

Navigating the Job Search



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The New Millennium Job Search

“There’s nothing in the newspaper!” “Where are all the jobs?” Finding a job can be a daunting and frustrating task. It will not happen overnight or by wishful thinking. Getting a good job takes preparation, effort, and a dose of reality.

You need to make sure you are tapping into **ALL** available resources instead of literally putting all your eggs in one basket. It would be wonderful if you could do all your job hunting in one sitting - while eating breakfast, enjoying the comics, or surfing the Internet. However, if you want a golden opportunity, you must put a lot of effort into finding it.

This booklet is designed to give you information, tools, and strategies to utilize during your search. Find the techniques that work best for you and **get that job!!**

Good Luck!



Understanding the Hidden Job Market

Only 10 - 15% of all jobs are advertised.

Where are all the rest?

The remainder of available jobs are found either through employment agencies or in the **hidden job market**.

This is how it works:

Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
No job openings, but employers are always looking for a good worker.	The need is clear - the insiders know but no action is taken to notify the public. Referrals and timing are critical.	Job is now open in-house and is posted. Referrals are desired. Employers call schools, employment agencies, etc.	Ad is in the newspaper. Crowds appear.
20%	50%	90%	100%

90% of all jobs are filled before a job is even advertised.

Therefore, you must be creative in your search and tap into **ALL** resources!

Tap Into All Available Resources

Getting started is the hardest part – How Do I Begin?

The newspaper is a great first step. You can see what companies have openings, and also get an idea of what kinds of jobs are available. **HINT:** Read all classified ads, not just the ones under a specific heading or job title. Think in terms of the **DUTIES** you'd like to perform in your job and search for those. Your dream career may be under a heading you never would have considered.

Don't park yourself in the classifieds, though. Look through the entire newspaper. Did a company just open a new location? Did another company just have a massive layoff? Get to know what is going on in your local business community, and you will know where the real opportunities are.

Once you have finished scanning the newspaper, pursue other avenues for uncovering opportunities. The newspaper only has 10 – 15% of available jobs, so you must tap into the **hidden job market**. The following are some suggestions, but this is by no means a comprehensive list.

Use your imagination and creativity to broaden your horizons, and take some time to investigate those that interest you.

- € **Yellow Pages** – Let your fingers do the walking to find what businesses are available in your geographic area. You'll get a breakdown of businesses by specialty or service provided, as well as contact information.
- € **Job Fairs** – Where else can you network with a multitude of employers in a span of a few hours? First and foremost, make sure you do your homework beforehand. Know what employers will be there, what they do, and what opportunities might be available for you. Bring plenty of resumes, a pleasant demeanor, and comfortable shoes for the ride home.
- € **College Career Offices, Workforce Development Offices, Community Agencies, and Libraries** – Employers post openings with many organizations. Make sure that you *frequently* investigate job postings, either on the web or in paper form.
- € **Chamber of Commerce** – New companies register with the Chamber to begin their own networking. Settled companies also utilize Chamber of Commerce membership to retain community ties and continue networking. Get on the Chamber of Commerce website for each city you are interested in to find out more.
- € **Internet** – Use the Internet to research companies, cultures, and environments. Many companies now post opportunities directly on their website, so you can check out opportunities while deciding if it would be a good fit for you.
- € **StormTracker** – Search for jobs and connect with alumni mentors.
- € **Connect** – Never underestimate the power of connecting. "It's not what you know, it's not who you know, it's who knows you."

Connecting/Networking

If you think that networking is just for job searches, think again. Networking can benefit you in many areas of your career, whether you are investigating a new career, trying to understand trends in your industry or field, looking to benchmark how another organization is handling an issue, developing business for your company, or looking for assistance with a volunteer project. Consider this a time to get information, connect with others and find out more about your career interest areas.

Do you feel unsure or nervous about networking? You are not alone. Believe it or not, the majority of business professionals hate to network. Even more surprising, few of us know how to do it well.

Is it awkward?

When business audiences are asked why they hate networking, many say they feel awkward and fear rejection, primarily because they don't know how to network effectively. Most of us learn our networking skills by observing others. The problem with learning by watching is that for many people, the observation is influenced by a belief that the purpose of networking is to obtain something from someone, which leads people to misinterpret the process.

What IS networking?

True networking is all about developing relationships. It is a step-by-step process that builds over time, not a hit-and-run transaction.

Blunders

This transaction mentality is the cause of the most common networking mistakes. For example, a typical mistake is to network for a job (hoping to hit the jackpot) instead of to gather information and advice. Few of us would be so brazen as to walk into an event, introduce ourselves, and ask outright, "Do you know of any jobs?" Yet every day, job seekers commit the electronic version of this blunder by sending e-mails to mere acquaintances asking for a job, when asking for advice would be much more effective. Network contacts are valuable resources for learning about a career field, trends in an industry, the culture of an organization, or even to get the inside scoop on a specific job opening.

Failure to follow-through

Another too-common mistake is the failure to follow through with contacts. Because it is viewed as a transaction, people believe if they send an e-mail or leave a voice mail message, their side of the transaction is complete. If they don't get a response, they simply write off that contact. Skilled networkers, on the other hand, take the responsibility to make multiple attempts to connect with someone, knowing that eventually persistence pays off. A simple shift in perspective, from thinking of networking as a transaction to viewing it as an opportunity to build a relationship, could make your next networking experience more enjoyable and much more effective.

Begin building your network

Log onto StormTracker and check out the alumni mentors. Join a Keuka club and broaden your net of contacts!

Networking Tips

If you are exploring careers, here are some tips to make your networking more effective:

- ✓ Ask for information and advice about a person's career, field, or organization, trends in the field or industry, or how to break into a particular field.
- ✓ Don't ask if they know of any job openings. It is up to them to offer if they do.
- ✓ Don't send your resume without being asked for it.
- ✓ Send a thank you note or email after each conversation or meeting.
- ✓ Offer to buy your networking contact coffee, a beverage, or lunch if you will be meeting in person.
- ✓ Ask if they can suggest any other people you could speak with in their organization or in other organizations and ask if you can use their name when contacting those people.
- ✓ Follow up with all referred contacts even if you don't think they will be helpful, and let the referrer know what happened and that you appreciate their thoughtfulness in making the referral.
- ✓ Request just 15 minutes of their time and stick to it, unless the person tells you they would like to keep on talking.
- ✓ Research shows it can take 5-7 attempts to connect with someone. If you send an email or leave a voice mail and do not get a response within a week, follow up politely and persistently. You can alternate emails and voice mails, if you like.
- ✓ Prepare for your conversation. Be ready to introduce yourself with a brief overview of your experience, and the reason for initiating the contact. See the "30-Second Elevator Pitch" worksheet for an example.

More networking resources:

Quintessential Careers - Articles on networking etiquette, how to's, etc.

www.quintcareers.com/networking_resources.html

The Riley Guide - Networking and interviewing articles and tips

www.rileyguide.com/netintv.html

JobStar Central - Tips on networking

www.jobstar.org/hidden/network.cfm

About.com - Making Connections

<http://careerplanning.about.com/od/networking/a/networking.htm>

How Do Employers Hire?

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

Recruitment

Employers need an applicant pool from which to choose when filling job openings. Employers who do extensive hiring may be continuously recruiting applicants, even when there is not an immediate need. They simply want to maintain the pool of applicants. Employers who hire occasionally, or for very specialized positions, will usually recruit as needed. Some employers will recruit simply to test the market. They may be planning some future expansion and want to know if they could fill their labor needs. Therefore, when an employer is actively recruiting, they may not have an actual job opening.

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

- **Advertising**: Employers may advertise in newspapers, local community papers, trade publications, on radio or television, the Internet, or with universities and community organizations.
- **Internal Posting**: Some employers will post their jobs internally first so interested employees may apply. Many will also post on their own websites.
- **Referral**: Referral from a trusted employee, colleague or peer is the source preferred by most employers. Many employers actively solicit these referrals as part of their recruitment efforts.
- **Placement Service Providers**: Employers may use private and public placement agencies to recruit candidates.
- **Employment Agencies**: Many employers are turning to temporary and contract agencies for employee recruitment.
- **Job Fairs**: Job fairs are an excellent source for entry-level employees. Employers who recruit at job fairs are usually building a pool of candidates and may not have an immediate opening.

Screening

Once the employer has an applicant pool, it is narrowed down to the best qualified candidates. This is no simple task. The reality is that for any one job, an employer may have hundreds of applicants. Therefore, their first task is to eliminate as many as possible, as quickly as possible. During the initial screening, employers generally spend no more than a few seconds on each application. Employers will spend more time reviewing the small number of candidates left after an initial screening. They will look more closely at qualifications and may contact a reference and/or past employers. Some may call the applicant to conduct a telephone screening interview, or they may schedule an in-person screening interview. The point of

screening is to narrow the pool of qualified applicants to those to be interviewed.

Selection

While every step in the process plays a part in the hiring decision, employers most often make the final selection based on the interview. At the interview, the employer is verifying qualifications and evaluating how the person will “fit” into the organization. When you are called for an interview, you can be reasonably confident the employer believes you are qualified for the job. The employer is interested in you or they would not be investing their time in an interview. The question is, “Are you the best qualified person for the job?”

“Best qualified” does not just mean skill, experience, and education. Employers are also looking for motivation, a passion for excellence, and a dedication to continuous learning and quality. They are considering how much a new employee will cost the organization. Hiring is a major “purchase” costing thousands of dollars per year. Employers want to make sure they get the best value for their investment. After all, most job seekers don’t come with a money back guarantee.

The Hiring Structure

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

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

The human resources department manages the hiring process, but may not be the hiring authority. Exceptions may be when hiring for an entry-level position, when the company has many positions open, or when the position is in the human resources department. Human resources will usually recruit, screen, and schedule interviews, and often has a great deal of influence on the hiring decision.

Today’s Job Market

The hiring process is more structured than it was in the past. Employers are generally more selective. Many factors have influenced the process. Large numbers of candidates, employment legislation, new technologies, employer liability, and organizational restructuring are a few of these influences. Employers no longer hire with the intent of lifetime employment. The average person will have many jobs and will change careers 3-5 times during his/her lifetime. To be successful in your job search, you must utilize all available resources, and remain flexible.

Advertised Jobs

Many employers advertise their job openings. The newspaper, trade journals, radio, libraries, and the Internet are all sources of advertised jobs. One limitation of advertised jobs is their overuse by many job seekers. Here are more limitations of advertised jobs:

- The competition is much greater because the ads are seen by more job seekers.
- They represent only a small percentage of available jobs.
- Many are “fake” openings. There is no real job, or the opening has already been filled. Employers may advertise to test the market, while some are required to advertise because of Equal Employment Opportunity requirements or Federal contracting.
- Some are undesirable jobs. They may pay low wages or the employer may have trouble keeping employees.

Despite this, there are many good jobs to be found through advertisements. Employers needing specialized skills and those who are mass recruiting (seeking to fill many positions) will often advertise. Advertisements are also excellent windows into the job market; they are one measure of growth industries. Here are some tips for advertised jobs:

- Actively look for advertised jobs, but do not make them your primary focus.
- Pick your sources for advertised jobs follow them faithfully. Review listings often.
- Respond to new openings immediately.
- Don't ignore “blind” ads (ads where you apply to a box number and do not know the employer's name). Many good jobs are listed as blind ads.
- Look at all the jobs listed, not just those that fit your goal. You may find a company you want to pursue although they have not listed a job in your occupation.
- Research the employer and the job before you apply.
- Direct your application to a person by name. Call to find name and title.

Internet job search tips

More than half of 3,900 human-resource personnel and recruiters surveyed by Weddle's, a publishing, consulting, and training firm, in the first three months of 2005 planned to spend up to 30 percent of their recruiting budgets online. Of those surveyed, 84 percent said niche sites provide access to the best talent while only 11 percent gave the nod to general-purpose recruitment sites.

- If using a main site such as Monster, HotJobs, etc. don't get discouraged if you get matches that do not reflect what you seek. Instead, refine your search, update your resume, and take control of your search!
- Many companies post directly on their website, so finding these opportunities takes initiative on your part. A little extra effort is impressive to employers, and helps separate you from others just seeking “a job”.
- Try to bypass human resources by sending your resume directly to the hiring department. Many companies have an employee directory to help you with a targeted letter.
- Actively visit niche sites such as professional organizations, geographic areas, etc. Broaden your exploration base.

- Visit Weddle’s Tips for Success When Looking for a New or Better Job on the Internet <http://www.weddles.com/tips/seekers.htm> for more tips.

Direct Employer Contact

A goal of a job search campaign is to meet face-to-face with employers, resulting in an invitation to interview. The more interviews you have, the greater your chance for success. Most job seekers prefer a passive job search strategy. They submit an application or resume and wait. When they don’t hear anything, they repeat the process. Successful job seekers are proactive in their approach. They take the initiative to make direct contact with potential employers. Contacting employers directly is fundamental in a successful job search.

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

Basic Principles of Direct Employer Contact

- Preparation is critical to success. Research the employer, the industry, and the job.
- Direct contact may be in person or by telephone. However, the ultimate goal is a personal interview.
- How do you find the right person to contact? Katharine Hansen (Sleuthing Out Hiring Managers is Key to Job-Search Follow-up www.quintcareers.com/hiring_managers.html) identifies these key strategies:
 - **Make a phone call**-directly ask for the information. Make sure you are courteous and respectful to the person answering the phone.
 - **Ask for help**-ask for assistance in connecting with the right person.
 - **Tap into your network**-ask your contacts if they can help.
 - **Become a proficient researcher**-learn how to navigate the web and locate this information
 - **Try the “top down” approach**-address your letter to the president and she/he will forward it to the appropriate person.
 - **Search using a fax number**-“Google it” and discover the company name.
 - **Find the company website**- is usually part of the company’s email address.
 - **Be as specific as possible**-if you can’t find specific name in a department, use a specific name in human resources
- When you make direct contact, do not begin by asking if they are hiring, or by saying you are unemployed. Capture their attention with your qualifications and ask for an interview.
- Plan your follow-up. If you are granted an interview, this is your next step. Otherwise come to an agreement with the employer regarding when you will call back.
- Sell your qualifications, send your resume and plan your follow-up even if an employer is not hiring. You never know what will happen tomorrow.
- Whenever possible, the next step is your responsibility – not the employer’s. For example, if an employer says, “We will call you in a couple of weeks,” you could respond

with, “Would it be all right if I call you two weeks from today?” If they say “Yes,” then you have agreed on your follow-up and the responsibility is yours.

- Expect rejection! It goes with the territory. Don’t take rejection personally.

Telephone Communications

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

Good telephone communication requires skills – skills that can be learned. Just because someone talks on the telephone a lot does not mean he/she is an effective communicator. In fact, many people who use the telephone frequently have mastered some very offensive habits. It is never too early or too late to learn good telephone communications. Telephone skills are marketable job skills many employers value. In a comprehensive job search you will be using the telephone to conduct research, call employers, make networking contacts, schedule meetings, and to interview. Using the telephone is an efficient and effective use of your time and resources.

Scripting

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

A business or sales caller has about 20 seconds to capture the listener’s attention. Therefore, communication has to be to the point and concise. There is no time to wander. Scripting is the answer.

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

Basic Principles of Scripting

- Have an objective for the call. You may be seeking information, trying to schedule a meeting, or present in your qualifications to a potential employer.
- Have a secondary objective. Often you will not achieve your primary objective, but every telephone call is an opportunity to solicit information.
- Know the name of the person to whom you wish to speak. If you do not know the person’s name, then obtaining it becomes your first objective.

- Outline in writing what you want to say. This is important in the early stages of cold calling or when the call is very important. Later on, you will script most of your calls in your head. Do not read your script. Your presentation should be natural, with your script as a guide.

The script will depend on the goal of the call and whether you know the person you are calling. A good script should include the following:

- Introduction:** Tell the person who you are.
- Lead Statement:** A quick statement designed to get the person’s attention.
- Body:** State your purpose for the call.
- Close:** Accomplish your goal, ask for information, schedule a meeting, etc.

Script for Contact Information

- Caller: “Hi. This is Jerry Job. I am trying to contact the person in charge of marketing. Who would that be?”
- Receiver: “That is John Smith. He is the director.”
- Caller: “I would like to speak with him regarding some marketing. Does he have a direct number or extension number?”
- Receiver: “His number is 555-5555. Would you like me to transfer you?”
- Caller: “Yes and thank you for your assistance.”

Script for Follow-up Information

- Caller: “Hello. This is Jerry Job. I interviewed for the computer programmer position last week. I am calling to see if a hiring decision has been made.”
- Receiver: “Not yet. We anticipate making our final selection this Wednesday.”
- Caller: “I’m still very interested in the position. You are doing some very innovative multimedia work that’s on the cutting edge of today’s technology. Best of all, you have a bright and energetic technical staff that understands the importance of team production. I’m sure we would work well together. Would it be okay if I called you on Wednesday? What would be the best time?”

Basic Principles of Telephone Communications

“Buy” Signals – A “buy” signal is evidence that you have captured the person’s attention. “Buy” signals usually take the form of questions. When someone is asking questions about your qualifications, they are, for the moment, interested in you.

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

Location – Call from a quiet place where you can concentrate. Do not call from a noisy restaurant, bus station, street corner, when the kids are yelling, or when the dog is barking.

Interference – Don't call from a cell phone that is breaking up.

Listen Carefully – Communication is what is said, how it's said, and the body language used (even if you can't see it, it can be heard in your voice). It is important to listen carefully to what you are saying, how you are saying it, and how you are being received. If you sense you have called at a bad time, politely ask if there is a better time. It may be useful to tape record yourself while conducting a simulated call.

Organization – Have all your job search materials nearby and take notes.

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

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

Voice Mail – Whether you like it or not, voice mail is a part of our lives. Speaking to a recording adds a new dimension to telephone skills. It is a good idea to know what you will say if you get someone's voice mail. Having a script ready will enable you to leave a message that is upbeat, simple, clear, and concise. Your message should be 30 seconds or less. It is amazing how an otherwise skilled telephone user comes across as monotone and unsure on a message machine.

Make sure your own voice mail message is polite and professional, and be sure to answer your messages daily.

Additional Telephone Tips

- ✓ Wear a smile while on the telephone – your listener may not see it, but they will hear it.
- ✓ Dress for telephone contacts as you would for an interview. Your professionalism and preparation will be heard (If it's a local call, you may be asked to come right down).
- ✓ Treat the front line receptionist with respect. Don't insult the person by asking for "someone who can help you". That person is paid to know what is going on. Enlist their assistance and honestly thank him/her for his/her time.
- ✓ Look for ways to compliment the person or the company.
- ✓ Don't apologize for making the contact. You have a product they need and a right to present yourself.

- ✓ Don't sell yourself from a position of weakness or apologize for what you do not have or have not done. Sell yourself from a position of strength and stress those skills, attributes, and accomplishments attractive to the employer.

Rule of Thumb for Résumé Showcasing

Pick up your résumé. Where are your thumbs? They are probably at about the midpoint of the page. Most employers spend 15 – 30 seconds when first examining résumé, and only seeing the top half of your résumé. Therefore, everything above your thumbs should be the most important information that you want to convey to the employer, and everything below your thumbs should support the message you are communicating.

In this short amount of time employers determine your strengths and if you have something to offer. If they feel that you do, they will look at your resume in more depth. If not, you will be filed away. You need to make sure that the employer knows what you are capable of doing. If you don't tell them, no one else will. Employers want to **QUICKLY screen you out**. Your goal is to get screened **IN**.

How do you fashion your résumé so that it gets noticed? The employer doesn't have time to search your résumé for pertinent information – you must provide it on a silver platter – easy to obtain and elegantly presented.

Take the time to craft a résumé that is an accurate reflection of you. Don't do it alone! Tap into book and web resources, and ask others for input. Remember that you have the final say on your résumé's appearance – you must **like** it. When you look at it, you should say, "Wow, I'm good!!"



Resume Critique Checklist

- _____ Material fits neatly on one page, two pages if there is enough relevant experience.
- _____ No spelling, grammar, or punctuation errors. Typing is neat, clean, and professional looking.
- _____ Name, address, telephone, and e-mail are at the top and easy to locate.
- _____ Margins at sides and bottom are not less than one-half inch.
- _____ Layout and design are easy to read and pleasing to the eye.
- _____ Important titles are emphasized by using text enhancements where appropriate (caps, bolds, underline, italics), but not overdone.
- _____ Indentations or appropriate symbols are used to organize information logically.
- _____ Overall appearance invites one to read it.
- _____ Action words are used to communicate accomplishments and results.
- _____ Extraneous personal information (height, weight, age, sex, etc.) has been left out.
- _____ If using a career objective, make sure it is specific, clear, and targeted.
- _____ Remember the RULE OF THUMB- the most important information is in the first half.
- _____ Use conservative colors like white, off-white, beige, or gray parchment.
- _____ Avoid graphics and colorful paper unless you are in the design field.
- _____ Always use reverse chronological order.
- _____ Employment that is older than 10 years is not listed.
- _____ Language specific only to the company in which you worked has been translated to apply to other areas.
- _____ Strongest statements are at the top, working downward.
- _____ Dates of employment and education are included and accurate.
- _____ "References Available Upon Request" has been substituted with more skills.
- _____ Quantities, amounts, and dollar values are used to enhance the description of your job.
- _____ References are listed on a separate sheet of paper with the same heading as the resume.
- _____ Addresses and phone numbers of previous employers are omitted.
- _____ Hobbies or social skills are not listed unless they are related to the targeted job.
- _____ The word "I" is used only in the cover letter.

References – Why Have Them?

References - Why Have Them?

- They know people who can help.
- People who are evaluating your candidacy may know them.
- They indicate the breadth of your experiences (professional, academic, personal, etc.)

Who Should Be Included?

- Current Practitioner - Someone who is doing what you're applying to do. Do you have what it takes to do the job? This person should be able to say an unqualified YES!
- Academics - Someone who can attest to your academic proficiency.
- Work - Someone who can speak to your qualities as an employee and worker.
- Personal - Someone who can speak about you as a person

Who You Should NOT Include

- Relatives and/or parents
- Brothers and/or sisters
- People who don't know you
- "Big Name" people who you don't know

Reference Page

- It's a good idea to develop a page that lists your references.
- This page should be included with any application material you submit.
- It should be done on the same paper as your resume, and should have your name at the top.
- You should always follow the employer's instructions as to what type of references they require (work, education, personal)
- You never know who knows someone else.

You Should Always

- Follow directions and supply the type of references the employer requests.
- **ASK** your references if they feel comfortable being your reference.
- Give your references copies of your resume as well as a description of the job you are applying for. They are doing you a favor- help them!
- Thank your references!

Cover Letter Critique Checklist

- _____ The first paragraph gives the employer a frame of reference.
- _____ No spelling, grammar or punctuation errors.
- _____ Typing is neat, clean and professional-looking.
- _____ Margins at sides and bottom are not less than one-half inch.
- _____ Layout and design are easy to read and pleasing to the eye.
- _____ Use simple language. Keep it short, sweet and to the point.
- _____ The cover letter is typed, never hand-written.
- _____ Overall appearance invites one to read it.
- _____ Action words are used to communicate accomplishments and results.
- _____ No extraneous personal information (height, weight, age, sex, etc.).
- _____ I've used the same paper for my cover letter and resume.
- _____ If answering an ad, the cover letter is written specifically to the ad.
- _____ I have individualized each cover letter.
- _____ I have not included salary information.
- _____ I have described myself in terms of the contributions I can make to the employer.
- _____ The tone of my cover letter is proactive.



What is a Thank You Letter?

Set Yourself Apart From 99.9% of Other Job Seekers

This is one of the most important yet least used tools in a job search. Its purpose is to establish good will, express appreciation and/or to strengthen your candidacy. The basic rule of thumb is to send a letter to everyone who helps you in any way. When used after employment interviews, thank you letters should be sent within 24 hours of each contact. Also, be sure to send thank you letters to individuals who granted you information interviews, and to people who provided references for you.

Hints for a Thank You Letter

- ✓ Make it brief.
- ✓ If you feel you have a personal relationship with the person with whom you interviewed, then a hand-written (if legible) “thank you” note card is appropriate.
- ✓ Note the date of your interview in your letter. It will help the recipient remember who you are.
- ✓ Highlight a key point from your interview that you believe the interviewer will remember, and therefore remember you.
- ✓ Re-state your strong interest (if you have one) in the position, and highlight your qualifications once again.
- ✓ Try to be specific about why you are interested and how you are a good fit for the organization.

- ✓ Thank everyone with whom you interviewed.
- ✓ Send one even if you don't want the job. You never know when you will meet the person again.

Most Frequently Asked Interview Questions

1. Why don't you tell me about yourself?
2. Why should I hire you?
3. What are your major strengths?
4. What is your greatest weakness?
5. What sort of pay do you expect to receive?
6. How does your previous experience relate to this job?
7. What are your plans for the future?
8. What will your former employers (or references) say about you?
9. Why are you looking for this sort of position and why here?
10. Why did you leave your last job or why did your last job end?

Employer Fear Behind Their Questions

1. You lack the skills to do the job.
2. You won't put in a full working day.
3. You'll be out sick or absent a lot.
4. You won't stay with the company very long.
5. It will take you too long to learn the job and cost the company money.
6. You won't get along with other co-workers or your boss.
7. You will not work hard and do only the minimum job requirements.
8. You will not show initiative and have to be told what to do all the time.
9. You will have a work-disrupting character flaw.
10. You will bring discredit upon the company, department, or supervisor.

Address the Fear Behind the Question...

1. Understand what is really being asked.
2. Answer the questions briefly.
3. Address the hidden concern by presenting your skills. Focus on your key skills and give examples.

Characteristics of a Good Salesperson

- € Knows the product (key skills, translates features into benefits for the employer)
- € Believes in the product (convincing)
- € Positive, can do, upbeat attitude (handles rejection, doesn't take it personally)
- € Professional appearance
- € Well mannered
- € Natural and sincere
- € Good communication skills (clear, concise)
- € Enthusiastic, eager, creates excitement
- € Paints a picture (show the vision)
- € Professional appearance
- € Knows that sales is a number game, knows how to find his/her market
- € Self confident (believes in self)
- € Self motivated, hard working, persistent
- € Organized, uses time wisely (has tools, paperwork in order)
- € Prepared to make the sale (research)
- € Dependable – delivers the goods (keeping the job)
- € Personable, friendly, likeable, smiles a lot
- € Uses psychology (Calls customer by name repeatedly – our favorite word is our name)
- € Good listener
- € Asks probing questions to determine the customer's needs (open and closed, uncover hidden fears, objections)
- € Uses supporting statements (empathy, acknowledges need, and introduces benefits)
- € Differentiates self from the competition
- € Good eye contact and body language
- € Closes the sale (summarizes the benefits and asks for the order)
- € Good follow-up after the sale (thank you note, call back)

**The interview is your sales call.
Remember . . . usually the best salesperson
gets the job!**

Some Final Suggestions

1. Get an answering machine or voice mail. Make sure the message is professional. Do not allow small children to answer the phone or create a message. Do not answer the phone if you are out of breath. Always answer the phone in a pleasant voice. Do not answer the phone if you are sleeping. If it is past 8:00 in the morning, let the answering machine pick it up or get up early. Employers will hold it against you if they think you are sleeping at 9:30 or 10:00 am, no matter what the reason.
2. If you include a professional e-mail address, make sure you check it daily. Employers are looking for quick turnaround. If you only check it once a week, you may miss your opportunity.
3. Be prepared for a telephone call or a telephone interview at any time. Employers will call you for telephone interviews, even at 10:00 pm at night. This is a very popular way to screen candidates out, without having to go through the costly interview process. Don't be caught off guard; know something about each company you sent a resume to, know why you would want to work there and be prepared to come up with quick responses.
4. Be prepared for group interviews during the interview process. The employer is looking for consistency of answers, to see how you will fit in with the team and if you have the energy and drive necessary for the job. When you set up the interview, ask who you will be interviewing with- get specific names and titles.
5. Arriving early to an interview shows professionalism, but also gives you an opportunity to check out the workplace environment. Do the people look happy, tired, complaining, friendly, etc? How people treat each other or feel about their jobs is a good indication of what it would be like to work there.
6. Employers DO check previous employers and references. Make sure you have provided accurate information and have asked your references if they feel comfortable representing you.
7. Never criticize your previous employer. If you were fired, you need to approach it in a factual format, with no emotion. Be honest; do not lie. Tell what you learned from it and how you are better because of it. Contact Alumni Career Services for help with this.
8. Be professional from start to finish.
9. Do not send anything more than a resume and cover letter, unless the employer asks for it. Reference sheets, letters of recommendation, etc. should be brought to the interview.

10. Always follow up to see if your resume was received. Indicate on your cover letter when you will be calling. When you call, ask about the status of the interview process.
11. Always be polite and gracious to a receptionist or secretary. They have a lot more power than you may think. It is best to assume that anyone you speak with or encounter in an organization has the power to veto your resume.
12. Do not starve while job hunting. Do not wait until the last minute (a day before graduation or before your unemployment runs out) before you start looking. The employment process takes time; it may take an employer from 1-6 weeks to make up his/her mind once resumes have been received. The rule of thumb is that it takes much more time than you think it will. Employers like to see that you have not been sitting at home, waiting for them to call. Take contract work, participate in a co-op or internship to get experience and network.
13. Consider benefits when deciding to take a job. They count as much as the salary does. If you have a great salary and no medical insurance, consider how much your out of pocket expenses are. Be realistic with salary. How much do you want, how much do you need, and where do the two meet?
14. If you are really interested in working for a particular company, check back with them every few months or so. Many times they may hire someone who doesn't work out. Showing them that you are sincerely interested in THEIR company will impress them.
15. Remember that attitude is everything. Be positive, be motivated, know what you want, but always remember that in this market it's not what you want, but what you can do for the employer!
16. Don't underestimate the power of informational interviews and networking. Employers are more willing to provide information and mentoring first, and then employment opportunities. Show them the type of person you are and the type of worker you will be.
17. Job hunting is the hardest job you will ever have. The more time you spend in your job search, the more you increase your chances of finding a good match. A job search should take up to 40 hours per week.
18. Think of your job search as a job. Get up, shower, get dressed and be ready to work at 8:00 or 9:00 am. Find a place (like an office) you can use as your "place of employment."
19. After you have worked a regular week on your job search, give yourself a reward.
20. Planning your job search will give you direction and make you feel good at the end of the week that you have made **real** progress toward finding a job.

How Not to Get Hired in 10 Easy Steps

By Catherine McGinnis

The economy is getting tighter and the competition for jobs is getting stiffer. This means your success depends on how professionally you present yourself throughout the entire job search process. However, if you DON'T want to get hired, make sure to follow these steps:

- 1) Lie on your resume or application. So you didn't really win the Nobel Peace Prize. Who is going to check? Which is more important- looking good on paper or being a credible candidate?
- 2) Misspell everything. You aren't applying for an editing job, so don't worry about it! The employer will be so impressed by your skills and false credentials, they won't care about anything else, right?
- 3) Put down a few famous people as references. A Nobel Prize Winner must list at least one president or dignitary, right? For those references you actually know, make sure you don't let them know you are job hunting. That way they will be surprised when asked to come up with good things to say about you!
- 4) When you get called for an interview, make sure to be highly inflexible. You can't possibly interview before 10 am or after 1 pm because you have OTHER things to do.
- 5) Come to the interview with your cell phone and make sure to leave it on. That way when the phone rings, the employer will get a chance to hear "The Brady Bunch" theme too!
- 6) Make sure to be polite only to the person you think is making the hiring decision. Treat secretaries, administrative assistants, office managers and all others with disdain, since you believe they have no power (think again!).
- 7) Address the interviewer by his or her first name, even if he/she hasn't told you to do so. Better yet, shorten his/her name and use that instead (ex: if her name is Deirdre, just call her Dee)
- 8) During the interview, appear to be disinterested and above everyone else. Save your enthusiasm for something really important, like the next time "The Brady Bunch" theme plays on your phone.

9) When asked to describe a weakness, make sure to pick something scary, such as “anger” (especially effective if you want to be a teacher), or something cute such as “chocolate” (you’ll be viewed as highly professional with this one).

10) When the interview is over, make sure to tell the interviewer how glad you are to be done with such torture. Also make sure to indicate you would rather have a root canal than work in this environment. To seal your fate, look at your watch, exclaim your delight in having enough time to get ice cream and then skip out of the office.

11) Make sure to be polite only to the person you think is making the hiring decision. Treat secretaries, administrative assistants, office managers and all others with disdain, since you believe they have no power (think again!).

12) When asked the salary question, provide a figure close to the national debt. Don’t research the salary range, and by all means don’t even consider benefits as part of the package! If offered a great opportunity, make sure to turn it down if they won’t pay you what you’re “worth”. There are plenty of other employers who will!

Ok, you get the picture. Employers hire people they believe to be competent. If you conduct a job search with minimal effort, are you indicating you will also work with minimal effort?

Why People Stay Unemployed

40% present a poor personal appearance

80% cannot describe their job skills

85% do not look hard enough for work

90% cannot answer problem questions in an interview

What About You???