hear the word "research," they have visions of a mad scientist surrounded by test tubes, microscopes and Bunsen burners. Others might think of endless trips to the library where they have to read stacks of books. The type of research needed in the job search isn't what you might think.

Why do research at all? When you research an industry, occupation or employer, you gain the information you need to make a good decision about the direction of your job search. You get to decide whether to apply for a job at a specific employer based on facts, not on feelings. You're in control. The information you gain while conducting this research will also impress the prospective employer during the interview. It says you're serious about your job search. Research can be done on occupations, industries, individual companies, availability of jobs in your area and on other topics.

Research doesn't have to be time-consuming. You don't have to check out 25 books from a library. Research can be as simple as looking at newspaper employment ads. Newspaper ads, the Internet, employer brochures and Internet home pages can be good resources for discovering what experience, training and knowledge are required by a variety of employers. You can measure your qualifications against those required by the employer. Do you need to get more training in a certain area? Does your resume cover the qualifications most requested by the employer?

#### Benefits of Research

- Increased job search confidence
- Increased control over the job search
- Increased decision making ability
- Increased potential for job search success
- Increased employment satisfaction
- Increased potential for economic security

# Researching an Employer

Before you apply for a job at a particular employer, you should learn as much about that employer as you can. Researching the employer will give you the information you need to decide if this is an employer for which you'd like to work. Would employment with them meet your career values?

Listed below are some of the many sources that have information about employers—

- Minnesota WorkForce Center Resource Area staff or staff at your local state employment service
- **People** who are working with the employer
- Current newspapers, trade journals and business magazines (Older copies of these can also be found in library archives.)
- Internet (Employer home pages often include extensive information including their vision, mission statement, product descriptions, hiring

ohn was looking for a welding job, although he had very little work experience. He did not think it was necessary to do research as he had an interview already set up with a small employer. After completing his job search training, he decided it might be to his benefit to research the employer. After researching, he went to his interview. One of the first questions asked of him was, "Tell me what you know about this company." Since he had done the research, he was able to impress the interviewer with the knowledge he had learned. The very next day John was offered the welding job.



policies and job openings. Articles in Internet publications contain information that relates to industries, occupations or employers. Internet newsgroups and email are excellent resources for networking.)

- Libraries (Most have special sections on occupations, careers and job search information. Talk to your librarian about newspaper indexes, which list recent articles about employers.)
- Colleges and university placement offices
- Chamber of Commerce or Jaycees
- Alumni Associations
- Annual reports, advertisements, employer newsletters and brochures (Often you can obtain these by contacting the employer's public relations office or personnel department.)

### Sample Questions

- What products/services does the employer provide?
- How many employees does the employer have?
- How long have they been in business?
- Where is the employer located?
   Does it have more than one location? Is it on the bus line?
- What is the employer's mission statement or philosophy?
- What is the company's financial situation? Is it making money?
- Has the employer undergone any downsizing in the last five years?
- Is the employer involved in community services? If so, what?

#### Sources of Published Information

- Library
- Internet
- Telephone Yellow Pages
- Professional/trade associations and unions
- Business and Manufacturer Guide
- <u>Dunn & Bradstreet</u> <u>Directory</u>
- Standard and Poor's
- Corporate Report Fact Book
- Corporate Yellow Book

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- Business Almanac
- Business Directory
- Employer database such as InfoTrac at local libraries
- News articles about employers
- Business Periodicals Index

Creative Job Search

# Labor Market Survey

The purpose of a labor market survey is to figure out if an occupation or specific line of work is appropriate for you. A labor market survey may be conducted over the telephone, by email or on Internet newsgroups. You will want to find out about—

- Competition for available job openings
- Background and training requirements
- Prevailing wages
- Future trends of the occupation

Talking with people currently working in the occupation you're interested in is one way of getting up-to-date information about this occupation.

You will need to have a clear idea of the specific occupation or line of work that interests you. You can clarify an occupational definition by consulting the Occupational Information Network (O\*Net), Minnesota Career Information System (MCIS) or other reference books available at Minnesota WorkForce Centers or local state employment service, public libraries, technical schools, colleges and universities.

#### Conducting a Labor Market Survey

- Identify people with knowledge about the job or occupation you're investigating. <u>Vocational Biographies</u>, business directories, the yellow pages, Internet newsgroups and Internet home pages are useful sources for contact information.
- **Contact** each person on your list. Direct your inquiries to people knowledgeable about hiring practices. Say you're seeking advice and information and that you will be brief. Explain you're seeking career information, not employment. Most people are willing to interact for a short time. It may be necessary, however, to check back. Try to get a name, then ask the person when you could contact them again.
- Prepare a short list of questions (3-5).
  - What are the background and training requirements for this occupation?
  - How many applicants do you usually have for a job opening in this field?
  - How many have you hired in the last year?
  - What is the typical entry-level wage?
  - What is the typical top wage?
  - What are the future trends for this field?
  - What recommendations could you give for someone who is considering this field?
- Write down the key comments.
- **Contact** between six and 10 people to obtain a valid sample. Your survey results will be more reliable if you contact several people.
- **Ask** if the person is willing to meet for a longer, face-to-face interview, if you feel the phone conversation is going well. Also ask if there is anyone else you could contact.
- **Review** your notes. Notice which comments were the most optimistic, the most pessimistic and whether there is agreement from those you contacted. You may want to do other research, including reading, doing in-person interviews, observing the job being done (job shadowing) or sampling tasks of the job.

# Informational Interviewing

#### What is It?

It's *not* an interview for a position. It's a meeting of usually 15 to 30 minutes with a person who has hands-on experience in the area you want to know more about. The purpose of an informational interview is to help you define your career options. It's also useful in researching companies where you may want to work.

# Informational Interviewing Objectives

- To gain solid information that will help you evaluate how your skills and interests dovetail with a particular career or business
- To learn what the industry or employer values in its employees
- To increase your network by leaving a positive impression with someone who could provide encouragement, support and future access to job leads
- To find out whether jobs are available in the field or business you want to enter
- To find out suggestions they have about the career or the employer
- To subtly market your skills in case they want to contact you when an opening occurs (Ask if they think your resume would be appropriate for their employer or this occupation.)

Be sure they don't get the impression you're asking them for a job! Don't misrepresent yourself either. Be honest.

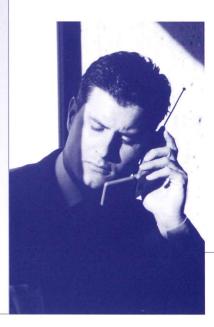
#### Who Do I Contact?

Everyone you know.

Ask, "Do you know anyone who works for General Mills?" "Do you know anyone in a nonprofit organization?" "Do you know anyone who does freelance writing?" Then, once you have a name . . .

"Mrs. Smith, Brad Johnson suggested I speak with you. My name is Steven Olson and I am interested in the \_\_\_\_\_\_ field. I could use some advice from someone who is in this field. Do you have any time this week when I could meet with you? I know you're busy, so I only need about 15 minutes of your time. I would really like to learn more about your company and the \_\_\_\_\_ field from someone like you."

You may also want to explain a little about your employment background and why this area is appealing to you.



# Preparing for the Interview

Select questions relating to the occupation or business you're considering. Research key areas of potential discussion. Take an active role in the interview. Encourage suggestions. Ask questions that provide the information you want. Show your interest and knowledge.

Keep in mind that you can also ask about other things. Get a sense for whether they enjoy their work. Decide what they actually do, how they spend their day and their short- and long-term responsibilities. Look for the answers behind the answers.

Develop rapport with the interviewer by recognizing similar interests and being agreeable. It's important to gauge just how friendly your contacts really are. If they're sympathetic, you can ask hard questions which may reveal doubts about the field. If they're standoffish or judgmental, be cautious. Don't be afraid to ask technical questions, especially if it shows what you already know about the field.

The Sample Informational Interview Questions on page 37 lists questions that you may want to ask.

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ob Search Preparation

#### When You Go



This is an opportunity to meet a person in the profession you're hoping to enter. Dress professionally, take paper for writing notes and take an extra resume in case there is an opportunity to have it critiqued or even leave with the employer.

Avoid anything that might jeopardize your interviewer's desire to refer you to other people. One important objective is getting additional leads and referrals, which may eventually lead to a job.

#### When It's Over



- You should have names of people to contact.
- You should follow-up on the advice the employer gives you.
- You should have a good idea if this is where you'd want to work or could work.
- Recap what you just learned or need to learn.
- Write down additional notes/ thoughts/evaluations for future reference.
- · Ask for a business card which will give you the information needed for the thank you

Don't forget to send a thank

being so generous with their

time. Consider including a

personal calling card.

you note to the person for

Accountant

#### **JUSTIN TIME**

111 Job Avenue St. Paul, MN 55555 (651) 555-5555

Accountant Six years of experience

Fax: (651) 444-4444 Email: justin.time@rrr.com

# Research and Labor Market Information Worksheet

Employer	
Address	
Type of Business	
Year Business Started	
Financial Status	
Number of Employees	
Product and Services Description	
Name of Contact Person	
Date Contacted	
Date to Follow-up	
Other Subsidiaries	
What are the background and tra (For more information on occupations, co Department of Employment and Econom Labor Market Information Help Line at 65 email Imi@ngwmail.des.state.mn.us)	ic Development,
How many applicants do you usua	ally have for a job opening in this field?
3	red in the last year?
	e for this occupation?
3.	
	give for someone who is considering or may be entering this field?

# Sample Informational Interview Questions

Consider using open-ended questions that elicit more than a yes or no answer.

- What is a typical day on this job really like?
- How did you get into this field?
- What do you like about your job? Any dislikes?
- What's the best way to find out about jobs in this field?
- What kind of experience or training is required?
- What is the career ladder for this position?
- May I have a copy of a job description?
- What are employers looking for (skills, education, experience)?
- How important is the resume and what makes one impressive?
- What do you look for in employees?
- How do you stay current in your knowledge?
- What's the corporate culture like here?
- Are there related fields I might want to look into if few jobs are available in my primary career goal?
- What are current job prospects like?
- What are the most important parts of your job?
- Is your job typical of others in this field?
- Which firms do you think are your toughest competitors, and how do they differ from your company?
- Is there anyone else you can refer me to in this field?
- How do you normally hire for this occupation?
- What is the average turnover in this type of job?
- Is my resume appropriate for this occupation?
- What would you recommend I do at this point to get into this field?
- Would you provide feedback as to the appropriateness of my resume for this occupation?
- What are the future trends for this field?



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Job Search Preparati

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Chapter S

# Skills Identification

The foundation of a successful job search . . . skills.



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# Skills Identification

kills are the foundation of an effective job search. Employers don't just want to know where you've been and what job titles you've had. They want to know what you can do. If you purchase a product that would cost thousands of dollars annually, you'd want to know what it could do.

The average person has between 500 and 800 skills! You need to identify at least five to 10 skills that are the most attractive to potential employers. Many people have a hard time identifying their skills. Don't think of a skill as something that requires years of formal education and experience to develop. A skill is anything you can do right now!

# Skills

Skills are things you can do that are related to employment or that you do in the course of your daily life. Skills that a person uses for a specific job such as sewing, record keeping, cooking, cleaning, computer programming and welding are called job-specific skills. Skills also include things you can do that aren't tied to a specific job or occupation, such as being on time, dependable, independent, flexible and ambitious. We call these self-management skills.

A combination of skills are used to accomplish a task. We accomplish many tasks each day. Tasks are part of our recreation, hobbies and volunteer work. Some tasks are related to employment. An administrative assistant who writes a letter uses the following

skills—typing, writing, editing and the ability to meet deadlines. A computer programmer who troubleshoots a network failure uses proofreading skills to find errors in computer codes. A cook uses slicing and cleaning skills to prepare vegetables. We also use skills to complete tasks in the course of our daily lives. Balancing a checking account, shopping, driving and mowing the lawn are all examples of tasks that require skills.

A combination of tasks make up an activity. Think of an activity as a major area of responsibility that requires a set of tasks. Many times skills and tasks seem interchangeable. That's because both are elements of an activity. It's up to you to apply these principles to your own job search.

Skills are the performance specifications of your product— you.

#### A Lesson From Sales

Looking for work is selling a product. A successful job search is a sales and marketing campaign. To successfully sell a product, a salesperson must know as much as possible about that product. The same is true for your job search.

Consider a major purchase you made or are planning to makea car, appliances, a computer or stereo equipment. If you're a smart consumer, you will shop around. You ask questions. You want to know what sets a product apart from the competition. It's the salesperson's job to convince the buyer that their product is the best. This is why salespeople spend many hours learning their products. This is also why you need to invest time in identifying your skills.

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Us Identification

### Job Skills

Job skills are those skills specific to a job or occupation. An administrative assistant is skilled in typing, word processing, filing, answering telephones and company correspondence. An accountant's skills would include calculating accounts receivable and accounts payable, preparing taxes and using computer accounting programs. A salesperson's skills would include customer service, record keeping, order processing, inventory management, billing and product displays.

Behind most skills lies a body of knowledge. The person performing computer programming has learned a computer language such as Visual Basic. A cook knows about cooking techniques such as basting or baking. These bodies of knowledge are also skills.

Job skills are important to employers for obvious reasons. They're the specific skills employers look for in a candidate. Job skills don't always come from employment. They may be developed through education, hobbies, community activities and life experiences. Common activities such as shopping, managing finances, balancing a bank account, hosting a party and teaching a child all contain potential job skills.

### Self-Management Skills

These are skills you use day-to-day to get along with others to survive. They're the skills that make you unique. Sincerity, reliability, tactfulness, patience, flexibility, timeliness and tolerance are all examples of self-management skills. Motivational attributes and attitudes are also self-management skills. Persistence, drive and cooperation are examples.

Don't underestimate self-management skills, especially those that show motivation and a good work attitude. Employers look for these skills to determine how a candidate will fit into the organization. How a person will fit in is an important consideration for employers. These skills are especially important for people who are seeking their first job or returning to employment after an absence.

### Transferable Skills

Many skills can be applied to a variety of activities. They can transfer from one activity to another. Self-management skills are highly transferable. They apply to most situations. However, a number of jobspecific skills are also transferable. If you can operate a drill press, you have skills to operate other types of machinery. If you can balance a personal bank account, you have math aptitude skills to balance a business account. If you coordinate events, lead meetings, participate on teams for community activities or personal interests— you have skills that transfer to employment.

Transferable skills are important for many reasons. Many jobseekers are unlikely to find a job identical to their previous employment. Therefore, it's critical for them to carefully evaluate how their skills transfer into other opportunities. People seeking their first job, making a major career change or returning to employment after a long absence will mostly use transferable skills in their job search.

Activity	Task	Potential Skills
Shopping	Shopping List	Planning/Organizational skills Budgeting Time management Product evaluation
Yard Work	Lawn Care	Determining nutrition, etc Physical endurance/coordination Equipment maintenance Safety operations Chemical applications, etc.

### Skills Identification Methods

There are many methods for identifying skills. Whatever method you use, consider the following—

- Don't get hung up over definitions or the process of how you identify your skills. The goal is to generate a list of skills. Definitions and process are simply tools to help you achieve that goal.
- Don't limit yourself. Give yourself the benefit of the doubt. List everything that remotely looks like a skill.
- You don't have to be an expert to claim a skill.
   Include skills you may be just learning.
- Have fun! Make a game out of it. Work through your skills identification with a friend.

The main reason some people have trouble finding a job is failure to describe skills or abilities clearly.

#### Method One

#### Step 1

Write the title of an employment-related activity. Focus on those activities that potentially demonstrate skill and experience relative to employment. You may get these titles from skills you may have gained while working for community organizations, volunteer activities and employment.

#### Step 2

List the tasks involved in performing this activity. Tasks are the basic functions of an activity.

#### Step 3

List the skills involved in accomplishing each task.
Be sure to include job, selfmanagement and transferable skills.

#### Method Two

Look for skill words that you recognize in books, magazines, publications and on the Internet. Skill words can be found in— The Occupational Outlook Handbook (may be found at your local library, Minnesota WorkForce Center or local state employment service), how-to books, hobby books, technical manuals, newspapers, magazines and classified advertisements.

#### Method Three

Network with friends, associates and family. Ask them what skills they see that you have. (See exercises beginning on page 53.)

Activity/Title	Task	<b>Skills</b> — job, self-management, transferable
Administrative Assistant	Answering company correspondence	Typing, word processing, tactfulness, timeliness, responsible, creative, dependable, detail-oriented, sincere, meeting deadlines, communicating, helping others, problem solving, checking for accuracy, researching, writing clearly and concisely
	Answering telephones	Getting along well with others, listening, mediating, communicating, respectful, helpful, resolving conflict, developing rapport, assertiveness, dependable, outgoing, pleasant, sensitive, tolerant, detail-oriented, enthusiastic, friendly, intelligent, kind, mature, patient, sincere, tactful, understanding

# Goal Setting

# Career Planning

During the average lifetime, an adult will have many jobs, several different careers and will spend half their waking hours working. Yet that same person will spend more time watching television in one week than they will spend in their lifetime planning for employment!

Most of this book deals with the goal of finding employment in a generic sense. Finding out which line of work is right for you isn't covered in this section. If you don't have that clearly determined yet, you're encouraged to do so now. Much of what follows cannot be applied until you've decided upon this important goal. Career counselors are available through Minnesota WorkForce Centers, local state employment service, schools and private organizations. There are many books on career planning available through the library or local bookstores.

Job Search Objective

You must have a job goal to conduct an effective job search campaign. You can't set out on a quest for employment looking for just anything. If you do, you will waste a lot of effort. Employers will quickly

recognize that you don't know what you want. This is comparable to a salesperson trying to sell a product without knowing its features.

Salespeople know what their product can do and they know the market for their product. In the same manner, you need to target your job search campaign to those employers who need your skills and can offer you the opportunities you're seeking.

Simply saying that you're looking for a good job that pays well isn't enough. Identifying the specific types of jobs for which you're qualified will focus your effort to those employers who match your employment objective. Furthermore, when you approach an employer, describe your skills, which will tell them what it is you can do. Tell them the kind of work you're looking for. Don't expect them to analyze your qualifications and tell you where you might fit into their organization. Skills sell the product— you!

Take the time to think about what you want from that next job. Conditions of employment, wages, location, hours and benefits are important considerations. You may also be looking for job security or advancement potential.

Look for ways to expand your opportunities. This means you may have to make some choices. Goals should be realistic and achievable. Keep this in mind when considering your expectations. A good strategy is to write down all the conditions that you'd like in a job, then categorize them as required, desired and optional. If you find that you aren't getting interviews, or that you aren't finding jobs that meet your expectations, reevaluate your criteria for employment.



**Judy** lived in a small town in Minnesota. She went to college and became a certified art therapist. Full of hope, she pursued her dream. However, she never worked as an art therapist. She didn't want to move, but there are not many related jobs in small communities. Her job goal was not achievable because of her location requirement.

Jim was an experienced tool and die maker who was laid off due to a plant closing. He was considered one of the best in his trade and was at the upper end of the pay scale. After investing six months in an exhaustive job search with no success, Jim was forced to reconsider his goals. His question was whether he should lower his expectations or expand the commutable distance he was willing to travel. His decision was to expand the distance, and within a short time he secured employment that met his standards.

**Bob** had extensive experience making ceramic figures. He mixed materials and extruded them into molds. Once the piece was set, it was then sanded and inspected. Since most ceramic companies are small, Bob was challenged to find opportunities that used his skills. Bob discovered the same basic extruding and finishing operations are used to work with plastics, light metals and even heavy foundry work.

After a long absence to raise her three children. Sue wanted to reenter the workforce. She had no recent employment experience, and her education was outdated. However, Sue has mastered many skills through managing a household on a limited budget and through volunteer work with the YWCA. Through a careful skill assessment and some creativity, Sue was able to identify many skills important to potential employers.

# Transferable Skills and Your Job Search Goal

Transferable skills are another way to expand your job search. Once you've identified your skills, look for ways they might transfer to other jobs. The transferability of self-management skills is obvious. All employers are looking for motivation and dependability. But many job skills are also transferable, and transferable job skills open doors to new opportunities.

Look for ways that your skills transfer to other employment opportunities. If you decide to pursue these opportunities, your next challenge is to find effective ways to present these skills to a potential employer.

Goal setting is an important part of a successful job search. It's critical that you take the time to establish clear job search goals. This takes research and an honest self-assessment. Consider talking to a professional career counselor and taking career tests (aptitude, interest, values and personality inventory). You will certainly want to research the labor market.

Focus on the job that you plan to pursue right now. Your immediate need for employment should be a step in your longterm career plans.

As you explore your job search goal, you will be considering criteria for the ultimate job. Throughout the process, a healthy dose of reality is important. Remember that your goals must be attainable. If you find your dream job isn't immediately achievable, reevaluate and plan the steps to achieve your goal. Secondary job goals are often among these steps. A secondary goal may include part-time, temporary, evening or contract employment. It may be an opportunity for advancement or self-employment. It may be short-term employment while you pursue other opportunities. Whatever the case, consider secondary goals early in your job search.

The worksheet and checklists at the end of this chapter will help you explore your values and establish your employment goals. Another useful activity is to return to the list of your skills and mark those that you'd like to use in future employment.

You can only hit a target if you aim for it.

Creative Job Search

# The Employer Perspective

enerally, employers aren't in the business of career development. Although many employers are interested in the career goals of their employees, the needs of the organization are their first priority. For a successful job search, match your skills and goals to the needs of the employer.

You don't have to match all of the skills needed for an occupation to pursue that occupation. The best candidates for a job rarely match all of the requirements of an employer. Many factors go into the hiring processincluding personality and motivation. The most successful jobseekers may not be the most qualified. Those who demonstrate the desired qualities sought by employers are the ones who will ultimately succeed.

Strategies for identifying the skills employers desire are similar to those for identifying your own skills. The goal is to learn as much as possible about the industry, occupation and employer. Position descriptions, industry and company literature, employment advertisements and Internet websites are all sources of information. You may also draw on the knowledge of your contacts, conduct informational interviews or participate in Internet discussion groups.

### The Mature Worker

As a mature worker, you've achieved many of your career objectives. Mature workers have multiple skills they've learned through their many years of participation in the workforce and through the volunteering they may have done.

You're in charge of your career. You've adapted to many changes and now you can use this to your advantage. Mature workers bring to the job many assets that younger people haven't vet acquired. You're reliable and have experience, multiple skills and a strong work ethic!

Mature workers often hear the phrases "you're overqualified" or "you wouldn't be interested in this job." You must identify the benefits you bring to the workforce, thus making you the best candidate.



Rita is considering retail sales as an immediate job goal. Her research shows that retail employers require good customer service skills. Customer service is not a skill that she identified. Her past employment as an inventory clerk in a warehouse required little customer contact. Yet, in that job she coordinated the distribution of inventory to several departments and worked very closely with staff. This work experience, along with her volunteer experience as a school fundraiser. demonstrates excellent customer service skills.

The important thing isn't where you are, but where you're going.

# Exercises

The following exercises will help you identify your own skills and give you ideas for jobs where those skills are in demand.

# Accomplishment Worksheet

An effective salesperson will describe the specifications of a product as well as promote its performance and note examples of success and customer satisfaction. Your accomplishments are a record of success. Employers want to know how, where and when you used those skills. They want to hear how you excelled in your performance. Your accomplishments set you apart from the competition.

List your accomplishments on the blanks. Include any successes in your life. There are no wrong answers. Include some accomplishments from past employment or an employmentrelated activity. Include ways you improved, met a specific challenge or saved time and money. These may have been from your own effort or as part of a team. When stating an accomplishment, use measures whenever possible.

#### Examples—

- Successfully managed \$500,000 accounts receivables and reduced delinquent accounts by 15 percent.
- Participated on a fundraising team for the YWCA which raised \$15,000 for youth programs.
- Successfully managed a household of four on a \$900 a month budget.
- Restored a 1936 Ford to original condition.

Accom	olishn	nents	
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Creative Job Search

### How Others See Me

Ask someone who is close to you— spouse, sibling, roommate or friend—to circle 10 to 15 traits that describe you. Their impressions may surprise you and possibly point you in some new direction. Look for ways to maximize your strengths and overcome your weaknesses.

Able	Fearful	Mature	Realistic
Accepting	Foolish	Modest	Reasonable
Active	Frank	Mystical	Reassuring
Adaptable	Friendly	Naive	Reflective
Ambitious	Frugal	Negative	Relaxed
Angry	Gentle	Neurotic	Reliable
Anxious	Giving	Noisy	Religious
Assertive	Gruff	Observant	Remote
Bitter	Gullible	Obsessive	Resentful
Bold	Hard	Organized	Reserved
Bright	Helpful	Original	Resolute
Calm	Helpless	Overconfident	Respectful
Careless	Honorable	Overemotional	Responsible
Caring	Idealistic	Overprotective	Responsive
Certain	Imaginative	Passive	Rigid
Cheerful	Inconsiderate	Paternal	Sarcastic
Clever	Independent	Patient	Satisfied
Cold	Innovative	Perceptive	Scientific
Confident	Insensitive	Perfectionist	Searching
Conforming	Insincere	Persuasive	Self-Accepting
Controlled	Intelligent	Petty	Self-Assertive
Courageous	Introverted	Playful	Self-Aware
Creative	Intuitive	Pleasant	Self-Conscious
Critical	Irresponsible	Poised	Self-Indulgent
Cynical	Irritable	Pompous	Self-Righteous
Demanding	Jealous	Powerful	Sensitive
Dependable	Jovial	Precise	Unpredictable
Dependent	Juvenile	Pretentious	Unreasonable
Determined	Kind	Principled	Unstructured
Dignified	Knowledgeable	Progressive	Useful
Disciplined	Lazy	Protective	Vain
Domineering	Liberal	Proud	Vulnerable
Dutiful	Lively	Quarrelsome	Warm
Efficient	Logical	Questioning	Wise
Elusive	Loving	Quiet	Withdrawn
Ethical	Manipulative	Radical	Witty
Extroverted	Materialistic	Rational	Worried
Fair	Maternal	Reactionary	Youthful

### Occupational Titles

Use the following list of job titles as a brainstorming tool when considering job goals.

Accountant
Architect
Assembler
Cabinet Maker
Carpenter
Cashier
Chef
Clerk
Cook
Counselor
Dentist

Doctor
Drafter
Editor
Engineer
Financial Analyst
Graphic Designer
Inspector
Lab Technician
Librarian
Machine Operator
Machinist

Mason Nurse Painter Programmer Salesperson Scientist Secretary Teacher Veterinarian Welder

Manager

### **Employment-Related Titles**

Community involvement and volunteer experience may be a valuable resource for your job search. The following are common titles. Just attach the name of the activity or community organization.

Example— YMCA Volunteer or School Fundraiser

Campaigner Consultant Coordinator Director Fundraiser Leader Member Organizer

Promoter Secretary Solicitor Sponsor

Teacher Treasurer Volunteer Worker

### Job Skills

The following is a short list of job skills. (There are literally thousands of job-specific skills.) You will have to research the job skills specific to your occupation.

Accounting Auditing **Brake Alignments Building Maintenance** C++ Programming Carpet Laying Cleaning **CNC** Machine Operation

Composite Engineering

Cooking Counseling **Customer Service** Desktop Publishing Detailing **Drill Press Operation** Driving

Editing Electronic Repair

Filing Hammering Interviewing Keyboarding LAN Administration Management Mechanical Drafting Metal Fabrication Payroll Accounting

**Public Speaking** Scheduling Soldering Teaching **Technical Writing Telemarketing** Typing

Welding Writing

**Computer Software** 

Auto CAD Excel

Lotus Microsoft Word PageMaker WordPerfect

### Self-Management Skills

You use self-management skills every day to survive and get along. Self-management skills are important because employers hire people who will fit in with the work group. Circle the self-management skills you possess right now.

#### Critical Skills

Follow Instructions Get Along Well with Others Get Things Done Honest

Punctual Responsible

#### Adaptive Skills

**Assertive** Assume Responsibility Competitive Complete Assignments Creative Decisive Dependable **Detail-Oriented** Diplomatic **Enthusiastic** Flexible Friendly Highly Motivated Ingenious

Integrity Intelligent **Inventive** Kind Learn Quickly Mature Open-Minded Outgoing **Patient** Persistent **Physically Strong** Pleasant Proud of Doing a Good Job Results-Oriented

Self-Motivated Sense of Direction (Purpose) Sense of Humor Sensitive Sincere Sociable Tactful Tolerant Tough Trusting Understanding Willing to Learn New Things

Creative Job Search

### Transferable Skills

Transferable skills can be transferred from one job or even one career to another.

Critical skills may get you higher levels of responsibility and pay. Emphasize them in an interview as well as on your resume.

#### Critical Skills

Accept Responsibility Budgeting Efficiency Meet Deadlines Project Planning Public Speaking Sales Supervise Others

### Thing Skills

Assembling
Balancing, Juggling
Counting
Drawing, Painting
Driving
Endurance
Finishing, Refinishing
Gathering

Grinding
Hammering
Hand Crafts
Keyboarding, Typing
Keypunching, Drilling
Manual Dexterity
Modeling, Remodeling
Observing, Inspecting

Operating Machines
Physical Agility, Strength
Precise, Tolerance, Standards
Restoring
Sandblasting
Sewing
Sorting
Weaving

#### People Skills

Caring
Comforting
Communicating
Conflict Management
Conflict Resolution
Counseling
Consulting
Developing Rapport
Diplomacy
Diversity

Empathy
Encouraging
Group Facilitating
Helping Others
Inspiring Trust
Inquiry
Instructing
Interviewing
Listening
Mediating

Mentoring
Motivating
Negotiating
Outgoing
Problem Solving
Respect
Responsive
Sensitive
Sympathy
Tolerance

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### Transferable Skills (continued)

#### Dealing With Data

Analyzina Auditing Averaging Budgeting Calculating, Computing Checking for Accuracy Classifying Comparing

Cost Analysis Counting Detail-Oriented Evaluating Examining Financial or Fiscal Analysis Financial Management

Organizing Problem Solving **Recording Facts** Research Surveying **Financial Records** Synthesizing Following Instructions Taking Inventory

Investigating

Interrelate

#### Using Words and Ideas

Advertising Articulate Brainstorming Correspondence Design Edit

Compiling

**Imaginative** Inventive Logical **Promotional Writing Public Speaking Publicity** 

**Quick Thinking** Sign Language Speech Writing Telephone Skills Write Clearly, Concisely Verbal Communication

#### Leadership

Competitive Coordinating **Decision Making** Decisive Delegate **Direct Others** Evaluation Goal Setting Influence Others Initiate New Tasks Integrity Judgment Manage, Direct Others Mediate Problems Motivate People Multitasking **Negotiate Agreements** Organization Planning Results-Oriented

Risk Taker Run Meetings Self-Confident Self-Directed Self-Motivated Sets an Example, Sets Pace Solve Problems Strategic Planning Supervision Work Schedules

#### Creative, Artistic

Artistic Dance, Body Movement Designing Drawing, Painting Expressive Handicrafts

Illustrating, Sketching Mechanical Drawing Model-Making Perform Photography Playing a Musical Instrument Poetic Images Present Artistic Ideas Rendering Singing Visualize Shapes Visualizing

# Job Skills Identification

Describe four major tasks that you've performed in previous employment, which you'd like to continue using in your next job. List the skills which were required to perform each task well.



Activity/Job Title	
Task	Skills

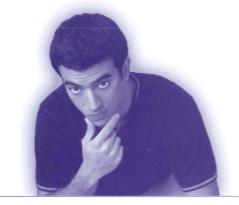
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ills Identification

#### Values Checklist

Work-related values are a part of setting job search goals. Decide what working conditions are important to you.

#### **Instructions** 1. Check the box next to those conditions that you'd like in a job. Add additional values on the blanks. 2. Draw a line through those conditions that you wouldn't like in a job. Authority Other Benefits Travel Pace (Fast, Slow) Career Enhancement Variety Casual Environment Position Wage Work Indoors/Outdoors Challenge Power Close Supervision Public Contact Work on a Team Commuting Distance Public Transportation Work Alone Work Under Pressure Competence **Quality Environment** Creativity Recognition **Decision Making** Regular Work Week Diversity Relocation Excitement Respect Flexible Schedule Retirement Benefits Formal Environment Security Health Benefits Shift Work Independence Size of Employer (Large, Small) Learning Opportunities Skill Building (Training) Organizational Structure Status



# Goal Identification Worksheet

Reality Check

Are these expectations reasonable and attainable?

If you answered no or are unsure, reexamine your values.

# Job Goal

#### **Instructions**

- 1. Write the occupational title of your immediate job goal representing the kind of job you plan to pursue right now. If you've more than one distinct job goal, complete this exercise for each one. See page 49 for a list of Occupational Titles. Review the values that you identified as important to your job goals on the Values Checklist on page 54. Which conditions do you require in a new opportunity? Which conditions do you desire?
- 2. Write your required values and desired values from the <u>Values Checklist</u> in the appropriate space below.
- 3. Evaluate whether your expectations are reasonable and attainable. To accomplish this, conduct a <u>Labor Market Survey</u> (as described on page 34).

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	*

Yes

Creative Job Search

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Skills

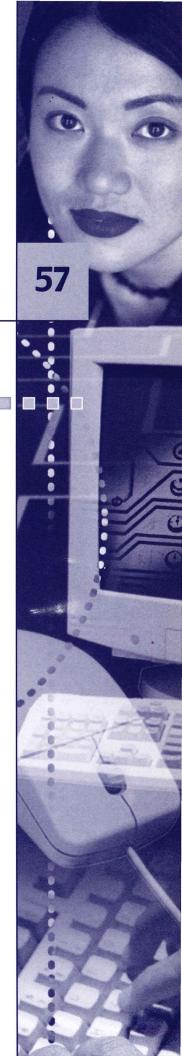
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Chapter Result

# Resumes and Cover Letters

Review of Qualifications
Essential Information Only
Skills-Based
Unique— What Makes You Special
Marketing a Product— You
Effective— Gets You Noticed



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# Resumes and Cover Letters

# Resume Writing

uch preparation goes into an excellent resume. You don't simply begin by writing. First establish clear goals for your job search. Then identify your skills that match your goals. You need to gather supporting materials and summarize your past employment-related experiences. Finally, you will write, rewrite and edit until the resume is perfect. Always have someone proofread your resume. You may also want someone to repeat back to you what your resume says. Continuously work at keeping your perfect resume up-to-date. As you grow, your resume should grow with you; its development should mirror your personal and professional development.

Don't overwhelm employers by providing more information than necessary. Don't try to be everything to everyone. The greatest challenge won't be what to include in your resume, but what to leave out. An attentiongetting resume must be targeted, to the point and clearly identify your qualifications. Focus on skills and accomplishments with specific attention to actual results. Hobbies, crafts and clubs can also give you accomplishments and skills.

You aren't ready to approach prospective employers until

you've taken these steps. Since it has to be done anyway, there is no better time than the present. If you're already engaged in these activities, you're that much closer to a finished product.

# Skills Identification

Employers want to know what you can do, not just where you've worked. If you cannot clearly state at least 20 skills directly associated with your job goal, you aren't ready to write your resume.

Take the time to work on developing a list of your skills. As you develop your list, identify examples of places where you've used your skills. Also, be sure to state your skills in a positive light. Avoid any language that may reduce their value. Always be honest and positive.

When drafting your resume, clearly identify your skills. Whenever possible, state your skills as expert skills, to avoid being perceived as a generalist. As an example, if you have word processing skills, state which software packages you've used. All resumes today need to be skills-based resumes. Whatever style or format you use, your resume

must clearly communicate the skills you bring to the job. (See the previous chapter on *Skills Identification*.)

# Goal Setting

An important element in resume preparation is establishing clear goals or objectives. It's critical that you target your resume to a specific occupational goal. The content of your resume should point to that goal. Without this focus, your resume will be mediocre at best. Great resumes are ones in which every piece of information points to a clear occupational objective. If you've already established specific goals, you're prepared to write your resume. If not, you're encouraged to first spend some time establishing your goals.

As you write your resume, keep your goal in view. This will help you decide what to include, what to leave out and will help target your resume. One strategy is to write your goal on a separate piece of paper and weigh each item in your resume against your goal. If it isn't clear how the item relates to your goal, then strongly consider eliminating it. (See the *Skills Identification* chapter on page 44 for information on *Goal Setting*.)

Your resume should be an honest presentation of your best qualities.

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esumes and Cover

Letter

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# The Language of Resumes

Resumes must be skills-based and clearly target your objectives and the needs of employers. Beyond this, there are many ways to present these skills. You may use narrative, bullets, lists of keywords, highlights or other presentation styles. The resume must have impact and flair.

What you say is important, but how you say it is just as important. To highlight your skills and qualifications, use action verbs—

- Mastered three word processing programs— WordPerfect, Microsoft Word and AmiPro
- Increased regional sales of widgets by 1.2 million
- Organized a neighborhood block party of 50 homes, which helped reduce crime by 15 percent
- Achieved 100 percent attendance during training

Notice the use of measures to strengthen statements of accomplishment. Also notice how action verbs like "mastered" make the statements stand out. It's one thing to say that you have a particular skill; it's another to proclaim that you have excelled in its performance. For more ideas to strengthen your resume language, see the *Sample List of Action Verbs* on page 63.

Resumes aren't literary—
they're promotional. The rules
of grammar are modified from
formal writing. Complete
sentences aren't necessary.
Avoid the use of "I," as the
subject of the resume is
assumed to be the person



named in the heading of the resume. Avoid long narratives—remember that your resume may be one of the dozens or even hundreds that are submitted to an employer. Here are some questions you should ask yourself that will make your resume stand out from the crowd—

- Could someone reading this resume easily understand what my skills are?
- Does the resume specify what I can do to help the employer?
- Is the content "tailored" to a particular job?
- Does it convey my desire to do quality work?
- Does it give someone a desire to learn more about me?

The resume is like a preview of coming attractions— the goal is to win an interview. It's at the interview that the job is won. A statement with an action verb and a specific accomplishment prompt an employer to find out more about you.

It's one thing to say that you have a particular skill; it's another to proclaim that you have excelled in its performance.

# Resume Formats

here are three common resume formats— chronological, functional and combination. By using the *Resume Format Comparison Chart* on page 64, you can determine which format and variation will best display your strengths. Your career objectives will also influence your choice. Another way to select the best format is to complete the *Resume Worksheets*. (See sample resumes later in the chapter.)

# Chronological

The emphasis for this format is on a chronological listing of employment and employmentrelated experiences. The format highlights the recent employment, while de-emphasizing experiences further back in time. The chronological resume is for those with a consistent employment history, no gaps in employment and whose past employment experiences are directly related to their current employment goals. A steady work record with increasing responsibilities can be effectively showcased using this format. You'd begin by listing your most recent employment experiences and working backward. Include dates, names and contact information such as addresses and phone numbers. This may NOT be the best format for individuals with job gaps, new graduates or a person changing careers.

When listing your experience, chronicle five to ten years of employment history. Experiences more than ten years ago begin to lose

impact and open the potential for age discrimination. If you have valuable experience beyond ten years, there are ways to present it other than chronologically. Read the following on *Functional* and *Combination* resume formats.

### **Functional**

The functional resume highlights skills, experience and accomplishments without identifying specific dates, names and places. In this format, information is organized by functions or skills, advertising the specific qualifications needed for the occupation. This format works very well for people changing careers, including military personnel moving into civilian employment. It's also effective for first-time jobseekers, those reentering the workforce after a gap in employment and people who want to emphasize experience that may be viewed as outdated.

In a true functional resume there is no chronological listing of employment. Consequently, many employers don't like this format— it creates suspicion that the person may be trying to hide something. The employer may suspect a job hopper, an older applicant trying to disguise age, a lack of career progression, underemployment, employment gaps or too little relevant experience.

### Combination

The combination resume brings the best of both the chronological and functional resumes. It features a functional section that highlights skills, accomplishments and experience. It also includes a chronological listing of employment, education and employment-related experiences. The combination resume is a very effective format for many jobseekers. The best chronological resume can be enhanced with a section highlighting skills, accomplishments and experience. The functional resume can be strengthened with a chronological listing of employment experiences.

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# Resume Variations

# Keyword

The keyword resume is a variation that adds a listing of skills to the beginning of any standard resume format. Critical occupational skills placed at the beginning add impact to the resume and help capture the reader's attention. This variation is effective for all career fields and skill levels. It's a very effective strategy for creating scannable resumes. The format for a keyword resume would look something like this—

Name Address Phone Employment Objective

#### Summary of Skills (Keyword List)

Skill Skill Skill
Skill Skill Skill
Skill Skill Skill

Resume Body (Chronological, Functional or Combination)

Receptionist

### Samples of Occupational Keywords

Journalism

Account Management Accounts Receivable Acquisitions Bachelor's Degree Bank Card **Bank Reconciliation Batch Processina** Benchmarking Blueprint Reading Brochures Budget **Bulletins** CAD Calibrator Carpentry Cash Flow Cell Culture Media Cement Childcare Claims Adjudication Commercial Leasing Copy Editing Counselor Crisis Management

Cross-Cultural Training Debugging **Decision Making** Demographics Dental Management Die Castina Dietitian Drywall Ecology Electronics **Employee Assistance** Engineer Equipment Vendor **Facilitator Financial Planning** Food Preparation Gas Pipeline Goal Setting Graphic Design **Guest Services** Harnessing Hiring/Firing Hotel ISO 9000

Journeyman Layout Design Logic Analyzer Magnetic Theory Manager Mappina Marketing Master's Degree Microprocessor Microsoft Word Nursing Oscillator Palletizina Patient Advocate Payroll Personal Computer Process Metallurgy Proposal Writing Psychology **Public Relations** Purchasing Radio **Raw Materials** 

Reporter Research Sales Secretarial Software Modeling Spanish Spreadsheets Statistical Process Control Stick Welding Strategic Planning Student Personnel Supervisor Taxonomy Teacher **Technical Writing** Time Management **Transportation** Travel Wave Solder WordPerfect Workflow Writer

Occupational keywords include skills, titles, degrees and occupational buzz words.

# Targeted

More of a method than a style, the targeted resume directs skills and experience to the specific needs of one employer. All resumes should target the needs of a specific occupation. In addition, this approach targets the specific needs of an employer and a specific job. It requires careful research of the employer's needs. Sources for information include position

descriptions, employer profiles, industry publications, networking and informational interviews. When drafting a targeted resume, direct your skills and experience to the specific needs of the employer by typing some of their keywords into your resume. This is a very powerful resume strategy that can set you apart from the competition and capture an employer's interest. For executive positions and specialized technical jobs, this strategy is almost a necessity.

Convenient access to a computer and word processing skills will help make this method work. Using the combination format, set up a resume template with header information and the chronological summary of your employment. Then customize the functional section of the resume, the summary of skills, accomplishments and qualifications to meet the needs of a specific employer. Be sure to name your objective with the exact job title.

### Sample List of Action Verbs

Achieved	Created	Formulated	Recruited
Administered	Decided	Founded	Rectified
Affected	Defined	Generated	Researched
Analyzed	Delegated	Governed	Reviewed
Applied	Designed	Grouped	Revised
Appraised	Detailed	Guided	Scheduled
Approved	Developed	Handled	Searched
Arranged	Directed	Illustrated	Secured
Assessed	Distributed	Implemented	Selected
Attained	Earned	Improved	Simplified
Awarded	Effected	Increased	Sold
Built	Encouraged	Influenced	Solved
Calculated	Enforced	Initiated	Stimulated
Catalogued	Enlarged	Inspired	Structured
Clarified	Equipped	Installed	Succeeded
Coached	Established	Instituted	Summarized
Compared	Estimated	Integrated	Supported
Composed	Evaluated	Interviewed	Tailored
Conceived	Examined	Introduced	Taught
Conducted	Excelled	Invented	Transformed
Constructed	Executed	Investigated	Translated
Contracted	Expanded	Launched	United
Controlled	Experimented	Maintained	Validated
Convinced	Facilitated	Mastered	Verified
Correlated	Formed	Recorded	-

How you say it is just as important as what you say. Use action words to stress performance, motivation and a passion for excellence. Use a dictionary, thesaurus or job descriptions for more words.

# Resume Format Comparison Chart

Format	Characteristic	Advantage	Disadvantage	Use	Don't Use If
Chronological	Presents information in reverse order, most recent experience listed first Offers concise picture of you as a potential employee	Easy to write Emphasizes steady employment record Format is familiar	Calls attention to employment gaps Skills are difficult to spot unless they're listed in the most recent job	To emphasize past career growth and development When continuing in the same career When the name of former employer may be significant to prospective employer	There are gaps in your work history Calling attention to your age could be a problem You've changed jobs often You're entering job market for first time or after a long absence
Functional	Focuses on specific strengths and skills important to employers	Brief and well- structured Focus on skills, not history De-emphasizes a spotty work history	No detailed work history Content may appear to lack depth	When entering the job market or when reentering after a long absence When work experience has been varied or unrelated When changing careers When primarily consulting or doing freelance work	You want to emphasize growth or development Responsibilities and functions in recent jobs were limited
Combination	All the flexibility and strength of the functional and chronological combined	Shows off a strong employment record with upward mobility Showcases relevant skills and abilities and supportive employment record Emphasizes transferable skills	Work history is often on the second page and employer may not read that far	When shorter functional format would be too sketchy To offer a complete picture of abilities and work history	Experience is limited There are wide gaps in work history
Format Variations	Allows for focused resumes that target skills	Skills are listed briefly and at the beginning of the resume Easy for employer to scan and find skills	May be redundant information to include keywords at the top of your resume Still an unfamiliar format to many employers	For all scannable systems of job screening For new graduates, those reentering the workplace or changing careers	There is rarely a time you cannot use this variation. It can be used in combination with any or all of the other formats
Targeted	Highly focused document aimed at a particular job A "capsule" of work experience	Brief and direct Easy to read	May focus too tightly on one particular job Content may appear sparse	When job target is specific When you need separate resumes for different career paths	You aren't prepared to put the effort into writing an excellent resume

# Basic Principles of Resume Writing

### General Considerations

#### Keep it Brief

Your resume is an overview of your qualifications— not your life story. It's a "preview of coming attractions" which creates the desire to see the rest of the show. One to two pages is the standard for a resume read by the human eye, and up to three pages for a scannable resume. If your resume is more than one page, the first page must capture the reader's attention. If it fails to do so, the remaining pages won't be read.

#### **Focus**

Don't try to be everything to everyone. Target your job search and your resume to your specific occupational goals.

#### Prepare Multiple Resumes

Generally, you should concentrate first on one well-written resume that targets your immediate job search. Make sure this resume represents you well to a wide range of employers and is suitable for scanning. If you've more than one objective, additional resumes may be required. For example, if you're planning to pursue

two distinct occupations such as realtor and bookkeeper, you'd need two resumes. If you only use the targeted resume approach, you'd also write a unique resume to each employer.

#### Provide a Visual Impact

A piece of sales literature has only about two seconds to attract the reader's attention. Similarly, the resume must attract the employer even before it's read. Many advertising techniques apply, including the use of white space, bullets, indentation and varied type style. Professional printing produces a high quality product, but can be expensive. Laser quality printing is an excellent alternative. Never handwrite your resume! Make sure there are no typographical, grammatical or spelling errors. Ask someone to proofread your resume to help eliminate errors.

#### **Ensure Integrity**

Your resume is specifically designed to paint the best picture possible of you. Place the emphasis on the positive, not the negative. It should be an honest statement of your best qualities. Your resume should hold up under scrutiny. Facts and numbers must be believable. The content of the resume should be in harmony. Dates should be consistent

while experience and related activities should support your qualifications.

#### Target Your Resume

If you consistently hear that you're overqualified or are concerned that you will be perceived as such, then you haven't effectively targeted your resume. When writing your resume, target it to the level of employment and to the occupation or employer. If you're pursuing more than one distinct level of employment, then consider a separate resume for each. Present the information that you believe is important. You don't have to tell everything. If you have an advanced degree in a field unrelated to your goal, leave it off.



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## Resume Content

#### Name Block

Use your full first name. Avoid using nicknames. If you have a preference to be called by a shortened version of your full name, it's acceptable to put this name in parentheses or quotes (Elizabeth— prefer to be called "Betty"). Your address shouldn't contain abbreviations. Your phone number should include the area code. Provide a phone number where you can be reached at all times, either by an answering machine or an alternate message number. Don't put your name and address on one line for a scannable resume, as the computer may be confused by this format. Type your name in bold and/or all capitals to make it stand out.

ELIZABETH "BETTY" APPLICANT 1443 Hire Me Lane Employability, Minnesota 55555 555.555.5555

## Employment or Career Objective

Include an objective when you're pursuing a specific job goal or when you know the exact title of the position you're applying for. The objective targets your resume, but also limits its use to those jobs that match your goal. Objectives may be considered optional on your resume. You can also use a short summary of your skills and qualifications. If your objective isn't included in your resume, state it in your cover letter.

### **Summary Statements**

The summary or qualification statement documents your work experience, achievement and skills. This statement is a summary of the experience and qualifications that are the most pertinent to the job for which you're applying. This is recommended for all jobseekers as a way to get the employer's attention. The summary should be three or four lines or a series of phrases that may be used in place of the employment objective or just following it.

To be effective, the summary or qualification statement must indicate that you're qualified for the position you're seeking. It's often read first, and if it catches the reader's attention. chances are, the rest of the resume will be read. A summary example— Resourceful Planner/Coordinator with extensive knowledge of inventory control and online inventory systems. Recognized by management for innovation and initiative in implementing JIT techniques, as well as interdepartmental communications and supervisory skills.

### **Employment History**

List your most recent employment first. A general standard is to list the last three jobs, or the last ten years, whichever comes first. Focus on recent jobs and those that are most appropriate to your goals. If you have large gaps in employment or have changed jobs frequently, consider using a functional resume. How you use your resume and the

make-up of your experience will determine the amount of information to include. Many jobseekers and employers use the resume as a substitute application (this is very useful if the application works against your qualifications). As a substitute application, the resume should include employer contact information. Many resumes list employer name, city and state. Contact information is provided through an employment application or reference sheet. One advantage in limiting this information is to keep the resume focused on your qualifications. Also, some people may not want a prospective employer to be able to easily reach a previous employer. The choice is yours. There is no one standard that fits all situations.

#### Memberships

List organizational memberships related to your job goal. Avoid using non-employer-related or controversial organizations. Avoid mentioning specific religious or political affiliations, or other potentially controversial groups unless they directly relate to the job you want.

#### **Education**

If your skills and experience come from employment, list employment first and education last. List education first if the emphasis is on education (a recent graduate). If you're a college graduate, state the name of the institution, location (city and state), degree earned and field of study.

## Additional Points to Consider Regarding Education

Carefully consider listing the dates you graduated from school. List recent education dates because it increases its value. Older educational experiences may not be valued by the reader and may be used in age discrimination.

Don't list high school graduation if you've completed a college degree. If you've taken posthigh school classes but didn't achieve a degree, list your high

When listing recent education, target specific skills and academic accomplishments.

A GED can be listed as a high school graduate. If the GED was achieved through a local school, list the name of that school. Otherwise, leave off the name of the school. You may choose to list the last school attended or the school district name.

Don't include an education section if you dropped out of high school and had no formal training either in school or from an employer.

Include relevant employersponsored training. Be sure that the training is targeted to your job goal. Summarize extensive

employer training by type and only include training that's relevant to a new job.

If you've conducted a thorough independent study into a jobrelated topic, you may summarize it as part of your education.

If you're currently taking classes or pursuing a degree related to your job goal, include that information. List the skills acquired, academic accomplishments and the projected date of completion.



## Military Experience

Include military experience that fills gaps in employment or supports your job goal as part of your work history. "Civilianize" your military language so your skills and experience match the employer's needs. For example, change a truck vehicle mechanic to a light diesel mechanic, logistics to warehouse or material inventory control, war college to advanced training, chief petty officer to supervisor or lead worker, or NCOIC to supervisor.

## Hobbies/ Personal Interests

Include hobbies and personal interests if they're employmentrelated, not controversial and show skills and experience.

#### References

Don't include references on the resume. Don't use "References available upon request." It's assumed by employers that you will provide this information. Once an employer requests references, be prepared to give them three to five references who can speak about your work habits and professional employment qualifications. Always seek permission before using someone as a reference.

### Awards/Recognition

Let the employer know of any awards or recognition you've received (employee of the month, etc.), if it's timely and appropriate.

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## Make it Scannable

Many employers and employment agencies are using electronic resume scanning systems to screen resumes, a trend that will increase in the future. When writing any resume, consider its scannability. Generally, there is little difference between a good scannable resume and one that's effective for the human eye. Ultimately, a person will look at all resumes so your resume must work for both.

### Tips for Scannable and Readable Resumes

Give priority to the skills on your resume. Employers want to know what you can do, not just where you've been. This is why scannable resume systems are set up to read skills. Place the important skills at the beginning of the resume where employers can see them first. Also, scannable database systems store a fixed number of skills so that those that come later may not be included in the database. Insure that your skills and occupation-specific keywords match your objective.

Place your name, address and phone number with area code in a block format below the top margin. This key information helps interested employers reach you and is the preferred format for scannable systems. Put your name on each page.

Use generous margins and plenty of white space. One-inch margins enhance the readability of your resume. Balance the body of the resume so the content isn't compressed. For multiple pages, make sure information is balanced on the pages. The final resume should be a high-contrast image— dark ink on white or light-colored paper.

Use vertical and horizontal lines sparingly and include a quarter-inch of space around them. (Scanning systems can confuse lines and characters.)

Avoid graphics and shading. Shading reduces the contrast, making text hard to read. Graphics may catch the human eye but don't make sense to scanning systems.

Use a font size between 10 and 14 points. Don't use *script*, *italic* or <u>underlining</u>. Highlight information using **bold** or CAPITAL letters.

Avoid stapling or folding which diminishes the visual appearance of the resume and affects scannability. Avoid fasteners and consider sending your resume flat in a large white envelope.

Be sure your resume is high quality and professional. Laser print your final copy. Remember, this is your advertisement to employers.

Choose a typeface (font) that's easily readable rather than decorative. Times, AGaramond, Optima, Caslon Book or Slimbach are readable.

## Resume Preparation

## **Quality Paper**

Now that you've invested time in writing the perfect resume, what remains is to produce a high-quality final product. Quality paper is a final touch that will leave a favorable impression with a prospective employer. It's appealing to the eye and prints better, maintaining a clear, sharp image. As for color, white is still considered the first choice. Off-white, cream or gray is acceptable avoid using colored paper. Paper size should be the standard letter size, 8½" x 11".

Quality paper should be between 16 and 25 lbs. One hundred percent cotton fiber (rag content) is the best.

Personal preference should be your guide. Examples include— linen, pebble finish and vellum. Avoid glossy or high-shine finishes.

#### Production

When creating your original or master, it should be produced using a common word processing or desktop publishing program. Typing your resume on a standard typewriter should be avoided since its print is usually not high quality. Editing and modifying will also be difficult. If all you have is a standard typewriter, consider taking your final draft to someone for word processing.

### Reproduction

When making copies for distribution, laser printing is preferred. Due to the poor quality, never print your resume on a dot matrix printer. You may also choose to have a print shop print your resume. If you reproduce your resume on a photocopier, be sure that the copies are clear, clean and sharp.

#### Computer Resources

Computers have become an important job search tool for most jobseekers. There are many places where use of a computer costs very little or is free. For example—

- Minnesota WorkForce Centers or local state employment service
- Friends and family
- Schools
- Social organizations
- Community agencies
- Print shops
- Religious organizations
- Private placement agencies
- Libraries



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## General Resume Do's and Don'ts

Do's	Don'ts
<ul> <li>Lead with your strongest statements that are related to the job or goal.</li> <li>Emphasize your skills.</li> <li>Keep it brief (1-2 pages).</li> <li>Use 8½" x 11" paper.</li> <li>Correct all typographical, grammatical and spelling errors.</li> <li>Include your employment-related accomplishments.</li> <li>Target your qualifications.</li> <li>Clearly communicate your purpose and value to employers.</li> <li>Maintain eye-appealing visual appearance.</li> <li>Use the best format to showcase your skills.</li> <li>Appear neat, well-organized and professional.</li> <li>Be creative and make your resume relevant to the job.</li> <li>Always include a cover letter when mailing your resume.</li> <li>To enhance your qualifications, use measurable outcomes, values and percentages.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Don't use abbreviations (exceptions include middle initial and directions such as N for North).</li> <li>Don't use personal pronouns such as "I" to refer to yourself.</li> <li>Don't mention salary expectations or wage history.</li> <li>Don't print on a dot matrix printer.</li> <li>Don't use fancy typeset, binders or exotic paper.</li> <li>Don't send a photograph of yourself.</li> <li>Don't make statements that you cannot prove.</li> <li>Don't include personal information (age, height, weight, family status).</li> <li>Don't include religious or political affiliation, unless you're applying for a job with one of these organizations.</li> <li>Don't change the tense of verbs or use the passive voice.</li> <li>Don't use the title "resume."</li> <li>Don't include references on the resume. (Make a separate reference sheet.)</li> <li>Don't include hobbies or social interests unless they contribute to your objective.</li> <li>Don't use repetitious statements.</li> </ul>

# Samples and Worksheets

The following resume samples model the basic formats and principles of resume writing. Consider how each jobseeker presents his/her skills and experience. Along with the content, look at how the resume is presented. Draw the best from each to help decide how to style your resume. Ultimately, your resume will be unique to you and won't look exactly like any of these presented. For more resume samples, look in the job search section of your local bookstore or library, contact a Minnesota WorkForce Center or local state employment service.

Your resume should focus on your skills. Employers want to know what you can do, not just where you've been. That's why resume scanning systems look for skills. Various scanning systems will identify different skills. This is because resume scanning systems use a lexicon or dictionary when looking for words and will identify only those words that are on file.

The resume worksheets are tools for crafting your resume. They aren't intended as a fill-in-the-blank form. Use them as models. Sections may vary and the layout you choose will ultimately be a variation on one or all of these formats.

Your resume is a marketing tool.

Make sure it presents you in a positive way.



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## Chronological Resume Sample-Work-to-Work Jobseeker



#### ELIZABETH B. JOBSEEKER

5555 Lakewood Road Somewhere, Minnesota 55555 (555) 555-5555

**OBJECTIVE** Mechanical Engineer

#### **ENGINEERING EXPERIENCE**

Industrial Engineer

199 to 200

Tool Incorporated, Minnetonka, MN

- Designed a plant layout for the shipping department
- Developed a multi-step shipping process improvement plan

Design Engineer

199\_ to 199\_

Mechanical Systems, St. Paul, MN

- Developed a complete safety package for a robot loader
- Designed hydraulic double stack lift
- Redesigned dairy open style conveyor
- Trained 10 engineers on AutoCAD Rev. 12
- Evaluated and purchased machine components

HVAC Engineer Assistant

199\_ to 199\_

Engineering Consultants, St. Paul, MN

- Prepared building and equipment bid specifications
- Evaluated HVAC equipment options
- Incorporated EPA and OSHA regulations into safety procedures
- Created working drawing on AutoCAD Rev. 1

#### MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE

Supervisor

198\_ to 199\_

College Police Department, Minneapolis, MN

- Supervised more than 50 student security personnel
- Maintained security accounts and budgets
- Interviewed, hired, field trained and conducted performance appraisals
- Prepared 25-page monthly report

Manager

198\_ to 198\_

Building Management Co., Northwoods, MN

• Maintained and performed building improvements

**EDUCATION** 

**Bachelor of Science Degree:** Mechanical Engineering 199\_

Minor: Engineering Management

University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN

Course Work: Thermodynamics, Heat Transfer, HVAC,

Machine Design, Fluid Power, IBM Compatible, AutoCAD 12, FORTRAN, Lotus and Quattro Pro

## Chronological Resume Sample— School-to-Work Jobseeker

#### **DEBRA JOBSEEKER, L.P.N.**

5555 Lakewood Road Somewhere, Minnesota 55555 (555) 555-5555

#### **SUMMARY**

Highly motivated, dependable **Licensed Practical Nurse**. Proven ability to initiate appropriate action, follow instructions and carry out tasks in an efficient manner. Proficient in patient care, medical management, coordination and emergency room techniques. Team player with effective interpersonal communication skills, and a positive, can-do attitude.

#### **EDUCATION**

**Certificate:** Licensed Practical Nurse Program (GPA: 3.85/4.0) 200\_

Normandale Community College— Bloomtown, MN

Internship: Regions Hospital— St. Paul, MN (3 Months) 200

Infection Control Critical Care Injections
Catheter Care Vital Signs Triage
Blood Draw Charting Intake
IV Therapy CPR Acute Care

**Diploma:** Richfield Senior High School— Richfield, MN

#### **RELATED VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE**

American Red Cross — Minneapolis, MN 199\_ - 199\_

• Provided emergency services to people in crisis.

 Assisted in providing information and services regarding food, shelter, clothing and medical provisions.

Courage Center — Golden Valley, MN 199 - 199

 Assisted disabled patients with daily living activities by writing letters, reading correspondence, feeding, pushing wheelchairs and shopping.

Neighborhood Involvement Program — St. Paul, MN 199\_ - 199\_

 Organized a block safety program for 26 households, which reduced crime in the area by 15 percent.

#### **MEMBERSHIPS**

Elected Secretary: Parent Teachers Association 199\_

## Functional Resume Sample— Work-to-Work Jobseeker



#### JERRY J. JOB

5555 Lakewood Road Somewhere, Minnesota 55555 (555) 555-5555

#### **OBJECTIVE**

Dependable, enthusiastic worker with more than 10 years of experience seeking a Welding or Building Maintenance position. Self-starter, dedicated to achieving high-quality results.

#### **SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS**

#### Welding-

Developed extensive experience in a wide variety of welding styles and positions including:

TIG

Heliarc

Oxyacetylene

Air ARC

Cutting and Gouging

Automatic Seam

Plasma Cutting

Underwater Water Cooled Spot Welding

#### Fabrication-

Skilled in layout and design of sheet metal and pipe. Developed extensive knowledge of sheet rollers and brakes. Followed Manufacturer's Operating Processes (MOP) to detail.

#### **Equipment Operator—**

Experienced forklift operator on various sizes and styles of forklifts. Skilled in the use of a variety of power tools and metal fabrication equipment including drills, drill press, edge planer, end mill, benders, power saws, sanders and grinders.

#### **Equipment Maintenance**—

Performed general maintenance on welding equipment and production machinery. Maintained high production levels through onsite machine repairs and preventive maintenance.

#### **Building Maintenance**—

Acquired experience in general construction including basic electrical repairs, carpentry, concrete, glass, spray and roller painting, plumbing, patching and sheetrock.

#### SUMMARY OF EXPERIENCE

#### **Lead Welder**

- Maintained strict performance, quality and production standards.
- Trained new employees and monitored their performance during probationary period.

#### **EDUCATION**

Certificate: Welding and Blueprint Reading

Somewhere Technical College - Somewhere, MN

Diploma:

Somewhere Senior High School - Somewhere, MN

## Functional Resume Sample— No Paid-Work Experience

#### **JOE DOER**

5555 Lakewood Road Somewhere, Minnesota 55555 (555) 555-5555

#### **EMPLOYMENT OBJECTIVE**

Assembly, Janitorial, Maintenance or Construction Work

#### SUMMARY OF SKILLS

- Industrious, reliable, highly-motivated and thorough
- · Ability to safely operate power machines, tools, saws, sanders and drills
- · Operate, repair and maintain mowers, snow blowers, buffers and trucks
- · Experience with household repairs, painting, siding and construction

#### RELATED VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

#### Assembly

- Received, sorted, bundled and placed recycling articles in correct containers
- Assembled, cleaned and packaged toys for children on holidays
- · Repaired bicycles, motor bikes and garage doors
- Assisted nursing home residents with making crafts and decorating rooms

#### **Janitorial**

- Maintained all aspects of home, and made minor repairs to structures and equipment
- Assisted friends and neighbors with lawn care, mowing, raking, shoveling, painting, buffing, sanding, remodeling and cleaning
- Helped residents repair and clean homes after a flood

#### Construction

- · Assisted in building and remodeling homes for low-income families
- Sanded floors, walls and cupboards
- · Laid sheetrock, painted and stained woodwork, mixed cement and sided outside walls
- Constructed emergency Mash Units and troop quarters
- Drove and repaired trucks

#### **VOLUNTEER WORK HISTORY**

Goodwill Industries

Minnesota Flood Victims Rescue
Habitat for Humanity
Sunshine Nursing Home

St. Paul, MN
East Grand Forks, MN
St. Paul, MN
Minneapolis, MN

#### **EDUCATION**

Diploma: Johnson High School— St. Paul, MN

Honorable Discharge: United States Army— Private E3 Classification

## Combination Resume Sample— No Paid-Work Experience



#### SHIRLEY I. QUALIFY

5555 Lakewood Road Somewhere, MN 55555 (555) 555-5555

#### **SUMMARY**

Dependable **General Office Worker** with more than 10 years of transferable experience. Proven clerical, customer service and communication skills in a variety of settings. Upbeat, positive attitude with a history of producing quality results and satisfied customers. Computer literate.

#### **SELECTED SKILLS**

#### **General Office**

- · Organized and implemented group activities in an efficient manner
- Scheduled appointments and assured timely arrival
- Maintained accurate financial records and paid all invoices on time
- Answered phones and took accurate messages
- Prepared reports and created documents using MS Word and WordPerfect
- Located desired information using the Internet

#### **Customer Service**

- Welcomed customers and visitors in a friendly and courteous manner
- Provided customers and clients with desired information in a timely manner
- · Listened, calmed and assisted customers with concerns
- Established friendly and lasting relationships

#### Communication

- Utilized Internet email as an effective communication tool
- Answered phones in a courteous and professional manner
- Established rapport with diverse individuals and groups
- Demonstrated ability to express ideas in a team environment and influence action

#### RELATED VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

General Office Volunteer	Salvation Army— St. Paul, MN	5 Years
Elected Secretary	Parent Teachers Association (ISD 11)—Anoka, MN	5 Years
<b>Event Coordinator</b>	Neighborhood Involvement Program—St. Paul, MN	3 Years
<b>Group Activities Leader</b>	Girl Scouts of America—St. Paul, MN	4 Years
Family Manager	Self-employed— Anoka, MN	7 Years

#### **EDUCATION**

GED: Ramsey Action Program—St. Paul, MN

#### **RED E. JOBHUNTER**

5555 Lakewood Road Somewhere, Minnesota 55555 (555) 555-5555 red@myemail.com

#### **Medical Laboratory Technician**

Extensive experience as a registered Medical Laboratory Technician with proven competencies in Phlebotomy, Instrument Maintenance, Teaching and Quality Control in a laboratory setting.

#### **SUMMARY OF SKILLS & EXPERIENCE**

#### Laboratory

- Regarded as a highly-skilled lab technologist, with experience serving ER, Urgent Care, Pediatric ER and Stab-Room Trauma Unit.
- Processed cultures in microbiology, gram stains, urinalysis and various manual tests.
- Increased lab efficiency through improved procedures, research and development of technical equipment, and lab layout and design.

#### **Phlebotomy**

- Performed both inpatient and outpatient, pre-op and post-op blood draws.
- Recognized for exceptional skill in serving hard to draw patients and children.

#### Instrument Maintenance

- Skilled in troubleshooting and maintenance of technical equipment.
- Maintained online performance and peak output.

#### Teaching

- Mastered teaching techniques.
- Recognized for excellent communication skills.
- Trained staff effectively on complex equipment operation and procedures.

#### **Quality Control**

- Maintained high quality standards with an emphasis on accuracy within strict guidelines.
- Maximized lab performance through organization, equipment testing and procedure development.

#### **EMPLOYMENT HISTORY**

Medical Laboratory Technician ASCP
Hennepin County Medical Center

Phlebotomist
Minneapolis Children's Medical Center

Minneapolis, MN

Minneapolis, MN

#### **EDUCATION**

Certificate: Medical Laboratory Technician (GPA 3.5/4.0)

College of St. Catherine— St. Paul, MN

Certificate: American Society of Clinical Pathologists

Course Work: Biology/Chemistry (117 credits)

Minnesota State University— Mankato, MN

etters

## Chronological Resume Worksheet

This is a general format. Actual content and layout will vary. Not all items are required or necessary.

Name
Address
Phone
Fax
Email
EMPLOYMENT OBJECTIVE (Optional)
SUMMARY (Optional— can include on cover letter)
WORK EXPERIENCE
Employer, City, State
Job Title
Dates
Responsibilities/Accomplishments/Skills
Employer, City, State
Job Title
Dates
Responsibilities/Accomplishments/Skills
Employer, City, State
Job Title
Dates
Responsibilities/Accomplishments/Skills
EDUCATION
LICENSES AND CERTIFICATIONS
LICENSES AND CERTIFICATIONS
AWARDS
PROFESCIONAL AREADERS UPS
PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

## Functional Resume Worksheet

This is a general format. Actual content and layout will vary. Not all items are required or necessary.

Name		
Address		
Phone		
Fax		
	EMPLOYMENT OBJECTIVE (Option	nal)
	HIGHLIGHTS OF QUALIFICATIONS (O	ptional)
	WORK EXPERIENCE	
	ategory	
Skills/Accomplishments/Res	ponsibilities	
Occupational/Functional C	et again.	
	ategoryponsibilities	
skiiis/Accomplishments/kes	ponsibilities	
Occupational/Functional C		
	ategoryponsibilities	
skiiis/Accompiisniments/kes	ponsibilities	
	EMPLOYMENT HISTORY	
Employer	Title	Dates
Employer	Title	Dates
Employer	Title	Dates

#### **EDUCATION**

LICENSES AND CERTIFICATIONS

AWARDS/PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

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## Combination Resume Worksheet

This is a general format. Actual content and layout will vary. Not all items are required or necessary.

Name	
Phone	
SUMMARY OF SKILLS AND/OR EXPERIENCE	
Skill/Experience	
Description	
Ckill/Evraprious co	
Description	
Skill/Experience	
Description	
WORK EXPERIENCE	
Name of Employer	Job Title
	Dates of Employment
Name of Employer	Job Title
Address/Phone	Dates of Employment
	Job Title
Address/Phone	Dates of Employment
EDUCATION	
School Name	
City/StateDo	ates of Attendance (if recent)
Major(s)	
Degree/Certificate Earned	
LICENSES AND CERTIFICATIONS	
PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS/ORGANIZATIONS	

# Resume Strategies

## How to Use Your Resume Effectively

A good resume is an important job search tool, but like any tool it's only as good as the person using it. Much has been said about selling your employment skills to a prospective employer. What it takes to accomplish this is job search skills. It isn't enough to have the employment skills that an employer desires if you don't have the ability to market them. Use your resume effectively when networking.

Now that you've perfected your resume, there are some guidelines for using it effectively. Job search strategies range from the simple and common to the innovative and complex. Following are some of the more common strategies and guidelines. The successful jobseeker will master these skills.

## Give your resume to—

- Employers with advertised job openings
- Employers with no advertised job openings
- Employment agencies
- Vocational and college placement offices
- Personal and professional networking contacts
- Your references
- Executive recruiters
- Your instructors



Creative Job Search

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Cover Letters

## Tips For Using Your Resume

Resumes should be sent to a person by name. Avoid sending the resume to a job title such as "Production Manager." It will take extra effort, but do your research and find out the name and title of the appropriate person to whom your resume should be sent.

If you're asked to send your resume to personnel or human resources, do so. Then also send a resume to the person in charge of the department in which you want to work. Most of the time, personnel does the screening— it's the department manager who is the final hiring authority.

When mailing your resume, always send it with a cover letter. Never send it by itself.

Mass-mailing your resume to many employers, hoping that a couple of them will get someone's attention, isn't effective. The statistics are that for every 1,000 resumes you send to an employer, you can expect to get two interviews. Additionally, an accepted standard is that for every 10 interviews, you will receive one job offer.

Look for ways to target your resume to the specific needs of

the employer. This can be accomplished with a targeted resume or through the cover letter. It requires some research before sending the resume, but it will pay off in an increased number of positive responses.

When researching an employer or employment agency, among other important information, find out if they use a resume scanning system. If they do, it will help you prepare your resume for presentation.

Send your resume to employers even if they aren't hiring. You never know what the future will bring.

Always follow-up the sending of your resume with a phone call to the employer. Be courteous, professional and sell your qualifications. Be sure to ask for an interview.

When directly contacting employers, always have a copy of your resume available and take the initiative to offer it to them.

When applying for a job with an employment application, you may want to attach your resume. The resume will add impact and should complement the application. If you're asked to fill out an application, never write on it "See Resume." Take the time to fill out the application completely.

Applying for jobs by resume can be effective in overcoming employment barriers. The resume should paint the best picture of you, while the application may paint the worst.

Give a copy of your resume to your references. It provides them with information about you and will help them talk to an employer about your qualifications.

Give a copy of your resume to all networking contacts. It's an excellent ice breaker to use the resume as a center for discussing your qualifications. Ask your contacts to critique your resume.

Always bring extra copies of your resume to an interview.

Finally, Follow-up, Follow-up, Follow-up! It's no use mailing resumes if you don't take the time to follow-up on your efforts. If you aren't getting responses or interviews from your resume, you may want to reevaluate it. The true test of an effective resume is that you're offered interviews.

## Resume Critique Form

Use this form to rate your resume, or have someone familiar with your career field rate it. Grade the resume in each category as EXCELLENT, AVERAGE or POOR. Write in suggestions for improvement.

Item	EXCELLENT	AVERAGE	POOR	*Unknown	Improvements
Appearance Does it look good without reading it?					
Format  Was the best format used to sell your strengths?					
Skills Is the resume skills-based? Number of skills					
Keywords Are keywords and phrases easy to identify?					
Focus  Does the content point to your employment objective?					
Scannability Is it designed to be easily read by a scanning system?					
Proofing Is it free from grammar, spelling or typing errors?					
Length Is it a reasonable length?					
Integrity Is it an honest presentation of your best qualities?					
Appropriate Does the content capture an employer's interest?					

<sup>\*</sup>If you're unsure, then review these topics before finishing your resume.

## Cover Letters

The resume is a description of your qualifications, much like a product brochure. When presenting the resume to an employer, it needs to be personalized and targeted. The cover letter is your opportunity to personalize your resume and target your skills.

Most letter formats can be used for the cover letter. The only absolute is that it conforms to accepted standards for business letters. The reader of a cover letter may be the hiring authority, an agent of the hiring authority or an interested third party. The hiring authority is the person who has the final say in who is hired for a specific position (ultimately, this is the person you want to read your resume). An agent is usually someone who is working on behalf of the hiring authority, such as—personnel or human resources, an independent agency or a subordinate. Third parties include colleagues and subordinates of the hiring authority who are assisting in the hiring, as well as networking or referral contacts. The way you craft your letter should take the reader into consideration. A cover letter may be sent in response to an advertised job opening, a referral from a networking contact or directly to an employer.

## **Formats**

#### **Invited**

This letter format is used when an employer has solicited the resume for consideration. This is often in response to a want-ad or publicized job listing. This style focuses on matching your qualifications to the advertised requirements of the position.

## Uninvited or Cold-Contact

Use this format to contact employers who haven't advertised or published job openings. The focus is on matching your qualifications to the perceived needs of the employer based on labor market research. This strategy requires that a phone or personal contact with the employer either precede or follow the sending of the resume and cover letter.

#### Referral

Through networking, informational interviews and contact with employers, the effective jobseeker will receive referrals to job opportunities. These referrals may be to a specific job opening (advertised or unadvertised) or to an employer who may or may not be hiring now. In a referral letter, mention the individual who provided the information about the employer or job.

## Variation

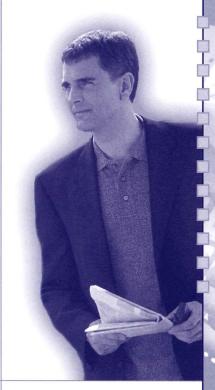
#### Job Match or "T"

When crafting a cover letter, it's always important to match your qualifications to the job and/or employer. Some sources for information include employment advertisements, position descriptions, phone conversations and informational interviews. Generally, this is done in the narrative of the letter. The "T" letter format uses bulleted comparisons that target the specific requirements and your corresponding qualifications.

#### Cover Letter Points to Consider

- State the date and your name and address at the top of the letter.
- Below your name and address, write the name and address of the person to whom you're writing. Always address the letter to a specific person by name and title. Even if responding to a job that states "no phone calls," consider calling to politely ask the name of the hiring authority. You may not always be able to identify the name of a specific person. In this case, send the letter to the title of the recipient (Production Manager, Maintenance Supervisor, Office Manager, Human Resources or Search Committee). Don't use "To Whom It May Concern."
- State your interest in the job for which you're applying.
- Mention your skills, education, special training and work experience that qualify you for the job.
- Provide a phone number and a time you will be available so the employer can reach you.

- Thank the person for taking the time to read your letter.
- Use the appropriate closing, such as "Sincerely."
- Ask someone to proofread your letter to check content, grammar and spelling.
- State that you'll call the employer to follow-up.
- Sign the letter in blue ink. It implies the letter is original and may get more attention.
   The only other ink color to use is black. Never use any other color on the cover letter.
- Structure the letter to reflect your individuality, but avoid appearing too familiar, overbearing, humorous or cute. Keep sentences short and to the point.
- Keep it brief, usually no more than one page with three to five paragraphs.
- Use the same paper stock for both your cover letter and resume.
- Avoid starting sentences with the same word such as "I."



Over Letters

Anytime a resume is sent by mail, it must be accompanied by a cover letter.

Creative Job Search

## Job Match or "T" Letter Sample

Your Name Address City, State Zip Code Phone Number

February 25, 200\_

Ms. Jane Smith, Title Work Incorporated 555 Pine Street St. Paul, MN 55555

Dear Ms. Smith:

I am very interested in the position of Administrative Assistant listed in the Daily Tribune on February 24, 200\_. The skills and qualifications you mention closely match my experience in this career field.

#### **Your Needs**

- Detail-oriented, experienced Administrative Assistant
- Assist Customer Relations Manager
- Corporate experience with major clients a must
- PC knowledge a plus

#### My Qualifications

- Four years Administrative Assistant experience with responsibility for numerous detailed reports
- Assisted Customer Relations Manager for two years
- Regularly served purchasing agents at Fortune 500 companies
- Hands-on experience with Lotus 1-2-3 and WordPerfect on IBM-PC

Enclosed is my resume for your review and consideration. I believe I am an excellent candidate for this position and look forward to meeting with you to discuss it in greater detail. I will plan to call you to determine when an interview might be possible. Thank you.

Sincerely,

(Signature) Typed Name

Enclosure

## Cover Letter Sample

Your Name Street Address City, State Zip Code Phone Number

Date

Individual's Name Job Title Name of Organization Street Address City, State Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms.:\_\_\_\_

**First Paragraph:** State the reason for writing. Name the specific position or type of work for which you're applying. Mention how you learned of the opening.

**Second Paragraph:** Explain why you're interested in working for this employer and specify how you're PERFECT for this position. Don't repeat the information on your resume. Include something special or unique about yourself that will benefit the employer. Remember, the reader will consider this an example of your writing skills.

**Third Paragraph:** Mention your resume is enclosed and indicate your desire to meet with the employer. You may want to suggest alternate dates and times, or simply advise them of your flexibility to the time and place. Include day and evening contact information. Include a statement or question that will encourage the reader to respond. Be sure to communicate your plan to follow-up. You might state that you'll be in the area on a certain date and would like to set up a meeting, or you'll call on a certain date to set up a meeting. Finally, thank the employer for his/her time.

Sincerely,

(Your Signature in blue or black ink) Your typed name

Enclosure

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esumes and Cover

## Cold-Contact Cover Letter Sample

Karen Kareer 5555 Lakewood Road Somewhere, MN 55555 (555) 555-5555

May 20, 200\_

Ms. Francisca Favor Department Manager EFTG Industries, Inc. 210 Industry Avenue Anytown, MN 55555

Dear Ms. Favor:

Perhaps you are seeking an addition to your marketing team. A new person can provide innovative approaches to the challenges of marketing. I am an innovator of new ideas, an excellent communicator with buyers, and have a demonstrated history of marketing success.

Presently, I am marketing computer products for a major supplier using television, radio and news advertising. I have a reputation for putting forth the effort required to make a project succeed.

Enclosed is my resume for your review and consideration. EFTG Industries has a reputation for excellence. I would like to use my talents to market your quality line of technical products. I will call you to further discuss my talents and how I can benefit your company. If you prefer, you may reach me in the evenings at (555) 555-5555.

Thank you for your time. I look forward to meeting you.

Sincerely,

Karen Kareer

Enclosure

#### Johnny Network

5555 Lakewood Road Somewhere, MN 55555 (555) 555-5555

June 26, 200\_

Mr. Phillip Morework Production Manager XYZ Corporation 21 Industry Lane Anytown, MN 55555

Dear Mr. Morework:

Please consider my qualifications for the Lead Production Assistant opportunity, which was listed in the Daily Planet on June 20, 200\_. With a proven high-tech background in *Fortune* 100 companies, I am well qualified and eager to represent your company in this capacity.

I thrive in a fast-paced environment where production deadlines are a priority, and handling multiple jobs simultaneously is the norm. In relation to leadership, I have been responsible for up to 35 staff members, and have built a reputation for making quality administrative decisions in a fair and consistent manner. Constant negotiations with all levels of management and staff have strengthened my interpersonal skills.

Enclosed is my resume and I am looking forward to discussing my qualifications with you. I will call you to confirm receipt of this information and discuss possible next steps. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Johnny Network

Enclosure

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Resumes and Cove

## Invited Cover Letter Sample— No Paid-Work Experience

#### **Wanda Job**

5555 Lakewood Road Somewhere, MN 55555 (555) 555-5555

January 6, 200\_

Ms. Marilyn Payer Housekeeping Manager Rodetown Inn 123 Indiana Drive Anytown, MN 55555

Dear Ms. Payer:

Your ad for a Housekeeper in the *Jobs Now* newspaper on Sunday, January 4, 200\_caught my eye. I have several years of housekeeping and home maintenance experience and I believe that I have the necessary skills for the position. My resume is enclosed for your consideration.

Rodetown Inn has an excellent reputation in the community as a quality employer, and my skills perfectly match the requirements. Having been a homeowner for more than five years, I do all of my own maintenance and repair. I also have four years of experience as a home care volunteer for the Salvation Army's "Be Friends" program. This includes helping disabled, elderly persons with household chores such as bed-making, cleaning, vacuuming, dusting, doing laundry, washing walls and windows, mopping, mowing, raking and shoveling. I am known to be extremely reliable, efficient, organized and a good team worker.

It would be beneficial for us to meet to discuss the position and my qualifications in greater detail. I will contact you to determine when a convenient interview time might be arranged. Please feel free to contact me in the interim at the number shown above. Thank you for your time. I look forward to talking with you soon.

Sincerely,

Wanda Job

**Enclosure** 

## Referral Cover Letter Sample—

## **Susan Jones**

5555 Lakewood Road Somewhere, MN 55555 (555) 555-5555

July 31, 200\_

Ms. Rhonda Leland Corporate Manager Do-It Corporation 42 Industry Circle Somewhere Else, MN 55555

Dear Ms. Leland:

Mary Smith, Vice President of Marketing with Do-It Corporation, suggested that I contact you directly regarding my interest in an Administrative Assistant position with your organization. Although my resume is actively on file in Human Resources, Ms. Smith felt that you would want to be made aware of my unique qualifications and availability. Consequently, I have enclosed my resume for your consideration.

My background makes me a highly qualified Administrative Assistant with more than four years of experience serving executive management for a large manufacturing company. My qualifications include extensive PC experience with the software used at Do-It Corp. (PowerPoint, Excel and MS Office 200\_) proven customer service skills, itinerary planning and report writing.

I will be in your area on August  $20, 200_{-}$  (9:00 - 3:00), and would appreciate an opportunity to meet with you to discuss my qualifications in greater detail. I will plan to contact you to arrange a possible meeting time. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Susan Jones

**Enclosure** 

c: M. Smith

# Job Search Tools

The right tools make any job easier.



# Job Search Tools

# **Employment Applications**

any occupations require specific tools. A successful job search also requires specific "tools." This chapter covers many of these job search tools and their uses.

Employment applications are an important part of your job search. Some employers require the application as the first step in the selection process. Others may not require it until later. No matter when the application is requested, it's an important job search tool. It provides an opportunity to sell your qualifications. The completed application may be the first impression the employer has of you.

The employment application is used to obtain information about your qualifications and to compare you to other applicants. Companies may receive hundreds or even thousands of applications each year. Therefore, they look for ways to reduce the number of applications they will read thoroughly. The employer screens out many applicants based on various factors in the application. You need to do everything possible to create the perfect application. Following are some general guidelines for completing applications.

## Provide Visual Impact

It's a good idea to make a copy of the application in case you make a mistake. Fill out the application completely, neatly and with no errors in grammar or spelling. Print clearly in black ink, don't use abbreviations, and respond to all questions. Use N/A (not applicable) if the section doesn't apply to you. This shows the employer that vou made an honest effort to fill out the entire application; you didn't overlook anything. If you're seeking professional or office jobs, you may want to type the application.

## Follow Directions

Read the entire application before you complete it. Pay close attention to what's being asked and how you're expected to respond. Read and respect sections that say, "Do Not Write Below This Line," or "Office Use Only." These sections may give insight into the evaluation process.

## Be Positive

During your job search you want to present a positive, honest picture of yourself. Avoid any negative information. Look for ways that show you're the right person for the job. Think of what you'd look for in an employee if you were an employer.

## Be Honest

You must be truthful on an application. The information you provide may become part of your permanent employment record. False information can become the basis for dismissal. Provide only the information the employer is seeking or is necessary to sell your qualifications.



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b Search Tool

## Illegal Questions Position Desired

Applications may contain questions that are tricky or even illegal. These may include questions about age, gender, disabilities, health, marital status, children, race, arrests or convictions, religion and workers' compensation. Read the application first so you can plan your answer. You need to decide how you'll respond. If the question doesn't bother you, answer it. If it does bother you, you may want to use N/A or a dash (—). Keep in mind you may get screened out by having too many of these responses. Additional information about illegal questions can be found at Minnesota WorkForce Centers, a local state employment service, the Attorney General's office or the Human Rights office. (See the section on Legal Rights on page 154.)

## Target Your Qualifications

Many applications have limited space to display your skills, experience and accomplishments. Increase your chances of gaining an interview by carefully selecting what you'll include on the application. Display your qualifications that meet the specific needs of the job. Read the job description carefully. Advance knowledge of the employer, its products or services, and especially the skills needed to do the job will help you choose the appropriate information to include. For ideas and techniques on doing employer research, read the section on Research on page 32.

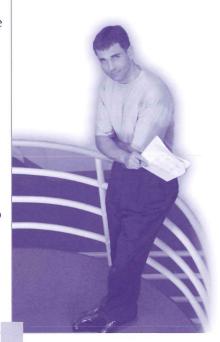
Employers won't try to figure out where you fit in their organization. If the job is an advertised job or if you're looking for a specific position, enter that job title in the blank space provided. When you aren't applying for a specific position, state the name of the department in which you wish to work. If you're interested in more than one job, fill out more than one application.

## Job Gaps

If you have job gaps in your employment history, be sure to think of positive ways you were spending your time while unemployed. Make your answer short, simple and truthful. Examples include managing and maintaining a household, attending school and providing childcare. If you were volunteering for an organization, be sure to state the name of the organization and the type of work you were doing. This will prepare you to answer questions regarding your job gap.

## Salary Requirements

When asked about salary requirements, it's best to give a salary range or to respond with "negotiable." Use one of these responses even if you know the wage. You never know what the future holds, and you could negotiate a higher salary. Remember that questions about salary may be "knockout" questions used to reduce the number of applicants.



## Reasons For Leaving

Carefully choose your words when responding to this question. Negative responses may provide a swift way for the employer to eliminate your application from consideration.

When stating why you left a job, it's important to avoid using the words fired, quit, illness or personal reasons. These responses may reduce your chances of being hired. Always look for positive statements. If you respond with, "Will explain at the interview," you can expect to be called on to do so. Often there are better ways to respond. Think of a way you can put your reason in a positive light. Examples— "Returned to school to learn new skills" or "To find a job that more closely matched my skills."

#### Fired

Don't use the term fired or terminated. Find a phrase that sounds neutral such as "involuntary separation." You may want to call past employers to find out what they will say in response to reference checks. When contacting former employers, reintroduce yourself and explain that you're looking for a new job. Ask what they will say if they're contacted for a reference check. If you were terminated, you may want to request that this employer simply verify your dates of employment, your job title and describe your job duties. You may also consider having a confidante call and ask for a reference, then report

to you what's said. In the future, if you're faced with being terminated, you may request that the employer's record documents a mutually agreeable reason for separation, and explain you're concerned that a record saying you were terminated may have a negative impact on your employability.

#### Quit

If you quit your job, be prepared to offer an explanation. If you quit under less than favorable conditions, avoid saying anything negative about the employer. You may want to use the term resigned or voluntarily separated which implies you followed proper procedures in leaving the job. There are many positive, valid reasons why you may have quit your job. You should be prepared to explain the reason on the application and/or in the interview.

Other reasons for quitting a job include volunteer work (state what kind of work and with whom you did volunteer work), starting your own business or raising your family. In all of these cases, you need to assure the employer you're now fully ready to assume the responsibilities of the job.

### Laid off

If you were laid off from a job due to no fault of your own, tell the employer the circumstances. Phrases you might want to use include lack of work, lack of operating funds, temporary employment, seasonal employment, company closed, plant closing, company downsizing, a corporate merger, etc.

#### Quit for a better job.

This response includes leaving for advancement potential, leaving to work closer to home, leaving for a better work environment or leaving for a career change. If you quit for a better job, there shouldn't be a long break in employment; your employment history should support the statement.

## Quit to move to another area.

In this case, you quit without having another job. You may have moved to be nearer to your family, to an area with greater economic potential, to an area better suited for raising children, etc. Be careful not to use this reason for more than one employer on your application— it might appear you aren't a dependable or stable employee.

## Quit to attend school.

If you use this reason, the education listed on your application and/or resume must agree. Preferably, your school program is consistent with your career goals. You should assure the employer any continuing school activities won't interfere with the job.

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Search To

# Additional Job Search Tools

Just as a toolbox contains many tools to get a job done, the following are some more ideas to help you "get the job" done.

## Letters of Recommendation

Letters of recommendation are written evaluations of your work performance and work habits. Your present or previous supervisor, manager or team member usually writes them at your request. They're used to recommend you to another employer. Employers aren't obligated to write these letters and may not write them due to liability issues and company policy. If you've been a good employee, many will do so to help you obtain a new position.

If you're a student who just completed training and have little or no work experience, you can ask your instructor, internship supervisor, advisor, mentor or volunteer coordinator to write a letter of recommendation.

If you're a person new to the labor market, with no paidwork experience, it's acceptable for you to ask your landlord, neighbor, volunteer coordinator, community leader, etc., to write a letter of recommendation. It should be someone you've completed a task or project with or someone who knows you well. They need to address how long they've known you, the quality of your work or participation, dedication, skills and work habits.

## Performance Evaluation

A performance evaluation is a formal, written review or evaluation of your work. It usually covers a specific period of time and includes the quality, quantity, work habits and attitude with which you've performed your job. It can also state your promotions, demotions and reprimands. Positive performance evaluations can be included with your resume or application to bolster your credentials and increase your opportunities of securing a job.





## Tips for Completing an Application

- A Personal Data Record contains information you will use in your job search. Use it to write resumes. Carry it with you when completing applications. Review it before your interviews.
- Write out responses using a separate sheet of paper before completing the application. An alternative is to obtain a second application.
- Whenever possible, take the application home so you can fill it out where you're comfortable and can take your time. Read the directions carefully. It's often helpful to discuss your answers with someone else to give you perspective and direction to your responses.
- A typed application, although optional, always creates a good impression with an employer.
- Use correction fluid sparingly for fixing minor errors.
   Consider using a black, erasable pen or a correction ribbon on your typewriter.
- Double-check grammar, spelling and content. When possible, ask someone to proofread it.
- Include skills on the application that are related to the type of position for which you're applying.
- Never write "See Resume" on the application.
- When explaining gaps in your employment, describe what you did in positive terms that can be related to employment. For example, if you spent time caring for a sick family member, refer to skills used in occupations like home health aide.



## Personal Data Record

Personal Data Rec	ord	for:								
Address										
Social Security Nu	mbei	·*				Alie	n Card N	umber*		
Phone Numbers	Hon	ne		Fax			Emo	il		
Driver's License Nu	ımbe	er		Class		Endorse	ments			
Any felony convictions?**		If yes, explain	:							
Position Desired										
Dates Available					Minim	um Wage				
Skills and Abilities										
Education										
		High School		ess, Ti ol, Col			raduate University	Grad Profes	uate/ ssional	Military Training
School Name/GED						×				
School Location							y			
Years Completed		Don't complete	1 2	3	4	1 2	3 4	1 2	3 4	
Did you graduate	? 1	this information for High School—	Yes	ı	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
Diploma/Degree		it either doesn't								
Graduation Date		apply or could lead to age								
Course of Study		discrimination.								
Describe any scholastic honors, assistantships, etc										
Describe any specialized trainin assistantships, etc	ıg,									
Foreign Language	25									
Occupational Licen Certifications, Regis trations, Profession Affiliations, etc.	;-									

<sup>\*</sup> Provide this information only after accepting an offer of employment. 
\*\* Provide this only if asked.

## Personal Data Record (continued)

<b>Employment History</b> (list most recent emp	oyment first)
Employer Name/Organization	Address
Dates Employed— From: Month/Year	To: Month/Year
Job Title/Major Responsibilities/Skills, Knowledge and Al	pilities
Supervisor/Leader	Contact? Yes No Phone
Reason for Leaving	Ending Salary
Employer Name/Organization	Address
Dates Employed— From: Month/Year	To: Month/Year
Job Title/Major Responsibilities/Skills, Knowledge and Al	pilities
Supervisor/Leader	Contact? Yes No Phone
Reason for Leaving	Ending Salary
Employer Name/Organization	Address
Dates Employed— From: Month/Year	To: Month/Year
Job Title/Major Responsibilities/Skills, Knowledge and Al	pilities
Supervisor/Leader	Contact? Yes No Phone
Reason for Leaving	Ending Salary
Volunteer Activity	
Dates Volunteered— From: Month/Year	To: Month/Year
Title/Major Responsibilities/Skills, Knowledge and Abiliti	es
Supervisor/Leader	Contact? Yes No Phone
Other skills, knowledge and abilities not listed above a	cavirad through habities or interests

# References

Choose your references with care. Someone who is influential in the community or business may be an effective reference, but shouldn't be selected for this reason alone. Look for people who honestly know you and will speak objectively. Avoid references where the potential employer may assume a bias in the relationship, such as your spouse. Avoid references that may be controversial or may concern the employer. Examples of these types of references are clergy, counselors or social workers. Of course, these are general guidelines and ultimately it's up to you to choose the best references. You may even want to use different references for different employment opportunities.

# General Guidelines in Selecting Your References

- When using someone as a reference, always get permission first.
- Tell them about your job search and the type of job opportunities you're seeking.
- Coach them so they'll be prepared to present you as an ideal candidate.
- Find out if the reference would prefer to be contacted at work or home. Find out the best time to reach her/him. Give this information to the prospective employer.
- Be prepared to provide the reference's occupation, phone number, length of time you've known each other and the nature of the relationship.
- Send your references a thank you note when you know they have given you a reference.

There are four types of references— (Be prepared to give references from as many reference types as possible.)

Work Related— Includes past employers, coworkers, subordinates or clients who can speak about your specific employment experience. You can also list the people for whom you perform volunteer activities, babysitting, lawn mowing and other odd jobs.

**Professional**— People who know you on a professional basis. May include contacts from business and sales, 4-H clubs or professional and community organizations.

Academic— Instructors and vocational counselors who can speak about your academic endeavors (appropriate for current students or recent graduates).

Personal — Only use a personal reference if you have no work related, professional or academic ones to offer. Friends and neighbors who know you personally and can describe your self-management skills can be used. Doctors, librarians, bankers and landlords may also be used as references. Use the names of people who can tell an employer you can be depended on to do a good job.



ob Search

# Reference Sheet

Keep this Reference Sheet with your Personal Data Record.

Name	Employer	Title	Phone Number

# Work Samples

Jan, a hairstylist, took pictures of her customers before and after she did their hair. This convinced the employer she was capable of doing a good job and she was hired immediately.

"A picture is worth a thousand words." If this saying is true, consider the possibilities for showcasing your qualifications. Presenting a picture of your

accomplishments using work samples may provide immediate impact and understanding of your skills.

Work samples can be presented in a variety of ways. Traditionally, artists and photographers prepare a collection of their best work. Those seeking work in the performing arts use video and audio tapes. Published works are the work samples of journalists and reporters.

A chef or baker could show photographs of culinary creations.

Tailors or seamstresses could wear examples of the clothing they produced. A secretary could have a writing sample completed in school. Office support staff might present brochures, reports or newsletters as samples of their work. A mechanic could present pictures of auto restorations. Facilitators or trainers could use participant evaluations and videos of presentations. Other sources of work samples include hobbies, sports, scouts, hunting, fishing, crafts, volunteer work and other interests.

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# Job Search

## **Advantages**

**Builds self-confidence**— presents the tangible evidence of what you've accomplished.

Proves your credibility—shows you have the experience and can accomplish the tasks.

Proves you can do the job—overcomes the perception that you lack experience or are under-qualified.

Be proactive with your work samples. While work samples may be used any time during your job search, you'd usually present them at an interview. Promote the fact that you have them and want to use them to illustrate your skills, abilities and accomplishments. After all, you're proud of what you've done. Show it!

Gene, a truck driver, built a home for his family during his free time. He did most of the work himself. When an injury forced him to find another occupation, Gene applied for a position at the help desk in a building supply center. Using a set of photographs his wife had taken during the construction of their house, Gene convinced the hiring manager he had the necessary knowledge and experience with building materials and tools.

# Portfolios— The Toolbox

The idea of using a portfolio has always been associated with certain types of work. This section will present the notion of using a portfolio regardless of your desired occupations. As noted above, there are many ways to promote your skills in a visual and dynamic way that can make you stand out from the rest. All that is needed is a method of organizing and presenting things important to your objective. The toolbox is the portfolio.

Interviewing is perhaps the most stressful part of a search for work. A portfolio can provide some comfort in that process. It'll improve your confidence by having something to refer to in support of your answers to questions or requirements of the job. It'll demonstrate to the interviewer that you're organized and focused. It can show that you did your homework and are truly interested in the job. Perhaps most importantly, it provides a systematic way to "close" the interview and leave an impression both in the mind of the interviewer and in their hands.

# Organization

Start with a notebook of some kind to hold and display materials. This could be as simple as a loose leaf binder with dividers. Think in terms of how you'll use it in the interview. At the beginning, it is useful to have a fresh copy of your resume. If there is a pocket in the front cover, put it there. The contents in the rest of the portfolio are best displayed in clear page protectors.

The very first page in the book should be reserved for any information you can find on the employer or the interviewer. Often you can find the company website or an article in the paper. Make a copy and insert it into the front of the book. Just behind that, place a copy of an article that shows a challenge or problem the industry is facing. These articles give you material to engage your interviewer in a dialog. Ideally, the interviewer will notice your book and possibly these articles while you retrieve a fresh resume at the beginning of the interview. Without appearing too pushy, look for a time to refer to your research. People will be appreciative of the fact that you took the time to find out something about them or the company.

Almost every occupation lends itself to the use of work samples.

If they simply ask, "What's that you have there?," tell them that the portfolio helps organize your work search, supports the claims made on your resume and proves you are the right one for the job.

Whether or not you talk about your research, ask near the beginning of the interview if it is alright to take notes. Usually this is acceptable and gives you another opportunity to get your portfolio noticed. Turn to the back cover where you've inserted a note pad in the pocket or rings of the binder. On the left, in a clear page protector facing the note pad, include a comparison of the requirements of the job to your skills and experience. You can find an example in the chapter on Resumes and Cover Letters called Job Match or "T"

Letter Sample. For this and other items in your portfolio, make copies and insert them behind the originals. Before the interview is over, you want to go through this comparison and ask if there are any other things necessary for the job. This will give you an opportunity to address any hidden issues. Never leave the interview without asking for the job, assuming you want it at that point. This is part of the *Job Match Letter* and should also be verbalized by you before the interview ends.

As the interview progresses, refer back to the portfolio anytime you can provide documentation supporting your claims and illustrating your qualifications. Each time, pull out a copy to give to the

interviewer. By the time the interview is over, the interviewer should have your resume, documents supporting your qualifications and a letter comparing your skills to the job requirements and asking for the job.

It should be emphasized that the interviewer must always be allowed to lead. You are in a "sell" position and the employer is in the "buy" mode. Until that relationship changes, like after an offer of employment, you must guard against the appearance of leading the interview.

The actual content of the portfolio will be dictated by each person's history. As a guide, refer to the following outline to give you ideas.

# Section Dividers and Content

#### **Employer/Industry Information**

This is where you put your articles on the interviewer, employer and industry.

#### **Personal Information**

Do not put information here that can lead to illegal discrimination

- · Goals
- Work Search Schedule
- Assessments
- Diplomas
- Certifications
- Skills/Aptitude Tests
- Transcripts
- Special Licenses
- Workshops and Conferences

#### "Good Word"

- References
- Evaluations
- Letters of Recommendation
- Letters of Thanks
- Testimonials
- Awards
- Pictures of Plagues/Trophies
- Articles About You
- Stories Demonstrating Your Skills or Character (preferably signed)

#### Work/Project Samples

- Writing Samples
- Published Work
- Documentation/Photos of Speaking Events
- Presentations (computer, hard copy, etc.)
- Teamwork Examples
- Your Greatest Accomplishment
- "Before" and "After" Examples
- Leadership Examples
- Work Showing Computer Knowledge (charts, spreadsheets, graphics, etc.)

#### **Additional Information**

- Job Match Letter
- Questions for the Employer
- Note Pad

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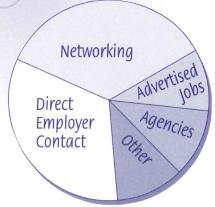
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# Job Search Process









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# Job Search Process

How Do Employers Hire?

nderstanding how employers hire will help in planning a successful job search. Many jobseekers express frustration with the hiring process. They feel a loss of control. The sense is that the employer holds all the cards and they aren't showing their hand. Knowledge is power, and understanding the hiring process is empowering. It will help direct your efforts and will eliminate some frustration.



Hiring practices vary from industry to industry, employer to employer, hiring manager to hiring manager. Managers at the same employer may use a different approach. No two hiring processes are alike. However, there are a few common strategies and tools used in hiring. Recruitment, screening and selection are three basic components of a hiring process.

### Recruitment

Employers need an applicant pool from which they fill job openings. Employers who do extensive hiring may be continuously recruiting applicants, even when there isn't an immediate need. They simply want to maintain the pool of applicants. Employers

who hire occasionally, or for very specialized positions, will usually recruit as needed. Some employers will recruit simply to test the market. They may be planning some future expansion and want to know if they could fill their labor needs. Therefore, when employers are actively recruiting, they may not have an actual job opening.

There are many ways employers recruit applicants. Here are the most common—

Advertising— Employers may advertise in newspapers, local community papers, trade publications, radio or television, on the Internet or on telephone job hotlines.

Internal Posting— Some employers will first post their jobs internally so interested employees may apply.

**Referral**— Referral from a trusted employee, colleague or peer is

the source preferred by most employers. Many employers actively solicit these referrals as part of their recruitment efforts.

Placement Service Providers— Employers may use private and public placement agencies to recruit candidates.

Personnel Staffing Services— Many employers are turning to temporary and contract agencies for employee recruitment.

Job Fairs— Job fairs are an excellent source for entry-level employees. Employers who recruit at job fairs are usually building a pool of candidates and may not have an immediate opening.

**Internet**— See the following chapter on *Internet Job Search Strategies*.

Other Recruitment Resources—Schools, placement offices, union halls and word of mouth.

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Search Process

## Screening

Once employers have an applicant pool, they narrow it down to the best qualified. This is no simple task. Employers are usually working with limited information. An application and/or a resume may be all they have. They may also have references and a record of past employment, but they usually will check these only after an initial screening. The reality is that for any one job, employers may have hundreds of applicants. Therefore, their first task is to eliminate as many as possible, as fast as possible. During the initial screening, employers generally spend no more than a few seconds on each application.

Cindy is looking to fill a position in her department. Through a successful recruiting effort, she has 120 resumes. Cindy has one position and plans to interview no more than 10 candidates. There is no way she can thoroughly review all 120 resumes. In planning her strategy, she decides to screen the resumes for basic requirements and appearance. She quickly pages through the resumes and eliminates those that do not meet the basic requirements and those that are poorly presented or have errors. In less than an hour, Cindy has narrowed the pool of candidates down to the 10 she plans to interview.

Employers will spend more time reviewing the small number of candidates left after an initial screening. They will look more closely at qualifications and may contact references and/or past employers. Some may call the applicant to conduct a telephone screening interview, or they may schedule an in-person screening interview. Employers are frequently turning to technology to help manage the hiring process. Growing technologies include resume scanning systems, databases and the Internet. The goal of screening is to narrow the pool of qualified applicants to those to be interviewed.

#### Selection

While every step in the process plays a part in the hiring decision, employers most often make the final selection based on the interview. At the interview, employers are seeking to verify qualifications and to evaluate how the person will fit into the organization. When someone is called for an interview, they can be reasonably confident employers believe they're qualified for the job. Employers are interested in the person or they wouldn't be investing their time in an interview. The question is, "Are you the best qualified person for the job?"

"Best qualified" doesn't just mean skills, experience and education. Employers are also looking for motivation, a passion for excellence and a dedication to continuous learning and quality. They're also looking at how much a new employee will cost them. Hiring is a major "purchase" that costs thousands of dollars per year. Employers want to make sure they get the best value for their money. After all, most jobseekers don't come with a money-back guarantee.

# The Hiring Structure

Usually, larger employers and those that do extensive hiring will have a formal hiring structure. Smaller employers and those who hire less frequently will be less formal. Also, larger employers may have several people involved in the process, while smaller employers may have one person handle the hiring. There are also industry-specific hiring practices. Medicine, education and government are industries that have unique hiring processes. Union contracts will also influence the process.

Not everyone in the hiring process has the authority to hire. Usually one person, most often the manager of the department where the person will work, makes the final decision. If possible, it's worth finding out who will make the final decision. However, treat everyone as though they're the hiring authority. You never know who has influence on the hiring decision. At the very least, you may be working with that person if you're hired.

The human resources department isn't usually the hiring authority. It manages the hiring process. Exceptions may be when hiring for an entry-level position, when the employer has many positions open, or when the position is in the human resources department. The human resources department will usually recruit, screen and schedule interviews. Although

the department usually doesn't hire, it often has a lot of influence on the hiring decision.

Tom needs to fill an opening in his department. He submits a written request to Human Resources. He includes the basic criteria for the job, how soon he needs the person and how many candidates he wants to see. Human Resources checks the current pool of applicants and, if necessary, recruits additional candidates. They will screen the pool and select the best candidates, who are referred to Tom for consideration. They will also schedule the interviews and process the necessary paperwork when the decision is made.

# Today's Job Market

The hiring process is more structured than it was in the past. Employers are generally more selective. Many factors have influenced the process. Large numbers of candidates, employment legislation, new technologies, employer liability and organizational restructuring are a few of these influences. No longer do employers hire with the intent of lifetime employment. The assurance of retirement with a single employer is quickly becoming outdated. The average person will have many jobs and will change careers several times during her/his lifetime. Job search is no longer a single or rare event in life— it has become an ongoing

career process. A successful job search campaign will consider these changes and will use all available resources.

# Advertised Jobs

Many employers advertise their job openings. The newspapers, trade journals, television, radio, bulletin boards, grocery stores, self-service laundries, libraries, store windows and the Internet are all sources of advertised jobs. The most common of these are newspaper advertisements. One limitation of advertised jobs is their overuse by many jobseekers. Here are more limitations of advertised jobs—

- Because they're seen by more jobseekers, the competition is much greater.
- They represent only a small percentage of available jobs.
   Most employers prefer to use other sources for recruiting candidates.
- Many are fake openings. There
  is no real job, or the opening
  has already been filled.
  Employers may advertise to
  test the market, while some
  are required to advertise
  because of Equal Employment
  Opportunity requirements or
  federal contracting.
- Some are undesirable jobs.
   They may pay low wages or the employer may have trouble keeping employees.

Despite this, there are many good jobs to be found through advertisements. Employers needing specialized skills and those who are mass recruiting (seeking to fill many positions) will often advertise. Also, advertisements are excellent

windows into the job market; they're one measure of growth industries. Here are some tips for advertised jobs—

- Actively look for advertised jobs, but don't make them your primary focus.
- Pick your sources for advertised jobs newspapers, trade journals, the Internet, etc., then follow them faithfully. Review new listings when they're released.
- Respond to new openings immediately.
- Keep track of listings that run continuously or are old. Review past advertisements to see which jobs have been listed before.
- Don't ignore blind ads (ads where you apply to a box number and don't know the employer's name). Many good jobs are listed as blind ads.
- Look at all the jobs listed, not just those that fit your goal. You may find an employer you want to pursue even though a job in your occupation isn't listed.
- Research the employer and the job before you apply.
- Direct your application to a person by name. Avoid "To whom it may concern" or "Personnel Manager."
- When you apply, attempt to meet the hiring authority.
   Don't just send your resume or application and wait.
- After you apply, follow-up with the employer. Check with the employer often ask for an interview show your initiative.

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# Networking \_\_\_

Employment experts agree that most job openings are never advertised.

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Jan and Frank moved so now they need a family doctor. Frank asks his coworkers while Jan checks with the neighbors for referrals to a good doctor.

Kevin is having car trouble and doesn't know where to have it fixed. He calls a couple of people at school to ask if they can suggest someone.

Gene is building a scale model of a fire station for his 5th grade class. He calls the local fire department and arranges to meet with the captain to work out the details.

**Sue** was looking for her first job as a receptionist. While she was attending a Minnesota WorkForce Center job club, another participant told her about an opening where his wife works.

Each of these people has something in common; they're all networking. Wherever there are communities and civilizations, there is networking. What has changed over time is how networking occurs. In the past, networking was informal and random. In fact, most people didn't even know that they were networking. Today networking has become calculated and structured. People network every day without thinking about it. However, more people are including formal networking as part of their daily activities.

# Finding the Hidden Job Market

Most employers don't need to advertise. There are enough applicants available to them without advertising. Also, most employers don't want to advertise. They'd rather consider someone referred to them from a trusted employee or colleague. It's like looking for a doctor or an auto mechanic; most people would rather go to someone recommended rather than to a name found in an advertisement. If this is the case, then how does someone find these jobs? Direct employer contact and networking are the answers.

Formal networking is the systematic pursuit of new contacts and information. It's organized and planned. Networking is relational. A good networking relationship will be mutually beneficial to both parties. Many people have trouble with formal networking, especially as a job search strategy.

Here are some common networking concerns-

- I'm embarrassed to admit that I'm looking for work.
- I feel that it would be like begging for a job.
- I don't want people to think that I'm taking advantage of them.

Now let's dismiss each of these concerns—

- · Looking for work doesn't carry the stigma that it did in the past. The average person will change jobs every five years. Your networking contacts will be much more sympathetic than you may think.
- Networking isn't begging. In fact, you shouldn't be asking for a job; you should be seeking information that may lead to a job. Usually your networking contacts won't be potential employers— they'll be people who know about potential employment. If you discover that a contact is a potential employer, take off your networking hat and pursue employment.
- Good networking is a mutually beneficial relationship. Plan to give as much or more than you receive. Also, you'll be surprised at how willing people are to help. In fact, they'll be honored that you value their input.

# Networking Strategies

Networking strategies range from basic to sophisticated. Here are some general networking ideas—

- Don't just wait to bump into people. Initiate contacts for the sole purpose of networking.
- Develop a networking list.
   Make contact with each person on your list. Add names of people you meet or are referred to by your contacts.
- Set networking goals. Write down specific goals for how many networking contacts you plan to make each week.
   Regularly check your progress.
- Set goals for each meeting.
   Don't just get together and see where it leads— meet with a purpose. Express this goal when you arrange the meeting.
- Come to the meeting prepared.
   Know what questions you want to ask. Take notes.
- Always ask if the person knows of anyone else you should meet.
   Ask if you can use her/his name when contacting the person.
- Maintain networking files.
   Keep a record of the outcomes of each contact and important information about the person.
- Meet in person whenever possible.
- Let the person know you value his/her information and professional opinion.
- Plan your follow-up. At the time you meet with someone, plan when you will contact this person again. Write it down on a follow-up calendar.
- If you agree to do something for someone, be sure to follow through.
- Say "thank you" often. Send a thank you letter or card.

# The Networking Campaign

There are four basic categories of networking contacts. Each has its own unique value. A good networking campaign will draw from each category.

# People you know well—friends, family, neighbors and coworkers.

This is a good place to begin your networking campaign. These people have the most interest in your success and are excellent networking contacts. These are the people with whom you're most comfortable and from whom you can ask for the most assistance. However, when networking with this group, set clear goals. They may want to help more than you wish. Acknowledge their value and say "thank you." This group is often the least appreciated.

# People you see occasionally—acquaintances or business contacts.

More than 25 percent of the people who find jobs through networking received the referral from someone they see once a year or less! These are people with whom you may feel less comfortable with, but they also have the greatest potential. Ask this group for ideas and referrals. You may need to reintroduce yourself. State your purpose, acknowledge their value and request a meeting.

It's a good idea to set reasonable time limits for the meeting. Let them know you only want 30 minutes of their time. Be sure you stick to your time limit. Come well prepared, and be professional and organized in your discussion.

# Referrals from your other networking contacts.

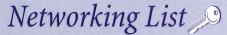
Stretch your network by meeting new people who are the friends, associates and acquaintances of your networking contacts. Sometimes these will be people with additional information, but they may also be potential employers. In either case, review the sections on Direct Employer Contact and Telephone Communications. Most jobseekers will now be out of their comfort zone. This is where you'll find the real action. You're getting closer to that job. When approaching a referral contact, introduce yourself with a lead statement that'll get their attention. Use the name of the person who referred you. State your purpose and request a meeting. Limit the time for the meeting, be well prepared and be professional.

# Cold-calling people you don't know and to whom you haven't been referred.

Through your employment research and networking, you may discover the names of people with whom you'd like to talk. This type of contact takes another level of confidence, but the potential is great. Take the initiative and you'll find that these contacts will pay off.



earch Process



Here is a list to get you started.

- Friends and Neighbors
- Social acquaintances—bridge group, hiking club, softball team, etc.
- Social club members
- Health club members
- PTA members or groups
- Classmates— from any level of school
- College alumni— get a list of those living in the area
- Teachers— your teachers and professors, your children's
- Anybody you wrote a check to in the last year
- Drugstore owner
- Doctor, dentist, optician
- Lawyer, accountant, real estate agent
- Insurance agent, stockbroker, travel
- Veterinarian
- Dry cleaner
- Flower shop owner or manager/ sales clerks
- Manager of your local bank
- Current and former coworkers
- Relatives
- Politicians
- Chamber of Commerce executives
- Professional association executives
- Trade association executives
- Members of professional organizations
- Religious leaders— check your fellowship/congregation for a job-loss support group
- Members of your fellowship/parish/ church/congregation/synagogue
- People you meet at conventions
- Speakers at meetings you've attended
- Business club executives and members— Rotary, Kiwanis, Jaycees, etc.
- Friends you served with in the military
- Volunteer affiliations
- Friends of your parents
- People you meet on airplanes, riding the bus (you never know!)
- Community meetings
- Daycare facilities
- YMCA/YWCA
- Coaches
- Mechanics
- Hairdresser/barber
- Other
- Other

# Log

Networking It's important to document and follow-up all job leads. Use this sheet for keeping track of all your networking activity. Always ask if they will suggest another contact. Keep the ball rolling!

Contact Name	Date Called		
Employer Name			
Address			
Action Plan			
Fax Apr	oointment Date/Time		
Email Address	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·		
Summary of Conversation/Conta	ct		
Special Interests/Proud Accompli of Person Interviewed	shments		
Follow-up			
	~		
Contact Names Received (List be	low new leads from this contact.)		
Name	Name		
Position	Position		
Employer	Employer		
Phone	Phone		
Fax	Fax		
Fmail	Email		

# Direct Employer Contact

goal of a job search campaign is to meet face-to-face with employers (interviews). The more interviews you have, the greater your chances for success. If you aren't getting interviews, it's unlikely that you'll have job offers. Most jobseekers, prefer a passive job search strategy. They submit an application or resume and wait. When they don't hear anything, they repeat the process. On the other hand, successful jobseekers are proactive in their approach. They take the initiative to make direct contact with potential employers. Contacting employers directly is fundamental to a successful job search.

Direct employer contact requires preparation, confidence and persistence. Many people are uncomfortable with this approach. They're afraid that they will offend the employer and hurt their chances for employment. A certain amount of concern is healthy; it's important to be considerate of employers and respect their time. But also remember that you have something they need. You're not asking for a handoutyou're selling a quality product! If you don't take the initiative, no one will take it for you.

Direct employer contact works for advertised jobs. Even if

an advertised job discourages direct contact, it's to your advantage to take the initiative. A wise policy is to first follow the advertised directions, then make direct contact. If the advertisement states, "Send a resume," send your resume, then follow it with a phone call.

Direct contact is the logical conclusion to a successful networking campaign. As your networking pays off in referrals to employers, you'll have to make direct contacts. You have the advantage of using the name of your referral to soften the contact.

Michael found a position in the newspaper that discouraged direct contact. Determined to do more than just send his resume, Michael researched the employer, then called and asked for an interview. Not only was he granted the interview, he subsequently won the job. To top this, Michael wasn't skilled in sales or a polished communicator. Michael had a severe speech impediment and was partially paralyzed.

You'll also want to make direct contact with employers who aren't advertising and to whom you haven't been referred. This is called cold calling. Cold calling is difficult for many people, but it's an extremely productive job search strategy.

# Basic Principles of Direct Employer Contact

- Preparation is critical to success.
   Research the employer, the industry and the job.
- Direct contact may be in person or by phone. However, the ultimate goal is an in-person interview.
- The goal is to present your qualifications directly to the hiring manager. The goal isn't to talk with the human resources department, unless you're looking for a job in the department or it is the hiring authority. Respect the human resources department by complying with the hiring process.
- The goal isn't to submit an application or resume. If an application or resume is requested, graciously comply and continue your direct contact.
- When you make direct contact, don't begin by asking if they're hiring, or by saying you're unemployed. Capture their attention with your qualifications and ask for an interview.
- Plan your follow-up. If you're granted an interview, this is your next step. Otherwise come to an agreement with the employer about when you will call back.
- Sell your qualifications, send your resume and plan your follow-up even if an employer isn't hiring. You never know what will happen tomorrow.
- Whenever possible, the next step is your responsibility— not the employer's. For example, if an employer says, "We will call you in a couple of weeks," you could respond with, "Would it be all right if I call you two weeks from today?" If they say "Yes," then you've agreed on your follow-up and the responsibility is yours.
- Expect rejection! It goes with the territory. Don't take rejection personally. Maintain a good attitude and a healthy sense of humor.

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# Telephone Communications



ot many people can imagine a world without telephones. They have become a fundamental part of our lives. Telephone communications have advanced to a degree of sophistication few people could've ever imagined. Telemarketing, voice mail, conference calling, email and fax machines have all added to this revolution.

The telephone is a critical tool in a successful job search campaign. It's almost guaranteed that you'll talk to a potential employer on the telephone at some point in the hiring process. Shrewd jobseekers use advanced telephone marketing techniques in their job search. They use the telephone to make direct employer contact and to open the doors of opportunity. The telephone is a powerful tool in presenting your qualifications to an employer. Effective telephone techniques are critical skills all jobseekers need.

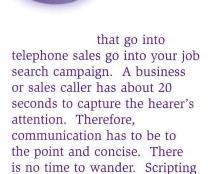
Good telephone communication requires skills— skills that can be learned. Just because someone talks on the telephone a lot doesn't mean they're effective communicators. In fact, many people who use the telephone frequently have mastered some very offensive

habits. It's never too early or too late to learn good telephone communications. Telephone skills are marketable job skills many employers value.

In a comprehensive job search, you'll be using the telephone to conduct research, cold call employers, make networking contacts, schedule meetings and to interview. Using the telephone is an efficient and effective use of your time and resources. The telephone can get you behind closed doors, which will help you contact those hard-to-reach people.

# Scripting

Preparation is critical to good telephone communication. It isn't wise to call someone and just start talking. This may work for family and friends, but it will kill a job search. Telephone communications in a job search campaign are business calls, not personal calls. Actually, they're sales calls. Some people have a hard time with the idea of telephone sales. None of us likes a pushy telemarketer. But many of the same concepts and strategies



is the answer.

Scripting is simply planning what you're going to say. Most people script important conversations— they just don't realize that's what they're doing. Have you ever made an important call and found yourself hesitating to dial the last number? Or hanging up before you've finished dialing? You were probably scripting in your mind what you were going to say. You may want to take it a step further and write down what you plan to say. That's what skilled telemarketers do— they have a script they follow.

# Basic Principles of Scripting

- Have an objective for the call. You may be seeking information, trying to schedule a meeting or presenting your qualifications to a potential employer.
- Have a secondary objective.
   Often you won't achieve your primary objective, but every telephone call is an opportunity to solicit information.
- Know the name of the person to whom you wish to speak. If you don't know the person's name, then obtaining it becomes your first objective.
- Outline in writing what you want to say. This is important in the early stages of cold calling or when the call is very important. Later on, you'll script most of your calls in your head. Don't read your script. Your presentation should be natural.
- The script will depend on the goal of the call and whether you know the person you're calling. A good script should include the following—

Introduction— Tell the person who you are.
Lead statement— Make a quick statement designed to get the person's attention.
Body— State your purpose for the call.

**Close**— Accomplish your goal, ask for information, schedule the meeting, etc.

# Script for Contact Information

**Caller**— Hi. This is Jerry Job. I'm trying to contact the person in charge of marketing. Who would that be?

**Receiver**— That's John Smith. He's the director.

**Caller**— I need to contact him about some marketing concerns. Does he have a direct number or an extension number?

**Receiver**— His direct number is 555.5555. Would you like me to transfer you?

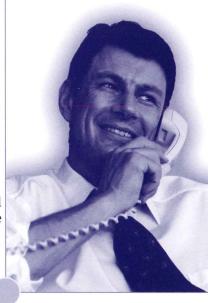
# Script for Follow-up Information

Caller— Hello. This is Jerry Job. I interviewed for the computer programmer position last week. I'm just checking to see if the hiring decision has been made.

Receiver— Not yet. We

anticipate making our final selection this Wednesday.

Caller— I'm still very interested in the position. You're doing some very innovative multimedia work that's on the cutting edge of today's technology. Best of all, you have a bright and energetic technical staff that understands the importance of team production. I'm sure we'd work well together. Would it be okay if I called you on Wednesday? What would be the best time?



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# Basic Principles of Telephone Communications

**Practice**— Telephone skills, like all skills, have to be practiced to be mastered. Start with low-risk calls. Practice your presentation with a friend and read your script out loud.

#### Deal With Voice Mail-

Whether you like it or not, voice mail is a part of our lives. Speaking to a machine adds a new dimension to telephone skills. When you get voice mail, listen carefully to the message so you can comply with the instructions. It's a good idea to know what you will say before you make your call. Having a script ready will enable you to leave a message that's upbeat, simple, clear and concise. Your message should be 30 seconds or less. It's amazing how an otherwise skilled telephone user comes across as monotone and unsure on a message machine. If you have an answering machine, make sure your message is polite and professional, and be sure you answer your messages.

**Select a Location**— Call from a quiet place where you can concentrate. Don't call from a noisy restaurant, bus station, street corner, when the kids are yelling or the dog is barking.

**Organize**— Have all your job search materials nearby and take notes.

#### Listen Carefully—

Communication is what's said, how it's said and the body language that's used. It's important to listen carefully to what you're saying, how you're saying it and how you're being received. If you sense you've called at a bad time, politely ask if there's a better time. It may be useful to tape record yourself while conducting a simulated call.

Catch "Buy" Signals— A "buy" signal is evidence that you've captured the person's attention. "Buy" signals usually take the form of questions. When someone is asking questions about your qualifications, they are, for the moment, interested in you.

#### **Handle Objections**—

Objections come in many forms. "We're looking for someone with more experience or education," or "Sorry, we're not hiring right now." Press on to your goal and continue to sell your qualifications. Look for ways to eliminate the objection.

**Follow-up**— It's the persistent 20 percent who make 80 percent of the sales! The best time to plan a follow-up is when you make the contact. While you have the contact on the telephone, agree on when you'll call back. Keep a followup calendar and maintain a record of your contacts. If you agree to call back, be sure to do so. If someone agrees to call you, state the best time to be reached. The last thing you want to do is sit by the telephone waiting for a call that may never come.

# Additional Telephone Tips

- Wear a smile on the telephone— they may not see it but they'll hear it.
- Dress for making telephone contacts as you would for an interview. Your professionalism and preparation will be heard (you may also be asked to come right down).
- If you can't get past a shrewd receptionist, try before 8:00 a.m., during lunch, after 5:00 p.m. or Saturday morning. If you still can't get through, solicit the receptionist's assistance.
- Look for ways to compliment the person or the employer.
- Don't apologize for making the contact. You have a product they need and a right to present yourself.
- Don't sell yourself from a position of weakness or apologize for what you don't have or haven't done. Sell yourself from a position of strength and stress those skills, attributes and accomplishments attractive to the employer.

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# Telephone Preparation Form

Date	
Contact Person (full name and title)	
Employer Name	
Address	
Telephone Number(s)	
Script	
Primary Goal	
Secondary Goal	
Introduction	
Lead Statement	
Body	
Conclusion	
Results/Comments	
Follow-up Action to be Taken	

# Personnel Staffing Services

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ersonnel staffing services can be an excellent job search resource. They're sometimes known as contract or search firms, or employment agencies. They offer a variety of services and options for the jobseeker. These firms can be private, public, for profit or nonprofit. Some specialize in service to specific groups of people and have eligibility requirements; others serve the general public. Each firm is unique and may provide a combination of blended services. The type of services offered may be influenced by whom they represent— you or the employer. Generally, their focus is on matching your skills with the job openings of employers or companies. Depending on your circumstances and needs, many of them can be of benefit in helping you look for and secure employment. Therefore, it's important to assess your situation, know what you want and need from the firm, know the services they offer, and clearly understand both the firm's and your rights and responsibilities.

Types of services offered may vary. Here is a description of common services—

#### Staffing/Recruiting-

Employers use staffing services to assist them in filling their job openings. In some instances, they recruit, perform extensive interviewing, check references and submit only the most qualified applicants to the employer. Some staffing services are primarily a bulletin board service where job orders and/or resumes are posted, and you or the employer may contact each other.

Job Search Training— Some staffing services offer specific training in job search skills. This can help you develop valuable skills to enable you to successfully find your own job. This training may include individual workshops and materials on a variety of job search topics. Some firms specialize in resume writing, although sometimes there is a fee for this service. Be sure to find out before requesting this service.

Career Counseling and Planning— If you're looking for a job or entering the labor market for the first time, it's beneficial to talk with a career counselor to help you with self-assessment, knowledge of the labor market, employment trends and training opportunities. Some firms employ career counselors or advisors who provide these services. They usually offer aptitude, interest, personality and skills testing to

help you with career changes and to fulfill your potential by matching you to employment opportunities.

Outplacement or Career Transition— When companies downsize their workforce, some firms will provide laid-off employees with outplacement assistance. This can include job search workshops and materials, phone rooms, job leads, resume design, job club and employment counseling. Ask your employer if these services will be provided.

**Temporary and Contract Employment**— These are firms that refer you to temporary employment opportunities as requested by an employer who specifies the job requirements and time period of the work assignment. Usually, you're working for the temporary or contract firm during this time and are paid by them. Some employers use this means to try out new employees and may hire you later if you've performed well and they have a job opening. Others only have a short-term or seasonal need that's best met through this service.

# Benefits P

The benefit to you, the jobseeker, can be varied and many. You can build skills and meet financial needs while continuing to look for work. It's easier to get a job when you have a job. You may be able to get more flexible hours or working conditions to accommodate your personal situation. Some staffing services offer transportation, testing, training, childcare, medical and other benefits. This type of employment can also be useful for those who need to gain work experience, develop skills, obtain training or increase networking contacts. It's also a good way to check out an employer or an occupation before making a commitment to training, a particular career or a particular employer.



## Tips to Consider

- Jobseekers working with personnel staffing services need to be wise consumers. Check into the firm's reputation. Use the ones that are going to best meet your present and future employment needs. Determine if any fees will be charged for services before accepting or signing anything.
- Staffing services work with the job market daily, and can provide valuable information that's helpful in your job search. In all dealings, treat them as you'd treat a potential employer. They represent a variety of companies and can expose you to many opportunities that are otherwise not available.
- Take ownership of your own career and job search. Don't assume if you're working with a staffing service that you can sit back and wait. Use as many resources as possible to help you achieve your goal.
- Temporary staffing services are your employers when you're on assignment for them. Ask about items you need to know before you

agree to accept employment. Those items could include—pay rate, benefits, estimated length of assignment, the chance of becoming an employee of the company and what's expected of you. Also, let them know the hours and days you're available, your overtime availability, your transportation and salary needs.

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- Consider the secondary objectives of any service you're thinking of using. An example might be career counseling provided by training or educational institutions. They may have a primary interest in enrolling you in their training program for funding reasons. Be sure to check out their placement rates and services with the Department of Education, Better Business Bureau or with former students.
- If you're receiving unemployment insurance benefits, know the effect of short-term wages and the consequences of turning down job opportunities. Short-term wages may affect eligibility and benefit amounts. They may also extend the length of time that benefits can be received.

Personnel staffing services offer a variety of services and options for the jobseeker.

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Chapter

# Internet Job Search Strategies

"Never assume the way you've always job hunted is a sure thing."

From "<u>Electronic Job Search Revolution</u>," Joyce Laine Kennedy and Thomas J. Morrow



# Internet Job Search Strategies

# The Internet Job Search

he Internet is changing the way we communicate and receive information. Not since the telephone (and possibly the printing press) has technology created such a widespread impact on civilization. Many experts believe that the Internet will become as widely used and accepted as the telephone or the television. It may become so necessary to business and society that people will be helpless without it.

The Internet combines people and computers to form a global network of information, communication and community. The Internet is an electronic community with its own culture and subculture. It has its own rules of behavior and etiquette. Nearly everything found in a physical community (businesses, social organizations, government agencies, educational institutions and individuals) can also be found in cyberspace. Every idea, ideology and interest is represented. Exploring the Internet is much like maneuvering through life. The challenge is to master the technologies and the culture.

This chapter isn't intended to teach you all there is to know about the Internet. It assumes you have a basic knowledge of computers and the means to access the Internet. This entails a computer (at least the use of one), a software program called the "browser" and an Internet provider (to get you access to the Internet). Just about any computer you can purchase today will have a browser pre-loaded on it. Contacting a service provider is the next logical step. Minnesota WorkForce Centers have computers you can use at no charge for much of what will be discussed in this chapter. You may also find computers at libraries, schools and retail establishments that may or may not charge you a fee for their use.

successful job search requires a variety of skills, tools and strategies. There is no one factor that brings success. It's the combination of many individual efforts. The Internet is a gold mine of employment resources. For every major job search strategy there's an Internet counterpart. If you're serious about your job search, it's worth your time to explore these resources.

The Internet is quickly becoming a basic part of how we receive information, communicate and conduct business. It's also becoming an important tool in an effective job search campaign. People who learn to use the Internet will have a significant advantage over those who don't. It's worth taking the time to learn the Internet and use it as part of your job search.

# Search Engines

The fundamental tool for finding information on the Internet is the search engine. Search engines use keywords to locate web pages, listings in electronic directories or messages in newsgroups. Some engines search the Internet in general while others search a specific site. Mastering these tools is critical to effectively and efficiently locating information on the Internet.

There are many search sites on the Internet. Each one is a little different in its focus and use. To learn how to use a specific search engine, look for the "help" feature. Most search tools provide instruction on their use.

You can use the Internet to distribute your resume, make direct contact with potential employers and follow-up on job leads.

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Search Strategies

The Internet doesn't replace traditional job search strategies. Few people today can conduct an effective job search using only the Internet. Pen and paper applications, paper resumes, direct contact with potential employers, face-to-face networking and interviewing are still

fundamental. However, the use of technology has also become essential to a successful job search. The goal is to win a face-to-face meeting with an employer. In the near future, that face-to-face interview may be conducted by video conference from the comfort of your home.

# Tips for Learning the Internet

Spend time on the Internet—
The only way to master the
Internet is by using it. Plan to
invest time and energy into
learning the Internet.
The Internet is constantly
changing. To stay current,
you need to learn and relearn
the Internet.

Manage your Internet time— Avoid marathons. Regular short periods of time are more effective than infrequent long periods. When you go on the Internet, decide in advance what you want to accomplish.

Read magazines, bools and web pages— Everything you need to know about the Internet can be found on the Internet. Excellent information about the Internet can also be found in books, magazines and periodicals.

Attend classes or seminars— Seminars are useful for learning about the Internet. Hands-on classes are an excellent way to master Internet skills. Use the newly learned skills immediately and repeatedly. Network— Talk about the Internet with associates, friends and family. Participate in Internet newsgroups, chat rooms and message boards. How much you learn by asking questions, listening and sharing your knowledge with others may surprise you.

Look for opportunities to use the Internet— When you need information, see if you can find it on the Internet. Search for a phone number, address, map or an item for sale in the newspaper. Research a hobby, a dream vacation, business or professional topic. Explore different search strategies and search engines.

**Challenge yourself**— Look for new opportunities to use the Internet. Study a new website or learn another Internet resource.

Make the Internet a priority— Incorporate the Internet into your professional, social and personal life.

# Employment Research

Information is a critical part of a successful job search and is obtained through research. You'll want to learn as much as possible about potential employers, your occupation and your industry. There is no such thing as having too much information in a job search. Information is power. Information gives you control and confidence.

# Benefits of Research

- Increases control and confidence
- Focuses your efforts
- Improves time management and decision making
- Minimizes wasted efforts
- Improves effectiveness of resumes and cover letters
- Prepares you for a strong interview performance
- Strengthens your ability to negotiate the best job offer
- Increases potential for successful job search, job satisfaction and economic security
- Sets you apart from other jobseekers
- Improves potential for success once you start a new job

Prior to the Internet, employment research meant spending a lot of time at the library gathering and studying books, periodicals, articles and business literature. It also meant attending professional meetings, networking and going to informational interviews. While the Internet has not eliminated any of these activities, it has made many of them easier.

# Tips for Internet Research

Be Focused— Using the Internet for research isn't the same as surfing the Internet. It can be compared to taking a Sunday drive versus purchasing tires for your car. On a Sunday drive you can wander wherever the road leads. In fact, the less planned, the areater the adventure. On the other hand, you wouldn't just wander around until you found a tire store. Stay focused on your research goal. If you find something interesting en route to your goal, bookmark the site and come back to it. It'd be like finding a candy store on your way to get tires. Before you know it, you've lost track of what you wanted to accomplish.

#### Develop a Research Strategy—

Develop a plan before you begin looking for information. Decide in advance how much time you're willing to invest. Your topic will influence where you look. The Internet, newsgroups and email all require a different search strategy. Knowing roughly where your information might be found will help in developing your plan. Remember, "Plan your work, then work your plan."

Keep Records— Whether it's websites, computer files or paper files, it's important to keep a record of your research. As you explore potential employers, industries and communities, you will collect a lot of information. Discard that which has little or no immediate value, then file and maintain information that you want to keep. Almost every Internet newbie has given in to the temptation to bookmark sites without discretion. The result is almost always an unmanageable tangle of Internet bookmarks.

**Set Goals**— Goals will help keep you on track and should be stated in specific terms. "I'm going to spend the next hour researching two potential employers who might need someone with marketing skills," is far better stated than, "I'm going to look for jobs on the Internet."

# Electronic Directories

Printed directories like the Yellow Pages phone book are common sources of information, and the Internet is an excellent way to access these types of directories. All phone books that are published in the United States are available on the Internet. These and other Internet directories— which often have more information than the printed versions— are useful in conducting a job search. Not only can you find the address of a potential employer, but you may be able to click on a map that gives directions to that exact location. The electronic directory listing also may have a link to the organization's website where you will find much more information.

There are directories designed specifically for the Internet such as the popular site Yahoo. Its address on the Internet is www.yahoo.com. There are directories that specialize in a specific subject or geographic region. The "links" pages found on most websites are also a type of directory. These can be very useful because they have been reviewed and recommended by someone else interested in the subject.

# Internet job search resources include—

- · Job postings
- Resume posting
- Job search assistance
- Information on employers, occupations, industries and employment
- Access to people important to your success
- Telephone and business directories
- Customized maps that help with your travel
- Automation that notifies

Linda just completed training as a nursing assistant and is looking for potential employers. She decided the best way to start would be to look for nursing home names and addresses in the phone book. At a local library she was able to access phone books on the Internet. With little effort, she found a list of nursing homes in her area, along with maps to their locations and links to their websites. Linda followed one of the links and found a nursing home that was nearby. There she found information about the facility and also found a list of job openings. She also found the name, phone number and email address for the assistant director of nursing responsible for hiring nursing assistants.

Search Strateg

# Online Magazines and Newspapers

You can access a lot of published information on the Internet such as magazines and newspapers. You have access to thousands of free local and worldwide publications. If you're looking to relocate, you can find publications from distant communities.

The search capabilities of the Internet make finding information fast and efficient. How long would it take you to go through one magazine or an average-size newspaper and find every occurrence of the word "healthcare?" Not just in the titles of articles, but anywhere in the publication? How long would it take to search a stack of publications or a whole room full of publications? While the search capabilities of each website will vary, many sites give you the power to search an archive of issues in a matter of seconds. Most sites provide the ability to search at least their current publication.

# Websites

Many organizations and businesses publish a website that provides information for promotion or other purposes. New sites are being created every day. In fact, having a website for a business is becoming as common as having a phone number. The quality and amount of information that's provided varies among sites. But even the most basic employer websites usually have the location of the business and brief descriptions of products or services it provides. You may often find vision and mission statements, a history of the organization, names of key employees and supervisors, business plans, job postings with detailed descriptions of duties and much more.

In addition to employer websites, there are many other sites that provide useful information.

# Employment Research Sites

- Professional Associations
- Research Organizations
- Government Agencies
- Educational Institutions
- Community Organizations
- Libraries

The best tools for locating websites are search engines and directories. Search on the name of the site or use topical and geographic keywords. There are many directories you can use to find sites.

When viewing websites, consider the source and relevance of the information. If the research will have a significant impact on an important decision, look for ways to verify the information. Consider who authored the information and its timeliness. Look for other sources that agree with the information.

Lang is an electronic technician with the US Army stationed in Japan. He will be released from military service soon and plans to return to his home in Minnesota. Lang has been researching the local job market through newspapers published on the Internet. He uses the search features of these publications to find articles of specific interest. From his research, Lang learned about the local economy and identified several potential employers. He has further researched employers by browsing their websites and made initial contact by email. When Lang returns to Minnesota, he will be well on his way to landing an excellent civilian job.

Chuck is a welder with limited work experience. He recently applied for an entry-level job with a local manufacturing company. The company telephoned Chuck and scheduled an interview. At a Creative Job Search seminar, Chuck learned that he should research an employer when preparing for an interview. Chuck went to his local Minnesota WorkForce Center where he found public access to the Internet. Within a few minutes, Chuck had located the company's website. There he learned more than he expected. The next day at the interview the first question was, "What do you know about what we do?" The interviewer was visibly impressed with Chuck's knowledge and obvious preparation. Chuck got the job. He was also given a higher starting wage than was originally stated.

# Electronic Networking #

Would you like to network with professionals in your industry, from all over the world without traveling great distances to attend expensive conferences? Looking for another way to make direct contact with potential employers? In cyberspace you can! The Internet is a networker's paradise.

**Carlos** is considering changing careers. He has identified the paralegal occupation as one in which he has an interest. He has read a lot of published information on the paralegal occupation. Carlos researched the National Paralegal Association website on the Internet, but it was not enough. He wanted to talk directly with people who were currently working as paralegals to hear their personal perspective and experience. Carlos did not know anyone in the local chapter of the Paralegal Association. With the help of the website Google Groups (www.groups.google. com), Carlos was able to locate Internet newsgroups where there were discussions relating to paralegals. Carlos subscribed to a couple of groups and began reading the posts and listening to the discussions. He eventually posted a message introducing himself and describing his interests. In a short time, Carlos learned more than he expected. He was provided advice on training programs, employment trends and how to succeed in the paralegal profession.

The Internet provides access to people from all over the world. The challenge is to find the person with the information you're seeking. Electronic networking uses three basic Internet tools— newsgroups, email and live chat. To master these tools requires specialized communication skills. To be successful in this media requires preparation and practice. Many of the standards that apply to good telephone communication apply to the Internet.

Websites, Internet publications and directories are excellent sources of information. However, frequently the information you need isn't published. Some of the best insight comes from the personal experience and knowledge of individuals. A great deal of insight can be gained by reading published information about an employer or occupation. But a very different kind of insight is gained by talking to someone who works for that employer or in that occupation.

Effectively communicating electronically is both a science and a culture. It involves technology and society. The Internet community has its own culture and etiquette. Mastering these communications is a rewarding challenge. It will open up a new world of opportunity. To learn about electronic communication, go to www.learnthenet.com.



Nancy received a voice message from an employer who found her resume on Minnesota's Job Bank (www.mnwfc.org). The only information the employer left was his name, the name of the company and a phone number. Typically, Nancy would have called the employer without having any background information. She would have learned what she needed to know during the phone call. Instead, Nancy spent 15 minutes on the Internet researching the employer. She found the employer's website that outlined its business, mission, vision and history. She also found an article about the employer. When Nancy returned the telephone call, she had valuable information that helped her to effectively communicate her qualifications and evaluate the employment opportunity.

Strategies

# **Electronic Communications**

ommunication is fundamental to a successful job search. You could say that job search is communication. Consider the topics found in this guide. Communication is at the heart of these topics—

- Skills Identification
- Resumes and Cover Letters
- Employment Applications
- Reasons for Leaving
- References
- Work Samples
- Portfolios

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Job Search Strategies

Internet

- Networking
- Direct Employer Contact
- Telephone Communications
- The Job Interview
- Thank You Letters
- Negotiating Tips
- Job Success Skills

# Email

A very successful job search strategy is to make direct contact with a potential employer. It can also be very difficult. First, you have to identify the person. Then, you have to find the best way to make contact. The telephone is a popular tool for this purpose. Speaking on the telephone is an art, and it's sometimes difficult to connect with a person by phone. Email is an excellent alternative. It gives you access

to the individual any time of the day or night (whenever they read their messages). It also offers greater control over your message. On the phone it's easy to say the wrong thing or say it in the wrong way. With email you can edit and refine your message until it says exactly what you want.

Email can also be used to followup after an interview, communicate with networking contacts, references and placement professionals, and for sending your resume and thank you note. Email is a powerful and unique communication tool. It isn't as formal as a business letter, but it's more formal than a phone call. Email is most effective when communicating with people who actively use email. Many people who have email don't use it and may prefer other forms of communication. Whenever possible, find out early the person's preference for communication.

Making first contact with a stranger, especially a potential employer, is always a challenge. But it's also very necessary to an effective job search. When making first contact with someone by email, be very polite and professional. Introduce yourself with something of interest to the

reader. You want to capture their attention and interest. Don't just say, "Hi, my name is Joe and I'm looking for a job." Communicate what you want from the reader. Be specific you're looking for information or you'd like to schedule a meeting. Finish with your intent to follow-up and an alternative way the person can contact you. If you don't receive a reply, and you're serious about making contact, try a different form of communication (call them on the phone).

Frank submitted his resume to an employer for consideration. He attempted to follow-up directly with the employer by phone to discuss his qualifications and schedule a meeting. However, the employer was never available. Frank left messages on voice mail and with the receptionist. With the help of a directory on the web, Frank was able to locate the employer's email address. He sent the employer a message introducing himself and initiated a discussion. The employer promptly responded, asking more about Frank's experience. A series of email messages was sent between Frank and the employer. The final result was the employer hired Frank.

Networking is considered a very effective job search and career planning strategy.

Good electronic communication isn't just being able to retrieve, browse or send messages.

# Internet Discussion Forums

Networking is considered a very effective job search and career planning strategy. Building and nurturing professional relationships are important to career health. That's one of the major benefits of professional associations and clubs. But active membership usually requires time and travel. Furthermore, there may not be an organization that covers your interest in your local area. The Internet is an excellent networking tool. From the comfort of a personal computer, you can access people who share your interests. Newsgroups, message boards, email groups and chat rooms are all sources for Internet networking.

# Tips for Electronic Communication

- Keep messages short and concise.
- Check for proper spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- Say exactly what you mean.
- Give your message a descriptive and enticing subject.
- When replying to someone else's message, include or summarize the original message.
- AVOID USING ALL CAPITAL LETTERS— in electronic communications it's the equivalent of shouting.
- Many people regard emoticons
   :-) as unprofessional. Use them sparingly.
- Avoid acronyms (BTW by the way, IMHO— in my humble opinion, etc.).
- In heated messages, respond to the subject, not the individual. If you're angry, wait several hours or a day to respond.
- Always be courteous and professional.
- If you send email to people without their permission, find out if they'd prefer some other form of communication. Include a phone number where they can reach you.

# Tips for Group Discussion

- Keep in mind, some sites aren't regulated.
- Keep your communication consistent with the intended group topic.
- Keep your response directed to the current subject.
- Don't change the subject in the middle of the thread.
- Don't add a new subject to an existing thread.
- If you want to start a new discussion, begin with a new subject.
- Consider when to respond to the group or to a specific individual.
- Respond to the individual if your reply is personal, not consistent with the group's topic or if you want to limit the response.
- Respond to the group when your reply is of interest to the group.
- Find out if the group has published an FAQ (frequently asked questions) file and read it before participating in the discussion.
- Spend time reading posts and listening to discussions before you participate.



**Neal** is a gourmet chef and a member of the Minnesota Culinary Association. He is seldom able to make the association meetings because of his busy schedule. In order to stay current with culinary trends and to improve his management skills, he participates in newsgroups and email discussion groups. Through these groups, he is able to connect with other chefs from all over the world. Neal has learned a lot from these groups which helped him improve his skills and performance. The result has been steady promotions and salary increases. Since Neal is an active participant in these groups (asking questions, responding to other participants, participating in discussions), he has built a small, but important, national reputation. As a result, many fine restaurants around the country have approached Neal to consider working for them.

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Strateg

# The Electronic Resume

The electronic resume is an important job search tool. It's a jobseeker's advertisement of skills, qualifications and accomplishments. It's intended to attract the attention of potential employers and motivate them to meet with the jobseeker. The resume is also a tool for inputting a jobseeker's qualifications into a database to be searched and sorted by employers. The resume is an important tool in an effective Internet job search campaign.

# Sending Your Resume by Email

The resume is a communication tool. Traditionally, the resume was sent to prospective employers by US Postal Service mail, FAX or delivered in person. Today we can add email to the list. Email is a very effective way to send someone your resume. It can be sent either as part of the body of the email message or as an attachment. The recipient can then print a paper copy of the resume, save an electronic copy or import the resume into a database.

# Tips for Distributing Your Resume by Email

- · Generally, don't send an unsolicited resume (unsolicited resumes usually don't get
- Don't mass-mail your resume. Experts say that only two out of every 100 unsolicited resumes are read. Also, Internet users generally dislike unsolicited email (spam).
- Include a cover letter message when sending a resume. Indicate in the message your intent to follow-up with the
- Send the resume to a specific person. Avoid sending the resume "To Whom it May Concern," or to a generic job title.
- Consider targeting your resume to the needs of the specific employer. This requires

- researching the employer and editing your resume prior to sending it.
- Follow-up by phone or email on each resume you send.
- If you're concerned about the visual quality of your resume after it has been sent by email, consider following-up by sending a paper copy.
- If you're sending your resume as an email attachment, make sure the recipient can receive attachments.
- If you're sending your resume in a proprietary format such as Microsoft Word or WordPerfect, be sure the recipient has the correct version of the program so they can read your resume. If you're unsure, email or call to confirm. Otherwise, send your resume in text format.



# Posting Your Resume to a Database

Many employers manage and sort resumes in a resume database. They search the database for specific skills and qualifications. A well-written resume with the right skills and qualifications will show up frequently and prominently in the employer's search. It will capture the employer's attention and interest when reviewed. Effective resumes are those that contain many skill words, communicate motivation and demonstrate performance. A poorly written resume, or one with limited qualifications, won't show up in an employer's search and won't be viewed.

Resume databases favor the most skilled candidates or those who have the most effective resumes. One advantage to the jobseeker is that his/her resume will usually stay current in the database much longer than in a filing cabinet. If the resume doesn't show up in a search today, it has a chance of showing up in a search in the future.

There are several common ways that a resume is placed into a database. It may be entered directly, a paper resume may be scanned or an electronic resume may be imported into the database. Any resume (paper or electronic) may find its way into a database. While the original format for the resume may vary, once it's in the database, it will usually be stored in text format. See page 134 for *Text Formatting Suggestions*.

# Posting Your Resume to Newsgroups

Newsgroups are another place where you can post your resume. Most newsgroups are discussion forums where people who share similar interests can exchange and browse messages. Many newsgroups with professional topics can be excellent places to meet people, but they're usually not a good place to post your resume. It'd be like going to a local professional club or association meeting wearing a sign that says, "Help me, I'm looking for work." You'd probably be avoided. But you may meet people through newsgroups that you'd want to send your resume to by email.

However, not all newsgroups are discussion forums. Many are set up for advertising items for sale, listing job openings or for posting resumes. Many progressive recruiters look in these newsgroups for qualified candidates. It may be worth your effort to have your resume posted in select resume newsgroups. Resumes posted to newsgroups will nearly always be in text format. See page 134 for *Text Formatting Suggestions*.

# Tips for Posting Resumes

- Newsgroup postings are deleted or archived after a period of time. To keep your resume current it must be re-posted periodically.
- Many resume databases also have a specific period that the resume is active. Check with the provider to learn how long the resume is active and how to extend the time. If the resume will stay active indefinitely, learn how to remove the resume when you no longer want it posted.
- Resume posting to newsgroups opens you up to spam. Be prepared to screen out the advertisements. Remember, if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Alternatives include using an Internet email address exclusive to the job search. However, this will also limit the ability for employers to contact you.
- If you're contacted from a posting, screen the person carefully before you give any additional information or schedule a meeting! Ask for a phone number where you can call them back. Find out if they have a website you can access.
- Don't be offended if a recruiter wants to network with you. They may be hoping you know someone with the qualifications that they desire. If they're a legitimate recruiter, it may lead to something for you.
- Don't give out the names of your friends or associates. If you want to make a referral, give the name of the employer to your friend to follow-up on.

# Resume Content

The content of an electronic resume should follow the same wisdom used for producing a paper resume. Instead of just providing a list of where you worked and attended school, your resume should sell your qualifications. It shouldn't only say what you can do, but should stress your performance and accomplishments. The resume should be skills-based and database-friendly. Skills are important to employers. Skill words are important keywords when searching for resumes in a database. Many employers today use a resume database. Therefore, all resumes should be easily managed in a database.

# Contents of Electronic Resumes

- · Emphasize your skills.
- Include industry- and employer-specific keywords.
- Use contemporary language (i.e., keyboarding instead of typing).
- Stress your performance; use measurable outcomes and values.
- Target your qualifications to the needs of the employer.

While the content and use of an electronic resume follows the same wisdom as a paper resume, the formatting is very different. It's possible to distribute your resume through the Internet in a word processing file format such as Microsoft Word or WordPerfect. In its original format, it can be sent as an email attachment or made available to download from a web page or newsgroup. However, it will only be available to people who have the program that matches the file format (i.e., Microsoft Word or WordPerfect). Also, any number of things can go wrong with the transfer. Text format is preferred for distributing your resume on the Internet.

# Resume Formatting

The strength of text format is that all computers can read information in this format. The difficulty is that the only formatting options available are what can be accomplished with keystrokes on the keyboard. That eliminates **bold**, *italic*, <u>underline</u>, *fancy fonts*, large fonts and wordwrap. It also makes it more difficult to indent, tab, center, right justify or create lists. With a little creativity it's possible to create an attractive text resume.

# Text Formatting Suggestions

- Use capital letters for EMPHASIS, but not for the entire text.
- Use double returns to create white space.
- Use an asterisk (\*) to bullet.
   Be sure to put a space
   between the asterisk and the text.
- Use spaces to indent.
- Insert hard returns at the end of each line. The resume may wordwrap on the screen, but when you send or post it you may have lines that extend beyond the right margin.
- Use 66 characters for your line length to ensure that your resume stays formatted.

Your resume should sell your qualifications.

# Sample Resume— Text Format Layout

#### **RED E. JOBHUNTER**

Phone: (555) 555-5555

Email: jobhunter@success.com

OBJECTIVE: Registered Medical Laboratory Technician requiring extensive experience with success in pediatrics and at a trauma emergency hospital.

#### SUMMARY OF SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

LAB TECHNICIAN— Highly skilled lab technologist with experience serving ER, Urgent Care, Pediatric ER and Stab-Room Trauma Unit. Processed cultures in microbiology, gram stains, urinalysis and various manual tests.

PHLEBOTOMY— Inpatient and outpatient, pre-op and post-op blood draws. Recognized for exceptional skill in serving hard-to-draw patients and children.

INSTRUMENT MAINTENANCE— Skilled in troubleshooting and maintenance of technical equipment.

TEACHING— Responsible for training staff on equipment operation and procedures.

QUALITY CONTROL— Maintained high quality standards with an emphasis on accuracy. Maximized lab performance through organization, equipment testing and procedures development.

#### **EMPLOYMENT HISTORY**

#### MEDICAL LABORATORY TECHNICIAN, ASCP

May 198\_ to September 199\_, Hennepin County Medical Center

- \* Increased lab efficiency through improved processing procedures, development of technical equipment, lab layout and design.
- \* Maintained peak lab performance. Blood samples from Stab-Room Trauma Unit had to be accurately processed within two minutes!
- \* Assisted medical staff in the research and development of "Kiss of Life" mask used in respiratory emergency care.

#### **PHLEBOTOMIST**

August 198\_ to March 198\_, Minneapolis Children's Medical Center

#### **EDUCATION**

CERTIFIED: American Society of Clinical Pathologists MEDICAL LABORATORY TECHNICIAN (GPA 3.5) College of St. Catherine 198\_ BIOLOGY / CHEMISTRY (117 credits) Mankato State University 198\_ **135** 

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# Hypertext Resume

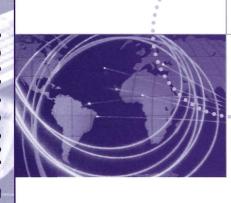
any progressive jobseekers are creating professional websites to promote themselves to potential employers. These hypertext resumes use the features of the Internet. They may include graphics, video, sound, hypertext links, direct email and more. Additionally, some sites that post resumes require them to be formatted in Hypertext Markup Language (HTML). The cost to setup such a site is often reasonable. Many Internet service providers include space for a personal or professional web page as part of their service package.

The hypertext resume should follow the publishing standards of the Internet. They include effective layout and design as well as the use of frames, JAVA, plug-ins, animations, etc. There are many resources on the Internet, in bookstores and in libraries to help you learn how to create a website. Most of the major word processing programs convert documents into HTML. There are also software products designed specifically for writing web pages. Information can be found on the Learn the Net Internet site at www.learnthenet.com

The hypertext resume should also follow the basic standards of resume writing (with a few exceptions). To learn more about writing resumes, see the chapter on Resumes and Cover Letters, contact a Minnesota WorkForce Center, local state employment service or check the Creative Job Search Internet site (www.mnwfc.org/cjs).

How you use your resume is just as important as how it's written. Placing a resume on the Internet, hoping an employer will stumble on it, is like leaving your paper resume laying around in public places as a job search strategy. Actively refer contacts to your web page. Include your Internet address in your paper cover letters, email correspondence and on personal business cards.

To view samples of personal web pages designed as a job search tool, go to your favorite search engine and search on the keyword "resume." You will find many samples to preview. Look for people who don't share the same experience and background you have. Consider how they've created a professional appearance using the tools of the web.



A partnership between Minnesota colleges and universities and a private Minnesota based company has created a tool for use in this area. Many educational institutions have used the portfolio concept to organize and present their academic performance in the past. This site expands its application to include not only the traditional student and educator, but also the career-oriented user. eFolio Minnesota (www.efolio.com) puts the portfolio on the Internet for use without cost for Minnesota residents and students enrolled in Minnesota schools. By self-selecting different templates, the user can target different purposes.

As mentioned earlier, just posting your information on the Internet without doing anything else is not a very effective strategy. See the section on portfolios at the end of the Job Search Tools chapter. The structure is similar except the Internet version is in an electronic form. Use of the "virtual portfolio" requires a different approach however. For employers to notice it, you have to actively promote it in some fashion. Some users are including their Internet eFolio

# Tips for Hypertext Resumes

- If you have a personal web page, keep it separate from your professional web page. Not all personal information belongs on your professional web page.
- Use graphics sparingly and only those that enhance your professional image. Be sure your resume is readable and attractive, with the graphics "turned off."
- Unless you're a web developer or graphic designer, avoid animations and advanced web features.
- Consider making your site more than just your paper resume online. Include more detail about your qualifications, work samples and accomplishments.
- Provide direction. A good website should be easy to navigate. The home page should capture readers' interest and allow them to choose what they'd like to view.
- Don't post pictures of yourself on your professional web page. Personal pictures open up the opportunity for bias and discrimination.
- Post work samples. Pictures of professional accomplishments can provide excellent work samples. Keep the file size of graphics small, so they're easy to download.

address (URL) when contacting employers by email, inviting them to view the information. You can add the URL to your contact information on your paper resume. Others have created calling cards

(see page 36) with the URL displayed. If you've used the hardcopy portfolio in an interview, it's a great reference to leave behind to be viewed at the employer's leisure.

How you use your resume is just as important as how it's written.

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Search Strategies

## Internet Employment Service Providers

ne popular enterprise is the Internet employment service. These sites are an excellent source of job opportunities and information. The services these sites provide are similar. However, the industries, geographic locations and jobseekers they serve can be quite different. Some serve all occupations and industries while others specialize. Some are national or international in their scope while others serve a limited geographic area. Some sites specialize in services for youth, recent college graduates, self-employment, minorities, women and persons with disabilities.

Among the benefits of these sites are their conveniences. Traditional employment services are offered in select locations. Internet employment services can be accessed from anywhere there is a computer connected to the Internet. In addition to home computers, this includes libraries, community centers and Minnesota WorkForce Centers. Expect these sites to grow as the Internet continues to grow.

All jobseekers should consider using these services. They're an excellent addition to a traditional job search. In Minnesota, check out the Minnesota Department of

#### Common Services

**Job Posting**— Listings of job opportunities or employers seeking qualified applicants

**Resume Posting**— Jobseekers post their resume to a database for employers to search

**Job Search Instruction**— Information on effective job search strategies

**Labor Market Information**— Information on occupations, wages and employment

Legal Information— Information on hiring, discrimination and personnel issues

**Training Information**— Information on training resources and financial assistance

#### Advanced Services

Automated Screening of Jobs— The site automatically screens new jobs and sends the jobseeker messages by email announcing opportunities that meet their interests

**Automated Resume Distribution**— The ability to send a resume on file with the site directly to employers listing job opportunities

Resume Tracking— Reports showing the activity of a resume listed in a database (i.e., number of times the resume has matched an employer's search and how many times the resume has been viewed)

Message Boards and Chat Rooms— Discussion forums where jobseekers can share ideas and ask questions about their job search

Professional Advice— Resume review and expert guidance from professional employment consultants through email, chat rooms and message boards

Employment and Economic Development Internet site (www.mnwfc.org). This

site offers nearly all the services previously mentioned.

Remember, the best job search strategies are still direct employer contact and networking.

Creative Job Search

Job Search Strategies nternet

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### Minnesota's Job Bank

You can register to look for work by setting up an Internet account on Minnesota's Job Bank. Establishing an account and logging onto Minnesota's Job Bank will give you access to job openings, resume posting, career information, training opportunities and information on all Minnesota WorkForce Center events and services.

Employers and private employment agencies will have access to your resume. They can view your qualifications in relationship to their job openings. If interested, employers will contact you directly.

There are step-by-step instructions for easy use of the system. You have the personal control of updating or removing your resume. Your resume will be done in an attractive and standardized format. There will also be other links to job-related websites for career and job search information and other local services and information. There is no charge for this service. Hundreds of new jobs are posted every day, so be sure to check back often.

If you don't have Internet access, you can visit your local public library, school, university, a Minnesota WorkForce Center or local state employment service. Minnesota's Job Bank can be found on the Internet at www.mnwfc.org; click on the "Minnesota's Job Bank" icon.

#### Tips for Using Internet Employment Services

- Choose providers that best meet your occupational and geographic goals.
- Research the employer before applying for job opportunities.
- Follow-up on jobs for which you've applied.
- Use the services actively, not passively. Visit the site frequently. Act quickly on job postings.
- Finally, don't invest the majority of your effort on these services.

## CareerOneStop

CareerOneStop is a comprehensive package of web-based resources focusing on career development, education and employment. Visit the new CareerOneStop portal site; a publicly-funded national resource for jobseekers and businesses.

### America's Job Bank

America's Job Bank (AJB) is a large national database of job openings. Relocate to other parts of the country by finding a job through AJB.

## America's Career InfoNet

Visit this site before making important career decisions. You will find out more about the job market in every state. You will learn about employment trends and what kind of training you will need to qualify for jobs which interest you.

#### America's Service Locator

If you want to find the One-Stop Career Center that's closest to you, go to America's Service Locator.

CareerOneStop can be found on the Internet at www.careeronestop.org

### Minnesota WorkForce Centers

Minnesota WorkForce Centers are available to help you with your job search. Resource Areas in the Minnesota WorkForce Centers offer computers with state-of-the-art software for resume writing, career exploration and job search. Professional staff are available to assist you with your efforts. To locate the Minnesota WorkForce Center near you, call 1.888.GETJOBS.

Minnesota WorkForce Centers and the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development provide extensive employment resources on the Internet at www.mnwfc.org. These resources are available from any computer with Internet access.

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# The Job Interview

The interview isn't the time to practice— it's the time to perform!



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# The Job Interview

ongratulations! All the hard work of your job search has just paid off. You've met the employer's minimum qualifications and captured her/his attention— you've been offered an interview. Now is the time to intensify your efforts. Preparation has been the force behind your job search, and further preparation is the key to a successful interview.

## Interview Preparation

nowing the kind of information the employer is likely to seek will help you prepare for the interview. Employers want to know your motivation for employment, your ability to do the job, how you will fit into the organization and how much you will cost them. Being able to answer probing questions in these areas will make for a successful interview. While you already have some information about the employer, you may need to do further research in preparation for the interview.

It's to your advantage to know as much as you can about the job before that first interview. It will help you to target your skills to the specific needs of the employer and demonstrate your enthusiasm for the job. It shows that you're serious about employment.

Employers have limited information from which to make a decision— an application or resume, references and a brief interview. It's up to you to convince the employer you're the best person for the job. All employers are looking for people who want to work. Most jobs require basic skills related to the specific job. For instance, a computer operator should know computer systems, an accountant understands accounting

principles, and a welder must be proficient in welding applications. In order to have a successful interview, the computer operator needs to know the type of equipment and programs used. The accountant would want to find out which accounting system is used. The welder needs to know the different types of materials to be welded and the applications necessary to perform the welds.

Jack received a call from an employer regarding an accounting position. His efforts have paid off. They want to schedule an interview! While Jack is on the phone scheduling the interview, he takes advantage of the opportunity. He inquires about the responsibilities of the position and asks them to send a position description and corporate report. Preparing for the interview, Jack studies these documents. He finds additional information at the library and on the Internet. Jack writes down the skills and qualifications he believes the employer will be seeking. Then he considers how his qualifications match those needs. He is encouraged to discover that he meets eight out of the ten major requirements. For the two that are a weak match, Jack spends additional time preparing for how he will address his deficiency. Jack

organizes his portfolio for the interview (see *Portfolios— The Toolbox* on page 104).

With the help of a friend, Jack set up a mock interview where he practiced answers to common interview questions using his portfolio. In his portfolio, he takes with him his company research, his resume, the position description, the corporate report, a personal assessment, performance reviews, pertinent diplomas, degrees, transcripts, certificates and letters of recommendation. At the back of the portfolio he brought along a note pad, and a task/skills comparison to close the interview.

At the interview there are no surprises. Jack is relaxed and confident. He anticipated the needs of the organization and is prepared to answer each question, even questions in those areas where his qualifications are weak. Occasionally, he refers to his portfolio where he has the marked-up position description, corporate report and his notes. He offers his references, the task/skills comparison and copies of supporting documents from his portfolio at the end of the interview. Jack is on the path to success. He is doing all that he can to succeed and ultimately his efforts will pay off.

The Job Interview

## Preparing for the Interview

- Find out the parking availability and directions to the employer
- Note the business address and telephone number
- Note the name of the person you are to meet
- Bring a notebook, black pen and tissues
- Review questions you can ask in the interview
- Bring your personal business card
- Bring your application or Personal Data Record and letters of recommendation
- Bring money for gas, public transportation, telephone calls and parking
- Bring your social security card and driver's license or state picture identification

## Research Questions

Information about the employer can be obtained by talking with the person scheduling your interview. Ask about the interview process, who you will be interviewing with (one person or a panel), the length of time to plan to be there, directions, address and phone number, parking location and if you're to bring anything other than your resume.

- If you need an accommodation due to a disability, let them know of your need.
- Ask for a written job description. This will be very helpful when trying to identify specific skills.
- Ask a current employee what personality traits are most useful when working for this employer.
- Who are the customers of this business? What products or services are offered to customers?
- What is the management philosophy?

The list goes on and on. The more you know, the better prepared you will be at the interview. Other sources of information include— employer brochures, annual business reports, trade periodicals, manufacturers' guides, union representatives, school placement offices, Minnesota WorkForce Centers, local state employment service, Chambers of Commerce and professional organizations.

See the chapter on *Job Search Preparation* to review information on researching employers.

### Match Skills

Once you've gathered as much information as possible, list the specific skills, experience and employment attributes sought by the employer. Write down how your qualifications meet those requirements. If you're deficient in an area, you must be ready to convince the employer you can and will learn the skill. You could also show how other skills you have make up for this weakness. Having a plan of action to overcome the deficiency should impress the employer. For example, you lack skill in programming in C++ language. Knowing when and where you can enroll in a C++ course in your community may convince the employer you're the right person to hire.

Nancy wants a job in human services helping people. She has no paidwork experience and recently completed her GED. However, she has answered phones for her uncle's business, coordinated mailings for her community center, did some fundraising for the Cancer Society and volunteers at a food shelf. By matching the skills on her resume to those skills that the employer needs, Nancy was able to get a job as an information coordinator at a resource center.

### Attitude

Employers are looking for people with a positive work attitude. Often employers emphasize attitude over skills, training and experience. Look for ways to show your enthusiasm for the job, willingness to learn, spirit of cooperation, and respect for the employer. Prepare yourself mentally with positive self-talk (see the chapter on Transition for information on Affirmations). Review your skills for reinforcement of your qualifications. Pay attention to what you're telling yourself before the interview— Is it positive, truthful and realistic?

George was applying for a building maintenance job. He had no employment history in maintenance, but he had developed the skills needed by repairing his home. He was competing with others who had lots of experience. For the interview, he wore a new pair of overalls, a tool belt loaded down with tools and displayed a positive attitude. He got the job!

### Appearance

A critical part of the impression you make on an employer is based on your physical appearance. An employer might reason that the person who doesn't care about her/his appearance won't care about the job. Neat, clean and conservative is a safe standard for dress and grooming. Dress a step above what the best employee for that job would wear. Avoid excessive jewelry, perfumes and colognes. Stay away from fads in clothing and shoes. Look the part.

Your personal appearance makes an immediate statement. If you were hiring someone for the position you're seeking, what would be important to you? What is your appearance saying?

### Make a Good Personal Appearance

- Get a good night's sleep
- Take a shower
- Shave
- Brush your teeth
- Use a mouthwash
- Comb your hair
- Wear clean and pressed clothes
- Wear proper clothes for the job
- Clean and shine your shoes
- Avoid smoking before the interview

Life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you react to it!

Charles Swindoll

nterview

## Types of Interviews

The purpose of an interview 146 is to get acquainted and to learn about one another. Employers evaluate your qualifications for the job. You Interview help them with this evaluation by being prepared to sell your skills and experience. It's also

an opportunity for you to evaluate the employer. As this learning process takes place, both parties develop expectations.

You may experience different kinds of interviews during your job search. It's important that you understand the purpose of each. Three very common types of interviews are telephone screening, in-person screening and the selection interview. Other types of interviews are also covered here. No matter which type of interview, your goal is to present your qualifications to the final decision maker. Not everyone you come into contact with will be the decision maker. However, you should treat each person as though they have the authority to hire you (from the parking attendant, to the secretary, to the CEO).

## Telephone Screening

This interview saves the employer time by eliminating candidates based on essential criteria such as employment objective, education or required skills. Since these interviews will often occur unexpectedly, it's important that your job search records are organized and kept where you can reach them at a moment's notice. This is a good reason to have a dedicated place in your home for your job search. Keep your resume in view and refer to it as needed.

## In-person Screening

This interview is used to verify the candidate's qualifications for the position and to establish a preliminary impression of the candidate's attitude, interest and professional style. A professional screener from the employer's human resources department most often conducts the interview. At this stage, the goal is to select candidates to meet with the decision maker.

### Selection

Conducted by the decision maker, the purpose of this interview is to probe the candidate's qualifications and to assess the comfort level with which the candidate might establish working relationships. There may be numerous interviews at this stage. As the number of candidates is whittled down, you may be invited back to speak with the same person and/or with other managers or members of the work group. Your ability to establish rapport and present yourself as the right person for the position is critical.

Even if there is only one decision maker, the opinions of the others will be sought and will probably have an effect on the outcome. When you're invited to interview with a number of people, it's important that you present yourself effectively to each one of them. Remember, they will be evaluating your skills and ability to fit in. As always, be yourself, but sell to each person's individual concerns.

## Work Sample

This interview is done to allow the applicant an opportunity to "show their wares." It could be the place for a graphic artist to display his/her portfolio. A salesperson may be asked to make a sales presentation. An office worker may be asked to complete a business letter using a specific type of computer software program.

## Peer Group

This interview is an opportunity for you to meet and talk with your prospective coworkers. Just as in other interviews, the peer group will be evaluating you, determining how you fit in.

## Group

Sometimes referred to as a panel interview, it usually consists of three or more people, all asking questions. Direct your answer to the individual asking the question, but try to maintain some eye contact with the other members of the group. Don't forget to smile. It shows confidence.

### Luncheon

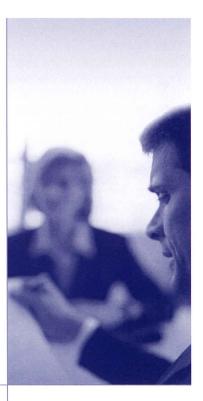
"The Meal"— this type of interview assesses how well you can handle yourself in a social situation. Employer representatives may include the hiring manager, a human resource department member and one or more peer employees. Choose your meal selection carefully. Spilling on your blouse or tie isn't likely to make a favorable impression. Select healthy and easy things to eat so you can answer questions and pay attention to the conversation.

#### Stress

A stress interview introduces you not to an interviewer, but to an interrogator. The interview is one in which you're treated as though you're the enemy. The interrogator asks you a number of offensive questions that are designed to deliberately make you uncomfortable. Keep your cool, take your time in responding to the questions, and when it's all over, reward yourself. Don't take it personally. This is usually a test of how you will handle stress on the job.

## Video Conference

Some employers today use video conferences to conduct meetings or carry out other aspects of their business. Conducting an interview via video conference enables an employer to save travel costs and still have, in effect, a person-to-person interview. If the thought of facing a camera during an interview frightens you, practice before a video camera or a mirror.



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The Job Interview

## Interviewing Tips

## Communicate Send Good Your Best Image Signals

- Be prepared
- Dress appropriately— select clothing appropriate to the job for which you're interviewing.
- Note business address, telephone number and name of your interviewer.
- Arrive on time for the interview. Plan your schedule and route so you arrive 10 to 15 minutes prior to the appointment time. You may also want to consider driving to the address prior to the interview so you will know exactly where you need to be.
- Fill out applications neatly, completely and in black ink. Be sure to bring your Personal Data Record.
- Bring a notebook, black pen, your personal calling card and extra copies of your resume.
- Bring letters of recommendation, your reference list, copies of licenses, driving record (for those jobs that require it) and social security or alien card.
- Also bring any other documentation supporting your qualifications (portfolio, work samples).
- Review questions you can ask in the interview.
- Review your resume and Personal Data Sheet for related skills.
- Review answers to why you're the best person for the job.

- More than 50 percent of your communication is nonverbal. Your posture, walk, dress, facial movement, energy, gestures and eye contact are all nonverbal signals.
- Use a natural greeting and shake hands firmly, but only if a hand is offered to you first.
- Show reserved confidence. Let the interviewer start the dialogue. Listen carefully. Have good questions prepared before the interview.
- Ask thoughtful questions to find out if the employer's philosophy is compatible with yours. Discover if the job is right for you.

very interview is a learning experience. Use each interview as a building block for the next one. You may go through many interviews before you connect with the right job! It isn't what happened at the last interview that's important, but what happens at this one!

### Communicate *Attitudes*

- You're willing to work. Give examples of your productivity on past jobs.
- You're skilled. Tell the employer about your skills. If you don't, no one else will! Don't make the employer work harder than you during the interview.
- You expect to make a contribution. Emphasize what you can do for the employer.
- You're flexible. Employers want employees who can adjust, work well with others, and fit into a new environment without complaints or special requests. Tell a story from your experience that illustrates your flexibility.
- You're committed to learning. Demonstrate this through examples of learning experiences (independent study, professional development, education, workshops, awards). Your plan for future development also communicates your commitment to learning.

## Handle Difficult Questions

- Welcome all questions with a smile.
- Give direct, honest answers.
   Take your time. Develop the answer in your head before you respond. If you don't understand a question, ask for it to be repeated or clarified. You don't have to rush, but don't be indecisive.
- Ask questions in return.
- Be prepared. Answering difficult questions that may reflect negatively on you can be answered by using the "sandwich model." This model has a positive statement followed by admitting the negative situation, and ending with another positive statement about what you've done to overcome the problem. Ending with a positive statement leaves a positive impression. Anticipate tough questions and practice interviewing beforehand.

#### Question—

Why were you let go?

#### Answer—

My skills are in engineering. My employer decided those skills were no longer needed. Therefore, I've taken some training and upgraded my skills (specify) to meet the qualifications for this type of job.

#### Question-

It appears you haven't worked in the last five years.

#### Answer-

I've been busy going to school full-time (specify), raising two children and managing my home. I'm now prepared and qualified for this job.

#### Question—

It appears you haven't worked for the past 10 years.

#### Answer-

I was trained in machine operation while at a correctional facility. I'm now married, have completed my GED and am ready to work for you.



## Finish Strong

- Take the initiative demonstrate interest by asking when the position will be filled.
- Summarize why you're qualified. This is the time to state strengths and qualities you may have forgotten to emphasize earlier. Mention a particular accomplishment or activity that fits the job.
- If you want the job, say so!
- Don't overstay your time.
- Ask what the next step is in the hiring process. Will there be additional interviews? When will the hiring decision be made? When could you call back for the decision?
- Be proactive in your follow-up.
   Schedule the next interview.
   Arrange to call the employer to learn their decision.

## Follow-up

- Evaluate the interview. What went well in the interview? How can you improve?
- Record your follow-up plans.
   Write the date and time for
   your next contact with the
   employer. Be sure you follow
   through on these plans.
- Send thank you letters or notes within 24 hours to each person with whom you interviewed. For information on thank you letters and notes, see the chapter entitled Finishing Touches.

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The Job Interview

# Key Interview Questions

## Sample Interview Questions

#### Tell me about yourself.

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Interview

This is an open-ended question often asked to help break the ice in the interview. The important thing to remember is to keep the answer job-related.

## Why are you interested in working for this company?

This will show the employer that you've done your homework. State the positive things you've learned about the company and how they fit with your career goals. This shows the employer that you cared enough about the interview to prepare for it.

### Tell me about your education.

Even though your resume includes this information, some employers like to have you expand on the subject. Mention your grade point average and good attendance record. Include all classes, seminars, workshops and on-the-job training you've attended that support your job goals.

## Why have you chosen this particular field?

This is one way to discover your enthusiasm and dedication to your career.

## Describe your best/worst boss.

This could be a trap. Don't present a negative picture of any past employers. If given a choice, always talk about your best boss. If pressed to describe the worst boss, pick a work-related characteristic that can be stated in a positive way. For example, "I had a supervisor who was vague when issuing assignments. I learned to ask questions so that I knew what was expected."

## In a job, what interests you most/least?

This will give the employer another gauge for measuring how well you will fit the job opening.

## What is your major weakness?

Always turn this into a positive! State a weakness and turn it into a positive by

showing how you overcame the weakness. "In the past, it has been difficult for me to accept criticism from my peers. However, I've learned to value and solicit this input and it's improved my job performance."

## Give an example of how you solved a problem in the past.

It's important to be able to show the process you go through when presented with a problem. State the problem and the steps you followed to reach the solution.

#### What are your strengths?

This is the time to describe the skills you've identified that will most effectively "market" you as an employee.

#### How do others describe you?

Another way for the employer to ask this would be, "How would you fit into this work group?" If you aren't comfortable with this question before the interview, call some friends and/or ask people you've worked with how they'd describe you.

All interview questions are really the same question— Why are you the best person for the job?

# Keep your answers brief and job-related. Focus on your skills. Good Luck!

# What do you consider the most important idea you contributed or your most noteworthy accomplishment in your last job?

Give examples of ways in which you saved the employer time, money or developed an office procedure that improved efficiency.

## Where do you see yourself in three years?

Telling the interviewer, "In your job!" isn't a good idea. Do indicate that you hope to acquire sufficient skills and knowledge within that time to make a positive contribution to the company.

## Think about something you consider a failure in your life, and tell me why you think it happened.

Failure implies error. Answers that point to a negative should conclude with a success. For example, "In my last job, I was given an assignment to coordinate all travel plans for an international conference. About halfway through the process, I realized I had not gathered enough information to help attendees make good travel and lodging decisions. I had to take time out to do the research, which put me under a severe time crunch. I learned to do my research sooner. I haven't had the problem since."

"I dropped out of school at age 17 to work for a fast-food employer. I later realized I couldn't make enough money to raise my family. I returned to school in the evenings and acquired clerical skills so I'm now qualified to do this job."

## How do you think you will fit into this operation?

This is the time to express your interest in the job and knowledge of the employer. The more you know about the operation the easier this question will be to answer.

## If you were hired, what ideas/talents could you contribute to the position or our company?

This is another great opportunity for you to sell your skills. By giving examples of past accomplishments, the employer can visualize your contribution to his/her company.

## Give an example where you showed leadership and initiative.

Even if you haven't had the title of lead worker, supervisor or manager, give examples of when you recognized a job needed to be done and you did it.

## Give an example of when you were able to contribute to a team project.

Unless you've lived in a total void, you've been part of a team. Teamwork is used in sales because both parties have to state their needs and expectations, then negotiate the sale. Families, community activities and school all require teamwork.

## What have you done to develop or change in the last few years?

This shows a willingness to be challenged and to improve. Employers are looking for people who are willing to continue learning. Talk about formal and informal educational opportunities you've pursued. Mention books and periodicals you've read related to your field of interest.

## Do you have any questions for me?

By asking questions, you again show interest in the job. Listed on the next page are some questions you may want to ask at your interview. 151

he Job Interview

### Questions to Ask Reasons People in an Interview

- What are the responsibilities and accountabilities of this position?
- How well is the position defined? Can its duties be expanded?
- Would you describe an average day on this job?
- What is the history of the position? Why is it vacant?
- What aspects of this job would you like to see performed better?
- What are the key challenges or problems of this position?
- Where can I go from here, assuming that I meet/exceed the job responsibilities?
- How would you describe the ideal candidate?
- What are the employer's short- and long-range objectives?
- What are some outside influences that affect company growth?
- Where does the company excel? What are its limitations?
- When and how will I be evaluated? What are the performance standards?
- With whom would I be working? Who would be my supervisor? Who would I supervise?
- What is the department's environment like?
- When will you make the hiring decision? May I call you for the decision? When is a good time?

## Don't Get Hired

- Poor personal appearance
- Over-aggressiveness
- Inability to express information clearly
- · Lack of interest and enthusiasm
- Lack of planning for career no purpose or goal
- Nervousness, lack of confidence and poise
- Overemphasis on money
- Unwillingness to start at the bottom
- · Lack of tact and courtesy
- · Lack of maturity
- Negative attitude about past employers
- No genuine interest in the employer or job
- No eye contact with the interviewer
- Incomplete or sloppy application form
- No sense of humor
- Arriving late for the interview
- Failure to express appreciation for interviewer's time
- Failure to ask questions about
- Vague responses given to auestions
- No follow-up with thank you note or phone call

#### Be a Star

Everyone has a story to tell, and everyone loves a story. Before your interview, follow the "star" method. When interviewing, bring up your "star" stories. Employers will remember you by your stories.

- Write short statements of what tasks you did and the results achieved. Be very specific.
- Use the fewest number of words, but make your points stand out.
- When possible, use numbers to measure the activity, benefits or results.
- How significant and/or believable is your accomplishment from an objective point of view?



- S— Situation
- T— Task
- A- Action
- **R** Results related to the job



## Illustrate

In an interview, illustrate how you—

- Identified a problem
- Identified possible solutions
- Selected a solution
- Implemented a solution and what the positive outcome was

## Be Prepared

Write out answers to questions! Illustrate—

- Your strengths
- Your leadership
- Your ability to learn new things
- Your contributions to the organization
- Your creativity in solving problems and handling people

### Practice

You should have at least two to four stories to tell an interviewer about yourself. Don't merely say you get along well with people, tell a story. People remember specific illustrations of skills, experience and education. Make yours memorable. Stand out from the crowd. Make your stories relate to the skills the employer is seeking. Don't forget your sense of humor. SMILE.

## Legal Rights

uestions asked in an interview should focus on your qualifications for the job. Although recent legislation helps ensure that you aren't asked illegal questions, occasionally these questions come up on an application or in an interview. Human resources personnel are usually aware of what's legal and illegal. Others involved in the hiring process may not have the same awareness.

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It's your right to withhold information unrelated to the job. However, research shows that refusing to answer questions may hurt your employment prospects. Think through possible illegal questions ahead of time and decide how you will handle them. If it doesn't bother you to answer a question, go ahead and answer it. If the question does bother you, be prepared to address it in a way which won't offend the interviewer. The key to effectively handling difficult questions is to prepare suitable answers well before the interview.

Listed below are examples of legal and discriminatory questions (in the State of Minnesota). For more information, contact your state's Department of Human Rights, Minnesota WorkForce Center or your local state employment service.

## Legal Questions

- Describe your education.
- What experience qualifies you for this job?
- Do you have licenses/ certifications for this job?
- Are you willing to travel?
- What name(s) are your work records under?
- Are you available for overtime?
- Do you have the legal right to work in the United States?

# Discriminatory or Illegal Questions

- What is or was your spouse's name or line of work?
- Have you ever filed a Workers' Compensation claim or been injured on the job?
- Do you have any physical impairments which would prevent you from performing the job for which you're applying?
- Have you ever been arrested?

Title I of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) lists these additional prohibited questions—

- What is your hair/eye color?
- What is your height/weight?
- Have you ever been hospitalized? If so, for what condition?
- Have you ever been treated by a psychiatrist or psychologist? If so, for what condition?
- Is there any health-related reason you may not be able to perform the job for which you're applying?
- How many days were you absent from work because of illness last year?
- Are you taking any prescribed drugs?
- Have you ever been treated for drug addiction or alcoholism?

Once an employer offers you the job they may request—

- Birth certificate
- Affirmative action statistics
- Marital status
- Proof of citizenship
- Photographs
- Physical exam and drug testing
- Social Security card or alien registration card

Creative Job Search

Notes			
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# Chapter C

# Finishing Touches

By adding the finishing touches, you will be the most outstanding candidate and the best person to hire.



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# Finishing Touches

ow that your interview is over you can relax and wait for the answer— WRONG! In any good sales campaign, you have a plan, and you keep on selling. No interview is over until you've assessed the interview and written and mailed the thank you notes to all who interviewed you. You should also notify your references that they may soon be getting a telephone call from your prospective employer. Be sure to coach them on what you'd like them to emphasize.

These are the extra steps that go into making you the outstanding and memorable candidate in the mind of the employer. If done correctly, these steps can put you a cut above the competition. Always think in these terms— "What is generally done by the typical jobseeker?" "What else can I do to convince them I'm the best person for the job?" This attitude will carry you through successful negotiation, gain on-the-job recognition and foster career mobility. Don't be afraid to show you're the best person for the job by taking the initiative to do the extraordinary. By adding the finishing touches, you will be the most outstanding candidate and the best person to hire.

## Thank You Letters and Notes

aying "thank you" in your job search isn't only the right thing to do, but is also an effective job search strategy. Every "thank you" is an opportunity to sell your qualifications and leave a positive impression on the reader. In your job search you should express your gratitude. Don't wait for opportunities— create them. Send a thank you letter or note to employers, employment contacts and references whenever they have extended themselves. This includes after a job or informational interview, when someone gives you a referral or information, or whenever someone takes time

out of their schedule to help you.

Every person who assists you in your job search effort deserves an expression or note of thanks. Ask your references to keep you informed of contacts. Keep references informed about those employers/positions you're really interested in.

"Thank you" may be said in person, by phone, in a formal letter or in an informal note. The best approach will depend upon the circumstances, personal style and preference. The best strategy is to select the approach that best serves the immediate need.

Thank you letters and notes should be standard tools in

your job search. The thank you letter should follow a standard business letter format, while the note may be a simple, handwritten note or card. The situation and your personal style will determine which you send.

At the minimum, a written thank you letter or note should be sent after all interviews. This is your opportunity to make one more impression before the decision is made. Send a written thank you letter even if you're turned down for a job. Let employers know that you appreciate their consideration, and you'd be interested in future opportunities.

Thank you is a powerful statement. Unfortunately, it is seldom heard.

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#### Points to Consider

- Write a thank you letter or note no later than 24 hours after the interview, even if things didn't go well.
- Be brief and to the point.
   Note the job you interviewed for, and also list the date of your interview.
- Always address a thank you letter to a person by name and title. Include your personal calling card if you have one.
- If there are multiple people, such as a panel interview, send a separate thank you to each person, or send a single thank you to a key person for distribution. When sending more than one thank you letter, it's effective to vary each letter.

- When thanking a potential employer, restate your interest in the position and the employer.
- The thank you letter is an opportunity to again sell your qualifications. Briefly include any pertinent information you failed to mention earlier. Be sure to reemphasize your most important qualifications and skills for the job. Note anything that was mentioned in the interview that you can enhance or you feel may not have been discussed fully.
- Try not to start consecutive sentences with the same word.
- Offer to come in for another interview or to provide more information if needed.

- Always plan your follow-up. Make it a point to tell the person when and how you will be following through.
- Learn to say thank you when you're with the individual. Don't let that be all you do; follow-up with a thank you letter, note or phone call. You may want to make the effort to meet with the person again for the primary purpose of saying thank you.
- Of course, you should always say thank you whenever you're on the phone and someone helps you. There may be occasions when you'd call someone specifically to thank them.



## Thank You Letter Sample

2233 First Street Anytown, MN 55555 (555) 555-5555

September 20, 200\_

Mr. James Business Human Resource Manager ABC Company 111 Employment Way Anytown, MN 55555

Dear Mr. Business:

Thank you for the opportunity this morning to discuss the secretarial position. Our conversation gave me a better understanding of ABC Company and the requirements of the job. The additional information from Max and Katherine was helpful in gaining a better perspective of the position.

My strong office and interpersonal skills will definitely make a contribution to your company. I am proficient in all the computer software packages you use, and I feel I possess the customer service experience you want.

I enjoyed meeting the office staff and touring the facility. This is clearly a quality organization with an emphasis on efficiency and a dedication to teamwork. I would consider it a privilege to join your team and will contact you next week to inquire about the hiring decision.

Again, thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Amy Applicant

#### Basic Parts of a Thank You Note

- Statement of appreciation
- Expressions of interest in the job
- Brief restatement of qualifications/skills
- An opportunity to add additional information you failed to mention
- Final "thank you"

### Thank You Note

February 29, 200\_

Dear Ms. Smith,

Thank you for taking the time to discuss the accounting position with me. It was a pleasure meeting you and Mr. Jones. Lord's Industries sounds like the perfect place for me to use my skills, especially since you use the WXY system, the same system I have been supporting the past three years. My proven track record and accomplishments with cost-effective systems can be an asset to your company.

Again, thank you for your consideration. I will contact you by Tuesday of next week to learn of your decision. I look forward to the possibility of joining your staff.

Sincerely,

February 29, 200\_

Dear Mr. Jones,

Thank you for the interview for the accountant position today. I appreciate the information you shared with me and enjoyed meeting Ms. Smith from the Accounting Department.

My interest in working for Lord's Industries is stronger than ever and, based on your description of the position, I know I can do a good job for you.

I will contact you by Tuesday of next week to learn of your decision.

Sincerely,

Thank you notes, whether handwritten or printed, must be clear, concise and legible.

egotiating is a very important part of the job search process. It can set the tone for your work life and experience with the employer. These are some suggestions to consider when you receive a job offer. Negotiating is a two-way street. Try to achieve a win-win situation. It's up to you to decide the tips that will work best for you.

# Negotiating Tips

- Know the salary you can reasonably accept and expect for the type of position you seek in comparison with your experience, education and the industry wage standards.
- Try to find out the salary range for the position before the interview. Contacting the interviewer's secretary, the personnel office or a networking contact that works in the company may be helpful.
- It isn't usually recommended to accept an offer on the spot. Express your appreciation and strong interest in the job. Request at least 24 hours to consider it, even when saying "Yes." Ask any questions you need clarified.
- Assess the job offer in terms of your needs, benefits and long-term career and life goals. Talk it over with someone you respect. Make a list of the pros and cons of the job offer.

- Consider if the job description is clear. Note your reporting relationships, authority and advancement potential. Keep asking questions until you clearly understand. Careful thought and consideration will only gain you respect.
- If you want the job, make it clear this is the job you want. If you're uncertain, state there are some items you'd like to discuss before you can accept the job. Suggest meeting further to talk about the offer.
- Begin the negotiation with reasonable requests. Those requests could include more money, benefits, tuition, training, more vacation time, a flexible schedule, stock options, a company car, onsite daycare, parking privileges, etc.
- Negotiations should never become emotional or hostile. Use your value, skills, experience and education to negotiate. Don't use your need for the job to negotiate.

- Listen carefully. If the offer is less than you expected, let them know that, but state you're still interested in the position if they want to reconsider their offer. Don't assume the first offer is fixed. Even if the interviewer tells you it is— it rarely is.
- If the same figure is offered a couple days later, it probably is the last offer. In that case, you can ask for a salary review in six months to evaluate your performance and value, or you can turn the job down, asking that they keep you in mind for future openings paying more money.
- Even when saying "no," leave the door open to negotiation.
   (Don't use this to negotiate a higher wage. When you say "no," be ready to lose the job forever.)
- When you reach an agreement, request the agreement in writing.

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Finishing Touche

## What to Do If You Get Turned Down

- Let interviewers know that although you're disappointed, you're still interested in working for the employer.
- Be sure to thank them for their time and interest.
   Reemphasize the fact that if future openings occur, you'd be interested.
- Find out if there are, or might be, other openings they could suggest or other persons you could contact.
- Many times the person selected ends up turning the job down or doesn't work out. Keep the communication line open, positive and professional.
   This keeps your name in their mind for the next opening or future opportunities.
- Ask if you could contact them every three or four months to find out about future job openings.
- Stay positive. Congratulate yourself. You did get the interview, which means the employer was interested in you. Use positive self-talk (see *Affirmations* on page 19).

- Learn from the experience. Ask for feedback from the interviewer on what you could improve or do differently.
- Keep trying. This isn't the time to stop. Forge ahead.
   Act to stay in control of your job search.
- Remember the salesperson's motto— "No" is another step closer to "Yes."
- Don't despair. Getting turned down happens to all of us at some point in our lives.



## Rejection Letter Sample

I. M. Boss Human Resources Manager 123 Pinnacle Heights Lake Woebegone, MN 55555 (987) 654-3210

May 31, 200\_

Mr. Neda Job Rural Route 1 Frostbite Falls, MN 55555

Dear Mr. Job:

After considering all of the candidates for Nit Picker, we decided to hire someone with more experience and education in this field. Thank you for taking the time to talk to us about the position. I hope you find the job you are looking for.

Sincerely,

I. M. Boss

## Response to Rejection Letter Sample

Neda Job Rural Route 1 Frostbite Falls, MN 55555

June 2, 200\_

I. M. BossHuman Resources Manager123 Pinnacle HeightsLake Woebegone, MN 55555

Dear Mr. Boss:

While I am disappointed that I was not selected for the job of Nit Picker, I remain interested in working for your company. Please consider me for future openings or other positions for which I am qualified.

I want to thank you for taking the time to talk to me about the position. I will contact you in the near future to inquire about other prospects. If you think of someone else that might use my skills, I would very much appreciate a referral.

Thanks again for your kind consideration and remember me if the candidate you hired doesn't work out.

Sincerely,

Neda Job

## Job Success Skills

# How to Succeed on the Job After You've Gotten it!

Once you've made the big transition from job searching to landing the job, the next goal is job success. There are specific skills you need to know and use to be successful at your job. It's important to practice these skills prior to starting the job. First impressions show from day one. You only get one first impression.

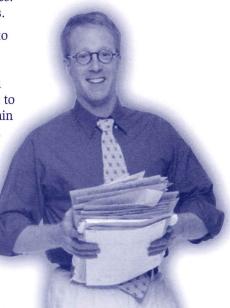
This isn't a complete list. It's a good idea to check with your supervisor about what's most important. Employers say more people lose their job because they don't use good work habits, rather than they aren't able to do the job. The following list of suggestions is based on feedback from a majority of surveyed employers.

## Employer Expectations

- Having a positive attitude is one of the most important factors in achieving job success.
   Don't carry negative feelings into your new workplace resolve them elsewhere.
- Always be on time. How long will it take to get to work? Allow a few extra minutes for traffic problems and getting children to daycare. Set an alarm clock to help you get up. Being reliable and dependable gains the trust and respect of your new employer.
- Try for good attendance. If you're going to be out sick, ask your supervisor the proper method of notification.
- Know and follow all office rules, policies and procedures.
   Read the employee manuals.
- Listen and learn. Be open to new ways of doing things, even if you were taught differently in school or on a different job. Don't be quick to find fault, criticize or complain until you can prove you can do something a better way.
- Meet and exceed your employer's expectations.
- Learn all you can about the job you were hired to do before thinking about moving up.

### Communication

- When you need to talk with your supervisor, ask when would be a good time to meet.
- Take advantage of your performance reviews. Stay calm. Learn from them. Ask how you can improve. Show job-related classes you've taken. Most supervisors appreciate employees who are concerned about performance and finding ways to improve. Your job success is also their success.
- Ask for help when you need it. If you make a mistake, let your supervisor know immediately. Find out how you can fix it.
- Follow the proper chain of command. Discuss items with your supervisor first.



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#### Personal

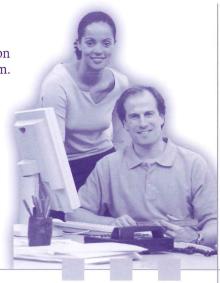
- Prior to starting the job, have all of your appointments with doctors, dentists, etc., out of the way. Have your transportation and daycare lined up so you don't immediately have to take time off. Have an emergency plan for daycare and transportation.
- Be willing to learn new skills. Keep a record of classes you're taking that relate to the job. Review this with your supervisor at an appropriate time.
- Take time in making new friends. Find positive and upbeat coworkers. Avoid negative, critical and gossiping people.
- Be clean and well-groomed.
  Wear clean and job-appropriate clothes. Pay attention to
  how your coworkers are
  dressed. Avoid wearing
  strong perfumes or colognes.
- Keep your personal life and problems at home. Don't use the employer's equipment and time to do personal things like making personal phone calls, using the copy machine or resolving your personal problems on the job. If you're having trouble resolving personal problems,

- counseling, support groups or employee assistance programs may be useful.
- Create the image. Dress for the job you want next.
- Be patient with yourself and your employer. It takes time to get used to, learn and like a new job.
- Volunteer for projects and committees if your work is completed and your supervisor approves.

### Getting Along With Others

- Don't express your opinions, biases or prejudices about others while you're at work. Diversity is a priority in the workplace.
- Accept criticism as constructive.
   Don't become defensive or take criticism personally.
   Thank people for their input.
   Consider changing if it's warranted. If you're unsure how to handle the situation, check with your supervisor.
- Always be friendly to everyone. Be willing to go the extra mile. This creates goodwill with employers, coworkers and customers.
- Notice who your boss relies on and model yourself after them.

- Find a mentor, someone who knows the employer and the job well enough to coach you or show you the ropes.
- Realize playing politics or power games could be dangerous and backfire on you.
- Treat everyone with courtesy and respect. Remember, as you climb the career ladder, you may meet the same people on your way down the ladder.
- Keep your emotions under control. The job isn't the place to let your feelings get out of control.
- Show appreciation. Let your supervisor(s) know you appreciate their training, support, input, feedback, etc.
- Strive to be positively recognized. Be friendly and helpful to everyone at all levels.
- Be a team player. Be willing to help. Know the goals of your job and how your job fits into the overall organization. Avoid a "know-it-all attitude." Try to fit in with the team. Keep your sense of humor.



## Final Thoughts

'n today's world, job search isn't usually a one-time event in most people's work life. Studies show that the average person will change jobs more frequently than in the past. People used to believe once they had secured a job with good pay and benefits, they would stay 20-30 years to retirement. Generally, this is no longer true for most people. The change is due, in part, to the fluctuating economy and fast-paced technological and scientific advances. That's why it's so important to learn the techniques of job search and consider it an invaluable and evolving lifetime skill for present and future use. Job search skills need to be constantly maintained and updated throughout your work life— even when you're employed.

A recent case study has shown that once you've acquired job seeking skills—

- Your confidence increases and your fears about looking for a new job are reduced.
- Your ability to interview and present yourself and your skills improves.
- You have more knowledge and are better prepared to move up the career ladder.
- You're considered more employable by potential employers when you're employed.
- You're more aware of your value and worth to your employer and the labor market.
- You gain freedom and independence from government programs.
- You know how to highlight your skills and abilities to stay ahead of the competition, achieve upward mobility and negotiate successfully.

In order to make the most of the valuable skills and assets acquired through your job search training, it's recommended that you—

- Keep your skills current.
   Keep a list of new things you learn on the job and elsewhere.
- Update your resume when you've gained new skills, abilities and accomplishments.
- Keep your options open. See what your job skills are worth in the job market. Go on interviews occasionally. Find out what you need to get to your goal, or what your marketable skills are worth. Expand your job by using all your skills.
- Get the training or experience you will need to move up or out.
- Keep a list of awards, accomplishments and recognitions to present to your supervisor to lobby for a raise or for upward mobility. Also include that information on resumes and cover letters. Remember that you are your own best sales representative. It's up to you to manage, maintain, improve and present your product— you and your skills.

Best wishes for your present and future success!

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Finishing Touches

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#### Prepared by

Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development Saint Paul, Minnesota

#### **Credits**

Graphic Design Barbara Gorski

Coordination Minnesota WorkForce Center System Staff Workforce Development Division Staff



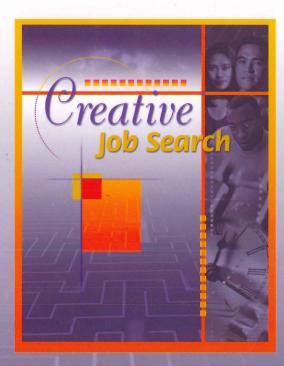
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