

# Your Job Search Handbook



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## **Career Exploration:**

You and the Job Market

## **Selling Yourself on Paper:**

Resumes, Applications and Cover Letters

## **Networking:**

Finding the Job You Want

## **Interviewing:**

Passing the Face-to-Face Test

## **Your Job Search Plan:**

Making the Commitment

## Introduction

**Your Job Search Handbook** is a comprehensive tool to help you achieve your goal of getting a job quickly. Filled with information and activities you can complete on your own, **Your Job Search Handbook** is meant to assist you in finding the right job for you.

Start on the road to your next job by:

- strategizing your job search
- identifying and learning to talk about your skills
- learning to write effective resumes and job applications
- discovering tips to good cover letters that will help you get noticed
- finding new sources of job leads
- getting prepared for job interviews
- deciding if a job is right for you

Put your One-Stop Job Center to work for you. Located across Virginia, these service centers offer a variety of employment services including:

### Thousands of Statewide and National Job Listings

The Virginia Workforce Connection has the largest computerized listing of jobs in the state and across the country. New listings come in daily, so review this up-to-date service frequently. Access the Internet for job listings and job search information at [www.vawc.virginia.gov](http://www.vawc.virginia.gov)

### Resources You Can Use

Fax machine, scanner, telephones, photocopier are available for job search related activities such as copying and scanning your resume and calling employers. Computer stations and Wi-Fi are also available to help you in your job search. Materials available include labor market information, resource books, child care listings, transportation information, job search reference materials, and computer software to help you create and format your resume.

### Job Seeking and Job Keeping Workshops

Take advantage of a wide variety of workshops, ranging from resume writing, strategizing your job search, preparing a 30 second commercial, mock interview, MS Word, Excel and PowerPoint, and negotiating a job offer. Meet and network with other job seekers who share your concerns and hear their job search ideas and experiences.

### Assistance from Experienced Employment Counselors

Center staff are available to provide you with support during your job search. Whether you want your resume critiqued or information on local employers, or job search tips, advice on changing your career, help is available.

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# Staying Motivated During Your Job Search

## Keep Your Self-Image Positive

It is sometimes very difficult not to take rejections personally. Layoffs and hiring decisions rest on many factors that may have little to do with you personally. Acknowledging your feelings and learning to manage any negative thoughts will help you begin to deal with your job loss. Try not to dwell on negative past experiences. Negative thinking has a dramatic effect on how well you recover and get back in the game. Treat yourself with respect!

## Keep a Routine

Just as you did when you were working, it is important to keep to a routine so that you will have an effective job search. Schedule your time so that you incorporate various job search methods into your day—internet searches, networking online as well as in person, attending professional functions/meetings, strategic volunteering opportunities, attending workshops at your local One-Stop Center.

## Be Organized

Organize a daily and weekly job search plan. Keep to your schedule so that you do not brush important tasks aside or waste time wondering what you should do next. If you are looking for a full time job, it is a 40 hour per week commitment.

## Take a Balanced Approach

Stay fit. Stress can manifest in neglecting health and diet. Exercise and eat well. Go for a 30 minute walk every day. Go to the gym or exercise to fitness videos on youtube.com. Besides helping you remain physically healthy, exercise will assist you in keeping the feeling of depression at a distance. Depression removes our desire to be active. Activity changes our body chemistry so that we actually feel better and desire more activity.

See family and friends and participate in activities you enjoy. It'll keep your spirits up and it'll also help keep you out seeing people and socializing—you never know who might have a job lead or be able to connect you with someone who does.

Take a break when you need it. Yes, you need to keep your job search productive, but sometimes it's equally important to take a break for an afternoon—go to the park or beach or museum. Relax and enjoy. You'll come back to your job search re-energized.

## Keep Emotions in Check

Be aware of how you are handling your emotions. Being responsible means responding appropriately to your emotions. Anger can be difficult to deal with. If you direct anger toward yourself, you risk the possibility of making yourself ill. If you misdirect anger on innocent people (like family, friends, or potential employers) you are not being responsible. There is no timeframe for

success and getting discouraged is easy. Even the best get knocked down—if that happens to you, get up, dust yourself off and get back into the fray! Persistence will pay off.

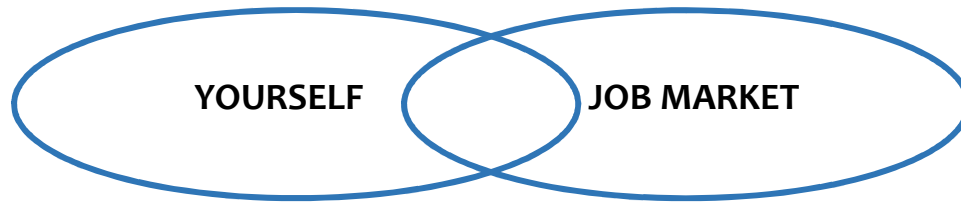
# Advantages to Finding a Job Quickly

Rank these in order of importance to you:

- \_\_\_ Earn income
- \_\_\_ Independence
- \_\_\_ Good example to your children
- \_\_\_ Self-respect
- \_\_\_ Socialize/meet new people
- \_\_\_ Self-confidence
- \_\_\_ Control of your life
- \_\_\_ Use your skills
- \_\_\_ Find hidden skills
- \_\_\_ Stimulate mind, body and spirit
- \_\_\_ Build work history
- \_\_\_ Gain pride and dignity for you and your family
- \_\_\_ Improve your home life
- \_\_\_ Children become more independent
- \_\_\_ Improve standard of living
- \_\_\_ Retirement/pension
- \_\_\_ Health and other benefits

List three more advantages for you: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Career Planning Steps



## 1. Assess Yourself

- Interests
  - Values
  - Skills
  - Accomplishments and Results
  - Personal Preferences and Needs
- (Refer to “Ways to Learn About Careers and the Job Market, page 16-17)

## 2. Research Careers and Occupations that Match Your Personal Profile

(Refer to “Ways to Learn About Career and the Job Market, page 16-17)

## 3. Understand the Job Market

- Occupations
- Industries
- Employment Outlook
- Local Economy and Employers

## 4. Identify Your Goal and Make a Plan for Achieving It

## What Do You Need?

Are the following issues of concern to you in your career planning? If they are, check the item and then write the specific issue for you and how you could go about solving it in the columns marked “Specific Issues” and “Solutions.” Remember, Center staff can help you identify solutions!

Type Of Need	Specific Issues	Solutions
<input type="checkbox"/> Childcare  <input type="checkbox"/> Other Family Responsibilities  <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation  <input type="checkbox"/> Financial Issues  <input type="checkbox"/> Education  <input type="checkbox"/> Training  <input type="checkbox"/> Location of Job  <input type="checkbox"/> Health Issues  <input type="checkbox"/> English for English Language Learners		



## Your Ideal Job

Ask yourself the following questions and jot down your responses.

1. You prefer to work in the following type of environment (type of industry, number of employees, government or private etc.)
2. You prefer to work in the following cities or towns
3. You prefer to work the following hours
4. You prefer a job requiring travel/not requiring travel
5. Are you indoors or outside? If you imagine yourself inside, where are you? Are you in an office building, a store, a factory? How large is the building? If you imagine yourself outside, where are you? Are you in a forest, a park, on a city street?
6. What activities are you doing? Are you writing, building something, talking with others, fixing something, using a computer or something else?
7. Are there other people around you? How many?
8. Are you working with these other people? How many? In what ways?
9. What is your salary?
10. What kinds of things are you very good at on your job?
11. What do you love about your job?

Write down more highlights of your ideal job in this space:

## Your Work Values

Please check work values that were present in your past job and those that you want most in your next job.

VALUE	DEFINITION	HAD IN PAST JOB	WANT IN NEXT JOB
<b>ACHIEVEMENT</b>	Personal/professional feeling of accomplishment		
<b>ADVANCEMENT</b>	Opportunity to move up the ladder		
<b>AUTHORITY</b>	Responsibility for directing the work of others		
<b>AUTONOMY</b>	Freedom to develop own approach to doing the job, opportunity to work independently		
<b>CHALLENGE</b>	A job that demands the best use of your resources and abilities to meet new situations		
<b>COMFORT</b>	Low pressure, few constraints		
<b>CONFORMITY</b>	The opportunity to let others set expectations and direction		
<b>CONTRIBUTION</b>	Opportunity to have a direct impact on the success of the organization		
<b>COOPERATION</b>	Work in a friendly, compatible environment		

## Your Work Values

VALUE	DEFINITION	HAD IN PAST JOB	WANT IN NEXT JOB
<b>CREATIVITY</b>	Opportunity to innovate and deal with new problems, varied and frequently changing situations		
<b>ENTREPRENEURSHIP</b>	Motivation to be self-employed, develop a new service, start-up a new program		
<b>ENVIRONMENT</b>	A workplace whose design and maintenance are compatible with your standards		
<b>INTERACTION</b>	Frequent and open interpersonal contacts with others		
<b>KNOWLEDGE</b>	Opportunity for much new learning		
<b>LEADERSHIP</b>	Be responsible for and direct the work of others, making decisions affecting others, and managing		
<b>MOBILITY</b>	Opportunity to travel		
<b>PERSONAL TIME</b>	Sufficient time for pursuits outside of work and/or family life		
<b>PRESTIGE</b>	A job that gives you a great deal of status and respect		

## Your Work Values

VALUE	DEFINITION	HAD IN PAST JOB	WANT IN NEXT JOB
<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	To be held accountable for important tasks		
<b>ROUTINE ACTIVITY</b>	Work that is uncomplicated and organized with the same tasks repeated frequently		
<b>SALARY</b>	Being well paid for your work		
<b>SECURITY</b>	A job that is not likely to be eliminated		
<b>SOCIAL INTEREST</b>	A job that helps people or provides for community involvement		
<b>VARIETY</b>	Work involving many different tasks		

## Skills Identification

This activity will help you identify many of your skills. First, list your past work positions and the responsibilities/tasks for each position. Identify the skills you used to accomplish your responsibilities. Also list past or present non-paid activities, such as volunteer work, internships, hobbies, and homemaking experience. Identify the responsibilities you had or the tasks you did in these activities and the skills you used in accomplishing these tasks.

### A. Past Work Positions

Position	Responsibilities	Skills
Receptionist	- Answers phones - Clerical work	Organizational, Communication, Typing, Manual skills, Editing
Real Estate Broker	- Supervises real estate Salespeople - Oversees business transactions between parties involved in sale of property	Supervision, Management, Coordination, Communication

### Your Past Work Positions

Position	Responsibilities	Skills

### B. Other Activities (volunteer work, internships, hobbies, homemaking activities)

Activity	Responsibilities	Skills
Homemaker	Raise a family  Cooking	Organizational, Leadership, Communication, Budgeting, Scheduling  Math skills, Organizational, Manual skills

### Your Other Activities (volunteer work, internships, homemaking, etc.)

Activity	Responsibilities	Skills

## Transferable Skills

A transferable skill is a skill that can be used across different fields and jobs. Think of them as universal skills you've developed that will transfer from one environment or occupation to another.

The following is a list of transferable skills that can be very important in your adjustment to and effectiveness in a particular job or occupation. Check those terms that describe you.

Working with People	Working with Data	Working with Things
<input type="checkbox"/> Patient <input type="checkbox"/> Care for <input type="checkbox"/> Persuasive <input type="checkbox"/> Confront others <input type="checkbox"/> Pleasant <input type="checkbox"/> Counsel people <input type="checkbox"/> Sensitive <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrate something <input type="checkbox"/> Supportive <input type="checkbox"/> Diplomatic <input type="checkbox"/> Supervise <input type="checkbox"/> Speak in public <input type="checkbox"/> Help others <input type="checkbox"/> Tactful <input type="checkbox"/> Insightful <input type="checkbox"/> Teach/Instruct <input type="checkbox"/> Interview others <input type="checkbox"/> Anticipate needs <input type="checkbox"/> Open minded <input type="checkbox"/> Kind <input type="checkbox"/> Take direction <input type="checkbox"/> Listen <input type="checkbox"/> Serving <input type="checkbox"/> Trust <input type="checkbox"/> Working with others <input type="checkbox"/> Negotiate <input type="checkbox"/> Understand <input type="checkbox"/> Adaptable <input type="checkbox"/> Outgoing <input type="checkbox"/> Meet the public <input type="checkbox"/> Team player <input type="checkbox"/> Ability to delegate <input type="checkbox"/> Customer service oriented <input type="checkbox"/> Team Builder <input type="checkbox"/> Direct others <input type="checkbox"/> Empower others <input type="checkbox"/> Coach others <input type="checkbox"/> Facilitate group processes <input type="checkbox"/> Motivate <input type="checkbox"/> Actively listen	<input type="checkbox"/> Analyze data or facts <input type="checkbox"/> Investigate <input type="checkbox"/> Audit records <input type="checkbox"/> Keep financial records <input type="checkbox"/> Locate answers <input type="checkbox"/> Gather information <input type="checkbox"/> Identify resources <input type="checkbox"/> Balance budgets <input type="checkbox"/> Calculate/Compute <input type="checkbox"/> Manage money <input type="checkbox"/> Classify data/things <input type="checkbox"/> Compare, inspect, or record facts <input type="checkbox"/> Count, observe, compile data <input type="checkbox"/> Compare data <input type="checkbox"/> Research <input type="checkbox"/> Detail oriented <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer details <input type="checkbox"/> Take inventory <input type="checkbox"/> Work independently <input type="checkbox"/> Computer skills <input type="checkbox"/> Report information <input type="checkbox"/> Coordinate tasks <input type="checkbox"/> Identify problems <input type="checkbox"/> Check for accuracy <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluate <input type="checkbox"/> Synthesize  <b>Working with Words, Ideas</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Edit <input type="checkbox"/> Articulate <input type="checkbox"/> Innovative/Inventive <input type="checkbox"/> Logical <input type="checkbox"/> Accurate <input type="checkbox"/> Create new ideas <input type="checkbox"/> Design <input type="checkbox"/> Make presentations <input type="checkbox"/> Write clearly <input type="checkbox"/> Understand the big picture	<input type="checkbox"/> Assemble or make things <input type="checkbox"/> Safety conscious <input type="checkbox"/> Observe/Inspect things <input type="checkbox"/> Build/Construct <input type="checkbox"/> Off-bearing or feeding machinery <input type="checkbox"/> Follow instructions <input type="checkbox"/> Operate tools and machinery <input type="checkbox"/> Repair things <input type="checkbox"/> Good with my hands <input type="checkbox"/> Use equipment <input type="checkbox"/> Use complex equipment <input type="checkbox"/> Drive/Operate equipment <input type="checkbox"/> Cleaning or washing <input type="checkbox"/> Loading/Unloading materials  <b>Creative/Artistic</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Music appreciation <input type="checkbox"/> Dance, body movement <input type="checkbox"/> Perform, act <input type="checkbox"/> Draw, sketch, render <input type="checkbox"/> Present artistic, creative ideas <input type="checkbox"/> Play instruments <input type="checkbox"/> Expressive <input type="checkbox"/> Create art <input type="checkbox"/> Designing something <input type="checkbox"/> Styling hair or apparel <input type="checkbox"/> Taking photographs <input type="checkbox"/> Landscaping or other outdoor design  <b>Others you think are important</b> <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____

<input type="checkbox"/> Mediate problems <input type="checkbox"/> Run meetings <input type="checkbox"/> Provide effective feedback <input type="checkbox"/> Delegate <input type="checkbox"/> Advocate for others	<input type="checkbox"/> Remember information <input type="checkbox"/> Communicate verbally <input type="checkbox"/> Ingenious <input type="checkbox"/> Writing or giving speeches	
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## Transferable Skills

**Summary: Review your list and select the skills that best describe you.**

- |    |     |
|----|-----|
| 1. | 7.  |
| 2. | 8.  |
| 3. | 9.  |
| 4. | 10. |
| 5. | 11. |
| 6. | 12. |

## Ways to Learn About Careers and the Job Market

If you are considering changing your occupation, you will want to research your options. The following are several ways to learn more about occupations:

- Identify people working in those careers and talk with them
- Look up information about those careers using:
  - ✓ One-Stop Career Centers
  - ✓ Public Libraries
  - ✓ Vocational Technical School Libraries
  - ✓ Occupational Outlook Handbook
- Network with individuals in those careers via professional association meetings; ask for an informational interview
- Join groups targeting those occupations on LinkedIn and reach out for information by posting questions/comments
- Visit work sites
- Find related part-time jobs, internships or strategic volunteer experiences

### Online Resources:

Career Assessments	Career/Occupation Choices	Associations	Career Transition
<a href="http://www.assessment.com">www.assessment.com</a> <a href="http://www.analyzecareer.com">www.analyzecareer.com</a> <a href="http://www.careerscope.net">www.careerscope.net</a> (available at your local One-Stop Center)	<a href="http://www.acinet.org">www.acinet.org</a> <a href="http://www.quintcareer.com">www.quintcareer.com</a> <a href="http://www.rileyguide.com">www.rileyguide.com</a> <a href="http://www.onetonline.org">www.onetonline.org</a> <a href="http://www.bls.gov">www.bls.gov</a> <a href="http://www.mynextmove.org">www.mynextmove.org</a>	<a href="http://www.lpl.org">www.lpl.org</a> <a href="http://www.weddles.com">www.weddles.com</a>	<a href="http://www.destinygroup.com">www.destinygroup.com</a> (Military) <a href="http://www.corporategray.com">www.corporategray.com</a>

Networking	Locate Companies	Job Search Resources
<a href="http://www.linkedin.com">www.linkedin.com</a> <a href="http://www.tribe.net">www.tribe.net</a> <a href="http://www.fiveoclockclub.com">www.fiveoclockclub.com</a> <a href="http://www.execunet.com">www.execunet.com</a> <a href="http://www.zoominfo.com">www.zoominfo.com</a> <a href="http://www.ryze.com">www.ryze.com</a>	<a href="http://www.corporateinformation.com">www.corporateinformation.com</a> <a href="http://www.wetfeet.com">www.wetfeet.com</a> <a href="http://www.infospace.com">www.infospace.com</a> <a href="http://www.searchbug.com">www.searchbug.com</a>	<a href="http://www.careershop.com">www.careershop.com</a> <a href="http://www.careersite.com">www.careersite.com</a> <a href="http://www.employment911.com">www.employment911.com</a> <a href="http://www.employmentguide.com">www.employmentguide.com</a>



## Ways to Learn About Career and the Job Market

**Investigate Careers by gathering the following information for each occupation you research:**

1. Description of the daily tasks and work activities
2. Education/Training required
3. Skills/Abilities required
4. Characteristics/Qualities or work styles needed
5. Wage and Employment Trends (career outlook)
6. Typical work hours/Travel requirements
7. Tools & Technologies used
8. Work environment(s)
9. Career ladder/Promotional opportunities
10. Career outlook
11. Related occupations
12. Sources of additional information



# Crafting a Great Resume

A resume is a one to two page written summary of your unique combination of skills, experience and achievements. Your resume is a personal document and there are many opinions as to what it should look like, what it should include and how it should be presented on the page. Create a resume that you are comfortable with. There are two basic formats for resumes—Chronological and Functional. A third format, Hybrid, is a mix and match or “smash-up” of both styles.

All resumes, no matter the style need to include this information:

- Header information including name, address, phone number, email address—include the information as to how you want an employer to contact you
- A clear and relevant job objective or summary of qualifications
- All significant work experience
- Education/Training/Certifications/Licenses
- Pertinent information about your skills
- Details of past accomplishments
- Volunteer experience
- Military experience
- Professional memberships/Organizations

## Chronological Resume

Research among hiring employers has shown that the most preferred and effective resume format is the chronological layout. It is a traditional resume format and good to use if you have steady work history or to show advancement within one company. Here are some tips for creating a chronological resume.

1. Start with your present or most recent position and work backward, with the most space devoted to recent employment.
2. Detail only the last three to five positions or employment covering the last ten years or so. Summarize earlier positions unless exceptionally relevant to the job you are applying to.
3. Use year designations only, without specifying month or day.
4. Do not repeat details that are common to several positions.
5. Within each position listed, starting with action verbs, stress the major accomplishments and responsibilities that demonstrate your full competence to do the job. Include results whenever possible.
6. Incorporate keywords from the job posting of the position to which you are applying.
7. If not recent, do not include the dates on your education—it might “date” you.
8. Keep it to no more than two pages.

## Sample Chronological Resume

**ELIZABETH DUSHANE**  
5555 Lakewood Road  
Warren, OH 44481  
(330) 555-5555

**OBJECTIVE:** Mechanical Engineer

**ENGINEERING EXPERIENCE:**

*Industrial Engineer* **1998-2007**  
Tool Incorporated, Warren, OH

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

*Design Engineer* **1995-1998**  
Mechanical Systems, Columbus, OH

- 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* **1990-1995**  
Engineering Consultants, Columbus, OH

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

**MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE:**

*Supervisor* **1987-1990**  
College Police Department, Cincinnati, OH

- 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* **1986-1988**  
Building Management Co., Cincinnati, OH

- Maintained and performed building improvements

**EDUCATION:**

**Bachelor of Science Degree: Mechanical Engineering** **1986-1990**  
Minor: Engineering Management  
University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH

**Course Work:** Thermodynamics, Heat Transfer, HVAC,  
Machine Design, Fluid Power, IBM Compatible  
AutoCAD 12, FORTRAN, Lotus and Quattro Pro



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## Creating a Great Resume

## Functional Resume

The functional resume differs from the chronological in that it emphasizes key skills acquired over time rather than by past jobs detailed with specific tasks and responsibilities. It is a good format to use if you have gaps in your employment history, have had frequent job changes or limited experience. The functional style resume is frequently used by professionals who want to emphasize particularly strong or important skill areas. Here are some tips for creating a functional resume.

1. Include a brief clear statement targeting the type of position you want in your job objective.
2. Decide on three to five major skill sets to highlight.
3. Write bullet points under each skill set, starting with action verbs, to show how you have demonstrated that skill set throughout your work history.
4. Incorporate keywords from the job posting of the position to which you are applying.
5. Work history should only contain your job title, company name, location and dates worked.
6. Use year designations only, without specifying month or day.
7. If not recent, do not include the dates on your education. If you are an older worker, it might “date” you.
8. Keep it to no more than two pages.

## Sample Functional Resume

**John W. Smith**

2002 Front Range Way Fort Collins, CO 80525  
[jwsmith@colostate.edu](mailto:jwsmith@colostate.edu)

**Career Summary**

Four years experience in early childhood development with a diverse background in the care of special needs children and adults.

**Adult Care Experience**

- Determined work placement for 150 special needs adult clients.
- Maintained client databases and records.
- Coordinated client contact with local health care professionals on a monthly basis.
- Managed 25 volunteer workers.

**Childcare Experience**

- Coordinated service assignments for 20 part-time counselors and 100 client families.
- Oversaw daily activity and outing planning for 100 clients.
- Assisted families of special needs clients with researching financial assistance and healthcare.
- Assisted teachers with managing daily classroom activities.
- Oversaw daily and special student activities.

**Employment History**

1999-2002 Counseling Supervisor, The Wesley Center, Little Rock, Arkansas.  
1997-1999 Client Specialist, Rainbow Special Care Center, Little Rock, Arkansas  
1996-1997 Teacher's Assistant, Cowell Elementary, Conway, Arkansas

**Education**

*University of Arkansas at Little Rock, Little Rock, AR*

- BS in Early Childhood Development (1999)
- BA in Elementary Education (1998)
- GPA (4.0 Scale): Early Childhood Development – 3.8, Elementary Education – 3.5, Overall 3.4.
- Dean's List, Chancellor's List

# The Employer's Bottom Line about Resumes

## Your resume has to sell the reader in the top half

- If there is an objective, it should be simply stated with a particular employment opportunity in mind.
- Your strongest skills and qualifications should be listed either at the top of the resume in a skills summary or in the first job description.
- Position titles and companies should be easy to pick out.

## The resume should be written with the employer in mind

- Tailor your resume to the kind of job(s) you are applying for. If the jobs are different, your resume should be adapted to reflect the keywords and the differences between employers.

## Your accomplishments should stand out

- The employer should easily be able to determine your accomplishments when reading your work history.
- Do not bog the reader down with long paragraphs. Use bullet points to highlight your accomplishments and begin your bullet points with action verbs. Keep the verb tense consistent throughout.
- Include results as much as possible.

## Your resume should have eye appeal

- It should look clean and professional.
- Leave at least a ½" margin around the page.
- Use consistent font throughout. Font size should be 10 – 12 point. Traditional font styles are Arial, Times Roman, MS Trebuchet and Calibri to name a few.
- Avoid heavy text, except in your header. This information does need to stand out.
- Proof Read! Proof Read! Proof Read! Spell check doesn't catch everything. Better yet, give it to someone else to proof read as well.

## What employers look for when reading a resume

- Are there sufficient years and the appropriate level of experience?
- Is the work experience concentrated in the right area(s)?
- Is the candidate missing any critical experience?
- Does the candidate have sufficient breadth and depth of technical knowledge?
- Is there a solid record of accomplishment?
- Are there any gaps in work history?
- How does the candidate compare with others currently under consideration?

## 246 Skills as Action Verbs for Resumes

Achieved	Discovered	Innovated	Prepared	Shaped
Acted	Dispensed	Inspected	Prescribed	Shared
Adapted	Displayed	Inspired	Presented	Showed
Addressed	Disproved	Installed	Printed	Sketched
Administered	Dissected	Instituted	Problem solved	Sold
Advised	Distributed	Instructed	Processed	Solved
Analyzed	Diverted	Integrated	Produced	Sorted
Anticipated	Dramatized	Interpreted	Programmed	Spoke
Arbitrated	Drew	Interviewed	Projected	Studied
Arranged	Drove	Intuited	Promoted	Summarized
Ascertained	Edited	Invented	Proof-read	Supervised
Assembled	Eliminated	Inventoried	Protected	Supplied
Assessed	Empathized	Investigated	Provided	Symbolized
Attained	Enforced	Judged	Publicized	Synergized
Audited	Established	Kept lead	Purchased	Synthesized
Budgeted	Estimated	Learned	Questioned	Took
Built	Evaluated	Lectured	Raised	Took instructions
Calculated	Examined	Lifted	Read	Talked
Charted	Expanded	Listened	Realized	Taught
Checked	Experimented	Logged	Reasoned	Team-built
Classified	Explained	Maintained	Received	Told
Coached	Expressed	Make	Recommended	Tended
Collected	Extracted	Managed	Reconciled	Tested
Communicated	Filed	Manipulated	Recorded	Trained
Compiled	Financed	Mediated	Recruited	Transcribed
Completed	Fixed	Met	Reduced	Translated
Composed	Followed	Memorized	Referred	Traveled
Computed	Formulated	Mentored	Rehabilitated	Treated
Conceptualized	Founded	Modeled	Related	Trouble-shooted
Conducted	Gathered	Monitored	Remembered	Tutored
Conserved	Gave	Motivated	Rendered	Typed
Consolidated	Generated	Navigated	Repaired	Umpired
Constructed	Got	Negotiated	Reported	Understood
Controlled	Guided	Observed	Represented	Undertook
Coordinated	Handled	Obtained	Researched	Unified
Copied	Had responsibility for	Offered	Resolved	United
Counseled	Headed	Operated	Responded	Upgraded
Created	Helped	Ordered	Restored	Used
Decided	Hypothesized	Organized	Retrieved	Utilized
Defined	Identified	Originated	Reviewed	Verbalized
Delivered	Illustrated	Oversaw	Risked	Washed
Designed	Imagined	Painted	Sang	Weighed
Detailed	Implemented	Perceived	Scheduled	Won
Detected	Improved	Performed	Selected	Worked
Determined	Improvised	Persuaded	Sensed	Wrote
Developed	Increased	Photographed	Separated	
Devised	Influenced	Piloted	Served	
Diagnosed	Informed	Planned	Set	
Dug	Initiated	Played	Set up	
Directed		Predicted	Sewed	



# Accent on Accomplishments

Your resume and application should highlight your accomplishments. Take each of the employers and jobs that you have and list the three most significant contributions that you made for each position. Use action verbs in describing your accomplishments and don't forget to include the results. To jog your memory, you may want to review past performance evaluations or ask former co-workers.

1. Employer		
<u>Job Title</u>	<u>Accomplishments</u>	<u>Results</u>
A.		
B.		
C.		

2. Employer		
<u>Job Title</u>	<u>Accomplishments</u>	<u>Results</u>
A.		
B.		
C.		

3. Employer		
<u>Job Title</u>	<u>Accomplishments</u>	<u>Results</u>
A.		
B.		
C.		

# Common Resume Mistakes

The easiest way to knock you out of contention to potentially being screened for a job, is submitting a seriously flawed resume. Here are some top resume mistakes that job seekers make.

1. **Making Typos and Grammatical Errors.** You've spent long hours on your resume, so it's easy to miss a spelling error. Read your resume aloud and backwards from the bottom up. It will force your eye to look at any sentence-level errors rather than on content and layout. Give it to someone else to read. For most people, spelling errors and incorrect grammar issues jump off the page and are quick to pick up on. So, a second opinion can be vital to your resume!
2. **Ignoring Key Words.** With so many companies using technology to scan resumes, job seekers should repeatedly sprinkle relevant keywords from the job description in their resume. If your resume doesn't contain the right key words, it most likely will not be viewed by human eyes. Look at the job description for repeated terms and key words to place in your resume.
3. **Highlighting Duties instead of Accomplishments.** You need to write real, quantitative tasks and accomplishments on your resume. Don't include every detail about each job you've held. Focus on using bullet points for the highlights and limit your resume to the last 10 years of work experience. Write active statements that showcase your relevant skills and accomplishments. Include results achieved. Be sure the employer can easily see how you added value in your past positions, not just a laundry list of your duties and responsibilities.
4. **Packing in too much Information.** Resumes that have too-small font and heavy paragraphs of information are overwhelming and unappealing to employers. If your resume is wall-to-wall text and uses six different fonts, it's visually too busy and will turn an employer off. Use white space to help direct the reader's eye by judiciously editing and removing unnecessary words. Read, reread and edit and have a friend or family member read, reread and edit.
5. **Making it all about You.** It's really all about the employer. Catch their eye in the top quarter of your resume by writing a compelling summary or profile of your skills that tells the employer *what you can do for them*. Your summary should demonstrate the skill level and experiences directly related to the position you are applying to.
6. **Incorrect Contact Information.** Don't overlook your header information. Be certain that the correct contact phone numbers are listed and emails are spelled correctly and case correct.
7. **Attempting a "One Size Fits All" Approach.** Developing one resume to send to all employers will almost always find its way into the employers "circular file" or recycle bin. Employers want you to write a resume specifically for them, clearly stating how and why you are a fit for

## Common Resume Mistakes

the position in a specific organization. If you're not willing to read the job description and tailor your resume for that job, employers think you don't care enough about the job to do it.

8. **Including Personal Information or Irrelevant Information.** Many job seekers include their interests on their resume, but only include those relating to the job. Personal information such as date of birth or marital status is normally not on the resume unless you are in the entertainment profession or a job seeker outside of the U.S.
9. **Omitting Volunteer Experience.** Employers value non-paid experience as much as paid experience, so be sure to include it on your resume. Besides, in doing volunteer work you have used your skills, learned new skills and broadened your network.
10. **Trying too Hard.** It's too much—don't use ornamental fonts, creative formatting, photos, exotic paper stock—unless you are applying for a position as an artist or designer. Your resume is a professional document that should be to the point, clean and readable. The substance counts more than style, so spend your time polishing your bullet points rather than making them look fancy.

## Resumes that Sell: Rate Your Resume

Use this form to rate your resume or give it to your friends and have them rate it. Grade your resume in each of the categories listed as Excellent, Average or Needs Improvement. Write in suggestions for improvements.

	Rating			Suggestions for Improvement
	Excellent	Average	Needs Improvement	
Is resume error free? (spelling, grammar, punctuation or poor word usage)				
Is objective statement focused, but not too narrow?				
Are there quantitative terms used to stress results?				
Does it emphasize accomplishments over duties performed?				
Is the resume clear? Is it easy to get a "picture" of qualifications?				
Is irrelevant personal information left out?				
Is the language clear and understandable?				
Does it emphasize benefits for a potential employer?				
Does it make the reader want to read it?				
Is it well printed on professional resume stock?				
Does the layout invite attention?				
Do strong points stand out?				
Is industry/product-line of past employer clear?				
Do the bullet points begin with action verbs?				
Is it to the point and clear?				
Is the header contact information correct?				
Is it too long or too short?				

## Tips for Completing Job Applications

- ✓ **BE PREPARED** Take a sample application form with you when you go to apply for a job. By having all the information about yourself ready ahead of time, you will be able to complete the application completely and accurately. (Sample application forms are available at the Workforce Resource Center.)
  
- ✓ **BE CERTAIN** Before you begin to fill in the blanks, read everything on the application carefully. After you complete the form, read it again to make sure you have answered every question correctly.
  
- ✓ **BE CAREFUL** If you are careful about following instructions on your application, an employer will most likely think that you may be careful as an employee.
  
- ✓ **BE ALERT** If you are not sure about the meaning of something on the application, ask the person who gave you the form to explain.
  
- ✓ **BE NEAT** Your handwriting should be printed legibly so that your application can be easily read. Use a reliable blue or black pen.
  
- ✓ **BE COMPLETE** Answer every question. If a question does not apply to you, write N/A or “Does Not Apply” so the employer knows you did not skip the question.
  
- ✓ **BE CORRECT** Use proper spelling, grammar and punctuation.
  
- ✓ **BE INCLUSIVE** Describe your skills and abilities. List the kinds of equipment, software, machinery and tools you are able to use.
  
- ✓ **BE ACCURATE** Make sure all information is correct. Check employment dates, phone numbers, email and addresses for accuracy.

## Your Cover Letter

Your cover letter introduces you to a potential employer... a well written cover letter can set you apart from your competition. Your cover letter along with your resume are the strategic written tools you have to grab an employer's attention and entice them to call you for an interview. Since your resume is not addressed to anyone in particular, your cover letter should be addressed to a specific person if at all possible. Make the letter versatile so that changes can be made for each employer who will read it by making the letter specific to the job for which you are applying.

Your cover letter should be brief, no more than two to three paragraphs and be interesting enough for the reader to want to look at your resume next. Use your cover letter to state the job title and/or job number and where you found it. You should also express the qualifications you possess that the employer is looking for and key accomplishments you've achieved and what makes you unique. Never send a standard form letter that you just change the company name and address on. Remember to keep copies of all correspondence you send and receive during your job search.

## Sample Cover Letter

1543 Elm St.  
Sometown, NY 11111  
Home: (555) 555-5555  
mamie@somedomain.com

[Date]

John Short  
General Manager  
Action Company  
1428 Main St.  
Anytown, NY 12222

Dear Mr. Short,

Are you spending too much time handling administrative tasks? Would you like to free yourself from tedious detail work so you can focus on building your business? If the answer is yes, then we should speak.

I offer a five-year track record in office management and administrative support. You will benefit from my following key strengths:

- Computer expertise, with proficiency in all MS Office programs (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook and Access).
- Broad-based experience covering a full spectrum of administrative duties, including executive support, office management, billing/invoicing, payroll administration, customer care, account management, database administration, document preparation, travel/meeting coordination and project/program support.
- Superior multitasking talents, with the ability to manage multiple high-priority assignments and develop solutions to challenging business problems.
- A proven reputation, with a consistent history of exemplary performance reviews and recognition for driving efficiency improvements to office systems, workflows and processes.

I am confident that if you hire me as your administrative assistant, you will have more time and energy to concentrate on growing your business. My resume is enclosed for your review, and I will follow up with you in a few days to discuss your administrative support needs. You may also call me at (555) 555-5555 or email me at mamie@somedomain.com. Thank you for your time, and have a great day.

Sincerely,

Marnie Smith  
Enclosure

# Sample Cover Letter

**Your Name**  
**Your Address**  
**Your City, State, Zip Code**  
**Your Phone Number**  
**Your Email**

Date

Name  
Title  
Organization  
Address  
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name,

I am interested in the Coordinator position advertised on XYZ.

My resume is enclosed for your review. Given my related experience and excellent capabilities I would appreciate your consideration for this job opening. My skills are an ideal match for this position.

Your Requirements:

- Responsible for evening operations in Student Center and other facilities, including managing registration, solving customer problems, dealing with risk management and emergencies, enforcement of department policies.
- Assists with hiring, training, and management of staff. Coordinate statistics and inventory.
- Experience in the supervision of student staff and strong interpersonal skills are also preferred.
- Valid Minnesota driver's license with good driving record. Ability to travel to different sites required.
- Experience in collegiate programming and management.

My Qualifications:

- Register students for courses, design and manage program software, solve customer problems, enforce department policies, and serve as a contact for students, faculty, and staff.
- Hiring, training, scheduling and management of staff, managing supply inventory, and ordering.
- Minnesota driver's license with NTSA defensive driving certification.
- Extensive experience in collegiate programming and management.
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills.

I appreciate your taking the time to review my credentials and experience. Again, thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Your Signature (for hard copy letter)

Your Typed Name



## 10 Tips to Great Cover Letters

Your cover letter is a marketing tool to help you sell your qualifications and fit for a job. So, here are some tips for writing effective cover letters.

1. **Always include contact information.** Your name, address, phone number and email address should be easily visible on every cover letter you send out. It will be the first thing the reader looks for when trying to contact you.
2. **Make it personal.** Whenever possible, address the letter to someone by name. If necessary, call the company to get a contact name. Approaching a hiring manager directly can help cut off many screening phases. “To whom it may concern” and “Dear sir/madam” just don’t get the same attention as those addressed to a specific person.
3. **Make it readable.** Keep your cover letters focused, clear and brief. Use attention getting first sentences that will address the interest of the employer and entice him/her to read on. Your letter doesn’t sell you—that’s the resume’s job. The letter positions you for serious consideration by whetting the reader’s appetite. Also, your cover letter should echo the appearance of your resume by using the same font size and style for emails and printed cover letters... and paper stock (if printed).
4. **Write each letter to a specific job and company.** Each job you apply for is different, so your cover letters also need to reflect those differences. Refer to the specific job in the first few sentences so the reader knows what job you are applying for. There is no “one size fits all” cover letter.
5. **Describe your skills as they relate to the job.** Saying you worked for a company in a job doesn’t mean the reader will make the connection between you, your previous job and the job in question. It will help if you connect your experience to your skills and then relate your skills to the job description.
6. **Emphasize Your Personal Brand.** Keep in mind that your cover letter is part of the “packaging” that captures your professional profile. Remember, it’s part of your marketing—the marketing of you. It should show you to be a professional with a clear sense of self, with a succinct and relevant message that will distinguish you as an outstanding candidate.
7. **Be brief, use action verbs to describe your accomplishments.** Can’t say it enough—some employers read many cover letters and resumes daily, so they want to know about you without having a lot to read.

## 10 Tips to Great Cover Letters

8. **Be confident, creative and enthusiastic.** Next to your resume, your cover letter is your best way to sell yourself on paper. Let your personality come through as well as the benefits of hiring you.
  
9. **Always proofread your cover letter before sending it out.** Your cover letter creates an impression of you. It's critical to appear professional and not make mistakes. Making errors on your cover letter may reflect how employers view you. If your cover letter is neat and professional, the employer may believe you are as well. Don't forget to keep copies of all correspondence.
  
10. **Always end with a "Call to Action".** Be proactive and tell the reader that you intend to follow up at a certain point in time. Your cover letter is meant to get you an interview—so ask for one!



## Why Network?

While focusing on your resume and cover letter are important, most people seeking employment do not consider networking as a job search strategy. Talking to or contacting people you know to find job leads is the most effective way to find a job. You should let everyone you meet and talk with know that you are job searching—you never know who can help you. 80 – 85% of jobs are unadvertised!

When you network, the goal isn't to ask for a job, the goal is to give the other person an opportunity to get to know you. It's a chance to ask for advice, share ideas and have meaningful conversations around industry-related topics as a way to feel more comfortable with one another. It's also reciprocal. Networking is the process of meeting other people and exchanging resources for mutual gain. You may be able to help the person you're networking with someday in their career.

Look at all the people you can network with:

### Alumni organizations

- ✓ Children's contacts
- ✓ Classmates
- ✓ Community Job Clubs
- ✓ Former Employers

### Friends (Local & Out of Town)

- ✓ Hobby Groups
- ✓ Members of your place of worship
- ✓ Parents of your kids

### Military Buddies

### Neighbors (Current & Past)

### Relatives (Local & Out of Town)

### Volunteer Organizations (Past & Present)

### Participants in seminars, workshops, trade shows you've attended

### Political Groups

### Professional Organizations

### Professionals

- ✓ dentist
- ✓ insurance agent
- ✓ attorney

### Service of fraternal organizations & groups

### Services

- ✓ Travel Agents
- ✓ Stockbrokers
- ✓ Relators

## Tap into Your Network

A good contact is anyone who is able to:

- Offer you a job
- Tell you of a job opening
- Refer you to somebody who can arrange an interview or read your resume
- Offer you an informational interview
- Give you the name of somebody who can do any of the above
- Give you the name of somebody who can give you the name of someone else who can do any of the above

It can be a challenge to see how innovative and productive you can be in seeking out new resources. Leave no stone unturned!

Consider the following lists. These are not necessarily people in your occupation or people you know well, just people you've met who may be willing to give you some helpful information.

Kinds of People to include:		Kinds Places and Organizations to consider:
Professional colleagues	Building inspectors	Local/State/Federal government
Classmates	Convenience store workers	Trade shows
Ex-supervisors	Landlord	Volunteer groups
Ex-co-workers	Postal Carrier	Business calendars
Doctors	Maintenance worker	Alumni directory
Dentists	Piano tuner	Rotary, Kiwanis Lions Clubs
Clergymen	Roommates	YMCA/YWCA
Salesmen, customers		Veterans groups
Pharmacist		Places of worship
Barber, Hair Stylist		Conventions, Seminars
Bank Teller		Temporary employment agencies
Parties		Chamber of Commerce
PTA		Professional associations
Bartenders		Home owners associations
Police Officers		Local newspapers
Insurance Agents		College bulletin boards
Faculty		College placement office
Administrative Assistants		Library
Golf, Tennis, Skiing Pros		Trade journals
Relatives		Bars at the airport or bars close to the company you are interested in
Neighbors		Grocery store bulletin board
Fraternity/Sorority members		
Sub-Contractors		

**Don't prejudge! Anyone, no matter what their status, may be a source of a referral or a lead that results in your next job.**

## Building Your Network of Contacts

You know a lot of people who know a lot of people who may know about job possibilities. Additionally, they have ideas about different kinds of jobs and companies that you might be interested in learning more about. They may also be able to refer you to their contacts who know about job prospects.

Get your network of contacts started by listing five contacts from each of the lists on the previous page. Then, don't stop there—on separate paper, continue to write down everyone who can help you! Don't worry about the chart being too long. There is no such thing as too much help.

Name	Occupation	Company	Phone	Email
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				

(If you don't know someone's occupation, company or contact information, list their name and get this information later.)

## 30 Second Commercial, Otherwise Known as the Elevator Speech

Networking can be easy and more comfortable for you if you have a 30 Second Commercial prepared. It's basically a "Me in 30 Seconds" statement that is your first chance to introduce yourself to someone and give them a short synopsis of your skills, experience and talents. All with the goal of piquing their interest and engaging them in conversation so they can find out more about you.

Your 30 Second Commercial is perfect to use at job fairs but also if you need to leave a voicemail for a recruiter, Human Resources Manager or hiring manager as you follow up on your application and resume submissions.

### What should it include?

- A brief personal introduction with your name, your career objective or the type of position you want.
- Three or four specific accomplishments to prove you meet or exceed the requirements of the position.
- A few character traits, talents or skills that set you apart from other candidates—your "value" or "benefit" to the employer.
- End with an exchange of business cards (yes, you should have your own personal business cards) and a probing open-ended question that will lead to further conversation, give you referral information, advice or an informational interview.

### Sample 30 Second Commercials

"I am a customer service specialist with over 15 years of experience in banking and administration. My ability to understand customer concerns and respond quickly has supported the bank's customer retention program. I am also very accurate and well organized and have closed my register without error on a daily basis. Currently I am looking for an opportunity to utilize my people skills and resolve customer complaints quickly and efficiently. I'd like to exchange business cards with you and would appreciate any advice you have for me regarding employment opportunities at your company."

"People find me to be an upbeat, self-motivated team player with excellent communication skills. For the past several years I have worked in lead qualification, telemarketing, and customer service in the technology industry. My experience includes successfully calling people in director-level positions of technology departments and developing viable leads. I have a track record of maintaining a consistent call and activity volume and consistently achieving the top 10 percent in sales, and I can do the same thing for your company. Would you know of someone I can talk to in order to schedule an informational interview?"

"My name is Lucas Martin, and I enjoy meeting new people and finding ways to help them have an uplifting experience. I have had a variety of customer service opportunities, through which I was able to have fewer returned products and increased repeat customers, when compared with co-workers. I am dedicated, outgoing, and a team player. Who could I speak with in your customer service department about your organization's customer service needs?"

## Cold Calling to Get an Interview

Getting informational interviews may mean you have to make a few “cold calls” to set them up. Here are a few tips on making those cold calls:

1. Find the names of contacts at the companies you’d like to work at by using their websites, internet searches and networking sites like LinkedIn. Find out all you can about the person you’re seeking out.
2. Put some thought into the best time to place the call. Friday at 4:45 or Monday mornings are not advised. In general, mornings are better (other than Monday’s). If in your research you found out that the person you’re calling is presenting at a conference next week, obviously, calling the week prior would not be a great idea. Call them after the conference.
3. Prepare and practice what you’re going to say. Write a script for yourself. Writing out what you want to say can stop you from forgetting what to say and help you speak clearly. Your script should be concise and highlight your skills and experience and why you stand out from the crowd.
4. When you do call, ask if it is a convenient time to talk. If it isn’t, arrange to a better time to call. If they do have the time to talk, explain that you are very interested in career opportunities at the company, give a brief overview of your background and skills. And ask if you could make an appointment to come in and speak with them in person.
5. Take notes on the conversation so you don’t repeat things you’ve discussed if you speak a second time. If you didn’t get what you wanted, ask for contact details of someone else who may be able to help you.
6. Follow up. If you said you’d email your resume, be sure you do—and do it timely. If someone said they’d call you back and don’t, give them another call.



## Cold Calling to Get an Interview

<p>Ask to be connected. If asked the purpose of the call is business...</p>	<p>“Hello, this is _____ (name of caller).”</p> <p>“I would like the name of the person in charge of the _____ (desired department), please.”</p> <p>“Hello, Mr./Ms. _____ (name of Dept. Head), my name is...”.</p>
<p>If applicable, give the name of the person who suggested that you call...</p>	<p>“Mr./Ms. _____ suggested I call you. I am interested in the _____ (name of position).”</p>
<p>If applicable, talk about how you found out about the job...</p>	<p>“I am responding to the ad on (name of publication, position, job board, workforce resource center), regarding the _____ (title of position).”</p>
<p>If the department head is in a hurry and wants to end the conversation...</p>	<p>“I understand that you are extremely busy, but could we set up an interview at your earliest convenience?”</p>
<p>If the department head wants you to call back...</p>	<p>“When is a good time for me to reach you?”</p>
<p>If the department head wants more information... Give power statement regarding work experience, training, skills...</p>	<p>Use your 30 Second Commercial to briefly highlight your skills, achievements and benefit to the employer.</p>
<p>Getting the interview...</p>	<p>“I would like to set up an interview at your earliest convenience.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Make sure to have your calendar at hand and some tentative dates.</li> <li>▪ Do not ask for directions. Call later and ask the Administrative Assistant.</li> </ul>
<p>If you are rejected...</p>	<p>“Is it alright if I follow up with you in a couple weeks in case something opens up?”</p>
<p>Ask for other leads...</p>	<p>“Can you suggest any other places I could contact” Who would I speak to there?”</p>
<p>Closing...</p>	<p>“Thank you for your time.”</p>



# Interview Tips

## In-ter-view (in' ter-vyoo') n.

1. a formal face-to-face meeting, esp. one arranged for evaluating the qualifications of an applicant, as for employment.

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### To prepare for a successful interview, here are some things to keep in mind before going:

- ✓ Review the job description
- ✓ Research the company's website. Learn about their mission, values, culture, community interests, etc.
- ✓ Review your resume and be prepared to link your skills & accomplishments to the requirements of the position
- ✓ How will you get to the interview? Do you need directions?
- ✓ How long will it take you to get there? Is there parking?
- ✓ Should you do a transportation "dry run"?
- ✓ Do you need to arrange for child care, pet care?
- ✓ Be sure that your voicemail and email address are professional.
- ✓ Google yourself. Does your Facebook page (or other social media) have any photos that need deleted?
- ✓ Dress for success
  - Is your interview outfit clean and pressed?
  - Business-like attire. Conservative is best
  - Limit your accessories, jewelry and cologne
- ✓ Prepare your own questions
- ✓ PRACTICE! Rehearse and get feedback

### What to take with you to the interview?

- ✓ Enough copies of your resume for the number of people you will be speaking with—and then several more
- ✓ List of references with contact information
- ✓ Letter of reference (if applicable)
- ✓ Job posting and any other notes related to the company
- ✓ Any licenses necessary for that specific occupation
- ✓ Note pad and 2 pens
- ✓ Your list of questions to ask the interviewer

# Interview Tips

## At the interview:

- ✓ Arrive at least 15 minutes early
- ✓ Relax
- ✓ Turn your cell phone off or leave it in the car
- ✓ Be aware of your body language & voice
  - Direct eye contact
  - Firm handshake
  - Good posture
  - No fidgeting
  - Clear diction
  - Sound sincere and enthusiastic
  - Pleasant volume; reasonable pitch level
  - No slang (Yea, Yep, Na, Naw, UnhUh)
  - Avoid “non” words (Ah, Um, Uh)

## Dos:

- ✓ Go alone
- ✓ Use active listening skills
- ✓ Stress your related skills, accomplishments, education and results achieved
- ✓ When necessary, ask for clarification or to have the interviewer repeat the question
- ✓ Think before you respond—ask for a moment if you need time to think
- ✓ Ask your prepared questions
- ✓ Ask permission to call back for the results of your interview
- ✓ At the end of the interview, thank the interviewer for his/her time

## Don'ts:

- ✓ Ramble
- ✓ Exaggerate
- ✓ Use slang
- ✓ Dwell on the past
- ✓ Volunteer negative information
- ✓ Discuss personal problems
- ✓ Express strong or controversial opinions
- ✓ Interrupt the interviewer
- ✓ Be evasive or dishonest
- ✓ Call the interviewer(s) by first name (unless invited to do so)
- ✓ Smoke or chew anything
- ✓ Ask about salary or days off
- ✓ Discuss your health

## Common Interview Questions

To be successful at job interviews you will need to practice your interviewing skills. Be prepared to answer a wide variety of questions. It would be impossible to list all of the questions that could be asked in the course of an interview. The choices are just too many. The following questions, in addition to being fairly common, are also the most challenging and thought-provoking. Practice these, and they should help you to fine tune your interviewing skills.

- Tell me about yourself.
- Describe your ability to work under pressure.
- Tell me about a time when you had to adjust to a colleague's working style in order to complete a project or achieve your objectives.
- Tell me about a situation where you had to solve a difficult problem. What did you do? What was the outcome? What would you do differently?
- Tell me about a time when you had to use your presentation skills to influence someone's opinion.
- Tell me about a difficult decision you've made in the last year.
- Describe a time when you put your needs aside to help a co-worker understand a task. How did you assist them? What was the result?
- Give me an example of a time when you set a goal and were able to meet or achieve it.
- Give me an example of when you showed initiative and took the lead.
- What are your long range career objectives?
- How do you plan to achieve your career goals?
- What are the most important rewards you expect in your career?
- What do you expect to be earning in five years?
- Why did you choose this career?
- How well do you work with people? Do you prefer working alone or in teams?
- How would you evaluate your ability to deal with conflict?
- Have you ever had difficulty with a supervisor? How did you resolve the conflict?
- What's more important to you -- the work itself or how much you're paid for doing it?
- What do you consider to be your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
- How would a good friend describe you?
- Describe the best job you've ever had.
- Describe the best supervisor you've ever had.
- What would your last boss say about your work performance?
- What motivates you to go the extra mile on a project or job?
- Why should I hire you?
- What makes you qualified for this position?
- What qualifications do you have that make you successful in this career?
- How do you determine or evaluate success?
- What do you think it takes to be successful in a company like ours?

## Common Interview Questions

- In what ways do you think you can make a contribution to our company?
- What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction? Why?
- Describe the most rewarding experience of your career thus far.
- If you were hiring a job-seeker for this position, what qualities would you look for?
- Do you have plans for continued study? An advanced degree?
- In what kind of work environment are you most comfortable?
- How would your direct reports describe you as a manager?
- Describe how you delegate tasks?
- How well do you adapt to new situations?
- Why did you decide to seek a position in this company?
- What are your expectations regarding promotions and salary increases?
- What criteria are you using to evaluate the company for which you hope to work?
- What is the proper balance between managerial control and employee independence?
- Are you willing to relocate?
- Are you willing to travel for the job?
- What major projects have you undertaken in your current job that are beyond those normally required for this position?
- What major changes and improvements have you brought about in your last job? Why were these important?
- Tell me what you know about our company?
- Of the past positions you've held, which did you like most? Why?
- Which past position did you like least? Why?
- What were the events and factors that led to your departure from your last company?

## Guidelines for Interview Questions

Some employers may ask you questions they should not—questions that may be discriminatory. While you should not answer these, you should be prepared to deal with them in an appropriate manner.

Topic	Unacceptable	Acceptable
Availability	Number of children?	What hours and days can you work?
Attendance	-What childcare arrangement have you made? -What religion are you? -Do you have pre-school age children at home? -Do you have children?	-Are there specific times that you cannot work? -Do you have responsibilities other than work that will interfere with specific job requirements such as traveling?
Citizenship/National Origin	-What is your national origin?  -Where are your parents from? -What is your maiden name?	-Are you legally eligible for employment in the US? -Are you a citizen? Do you intend to become a citizen? -Have you ever worked under a different name?
For Reference Checking	-What is your father's surname? -What are the names of your relatives?	-None -None
Arrest and Conviction	-Have you ever been arrested? -Have you ever been convicted of a misdemeanor?	-Have you ever been convicted of a felony? If so, when, where and what was the disposition of the case?
Disabilities	-Do you have any disabilities? -What kind of disability do you have? -How severe in your disability?	-Can you perform the duties of the job you are applying for?
Emergency	-What is the name and address of the relative to be notified in case of an emergency?	-What is the name and address of the person to be notified in case of an emergency? (Request only after the individual has been hired.)
Credit Report	-Do you own your own home? -Have your wages ever been garnished?  -Have you ever declared bankruptcy?	-None -Credit references may be used if in compliance with the Fair Credit Reporting Act of 1970 and the Consumer Credit Reporting Reform Act of 1996 -None
Military Record	-What type of discharge did you receive? -Are you receiving a service connected disability pension?	-Are you a U.S. veteran? -What is your U.S. military service history?
Language	-What is your native language?	-Inquiry into languages applicant speaks and writes fluently. (If the job requires additional languages.)
Organizations	-List all clubs, societies and lodges to which you belong.	-Inquiry into applicant's membership in organizations which the applicant considers relevant to his/her ability to perform job. -Are you a member of any organizations which advocate overthrowing the U.S. Government by violent means?

## Guidelines for Interview Questions (continued)

Topic	Unacceptable	Acceptable
Race or Color	-Complexion or color of skin? Coloring? -Require a photo accompany applications.	-None
Religion or Creed	-Inquiry into applicant's religious denomination, religious affiliations, church, parish, pastor or religious holidays observed.	-None
Gender	-Do you wish to be addressed as Mr.? Mrs.?, Miss?, or Ms.?	-None
Addresses	-What was your previous address? -How long did you live there? -How long have you lived at your current address? -Do you own your own home?	-None
Education	-When did you attend or graduate from high school or college?	-Do you have a high school diploma or equivalent? Do you have a university or college degree?
Personal	-What color are your eyes, hair? -What is your weight?	-Only permissible if there is a bona fide occupational qualification.
Age	-When were you born?  -How old are you?	-Are you a minor (under the age of 18)? -May I have proof that you are 18 or over? -Questions are allowed if based on a bona fide occupational qualification previously granted by the Commission or if necessary to satisfy provisions of state or federal law
Sexual Preference	-What is your sexual preference? -Are you a homosexual?	-None
Sex	-How do you identify in terms of gender?	-None, unless based on a bona fide occupational qualification previously granted by the Commission
Worker's Compensation	-Have you ever filed for worker's comp? -Have you ever had any prior work injuries?	-None



# After Interview Checklist

After every interview, you should give yourself time to reflect on it and how you felt it went.

<b>Company Name:</b>	<b>Interviewer's Name:</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>First Call Back Date:</b>

Complete immediately after the interview	Yes	No
1. Did you arrive on time?		
2. What did you wear? _____		
3. Was your grooming immaculate?		
4. Were you dressed like company employees?		
5. Did you introduce yourself to the interviewer?		
6. Did the opening of the interview go smoothly?		
7. Did you display energy and enthusiasm? Flexibility? Interest in learning new things?		
8. Did you smile? Did you make direct eye contact?		
9. Did you frequently make a strong connection between the job's requirements and your qualifications?		
10. Did you forget any important selling points? If, so did you put them in a follow-up email, letter, or call back?		
11. Did you convey at least five major qualities the interviewer should remember about you?		
12. Did you use storytelling, examples, results and measurement of achievements to back up your claims and convince the interviewer that you have the skills to do the job?		
13. Did you make clear your understanding of the work involved in the job?		
14. Did you show your understanding of the strategies required to reach company goals?		
15. Did you find some common ground to establish that you'll fit well into the company?		
16. What did the interviewer seem particularly interested in? What was discussed the most? _____ _____		
17. Was there anything the interviewer seemed to dislike? If so, what? _____		

# After Interview Checklist

Complete immediately after the interview	Yes	No
18. Were you asked any questions that you feel you were not prepared for? If so, what were they? _____ _____		
19. Did you ask your questions?		
20. Did you hijack the interview by grabbing control or speaking too much (more than half the time)?		
21. Did you find out the next step in the interview process?		
22. Would you have done something differently if you could replay the interview? _____ _____		
23. Did you take notes during the interview so that you can remember the key points?		
24. Did you say you would follow up and when?		
25. Did you write a thank you note to the interviewer?		

## Sample Thank You Follow Up Letter

A thank you follow up letter after an employment interview can be pivotal to getting the job. One of the best approaches to writing a powerful thank you letter is to mirror and repeat back a summary of the key points you discussed in the interview. The primary things to include are the employer's main challenges, the kind of person they are looking for and anything positive they shared about you and your potential candidacy. Keep your letter short--under 200 words!

Your street address  
Your City, State and Zip Code

Date of the letter

Name of the Recipient  
Job Title of the Recipient  
Name of the Employer  
Employer's Street Address  
Employer's City, State and Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name:

Thank you very much for the opportunity to interview for the position of [job title] yesterday [or today, if appropriate]. I enjoyed speaking with you, meeting other members of the staff, and the opportunity to learn more about this position. I am very interested in this position and the opportunity to join your team.

This job feels like a very good match between my skills and experience and the requirements of this job. As we discussed, you need someone with strong [whatever] skills, and I have extensive experience with [whatever technology or tool that is important to the job and that you have experience using]. In addition, in my current [or former] job as [names or type of employer in your past] has provided the opportunity to polish my skills in [whatever] and [whatever] needed for your [job title] position.

Again, thank you for considering me for this wonderful opportunity. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns or need more information. I look forward to hearing from you next week [or whenever they said they would be in touch] and hope to join your staff soon.

Best regards,

[your name]  
[Your tagline, like "eCommerce Customer Support Specialist"]  
[Your job search email address]



# Make the Most of Your Time

## “Work Smarter not Harder”

### Use Commuting Time

If you spend only an hour a day commuting, you’re spending the equivalent of more than six full work weeks a year in transit. Try to spend at least some of this time on high priority activities. You can read or work on a bus, metro or in a carpool. Even while driving you can slowly think over an important problem or project. Use your time.

### Schedule Free Time

Take a break when you need it. Yes, you need to keep your job search productive, but sometimes it’s equally important to take a break for an afternoon—go to the park or beach or museum. Relax and enjoy. Incorporate short breaks into your day to stretch your legs and go for a walk, read, exercise, or do whatever you enjoy. You’ll come back to your job search re-energized.

### The Five-Minute Experiment

From time to time, everyone has a task they must do but just can’t get started on. When this happens, commit yourself to a single five-minute effort.

### Time Management at Home

Your personal life can also benefit from reflection on your most important goals, major tasks and daily priorities. Think about what is important to you at home—more time with family and friends, learning a new hobby—and strategize the steps to achieve these goals.

### Parkinson’s Law

The adage that "work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion" is true. Fight this waste of time with deadlines. If you don’t have an actual deadline, make one for yourself. Otherwise projects will often float and never reach completion. Stop thinking about the fact that you need to strategize your job search and commit it to paper. Set deadlines for working through the different sections of this handbook.

### Fight Procrastination

Delaying the unpleasant may be part of human nature, but it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy if not resisted. Fight procrastination by:

- setting deadlines and making commitments
- thinking about the benefits and satisfaction of doing what you know you’re supposed to
- thinking imaginatively about the bad things that will happen if you procrastinate
- replacing the habit of procrastination with the habit of doing the most unpleasant thing first
- reward yourself for completed work

# Sample Daily Job Search Planner

A thorough job search involves many steps. Planning and organizing your job search is the best way to ensure that all the steps are taken. Set time aside each day to plan what you want to accomplish during the day. This form may help.

## Job Search Planner

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

People I Need To Contact Today			
Name/Title	Phone/Email		
_____	_____		
_____	_____		
People I Need To Send Letter, Resumes Or Applications Today			
Name/Title	Mailing Address/Email		
_____	_____		
_____	_____		
Appointments Or Interviews Scheduled Today			
Where	With Whom (Name/Title)	Time	Phone #
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
Other Job Search Steps I Need To Take Today (Research company web sites, job boards, make cold calls, networking activities)			
Action	Person		
_____	_____		
_____	_____		
Job Search Activities I Need To Schedule For Future Days			
Activity	Due Date		
_____	_____		
_____	_____		







# Welcome to the Loudoun Workforce Resource Center

## WHERE DO I BEGIN...



Resume Resources



Job Search Strategies



Workshops & Career  
Development



Veteran Services



Computers & Office  
Equipment



Workforce Innovation  
& Opportunity Act  
(Training Resources)



Assistance with  
Employment Barriers



Career Fairs & Events



Job Announcements



Unemployment Insurance  
Information



Housing Programs  
& Resources



Still not sure...Ask to speak with the  
Employment Resource Navigator

102 Heritage Way, NE, Leesburg, VA 20176 ~ 703-777-0150 ~ [wrc@loudoun.gov](mailto:wrc@loudoun.gov) ~ [www.loudoun.gov/wrc](http://www.loudoun.gov/wrc)