



Finding the Right Job

Your Resume

Before you do anything else, you should prepare your resume. Preparing your resume helps you record your accomplishments and define your goals and needs.

Your resume includes a summary of your work, your education, skills and abilities relating to a particular job or career field. Do your reader a favor – be direct, brief and complete. Don't bore, be flashy or overwhelm.

The purpose of a resume is to land an interview. Your resume should create a favorable first impression by saying:

- Who you are
- What you know
- What you have accomplished
- What your aspirations are
- How you can benefit the interviewer and their organization

Employers generally prefer resumes in the following order: Education/Training (if it's not relevant, put it toward the end), Technical Summary (if you're in a technical field), Employment (reverse-chronological order with your most recent position listed first – always include dates in month/year), Military Service and volunteer experience.

Your resume should:

1. Be factual.
2. Be brief. Two pages should be the maximum unless your experience dictates otherwise.
3. Be scannable. Write it in outline or bullet format so the reader can pick up the essential points in 30 seconds. The resume should be compact, single spaced within paragraphs and double-spaced between paragraphs. You should also use bold, underlining, italics and/or bullets to set off essential information from the text.
4. Be focused on the specific type of position being sought. Only relevant information should be included.
5. Be written in an active, not passive voice. Use of verbs, numbers, percentages and dollars amounts makes the information quantifiable and makes you sound action-oriented. When possible, include goals, budgets and performance.
6. Be concise, accurate and readable. Proofread carefully for any errors in spelling, typing, grammar, etc. Make sure there is visual appeal and that your text is neither too crowded nor too brief.
7. Be professionally laid out and printed (either typeset or offset - no photocopying) on heavy, standard color, quality stationery.

Developing Leads and Contacts

FACT: Postings on job boards only represent a fraction of the available jobs.

FICTION: Fate and luck (being at the right place at the right time) contribute heavily to finding the right job.

FACT: Informal methods and personal contacts used in job searching are among the most effective methods of finding a job. You can improve your chances of landing a job by making the right people aware of your talents and objectives.

FACT: Establishing a network of prior colleagues and professional contacts should be one of the first things that you do as you start your search.

Marketing Yourself

In the job search process, you should consider that you are the product being "sold." In that way, your resume is your "brochure." And as with any product, you must have a sales force. When you initiate your search, every personal and professional contact becomes a part of your sales force. The broader your network, the better your chances of finding a new position.

Careful planning, building your network of contacts, preparing for each conversation, making a good impression – all of this is hard work. It is a process which requires determination, persistence (without being bothersome), an assessment of where you belong in the marketplace and a positive attitude. Remember, you're a salesperson for the product you should believe in most – yourself.

Plan Your Campaign

Before you start networking, you must evaluate:

- Your skills and abilities
- Your objectives
- The marketplace
- The appropriateness of an individual to help you in your search

Prepare a List of Contacts

Develop your personal list of contacts from the following sources:

- Your personal database of contacts
- Professional association membership directories
- Former colleagues, bosses or direct reports
- Online databases and professional and social networking communities
- Industrial directories
- Executives in your company
- Individuals you have interviewed or who have interviewed you
- College alumni directories
- Local business owners

- Professionals (accountants, lawyers, bankers, venture capitalists, doctors, dentists, real estate brokers, financial advisors, clergy, politicians, consultants in executive search and management, etc.)
- Fraternal or social club directories
- Church or temple rosters
- New/old address book(s)
- Christmas card list

Categorize each of these contacts as:

- People with the power to give you the job you're seeking
- People who don't have the power to place you but can introduce you to those who will
- People who can advise you or introduce you to people in the second category

Rank this list and initially contact the least likely people. You'll gain confidence in your ability to present yourself and be much more effective when contacting the high-powered individuals at the top of the list.

Networking Tips

Here are some guidelines for managing a networking conversation:

- Establish a "bridge." This is easy enough for people you already know. For referrals, immediately mention who referred you and why. Establish what you have in common.
- Be direct. Make it clear that you are looking for a job but you do not expect this individual to have a job opening or know of one. This removes the pressure – your contact person will be much more willing to listen and remember you favorably.
- Avoid sounding indecisive or without purpose. Tell the listener the kind of help you want rather than asking him or her to volunteer direction.
- Be focused. Know the exact companies, industries and functional areas you are interested in and ask for specific information.
- Be patient. Some professionals cannot return calls or emails immediately. However, be politely persistent and follow-up on inquiries not returned within three days.
- Do not say you are looking for career advice – that's a burden to your contact person. Instead, have a specific reason for calling like you need their expert information or in need of a referral.
- Keep conversations short and restrict them to a phone call. Don't suggest a lunch or breakfast meeting if what you need to know can be relayed by phone. If a meeting is suggested, take advantage of the face-to-face encounter. It is an opportunity to impress.
- Describe yourself and your objectives and practice this beforehand.
- Prepare in advance a list of questions you have for this person - your reasons for contacting and wanting to meet him/her.
- Acquire contact names for referrals.
- Space repeated calls to contacts appropriately (no sooner than three days; no later than one week) and keep them to the point.
- Write a short thank you note after your initial contact. Express your appreciation for their time and effort and gently remind them of any follow-up activity they promised.

- After you've been hired, write brief notes to each of your contact people to thank them for their support and tell them how their assistance contributed to your success in landing a job. This thoughtful gesture may prove helpful if you need to reactivate your network in the future. You should also offer to reciprocate the support they extended to you should they ever need a resource.

The Interview

The day of the interview:

- Get a good night's sleep the night before.
- Read the newspaper or listen to news radio the day of the interview so you will be knowledgeable about current events and are able to make "small talk" if a topic is raised.
- Dress appropriately for the job. Be neat, clean and professional. A business suit is always a safe choice.
- Arrive early, but not too early, so you can check your appearance and relax. Allow time for getting stuck in traffic or losing your way. If you can make a "dry run" the day before, that should give you a better idea of travel time if it's a new area.
- Bring copies of your resume even though you may already have sent them one, just in case. Bring reference letters, a portfolio or work samples, if appropriate.

Interviewing Tips

- Be aware of your body language.
- Present a firm handshake to both men and women; smile and greet the interviewer by name.
- Avoid chewing gum.
- Have good posture.
- Maintain eye contact. Be enthusiastic and interested.
- Listen carefully and attentively.
- Ask for clarification, if you don't understand a question being asked. If you need more time to respond to a question or provide information, don't hesitate to state that.
- Ask the interviewer insightful questions, but don't ask off-the-wall or hypothetical questions. Be positive and enthusiastic, stress your accomplishments and try to relax.
- While following the interviewer to his or her office or while on a tour, keep up the pace and don't lag behind.
- At the end of the interview, be cordial and thank the interviewer for his or her time. Be direct in asking what the next step is in the hiring process. If appropriate, ask if you can check back with him or her periodically.

Words of Caution

- Don't be negative and complain about anything even when you may be justified.
- Don't take notes. Wait until after the interview.
- Don't think ahead of the conversation.
- Don't talk money unless it's in the context of the job offer.
- Don't try to sell an idea, just sell yourself.
- Don't be too clever, cute or jocular. Pleasant is important; brash doesn't work.

- Don't act as if you know more than the interviewer. Being knowledgeable and confident is one thing; being overbearing or conceited is offensive.
- Don't interrupt when the interviewer is talking.
- Don't ask multiple or lengthy questions.
- Don't talk about yourself for extended amounts of time.
- Don't be vague. Be direct, even about negative aspects, but talk about them in a positive and constructive manner.
- Try not to interview with anyone who doesn't have the authority to hire you unless this is a peer interview to test how you'll fit into a group. If an interview with Human Resources is part of a company's normal hiring protocol, go gladly and remember to impress them as well.

Questions to Expect

An interview is an opportunity to exchange information, learn whether you like the interviewer and whether he or she likes you and judge whether you and the company meet each other's needs.

Be prepared to answer any and all questions that may arise during an interview. Think out your responses beforehand. These questions are designed to encourage you to talk, and the interviewer will be strongly influenced, either negatively or positively, by your responses. The wording of each question will vary widely, but all of the probing is aimed at one central question: *Why should we hire you?*

1. Tell me about yourself. Where do you see yourself in five years? Ten years?
2. What are your strengths and weaknesses?
3. You have changed jobs frequently. Are you still uncertain of your career direction?
4. Are you willing to relocate? Travel?
5. What motivates you?
6. How long would you stay with us?
7. What kind of magazines and books do you read?
8. Who in history do you most admire?
9. What are your short- and long-term goals?
10. What are you looking for in a job?
11. Why do you want to leave your current job?
12. What can you do for us that someone else can't?
13. What are your three most important accomplishments thus far in your career?
14. Why do you want to work for us?
15. Are you creative or analytical? Give examples.
16. Are you a good manager? Give an example.
17. How would you describe your personality? How would others describe your personality?
18. How many people have you hired? What do you look for?
19. Are you a leader? Give an example.
20. How have you helped to increase earnings (reduce costs) for your former employers?
21. How do your subordinates get along with you?
22. What other companies are you talking to?
23. What other positions are you considering?
24. How did you get along with your last boss?
25. Did you enjoy working for your last employer? Explain.
26. How will your major strengths help you in this job?
27. In what way, do you feel you can make the biggest contribution to this firm?

28. What sports do you enjoy?
29. What kind of people are you drawn to? What kind annoys you?
30. Do you have any hobbies?
31. Did you consider looking for a new opportunity within your current company?
32. How did you happen to get into the field?
33. Does your present company know you are planning to leave?
34. Describe the perfect job.
35. Why are you changing fields?
36. If you were starting all over again, what field would you choose?
37. What direct supervisory experience have you had?
38. What did you like most (least) about your last job?
39. How much do you know about the job requirements and our company?
40. Have you ever been fired?
41. What did you major in at college and why?
42. Why didn't you finish college? Do you have any plans to complete your formal education?
43. What is your current salary? What are you looking for?
44. Do you prefer working with others or independently?
45. How would you describe the "ideal" boss?
46. Are you active in any outside groups or organizations?
47. How many hours per week do you think a person should spend on this job?
48. How do you spend your spare time?
49. Could you have done more in your last (or present) job?
50. What suggestions have you offered former employers that were actually adopted?
51. Do you consider yourself successful?
52. What is the most difficult assignment you have tackled?
53. What is the most rewarding assignment you have completed?
54. Are you innovative? Explain.
55. How would this job compare with your last job?
56. Are you considered by friends or colleagues to be ambitious? Explain.
57. Are you a motivator of people? Explain.
58. Are you tough to please? Explain.
59. Do you consider yourself competitive? Explain.
60. What have you done to improve yourself this past year?
61. What is your greatest disappointment in life?
62. How long have you been out of work? What have you been doing while unemployed?
63. Have there been any factors that have held back your progress?

Questions You May Want to Ask

The employment relationship can be looked at as a marriage between you and your employer. It's equally important for both parties to know as much about each other as possible. Because an interview is an opportunity to exchange information, research the company thoroughly and prepare appropriate questions.

1. What are the daily responsibilities? Is there a written job description?
2. Is this a new position? How long has this position been open? How long have people stayed in this position?
3. Exactly what sort of person are you looking for to fill this job?
4. What is the overall structure of the company and how does your department fit in the structure?
5. What are the career paths in this department/organization?

6. What kind of people do you usually look for?
7. How and when will I be reviewed and by what criteria?
8. Can you tell me a little about your own experience with the company? How did you happen to come here?
9. Can you tell me a little about your role? How do you view your group/division/department/company?
10. What do you see ahead for your company in the next five years?
11. How do you see the future for this industry?
12. What have been the department's successes in the last couple of years?
13. How does the company feel about promotions from within?
14. What do you consider to be your firm's most important assets?
15. What can you tell me about your new product?
16. How do you rate your competition?
17. Ask questions relevant to your position to show you've done your homework about the company. For example: "How do you think the (steel) shortage will affect your operations?" "What are your plans for expanding?" "How has technology changed your distribution channels?"
18. What sort of personnel turnover have you experienced in this department?

Follow-Up After the Interview

With the interview still fresh in your mind, take time while you are in the company's parking lot to think about and record details about the interview, such as:

- Names and titles of the people you met with
- Company name, date and time of all interviews for reference purposes
- Whether this was a referral or job interview
- Details of what was discussed, especially "hot buttons"
- Points you may want to emphasize in a thank you note
- Concerns you may have or that the interviewer may have about you which should be addressed in follow-up correspondence or meetings
- An evaluation of how you did and what should be changed

Always send a thank you note to each person with whom you interviewed. This is not only a courtesy, but also allows you to stay in touch with a prospective employer. In the email or letter, you should restate your interest in the job, emphasize a point about your qualifications or address any of the employer's concerns about your candidacy. Let them know that you would like to continue the process.

If you have not had a response from the interviewer or company within one week after the interview, you may email or phone the interviewer. He or she may be awaiting your contact to see if you're truly interested. Your follow-up may be the deciding factor!

Take advantage of every opportunity to favorably impress the interviewer. The follow-up note and phone call may help you stand out from the other candidates in a very competitive market.

If the job is not offered to you in the end, you may want to get some helpful feedback from the hiring manager or from your recruiter. In a follow-up call or email, tell him or her you understand they chose someone else, but for future interviewing purposes, you would like some constructive feedback and advice. (Be

careful not to get defensive - you don't want to come across as asking them to justify their decision.) Thank them for their time and reiterate your interest in their company. A final thank you note is also a good idea. You never know – the person they may have hired might not work out or a more suitable opportunity just may open up.

