

# Job search basics

There are several steps you can take to secure employment. Manpower offers the following advice on finding a new job.

**Review your skills, strengths and experience.** Your skills inventory should include a list of job-related skills (e.g., type 60 words per minute, MS Excel and Word) and personal skills (e.g., honest, meets deadlines). Knowing what you can do and what you would like to do in your next job will help define your job search.

**Get organized.** Plan your day to accommodate looking for a job. Include time to make phone calls, visit employers or employment agencies, fill out applications, write letters and follow-up on job leads.

**Create a resume.** A good resume will help show your strengths and skills to a prospective employer. Basic resume sections include contact information, a job objective, education information and work history.

**Network.** One of the best ways to find a job is to ask friends, business contacts and family members for job leads. Call people you know or people you have previously worked with to see if they know of any potential job opportunities.

**Use the Internet.** The Internet is a good resource for finding jobs and letting employers find you. Search reputable job boards and company sites for current job openings, post your resume to job sites or network with other job seekers via newsgroups and bulletin boards. If you don't have access to the Internet at home, try your local library.

**Go to job fairs.** Attending job fairs can be an effective and efficient way to meet employers and learn about current openings. To get the most out of attending a job fair, be sure to bring several copies of your resume, dress appropriately and follow up with everyone you meet.

**Prepare for interviews.** Interviews are a critical part of your job search. In an interview, you want to obtain information about a company/job while persuading the employer you have the skills they need. To help your interview go smoothly, research the company, practice answering interview questions and prepare a few questions to ask the interviewer.

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## Strategies for Success

Surviving and succeeding  
in today's job market.



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## Introduction

Finding a job is hard work. This guide aims to provide you with tips and tools to help make your search a little easier.

Each section takes you through the critical steps of every job search. In addition, we hope the Beyond Job Success section provides you with some helpful tips. Because finding a job is only part of your success in life.

It's important to develop balance between your personal and professional lives. By monitoring your overall well-being — including financial, professional, emotional and physical health — you will be better prepared for all of life's challenges.

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This publication is designed to provide accurate information in regard to the subject matter covered. If legal advice, career counseling or other expert assistance is required, the services of a professional should be sought.

# Career transition

Change is normal. Change can be good. However, when we experience a change in our work situation, we often feel distressed. Almost everyone goes through a career transition at some point in his/her working life. How you choose to deal with the change can affect your future success.

## Getting started

**Take care of the basics.** Review your financial situation. Confirm you will be able to make ends meet while looking for a new job. Resolve any outstanding emotional issues resulting from your job loss.

**Keep active.** A job search is work. Stay on top of potential job leads. Consider volunteering to help your physical, emotional and professional well-being.

**Remind yourself that change can mean opportunity.** Don't dwell on the tough parts of looking for a job. Keep a positive attitude. A better career may be just around the corner.

**Develop your plan of action.** Set goals. Get in the job search state of mind as soon as possible.

## Today's job market

The contemporary world of work is always changing. Rapidly evolving economic, technological, social and political situations often equal workplace transformations. While that can be tough to survive in at times, it also means that your next opportunity may be right around the corner.

It is almost certain that most people are going to face job and career change at some point in their life. Studies have shown that the average person will change professions at least three times and jobs up to as often as 10 times. Keeping up with job market trends and job search skills is important for everyone.

Awareness and knowledge of trends in the job market can be an effective strategy in locating your next job. Check online, newspapers, magazines, government reports, etc., to find information on the hottest job fields, who's hiring and what skills are most attractive to employers. Your knowledge of the job market will help you at each stage of the job search.



# 2006- 2016

## Fastest growing occupations

1. Network systems and data communications
2. Personal and home care aides
3. Home health aides
4. Computer software engineers, applications
5. Veterinary technologists and technicians
6. Personal finance advisors
7. Makeup artists, theatrical and performance
8. Medical assistants
9. Veterinarians
10. Substance abuse and behavioral disorder counselors

## Occupations with the largest job growth

1. Registered nurses
2. Retail salespersons
3. Customer service representatives
4. Food preparation and serving workers
5. Office clerks
6. Personal and home care aides
7. Home health aides
8. Postsecondary teachers
9. Janitors and cleaners
10. Nursing aides, orderlies and attendants

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

## Your career plan

One way to remove uncertainty about your future is to develop a career plan. A career plan outlines the steps you need to take to reach your career goal. A career goal helps you focus on what you want to do for a living.

### Steps to developing a career plan

Develop a career plan to help focus your job search. Thinking about what you want to do and what you have to do to accomplish those goals can help you find a satisfying career.

- 1. Know yourself.** Make a list of skills you have. Your skills may include training you have gained through part-time or full-time jobs.
- 2. Identify job interests.** To determine your interests, think about what you like to do. Think about experiences you have enjoyed. Evaluate what you liked, what you found challenging and what you may have learned from those experiences. Find out about the types of careers available to you. If you don't research careers, you may not know about the best occupations to fit your interests and skills.

- 3. Determine how to make it happen.** Create an action plan. Once you have determined what career path you want to follow, assess what you need to do to prepare for that career.

By developing a career plan, you can focus on what you want to do and how to get there. And when you are ready to write your resume, you will have a better understanding of your skills and experiences to present to potential employers.

## Organize your job search

To effectively and efficiently manage your job search, it will help to have all your materials and information in order.

**Supplies** – Include resume paper, stamps, a calendar and a notebook or binder in your job search supplies. Also, try to arrange for computer Internet access – either at your home, local library, community college, etc.

**Paperwork** – Gather school transcripts, letters of recommendation, reference lists and a list of former employers (complete with addresses, phone numbers and dates of employment). Having this information at your fingertips will make phone interviews, networking, filling out job applications and building your resume a lot easier.

**Wardrobe** – Tidy up your interviewing attire and be ready for a meeting at a moment's notice.

**Daily schedule** – Create a daily worksheet of job search items to accomplish.

For example, determine who you have to call, how many resumes you need to send out, etc.

**Activity log** – Keep track of all your job search contacts and activities. Make note of contact dates, employer notes, phone numbers, follow-up information and more.

The time spent organizing this job search information may seem tedious but it will help you keep up with your goals and track your process.

## Evaluate yourself

The first step toward finding a new job is self-assessment. Knowing what you like to do, what you are good at, what your strongest skills are and what is important to you will guide you in your job search. It will also help you market yourself to potential employers. If you can describe the skills you have and how they relate to the job you are applying for, you will position yourself as a strong candidate for the job.

### Know what you want

- Do you want full- or part-time work?
- What shift do you want to work?
- How far are you willing to travel to work?
- What kind of work environment do you prefer?
- How much do you want to earn?

### Know what you like

- Do you like to work with people?
- Do you prefer to work on a team or independently?
- Do you like numbers?
- Do you like to be creative?
- Do you like to work with things (e.g., computers, tools, machines, etc.)?

### Know your skills

We all have many skills, but it is important to know how to categorize and present your skills to potential employers. Typically, skills are divided into three categories:

**Transferable skills** – general skills that can be used in a variety of jobs. Examples include problem solving, written communication, organization, motivation, etc. Your Transferable skills:

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**Job-Related skills** – skills that are specific to a job. Examples include typing speed, phone skills, computer programs, driving a forklift, etc.

Your Job-Related skills:

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**Personal (Adaptive) skills** – skills that relate to your personality. Examples include enthusiastic, punctual, honest, loyal, dependable, etc. Your Adaptive skills:

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Capturing the right blend of skills and interests and communicating that information to a potential employer can be the key to a new job.

**Top 10**  
qualities/skills  
employers want.

Source: National Association of Colleges and Employers, Job Outlook 2008

- Communication skills (verbal & written)
- Strong work ethic
- Teamwork skills (works well with others)
- Initiative
- Interpersonal skills (relates well to others)
- Problem-solving skills
- Analytical skills
- Flexibility/adaptability
- Computer skills
- Technical skills

## Ideal job experience

Before you begin your job search, it's important to identify the type of work you desire. Take a few minutes to describe your ideal job. Be sure to include details such as work environment, salary and benefits, title, day-to-day tasks and responsibilities, distance from home and other lifestyle impact issues, start date, the size of the company, industry, amount of travel, equipment used, advancement opportunities, uniform or dress requirements, total hours, days or shifts worked, special projects and any other details related to your ideal occupation. Use short sentences (e.g., I want my commute to be 20 minutes or less).

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# Finding jobs

Even in tough job markets, the jobs are out there. Sometimes it just takes a little more work to find them. Below is a list of ideas on where to find jobs.

**Apply directly to an employer.** Select employers that interest you and obtain their addresses and phone numbers. Consider visiting the company with resume in hand or directly calling the company. In either case, if you don't have a contact name, ask to speak to a hiring manager or Human Resources representative.

**Network.** Ask every friend, relative, teacher, former co-worker and casual acquaintance you have about job vacancies they may know about. Tell everyone you know or meet that you are job hunting. The more people you have trying to find you a job opportunity, the better your chances for success.

**Check the newspaper.** The newspaper is often the first place job seekers look. While this can help you find out the types of jobs that are out there and some of the companies that may be hiring, it is not the most effective place to find a job. Since everyone can find out about these jobs, competition tends to be high.

**Search the Internet.** The Internet has an incredible number of job listings and job-related information. In addition to searching for jobs on the Internet, you can also post your resume and job application and wait for employers to contact you. However, just like the newspaper, there can be a lot of competition for these positions.

**Consider smaller companies.** Many new jobs will come from smaller, growing companies, usually with fewer than 500 employees. Although larger employers are often more visible, well-known and aggressive in looking for employees, smaller companies may have the same positions. Focus on small companies that are expanding and projecting high growth; they can be easier to approach and contact than a large corporation.

**Try temporary or contract work.** Working as a temporary or contractor can provide you with valuable experience, contacts and references. Many times temporary or contract jobs can turn into permanent opportunities. Also, many staffing companies offer free training to increase your skills.

**Consider federal and local government sources.** The federal government has a huge amount of potential job search information available to you at little or no cost. Visit or call your local employment office and take advantage of the services they offer.

# Networking

The people you know can help you find a job. As soon as you decide to look for a job (or even while still employed) tell people that you are looking. Studies have shown that over 60% of job seekers find jobs through networking. The list below will give you some ideas for your initial networking contacts. As you continue your search, your network will expand through visits to job fairs and placement offices, classified ads in newspapers, industry publications and newsletters and postings on the Internet and online social networking sites.

Networking is contacting friends, friends of friends, family members and colleagues to discuss new directions, generate career options, problem solve for decision-making, assess transferable skills, find job leads, shape up your resume, rehearse for interviews, gain access to role models and mentors and receive emotional support.

## Create a contact list

Try to write a list of 50+ people you could consider for networking purposes. Include some or all of the following:

- Relatives
- Friends
- Neighbors – current and former
- Employers – current and former
- Co-workers – current and former
- PTA Members
- Teachers – including college professors and advisors
- Members/clergy of your church or religious institution
- College alumni
- Family contacts
- Social acquaintances
- Salespeople
- Classmates – from any grade level
- Politicians, Town Council members
- Doctor, dentist, lawyer
- Business club members and executives

## Prioritize each contact

After you have made a list of the people you know, prioritize them while keeping in mind the following traits of a good contact:

- Likes you and/or has a reason to want to help you
- Knows many people
- Aware of the current job market
- Successful

## Networking plan

1. Research your chosen career field at libraries, bookstores and on the Internet.
2. Ask friends about people they know who have jobs in this career field.
3. Build a network of people you can talk with about their work.
4. Organize a system to track your networking activities and contact names.
5. Prepare a personal pitch – a 30-second response to “Tell me a little about yourself.”
6. Prepare your networking self-marketing tools: resume, letters, etc.

## The networking call

Begin by calling the high priority contacts and work your way through the list. Be prepared to give them a 30-second summary of why you are calling. This is appropriate for both calls to potential employers and to friends and acquaintances on your networking list. The key to every networking call or contact is to ask for help. Never directly ask for a job, only seek another referral or information about open positions.

### Here is an example of how you might begin a typical networking call or conversation:

Hello Bob Smith, my name is Judy Simple. I got your name from my Uncle, Sam Simple, who works with you at the Basic Corporation. He told me that you were the head of Human Resources. I am in the process of conducting a job search. My background includes three years as an advertising media planner with Green and Gold Limited. I am also a skilled database programmer. Do you know of anyone who might have a need for someone with my experience?

## Expand your network

**At structured events** with networking on their agendas: scheduled one-to-one meetings, career or job fairs, networking clubs, “pink-slip” parties sponsored by Chambers of Commerce and staffing agencies, civic conventions, professional association meetings, trade shows and Internet user groups.

**At unstructured settings** where you can turn on your networking skills: restaurants and clubs, continuing education classes, parties and other social occasions, on the bus or airplane and Internet chat rooms.

## Networking tips

- Find contacts who really want to help.
- Express your gratitude. Send a thank you letter within 24 hours of a meeting.
- Inventory your contacts by type. Network for the specific connections you need.
- Be clear about what you want from your networking contacts.
- Be very thoughtful about your 30 to 45 second personal pitch and practice its delivery.
- Always be prepared – have business cards and resumes with you at all times.
- Create business cards to be used as “calling cards.” You don’t need to list a job title or company name – just your basic contact information.
- Stay in touch. Keep interested contacts informed about your job search progress.
- Effective networking is usually not a one-shot deal. Nurture long-term reciprocity.
- Find people experienced in the areas you’re pursuing and build a relationship with them. They’ll be a sounding board for your ideas and help analyze your career goals.
- Volunteering, part-time jobs and temporary work are alternate ways to network for information and job leads.
- Professional associations are full of avid networkers who would welcome you to meetings.
- Associations are a key to the “hidden job market” and networking. Their Web sites post membership directories, industry news and job trends and targeted resource libraries. To connect with associations visit your local library, or go online to the American Society of Associations at [asaenet.org](http://asaenet.org).
- Get your nose out of that book and network! It’s easy to get stuck in the library or on the computer.
- Networking is happening all around us. Take a deep breath and do it.

## Online social networking

Social networking on the Internet is becoming more and more popular and can be a very effective means to your job search efforts. Research shows that the more connections you have the more likely you are to be approached with a job opportunity.

If you are wondering how to get started, the process is simple. To register on a site, you will need a real e-mail address, a user name and a password. Then build your profile and establish your personal brand. A personal brand begins with setting an objective in terms of what you want to communicate with others. Your profile and brand is the foundation for building relationships with others.



Note that potential employers can view this information as well, so only post information that positions you in the best light to a potential employer. Your profile, at a minimum, should include your skills, field of expertise and experience. Many people also include areas of interest, hobbies, favorite books, and goals.

Once you have developed your profile you can begin to create your network of contacts. Start by adding friends you really know and then broaden your network by including former classmates, relatives, co-workers, and others from your contact list. To help you get started, here are some of the top social networking sites that exist today.

## Top social networking sites

### **LinkedIn**

**linkedin.com**

LinkedIn is an extremely popular online network for professionals. It has more than 25 million experienced professionals from around the world, representing 150 industries. By creating your profile and building connections among former colleagues, clients, friends, partners, family, etc., you can build your network and enhance your job search. Many employers and recruiters use the site to find great candidates.

### **Facebook**

**facebook.com**

Don't just think about this site as being for college students. The reality is this site is growing in popularity among the 25 and older group. This is a very social environment; however it is best to keep it professional if you are serious about your job search. Recruiters and employers visit the site as well. The site can be used to network with friends and colleagues, join public discussions, chat live, share videos, pictures, and more.

### **MySpace**

**myspace.com**

This is another very popular site to connect with others through your personal profile, blogs, groups and other media features. MySpace includes a Jobs section with over 5 million postings. As a member of MySpace you can also post a resume to the site.

## Job fairs

Attending a job fair is an opportunity to gain information about a variety of jobs and companies. It's a great time to make contacts for careers, internships or seasonal work. Here are a few suggestions on how to make the most of this great networking opportunity.

## Locating job fairs

Check newspapers, college placement offices, community centers and the Internet for information about upcoming job fairs. Select job fairs that cover the geographic area, companies and positions of interest to you.

## Prepare for the fair

Begin by identifying a few of the key strengths on your resume. Be prepared to discuss each key area, as appropriate, with potential employers. Practice introducing yourself and describing your skills to friends or family before the fair.

Dress exactly as you would for an interview. If you have "business cards" containing your personal information, bring them to hand out. (You can have these made inexpensively at a local copy shop.) You will also want to bring plenty of resumes (more than you think you will need), a notepad and pen. Consider including a very general cover letter with your resume that identifies your objective and key qualifications. This will make a positive impression because very few candidates make the effort. Carry a small portfolio instead of a briefcase so you can easily shake hands with recruiters.

If you know which companies will be represented, do some research before the job fair so you can discuss their businesses and ask intelligent questions. Try to determine what types of jobs they have open, what kind of people they are looking for and what skills are needed. Most of this information can be found on the companies career web site. You will also want to prioritize which companies you want to meet with in case you run out of time.

## At the fair

Think of your interaction with employers at the job fair as a job interview. Don't be surprised if you are interviewed on the spot. Pay attention to the non-verbal cues of the people working the booths. If the interviewer looks over your shoulder or at his/her watch, it's time to move on.

This is also an opportunity to gather information. Use the research you did ahead of time to make a great first impression. Ask specific questions about the position or department you are interested in and be ready to explain how your skills match what they are looking for. This will help you appear confident and knowledgeable about your career goals and desires.

## Follow-up

The day after the fair, send a cover letter to each contact with whom there might be ongoing mutual interest. Remind him or her of your meeting and qualifications. Enclose a fresh copy of your resume. If you said you would call the employer, do so, but leave only one or two messages. Be prepared to wait for a response.

# All about resumes

A resume is a written summary introducing you and your accomplishments, abilities, skills, qualifications and experience to a potential employer. To properly manage your career today, you need a resume or resumes that will work for you in a variety of ways.

## Resume types

**Traditional Resume** – The traditional resume provides your prospective employer with an informative, attractive description of yourself and the skills you are trying to market. It must be highly polished and pleasing to the eye.

- Use a word processing package and print on high-quality bond paper.
- Make sure the resume is grammatically perfect.
- Use a font size of 10 to 14 points and choose one typeface and stick to it.
- Use short phrases that begin with an action verb.
- Print on one side of the paper.

## Tips for a Successful Keyword Summary

- Use enough keywords to define your skills, experience, education, professional affiliations and industry background.
- Use jargon and acronyms specific to your industry.
- Increase your list of keywords by including specifics. For example, list the names of software and versions you use.
- Use keywords that are used in employment ads associated with the job title you are seeking.

**Electronic Resumes** – More and more companies are using electronic methods to collect, sort and file resumes. The electronic methods include scanning of resumes, accepting e-mail resumes, having applicants complete online resume forms, or accessing Internet home page resumes. The following elements will help you be effective in marketing your resume electronically.

- Use keyword nouns to describe your skills and experience. Be sure to use the acronym and spell out the word when referring to specific software packages or versions.
- Avoid boldface, underline, italics, special fonts, type sizes, indents, centering, and margin settings. Also, use the space bar instead of Tab and use asterisks instead of bullets.
- Use standard fonts or typefaces - such as Arial, Helvetica, Optima, Universe, Times New Roman, Palatino or Courier between 10 and 14 points.
- Make each line no longer than 60 characters with a hard return at the end.

- Save your resume in an ASCII file. Three popular file formats are Plain text (.txt), Rich text (.rtf), and Hypertext (.html). Plain text is the most widely used format on the Internet.
- Consider having resumes also available in a Microsoft Word (.doc) or PDF format.

## Resume formats

**Chronological Resume**– The chronological resume is the most popular and widely accepted resume format. It is organized by job title and presents your work experience in reverse chronological order. It is easy to read and can be quickly scanned for employment history.

Use a chronological resume when:

- You have a steady and consistent employment history with no major gaps in employment and have not changed career tracks recently.
- Your employment history has been one of progressively responsible positions.
- Your titles have been impressive and/or you have been recently employed at well-known companies.
- Your major accomplishments have been achieved in your most recent positions.

**Functional Resume** – The functional resume highlights your skills, accomplishments and qualifications at the top of the resume, regardless of where they have occurred in your career. Your employment history is not the focus since it is placed toward the bottom of your resume.

Consider using a functional resume when:

- You want to emphasize skills and accomplishments not from your most recent position.
- You have been out of the job market for some time and are trying to re-enter.
- You have held a variety of unrelated jobs.
- You are changing careers.

**Combination Resume** – The combination format unites the benefits of both the chronological and the functional formats. By beginning with a summary (functional format) of your most impressive qualifications, skills, abilities and accomplishments, it immediately places the emphasis where you want it. This is followed by an employment history section, written in the chronological format.

Consider using it when:

- You have a steady and progressive employment history.
- You are applying for a position for which the chronological resume is expected but you also want to highlight qualifications from earlier positions.
- You need an effective way to match your skills to the job requirements.

# Basic resume sections

## Identifying Information

- Place your name, address, phone numbers and email address at the top of each page.
- Make sure you provide a telephone number where you can be reached or a message can be left. If you provide a cell phone number, make sure you are prepared to always answer your phone in a professional manner.
- Left-justify the identifying information in a scannable resume.

## Objective

- An objective focuses the resume and communicates the position you are seeking.
- Be broad enough to merit consideration for related jobs.
- Be specific enough to show employers a focused goal.
- Define your functional area of interest.
- Identify the type, size and scope of the organization you want to work for.
- Describe the level of position you seek.

## Experience

- List each position held in reverse chronological order.
- Include the company name, city, state, a brief description of the firm, dates worked, title, position and key accomplishments.
- Record past work experiences in terms of transferable skills.
- Begin each descriptive phrase with an action verb (e.g., managed, achieved, etc.).
- Make sure the work history section is relevant to your objective.

Note: An optional category can be titled Relevant Experience. This section would describe pertinent, unpaid experience.

## Education

- List education and degrees in reverse chronological order.
- Provide the name and location of institutions as well as academic major.
- Note honorary societies, academic honors and graduation with distinction.
- Relevant coursework may be included for recent graduates.
- Research and/or publications are listed for applicants with a Master's and/or Ph.D. degree.

## Activities and Accomplishments

- Reveals how you spend your spare time.
- Provides insight into your involvement and participation with individuals and groups.
- Include hobbies, activities and membership in organizations, especially where you hold a leadership role.

# Action verbs

When writing your traditional resume, it helps to use words that convey strong action. Action verbs are particularly useful in a traditional resume.

Achieved	Employed	Investigated	Resolved
Accomplished	Enforced	Launched	Resorted
Administered	Established	Led	Reviewed
Advised	Evaluated	Maintained	Revitalized
Analyzed	Examined	Managed	Saved
Appointed	Executed	Minimized	Secured
Assessed	Expanded	Negotiated	Set up
Attained	Forecasted	Obtained	Simplified
Audited	Formed	Operated	Sold
Centralized	Formulated	Organized	Solved
Certified	Generated	Performed	Staffed
Completed	Guided	Planned	Standardized
Conducted	Handled	Presented	Started
Converted	Headed	Processed	Streamlined
Created	Hired	Produced	Studied
Decentralized	Implemented	Published	Supervised
Delivered	Improved	Purchased	Surveyed
Designed	Increased	Recruited	Tested
Determined	Initiated	Redesigned	Traded
Developed	Inspected	Reduced	Trained
Directed	Instructed	Referred	Upgraded
Documented	Interpreted	Regulated	Verified
Effected	Interviewed	Reorganized	Won
Eliminated	Introduced	Reported	Wrote

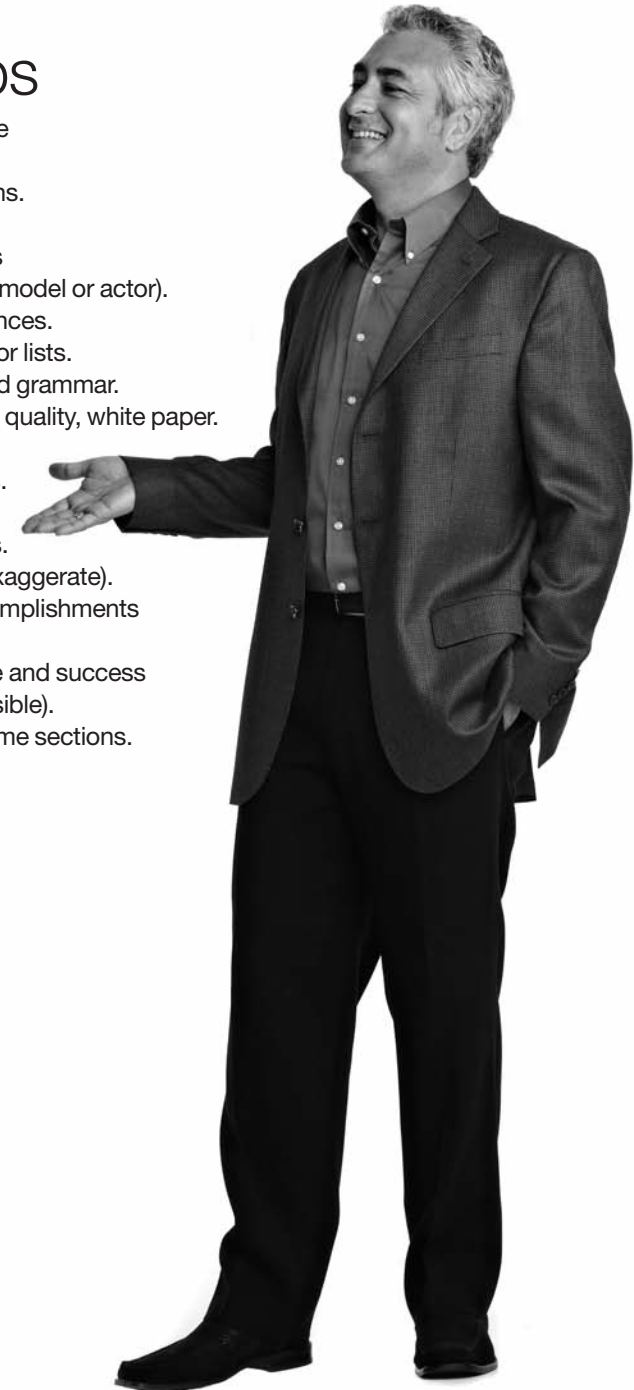
# Keywords

Scannable and emailed resumes are often searched for specific keywords. Here are some examples of keywords that help resumes get selected electronically.

Accounting Supervisor	Internet	Production
Advertising	Inventory	Project Management
Asia	Law Enforcement	Programming
Bachelor of Arts	Legal	Publicity
Bachelor of Science	Leadership	Purchasing Manager
Bank Teller	Magazine	Public Relations
Bookkeeping	Management	Quality Assurance
Cash Management	Manufacturing	Quark Xpress
Computer Technology	Marketing	Reporter
Cost Reduction	Master's Degree	Research
Customer Service	Material Management	Sales
Dean's List	Mathematics	Senior Editor
Drafting	Negotiator	Soldering
Editorial Experience	Non-Profit	Software Engineer
\$85 Million Sales	Oral and Written Communications	Spreadsheet
Electrical Circuits	Order Entry	Strategic Planning
Excel	Operations	Statistics
Feature Writer	OSHA Standards	Teaching Certification
Field Sales	Problem solving and decision making	Technical Writing
Financial Training	Phones	Trainer
Forecasting	Planning	3.6 GPA
Fortune 500	Product Development	Treasurer
Industrial Machinery		University of Arizona
Insurance		Word Processing

# Resume tips

- Keep your resume simple and straightforward.
- Do not write in paragraphs.
- Be honest.
- Avoid artwork or pictures (unless you are an artist, model or actor).
- Don't list personal references.
- Use bullets or asterisks for lists.
- Proofread for spelling and grammar.
- Use standard 8.5" by 11" quality, white paper.
- Avoid fancy fonts.
- Insert targeted keywords.
- Check for accuracy.
- Do not use abbreviations.
- Sell yourself (but don't exaggerate).
- Showcase your job accomplishments and results.
- Quantify your experience and success (use numbers when possible).
- Stick with common resume sections.



# Resume worksheet

## Identifying Information

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

(Area Code) Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

(Area Code) Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

## Keywords

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Objective/Career Summary

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Experience

Company Name \_\_\_\_\_

City, State \_\_\_\_\_

Dates Employed \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Supervisor (May be required on a job application) \_\_\_\_\_

Brief Description of Company \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Brief Description of your Responsibilities \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(Key Accomplishment) \_\_\_\_\_

(Key Accomplishment) \_\_\_\_\_

Company Name \_\_\_\_\_

City, State \_\_\_\_\_

Dates Employed \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Supervisor (May be required on a job application) \_\_\_\_\_

Brief Description of Company \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Brief Description of your Responsibilities \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(Key Accomplishment) \_\_\_\_\_

(Key Accomplishment) \_\_\_\_\_

Company Name \_\_\_\_\_

City, State \_\_\_\_\_

Dates Employed \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Supervisor (May be required on a job application) \_\_\_\_\_

Brief Description of Company \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Brief Description of your Responsibilities \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(Key Accomplishment) \_\_\_\_\_

(Key Accomplishment) \_\_\_\_\_

**Education** (place before Experience for new graduates only) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Activities and Accomplishments** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



# Sample resume

Pat M. Samples

2208 E. Park Place 2A, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53555  
Home: (555) 999-1628 Cell: (555) 999-1234  
Email: psamples@aol.com

**Career Objective:** To obtain a customer service position in a Fortune 500 company utilizing my communication and leadership skills. Demonstrate proficiency in a variety of computer software programs and a background in the office supply and telecommunications industries.

## EXPERIENCE

**ABC Office Supplies, Anytown, Wisconsin June 2005 - Present**  
Largest direct marketer of office supplies in the United States.

### Customer Service Representative

Inbound telemarketing, upselling and order entry for a product line of 3,000 items.

- Accrued the highest number of "Power Points" on work team for perfect attendance and successful upselling. Earned ABC Performance Award for accomplishment.
- Recognized by management for sensitivity and ability to handle difficult customers.
- Simplified scheduling process for a call center of 500 people.
- Set record for acquiring 100 new customers in August 2007.

**XYZ Phone Company, Anytown, Wisconsin May 2000 - June 2005**

The Midwest's leader in telecommunications services.

### Call Center Representative

Performed data entry, set up new customer accounts and handled customer inquiries. Answered incoming 800 customer service line. Performed a variety of administrative duties.

- Cross-trained in customer relations, billing and new accounts.
- Tested new call center tracking software.

### Human Resources Receptionist

Compiled and maintained personnel records; prepared, typed and filed personnel reports; verified employment; screened phone calls; executed data entry functions.

## EDUCATION

**Bachelor of Business Administration, Spanish Minor May 2000**

Ohio State University • Dean's List, Six Semesters

Who's Who Among College Graduates 2000

## ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

United Way Volunteer, Spring 2003, 2004

ABC Performance Award, September 2006

NOTE: Consider adding a Keyword Summary section directly to your resume if there are words/skills/topics you want to include that don't fit neatly in your job experience, or if you have a lot of industry-specific terms that employers may seek.

**Keywords:** Marketing, Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Bachelor of Business Administration, Spanish, Ohio State University, Telecommunications, Customer Service, Temporary Services, Personnel, Human Resources, Surveys, 800 Line, Writing, Presentations, Leadership, Honor Society, Direct Marketing, Dean's List, Upselling, Inbound.

# Reference tips

Selecting references is a critical part of job search success, so take time to choose them wisely. Here are a few suggestions on how to identify a good reference, reference etiquette, questions employers might ask a reference and how to set up a reference page for potential employers.

## Selecting your references

Strive for a balanced group of people (e.g., a recent/current employer, long-time professional contact or a colleague or co-worker). Choose references who know you well and can speak knowledgeably about your professional and personal attributes.

## Reference etiquette

1. If you haven't spoken to a potential reference in a while, pay them a visit. This is your chance to demonstrate that you have grown beyond their expectations.
2. Provide your references with as many details as possible about your current job search. Give them a copy of your resume, explain why you left or are leaving your current position and tell them why you would like to use them as a reference.
3. Don't automatically include references on your resume. Provide them when asked.
4. Contact your references every time you give out their names. Keep them updated on your job search progress. Ask them to contact you each time they are called.
5. When your search is over, send a letter or card to your references to thank them.

## Reference questions

References are used to help determine both the potential of the candidate and whether or not the candidate will fit into the company's culture. The following are typical questions your references might be asked:

- How would you describe [applicant's] professional style?
- What was [applicant's] major contribution to the organization?
- Why did [applicant] leave your company?
- What are [applicant's] strengths? Weaknesses?
- What type of management style would best fit with [applicant's] approach?
- How would you describe [applicant's] relationship with peers? Supervisors?

- Given the described position, would you hire/rehire [applicant] for the job? If not, why not?

## Your reference list

Set up your page of references on the same type of paper as your resume. Provide your name, address, phone and email information at the top in the same format and typeface as your resume. Include the following information for each reference:

- Name
- Position
- Company
- Address
- Office phone
- Home phone
- Email address
- Relationship
- Notes (Mention any specific achievement or skill that this person could discuss)

## Job search letters

Job search letters can be classified as cover letters, follow-up letters, or thank you notes. Cover letters are always sent with your resume in response to a job opening, including classified advertisements and emailed resumes. Follow-up letters are ideal after a meeting or discussion with an employer, when you are not yet a formal candidate for a position. A thank you note is an appropriate follow-up after an interview.

Writing letters is a critical part of your job search. Even after you've put your best material down on paper, you have to do more. Proofread and check every piece of job search correspondence, including letters. Have someone you trust read your letters and offer comments and suggestions. If you still need help, sample cover letter books are some of the most popular books in the library. Use them for ideas.

## Cover letters

The cover letter can be just as important as the resume. Not only is it your introduction to the company, it is your opportunity to tailor your qualifications to the job opening. Cover letters are not a synopsis of your job history or a long self-description. One page is sufficient. Your purpose is to generate interest and your aim is to get an interview. Don't describe yourself with terms such as "assertive, aggressive, highly motivated and mature." Instead, demonstrate those qualities by specifically listing your accomplishments.

Here are the basic rules for preparing a cover letter.

**Paragraph 1** – The first paragraph identifies the position for which you are applying and where you saw the ad or how you learned of the position along with why you are writing. Clear information will ensure that your resume ends up on the right person's desk. Here is an example:

I am responding to your job posting on websitename.com for the Call Center Specialist position at your New Jersey headquarters. I am very interested in this position and believe that my experience and skills in a call center environment will be extremely valuable to XYZ company.

**Paragraph 2** – The second paragraph explains that you can perform the job and know about the company or position enough to effectively demonstrate how you will be a good fit for the employer's needs. The purpose of this paragraph is to bridge your resume with the position. You may want to provide information that reflects why you are interested in the employer or type of work that the employer does. Also include information that outlines related assignments of accomplishments, similarities to your current position and why you believe you can do the job. This paragraph will have a greater impact if your accomplishments include facts such as numbers, statistics, programs established, etc. Here is one example of how you might formulate this paragraph.

In my current position, I am a call center agent for a large phone company where I have progressed from a data entry operator, to an entry-level call center agent, to my existing role as a team lead in the call center. My strong communication skills, both verbal and written and excellent computer and phone skills contributed to my advancement. I repeatedly ranked in the top 10 of our monthly Customer Service Agent Excellence Survey. As a team lead, I have thrived on educating and mentoring other agents, which fits perfectly with your strong training culture and customer service focus.

**Final Paragraph** – The final paragraph is your closing pitch. Thank the reviewer and repeat your interest in the job. Request the next step in the interview process. Tell the recruiter how to get in touch with you – repeat your phone number and email address. Also, if you say you will contact the recruiter, make sure you follow through. Below is an example.

I would appreciate an opportunity to discuss how my background and experience could benefit your organization. I can be reached via email at myname@email.com, or by phone at (555) 555-1234. Thank you for your time and consideration.

## Follow-up letters

Any personal interaction is an opportunity for further contact. After a meeting with a colleague or business contact, or a discussion at a job fair, send a follow-up letter. A good follow-up letter is more than a simple “thank you for your time.” It is an opportunity to reinforce the conversation and describe your qualifications. You can include much of the same information that you featured in the cover letter.

When preparing your follow-up letter, keep the following points in mind:

- Mail your letter within 48 hours of the meeting.
- Address the person you spoke with by name and title.
- Express appreciation for their time.
- Summarize the important points of your conversation to show you were listening and to remind the recruiter or interviewer of your conversation.
- Express your enthusiasm for the project and/or company.
- Ask for the assignment or an interview if appropriate.
- Include a copy of your resume.

## Thank you letters

Send thank you letters after you have formally met with a business contact regarding an available position. Spoken thanks are mandatory, but a thank you letter will drive home your appreciation and interest in the job opportunity. Send your thank you letter within 24 – 48 hours. If you are aspiring to a professional position, it’s best to send your letter on resume paper in a matching envelope. Here is an example of what you might write. Tailor it to your meeting so it doesn’t sound generic.

I enjoyed meeting you to discuss the position of Call Center Supervisor with ABC Company. I appreciated your openness and honest answers to my questions. This position is exactly what I have been looking for, and I sincerely hope that I am the person you are looking for as well. I can be reached next week at (555) 432-9999. I look forward to talking to you further.

**Note:** Emailing a thank you can be acceptable. Let the company’s culture be your guide. If you know a hiring decision will be made quickly, consider sending an email.

## Job applications

In addition to resumes, employers often use job applications to make hiring decisions. Many employers use applications as a way of standardizing the information they obtain from all job-seekers, including some things that you would not normally put on your resume. Also, if you do not have a resume prepared, filling out a job application will be your main way to communicate that you are qualified for a job.

Filling out a job application may seem redundant if you have a resume prepared, but applications are typically a Human Resources department requirement for all applicants.

### Tips for filling out job applications

**Be prepared.** Be sure to bring all your personal and job-related information. You may need items such as your resume, social security card, driver’s license, etc. You will also need a list of previous employers, dates of employment and salary information for each previous job.

**Read and follow instructions carefully.** Each job application can ask for information in a different order or format. Be sure to respond appropriately.

**Neatness counts.** Fill in the application as neatly as possible. Use a black or blue ink pen and do not cross out answers.

**Provide details.** Answer questions completely. Give details of skills and accomplishments.

**Don’t leave any blanks.** If there are questions that do not apply to you, simply respond with “not applicable,” or “n/a.”

**Be honest.** Answer all questions truthfully.

**Have your reference list ready.** Employers want to see that there are people who will provide objective information about you to them. You may be asked to provide the names of references, their titles, relationships to you and how they can be reached.

**Keep your application consistent with your resume.** Make sure all dates, names, titles, etc., on your application match the information on your resume.

**Proofread carefully.** Read over your application one or two times before submitting it to the employer. Make sure there are no misspelled words or incorrect information.

# Using the Internet in your job search

In today's competitive labor market, companies are using the Internet to find employees. By using the Internet to search for openings, and/or post your resume, you can increase the odds that your resume will be matched to an employer.

The Internet contains a wealth of information and services for the job seeker. You can explore topics such as salary surveys, resume and letter writing, relocation information, interview techniques and networking. Plus, you can search job databases to find positions that might be of interest to you, post your resume to sites that employers can access and chat with fellow job seekers.

## Benefits of Internet job searching

- Job opportunities abound. There are thousands of job sites to choose from, including specialty profession sites and specific geographical sites.
- Available day or night. You can job search when your schedule allows.
- Demonstrates your ability to use a computer to potential employers.

## Job databases and posting your resume

One of the benefits of the Internet is the wide variety of job sites that are available. Each site has its own database of current employment opportunities that can be accessed by job seekers. In many cases you can respond directly to the job opening by emailing or "posting" an electronic version of your resume or filling out an online application form.

Posting your resume on the Internet is like placing an advertisement that says you are looking for a job. Companies and recruiters search resume databases to find the ideal candidate based on keywords that identify the person's experience in a particular industry, education, job function or skill set. When you post your resume, the number of companies that have access to it increases as well as your odds of being matched with an employer.

### Word of caution:

If you are unfamiliar with the origin of a site, you may want to check the confidentiality of its database. Keep track of your resume postings so when you do find employment you can remove them. A good database will automatically delete your resume after three to six months if it is not updated.

## Get an email account

When job hunting online, you will often have to provide an email address. This is easy to do and won't cost you anything. You can establish a free email account at sites like Google.com, Yahoo.com or Hotmail.com. Even if you do not have a computer at home, you can access an email account (as long as you know your username and password) from any public computer.

## Searching a career site

Each job site has a slightly different form to search for jobs. Usually you will be provided with the option to search for jobs by category, location or job title. You are also able to search by keyword. This allows you to select the words you want to look for in a job posting. It also helps you narrow down your job list to positions that better match your specific skills and/or requirements.

## Using job search agents

Job search agents are computer programs that match a person's requirements with job listings. Agents continually look for jobs based upon specified criteria and notify the job seeker when matching jobs are found.

One of the biggest benefits of using job agents is the time they will save you. Instead of having to regularly visit career sites to look for new jobs, you simply can visit once and set up an agent. Enter your job search criteria in their job search agent and you will begin to receive emails from these sites notifying you of new jobs matching your criteria.

Most sites let you decide how often you wish to be notified by email of matching jobs. Typical options are daily, or every 3, 7, 14 or 30 days. The advantage of a daily notification is that you learn of new jobs as soon as they appear on a career site – giving you the ability to be one of the first applicants. The disadvantage of a daily notification is that you may constantly receive emails from these sites.

# Internet resources

The Internet is populated with hundreds of career sites designed to make the job search easier. Some of the best sites for general career information, company research and job openings are listed below. These career sites were selected based on job content, ease of use, links to other career resources and overall design. The following Web sites have been verified as accurate and valid at publication. However, due to the dynamic nature of the Internet, resources may disappear and addresses may change.

## Major career sites

### **Monster**

**monster.com**

Monster provides continuous access to the most progressive companies, as well as interactive, personalized tools to make the job search process effective and convenient. Features include: My Monster, your personal career management office; resume management, with the ability to store up to five different resumes; a personal job search agent; express apply feature; a careers network; chats and message boards; privacy options; expert advice on job-seeking; and free career management newsletters.

### **CareerBuilder**

**careerbuilder.com**

CareerBuilder has more ways to search for jobs than any other online recruiting and job awareness service. Job seekers are exposed to more than 250,000 continuously updated jobs of the top employers in virtually every industry and field.

### **Yahoo! Hotjobs**

**hotjobs.com**

HotJobs offers job-seeking professionals a one-stop job search resource. Candidates create a personalized career management page called My HotJobs, which provides all of the tools needed for an easy, simple and confidential job search. In addition, the site includes great features like “status” that allows candidates to see how many times their resume has been viewed.

### **Indeed**

**indeed.com**

Indeed.com functions as a job search engine that enables candidates to search by keywords and get listings of jobs drawn from major job sites, newspapers, company websites, associations, etc. The site has an easy to use look and feel that resembles general search engine designs. This site also includes information on job trends and salaries along with forums to ask questions and get career advice.

### **SimplyHired**

**simplyhired.com**

This is a great resource to search for jobs on multiple sites. SimplyHired aggregates results from major job websites, newspapers, company websites, associations and other online sources. The system allows job seekers to search by occupation, job title or location and filter results by job type, education, work experience, company revenue, or company size. If you become a frequent user of the site you can get job suggestions based on your search criteria. This site does not allow you to post resumes but there is a new feature that allows you to send your resume out to post on five other sites for free. SimplyHired partners with LinkedIn as well.

## Job search help – career sites

### **CareerJournal**

**careerjournal.com**

CareerJournal is sponsored by the *Wall Street Journal* and contains a large and growing library of excellent job search articles. In addition to articles, there is salary and hiring information, job hunting advice, discussion groups, and a job search board.

### **The Riley Guide**

**rileyguide.com**

The Riley Guide is a helpful site for the job seeker on how to use the Internet in searching for jobs. It provides guidance on preparing your resume for the Internet, using the Internet in your job search, Internet services and job search preparation guides. This site also contains a comprehensive A to Z index of topics and provides links to other employment sites.

### **Quintessential Careers**

**quintcareers.com**

Quintessential Careers, a career and job-hunting resources guide, includes information on career resources, resumes and cover letters, general job sites and industry-specific job sites.

### **WetFeet**

**wetfeet.com**

Top job candidates rely on wetfeet.com for the most comprehensive company research and career-related information to help them make better career decisions, as well as for the latest job and internship opportunities.

## Employer/company research

### **Hoover's Online**

**hoovers.com**

Hoover's Online is the source for finding company information. The site enables a job searcher to find company information using the company name, ticker symbol, keywords or a person's last name. Company information pages provide a company capsule, company profile, financial information and news.

### **Vault**

**vault.com**

Vault.com, the “insider” career network has a wide range of information on companies and jobs. You can also research industries and obtain career advice.

### **CNNMoney.com**

**money.cnn.com/news/crc**

A complete source for company information. Once you type in a company name or ticker symbol, you'll receive thorough background information, vital statistics and earnings estimates.

## Salary Information

### **Salary**

**salary.com**

Salary.com offers an invaluable range of information about salaries and benefits. The site showcases its Salary Wizard, which allows users to see whether their salaries meet the average in their area, as well as what kinds of salaries they would make in other parts of the country. On the homepage, users will also find collections of salary news and advice.



### **SalaryExpert**

**salaryexpert.com**

Salary information can be obtained from SalaryExpert by generating a free salary report after inputting basic information about your experience and job tasks. Additional information is available by viewing Salary Survey Data, Geographic Pay Data, Cost of Living Data, or Executive Compensation Data. SalaryExpert is an affiliate of ERI Economic Research Institute.

### **PayScale**

**payscale.com**

PayScale is a market leader in global online compensation data and has a large database of individual employee compensation profiles. PayScale provides an immediate and precise snapshot of the job market and can provide accurate and reliable compensation detail needed to make informed career decisions.

## Career Research

### **Occupational Outlook Handbook**

**www.bls.gov/oco**

The Occupational Outlook Handbook is a nationally recognized source of career information designed to provide valuable assistance to individuals making decisions about their future work lives. Revised every two years, the Handbook describes what workers do on the job, working conditions, the training and education needed, earnings and expected job prospects in a wide range of occupations.

### **CareerOneStop**

**careeronestop.org**

Sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor, CareerOneStop provides career resources that include occupation and industry information, salary data, career videos, education resources, self-assessment tools, as well as job seeking advice.

### **Occupational Information Network**

**online.onetcenter.org**

This is the nation's primary source of occupational information, providing comprehensive information on key attributes and characteristics of workers and occupations. Their database is continually updated by surveying a broad range of workers from each occupation. Information from this freely available database forms the heart of O\*NET OnLine, the interactive application for exploring and searching occupations.

### **Careers.org**

**careers.org**

This is a comprehensive directory of career-related resources, including access to a blogs, video profiles, assessment tools, a salary calculator, and more. This site also links to over 1,000 other online sources of job and career information on the Internet.

## Researching companies

If you want to stand out in an interview, know something about your potential employer. By thoroughly researching the employer, you increase your chances of making a positive and memorable first impression. Make sure you're prepared to answer one of the most common interview questions: "Why are you interested in our organization?" If you don't know anything about the employer, you won't be able to answer this question effectively and impress the recruiter.

### What to look for

Don't be satisfied with your general knowledge about an employer. For example, you may know that General Mills makes breakfast cereal, but you may not be aware that the company also owns other brands such as Pillsbury and Betty Crocker. Without research, you may be talking with a subsidiary of a much larger company and not realize it. The following list will give you an idea of the type of information to know before an interview.

- What are the services and products that they sell?
- What activities are carried out by the employer?
- How successful is the company? What are its sales? Assets? Earnings? What has its growth pattern been like? What is its forecast of anticipated growth?
- What is the size of the company? How many employees does it have? What types of jobs exist with the employer? What is the potential growth?
- What are the objectives and philosophy of the company?
- What is its location? How many locations are there? How long has the company been established there?
- Who are its competitors?
- What are the names of key executives? Is the company publicly or privately owned?
- What is the general reputation of the company?
- What are its major achievements?

### Sources of company information

- Employer Web sites
- Annual reports
- Company brochures
- Professional associations
- Conferences/tradeshows
- Chamber of Commerce
- Newspapers
- Magazines – *BusinessWeek*, *FORTUNE*, *Forbes*
- Trade Journals
- Internet

# Interview preparation

## The Basics

The goal of the job interview is to obtain information about a company/job, while persuading the employer that you have the skills they need. The employer's goal is to promote the company while gathering information about you. Everyone has something to gain from a good interview.

### Creating a Good Impression

- Arrive about 5 minutes early – never late
- Treat everyone with respect – including receptionists, other people in the lobby, etc.
- Dress appropriately
- Be organized
- Be prepared

### Dress for Success

- Look professional
- Wear clean, proper-fitting clothes
- Style hair neatly
- Clean and polish shoes
- Wear a watch
- Limit jewelry

### What to Bring

- Extra copies of your resume
- A nice pen and note pad
- Prepared questions that you would like answered
- References
- A positive attitude

## How to prepare

There are three steps to good interview preparation. Step one is to develop your C.A.R. stories as described below. Step two involves practicing your interview skills. Finally, before you leave for the interview, familiarize yourself with the list of do's and don'ts. It's easy to forget the most obvious details when under stress.

**C.A.R. Stories** You will be better prepared for your interview if you develop mini-stories about your accomplishments. This will help you answer interview questions by providing examples and make it easier to remember your accomplishments under stressful situations. Begin by describing an accomplishment and the skills that were used in that situation. See if you can break it down into a 5 or 6 sentence "story" describing the challenge, action and result.

### C. Challenge or problem that you encountered.

- What needed to be done?
- Where did you start?
- Describe your specific assignments, responsibilities or duties.
- Describe the situation, project or task.
- Emphasize the non-routine challenging problems.
- How and why did the situation arise?
- Did you notice or discover it yourself?
- Did you suggest or initiate the action?

### A. Action that you took to resolve the problem or situation.

- What did you do?
- How did you proceed?
- Describe your goals, plans and procedures.
- Emphasize your creative and innovative approach.
- Describe what you actually did and how you did it.
- Emphasize what others did under your supervision.
- Describe the difficulties that you encountered and overcame.

### R. Result that was achieved for you or the company. (Be specific and use measurable examples whenever possible).

- What did you accomplish?
- State how well you carried out your responsibilities.
- Describe your contributions and achievements.
- Quantify your results and specify them in concrete language.
- Describe how completely your plans were realized.
- Emphasize who (Company? Department? Boss? Other?) benefited.
- Exactly how did they benefit and how much did they benefit?

## Interview questions

Many of the questions asked by employers are designed to determine "chemistry" or "fit." You can demonstrate these to an employer by answering with examples and behaviors through your C.A.R. stories, as described above. You also need to be prepared to answer specific technical questions about your areas of expertise. The information below will help you understand the different types of questions you may be asked.

### Positive/Negative and Neutral Questions

Listen carefully to whether a question will prompt an automatic positive or negative response. Turn the negative and neutral questions into positive examples. Give specific, positive examples describing your experiences and attributes. Remember: Challenge, Action, Result.

### Positive Questions

- What are your strengths?
- Why should we hire you?
- What can you contribute?
- What are your most significant accomplishments?
- Why do you think you are qualified for this position?
- Why have you been successful?
- Tell me about the things you enjoy.
- Describe the ideal position for you.
- Tell me about a situation in which you felt very effective on the job.
- In what type of business environment do you function best?

### Negative Questions

- What are your weaknesses?
- Tell me about a work situation where you felt ineffective.
- What didn't you like about your last position (boss) (company)?
- What is the biggest mistake you have made in your career?
- Tell me how you have handled a difficult peer (boss) (subordinate).
- What criticisms have supervisors had about your work style?
- What type of business environment makes it most difficult for you to function?
- Why did you leave your last position? (Be brief, consistent, and stick to a pre-determined, positive reason for leaving).

### Neutral Questions

- Tell me about yourself.
- What will references (former bosses or co-workers) say about you? (Stress the positive; do not volunteer the negative; use their actual words where possible).
- How do you communicate with bosses/peers/subordinates?
- How did you spend time on your last job?
- How do you handle pressure?
- What are your salary requirements and expectations? (Give a range, not a specific figure. Leave room to negotiate after the position is offered. Make clear that salary is not all that is important).
- What qualities do you look for in people you hire?
- Why are you interested in this position?
- What is important for me to know about you?
- What is the key thing you have learned in your management career?
- How do you set priorities?
- How do you and your family feel about relocation?
- What do you want to be doing in five years? (Remember, you have to get this position and do it well before you move up).

### Questions You Ask

An interview is the time to learn more about the company's philosophy, different aspects of the job for which you are applying and what the company requires of its employees. These questions are as important as the ones asked of you.

#### Company:

- What is its mission? Vision?
- What future plans does the company have?
- What are the challenges the company is facing?
- What is the culture like? What gets rewarded? What are the values?
- How would you describe the culture or business environment of this department/organization?

#### Job:

- Is this a new/existing/revised job? If new, why was it created?
- Within the areas of responsibility, what are the two or three most significant things you would want me to accomplish?
- Where does this position fit within the company's structure?
- What level is this position?
- Can you give me more detail about the position's responsibilities?
- Who does this position interact with?
- What results are expected?
- What is the percentage of time spent on different activities?
- Is there opportunity for growth and advancement? If so, what other career opportunities might be open to me here?
- What are the goals for the department/job?
- What are the major challenges in this position (for this organization)?

### Questions NOT to Ask

Never ask personal questions of your interviewers. Examples might include how they got their job, or what they think of the firm. These questions may be important to you; however, the first interview is not the time to get the answers. This information will be supplied when the time is right. For example, don't ask about company retirement plans, vacations, bonuses and holidays until you have received or are in the process of negotiating an offer.

### Questions You NEVER Ask

Never ask the interviewer's opinion of a former employee. And never discuss politics or religion, unless the position is of a political or religious nature or it involves diversity issues.

## Interview tips

First impressions are very important. A review of the following simple do's and don'ts may be helpful. They are all obvious, but do not underestimate their importance.

**DO...** get clear directions to the exact location.  
smile frequently.  
answer questions honestly and without hesitation.  
be confident.  
keep it formal and relaxed.  
talk in terms of the employer and what you can do for them.  
be sincere.  
be well groomed.  
be about 5 – 10 minutes early for the interview.  
maintain good eye contact.  
end the interview by asking what the next step will be.

**DON'T...** carry a large handbag or heavy briefcase.  
take a seat unless offered one.  
wear clothes that are soiled and baggy.  
fidget/chew gum.  
contradict yourself.  
wear flashy clothing or clashing colors.  
falsify information.  
get too friendly or overly personal.

## Follow up

Always write a thank you note within 24 – 48 hours after an interview, even if you did not think the interview went well or if you are no longer interested in the position. Thank the employer for the time he/she spent with you. If you are interested in the job, the thank you letter is a great opportunity to restate your interest and skills.

A phone call is another way to follow up with the interviewer and find out where he/she is in the decision process. Ask if there is any other information that you could provide.

## Beyond job success

Looking for a job is not always easy. Many studies have shown that losing a job and/or looking for a job is one of the most stressful events that people have to endure. In addition to finding a job, you must come up with a way to manage your finances, stay healthy, deal with your emotions and find time for your friends, families and hobbies. Here are some tips.

## Maintaining financial stability

- Investigate severance pay and continued health insurance under COBRA.
- Contact your state's Unemployment Insurance office to learn about benefits.
- Evaluate your current financial situation and develop a survival budget.
- Keep your financial papers organized. Set payment priorities.
- Figure out the bills you must pay (food, rent or mortgage, utilities, car expenses).
- Record all incoming money (unemployment compensation, severance pay, income of spouse/children, interest from savings accounts, investment dividends, tax refunds).
- Make a list of all your assets and their current values.
- Talk with your creditors to set up flexible payment schedules.
- Review your retirement security. Visit [ChooseToSave.org](http://ChooseToSave.org).
- Contact non-profit organizations that provide confidential financial guidance such as Money Management International and Consumer Credit Counseling Services at (866) 889-9347 or [moneymanagement.org](http://moneymanagement.org).
- Get a head start on understanding many legal issues on [Nolo.com](http://Nolo.com).
- Start talking more openly about money with your family, (e.g., setting long- and short-term financial goals and reducing expenses).

## Dealing with emotional changes

Work is important in your life not only because of the money. Your self-esteem and sense of security depend on a job's predictable daily routine and purposeful activity. Living through the changes that job loss brings, you may experience a range of strong emotions. Re-employment may equal an opportunity for personal growth. Ways to move onto a positive track:

- Think about what's good in your life now – family, friends, skills – and you'll find motivation for the future.
- Focus on possibilities and accomplishments.
- Re-evaluate your goals. Imagine following a dream you always had.
- Be open with your family about anxiety and other feelings.
- Keep your children up-to-date on your activity and report successes.
- See yourself as a positive role model for your children and others.
- Get feedback and support from others. Avoid isolation.
- Join a support group where you can share hopes and plans and let off steam.
- Follow a daily schedule – work on resume, make calls, do research, set up interviews.
- Take pleasure in daily activities like grocery shopping, cooking and running errands.
- Volunteer – doing something for others increases your self-esteem, your network and your skills.

## Staying healthy

- Eat well, exercise, have fun, get adequate rest, commit to an active lifestyle.
- Aerobic exercise – like running or bike riding – will speed up your heart rate and breathing and build cardiovascular fitness.
- Strength-building activities such as weight-lifting build muscle and healthy bones.
- Stretching and yoga increase flexibility and help you avoid injuries or soreness.
- Exercise and good nutrition promote self-esteem and psychological well-being.
- Health is key to reaching the positive frame of mind you need to re-enter the workplace.

## New job success

### Make the most of your new job

You'll succeed in your new job by doing the best you can, regardless of whether the job is a temporary position or a professional job in your chosen field. Here are a few tips for the new employee:

**Be a dependable employee.** This lets your supervisor know your job is important to you.

**Master your tasks and do more than expected.** Avoid “it's not my job” thinking.

**Keep the lines of communication open.** Inform your supervisor of how you're progressing and ask for regular feedback on your performance.

**If any assignments are unclear, ask for clarification** instead of proceeding in the wrong direction because you are fearful of looking foolish.

**Enjoy the company of your coworkers.** Get to know and be known by others in your work environment... your professional growth depends on it.

**As a newcomer, avoid “office politics.”** Maintain confidentiality and avoid gossip.

**Ask others for advice and help,** and let them know they can depend on you.

**Learn the art of tact when working on a team,** which includes being receptive to others' input and knowing when to compromise.

**Be assertive, self-confident and visible.** Think of the three “E s” – enthusiasm, energy and excellence.

Your employer is your partner in finding balance between the world of work and your personal and family life. **Make use of the employee assistance programs** offered at your workplace to help find your balance.

## Opportunities through Manpower

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