

Employment Guide

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Creating Effective RESUMES & COVER LETTERS

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Purpose of a Resume and Needed Resources

What's the purpose of developing a resume?

The resume is a tool used to **market** yourself so that you get the interview! It's a formal, organized summary of your job and job-related experiences, education, and skills. This summary should celebrate you for the purpose of sparking employers' interest so that they will call you for an interview.

You need to have a clear picture of why you are writing your resume. If you aren't certain of what you want, your uncertainty will be reflected in your resume. You get ONE chance to make an impression, whether good or bad. Therefore, you want that impression to show focus and motivation. You will be much more successful in your job search if your goals are clear in your mind and on your resume.

As you are developing your resume, try to look at it from an employer's point of view. Ask yourself, *"If I were an employer, would I want to interview me based on my resume?"* By doing this, you will be more likely to include information in your resume that will take you to the interview level. Your resume won't lead to a job offer on its own, but, if done correctly, will open the door for dialogue and consideration by an interested employer.

What do you need to create your resume?

- An accurate list of the jobs you've held and dates you've held them
- Titles of your positions and descriptions of your responsibilities, work achievements, special projects, and results
- Important and relevant educational and training data
- List of certifications and licenses earned
- Records of relevant conferences or seminars you've attended
- List of action verbs that you can refer to when writing the Work Experience section
- Samples of various resume types to assist you with content and formatting

With these assembled resources, you will be ready to write your resume! You may not use all of this information, but reviewing it and noting it will help you make the many decisions that go into the creation of a resume.

Three Resume Formats

No two job seekers are the same. Each brings a unique set of skills and experiences to the work place. So, when building an effective resume, one size does not fit all. The three resume formats described below are suited to different kinds of job seekers. Review these formats to determine what will work best for you.

1. Chronological

Often called the “traditional” resume, this format is most commonly used. It connects job responsibilities and achievements directly to job experience. It is an excellent format for job seekers who have worked in one occupation and wish to continue in that occupation. A chronological resume presents your education and work experience in a straightforward manner, in reverse chronological order from the most recent or current position to the least recent.

In the samples that follow, the resumes by [Danielle Nichols](#) and [Jessica Monroe](#) are examples of a chronological resume format.

2. Functional (Skills-Oriented)

This format allows you to emphasize your strengths and skills and minimize your flawed or absent employment record. Recent graduates with little professional experience in their fields but with relevant academic work and training may want to consider this format. It relies on grouping key skills and accomplishments together to demonstrate your qualifications and expertise for a particular job. This is also an effective format for career changers and those returning to the workforce after a long absence.

In the samples that follow, [Ian McDonald's](#) resume is an example of a functional resume format.

BONUS TIP:

Employment Connections offers individual Resume Review year round. Once you've written your resume, call 920-735-5627 and schedule an appointment to meet with an employment advisor. This service is free for students, graduates, staff, and community members.

3. Combined (Chronological and Functional)

This format combines the chronological and functional (skills-oriented) formats. It is effective if you have at least some professional related experience in your field of interest and want to feature your skills related to your stated objective. Here your skills and accomplishments are in one section and work experience is in another, listed in reverse chronological order.

In the samples that follow, [Bruce Matthews'](#) resume is an example of a combined resume format.

Resume Sections and How to Write Them

Naming and Ordering Various Resume Sections

The section names and their order vary depending on which format you use and your field of interest. For example, a person applying for an Information Technology position may choose to use a **Technology Skills** section instead of a **Professional Skills** section while someone who has no professional experience but only unrelated (to their stated job objective) job experience may want to use **Work Experience** instead of **Professional Experience**. Section order should be determined by the importance of the content. Those sections which are most significant should be higher in your resume. If your work history is what makes you most qualified for a position, put that before education. If you're a new graduate and have never worked in your field before, education should be near the top of your resume.

Below are three lists of suggested basic section names and section orders corresponding to the specific format:

Chronological Format

Heading
Objective
Professional Skills
Work Experience
Education

Functional Format

Heading
Objective
Skills / Achievements
Education
Work Experience

Combination Format

Heading
Objective
Professional Skills
Education
Related Experience

Additional sections may be appropriate to include in your resume:

Relevant Volunteer Experience	Software/Technology Experience
Honors and Awards	Professional Associations
Military Experience	Languages

Heading

The heading is at the top of your resume and includes your identifying and contact information: **Name**, **Address**, **Phone number**, and **E-mail address**. If you have your own web site or LinkedIn profile, that can be included as well. Look at the heading types on the resume samples later in this guide for ideas.

Here are a few tips regarding your heading:

- Your name should be **bold** and **larger** in character size than the other information.
- Your heading can be centered, aligned left or split right and left. The variations are endless, but it should be simple and easy to read.
- Your phone number can be written in several formats: (920) 555-5555, 920.555.5555, or 920-555-5555.
- Your e-mail address **must** have a professional tone. hairoffthedogdude@gmail.com won't cut it. The best option is to use some kind of combination of your first and last name. If your existing email address is not professional, open up a new account.

Objective

If you are applying for a specific position, your resume needs to clearly indicate the specific job you are seeking and what you have to offer an employer. It is an optional section, but strongly recommended, especially for new graduates.

Use the job posting to help word your objective. This means each time you apply a different position, you are changing your objective.

An objective should include:

1. The specific position (title) you are seeking, using the exact title given by the employer.
2. The name of the employer.
3. If appropriate, some reference to position level or type such as: internship, part-time, full time, entry level, second shift, experienced, professional, supervisory, management or executive.
4. **Marketing language:** References to your experience, skills, abilities, and traits that match the job posting and/or would appeal to the employer. This is what you are offering the employer.

BONUS TIP:

If you have extensive work experience in one or more related fields and wish to stay in the field, you may create a SUMMARY instead of an objective. A summary is a short paragraph or bulleted list that summarizes your qualifications and experience and makes clear your professional goal.

If you are applying to work in particular industry rather than a specific position, many of the same rules apply, but you want to make your objective less specific. If you are writing your resume this way, it is likely for mass consumption, such as distribution at a job fair or networking event. In that case, replace the specific position and company name with the specific type of work and industry or occupation you wish to work.

Objective Template

A good objective should be specific and distinguish you from others. However, it shouldn't be long and wordy. When possible, use terms contained in the position posting. The following template can be very helpful to use when developing your objective.

A (a) position involving (b), (b), and (b) for a (c) organization focused on (d).

- (a) The specific title of the position as advertised
- (b) Tasks using industry specific terminology that only people in the industry recognize and should have been included on the job posting
- (c) The broad term used for the type of organization posting the position, e.g. medical, public safety
- (d) A descriptive term that describes your values that are shared by the organization, e.g. employee development, reducing crime, world class customer service

Example 1: A part-time CNA position involving tracking and charting patient care, assisting patients with ADLs, and actively listening to their needs and concerns for a health care organization focused on providing exceptional quality care

Example 2: An experienced IT Help Desk position involving the diagnosis and resolution of complex programming problems, inter-departmental project support, and system design upgrades for a national sales organization that focuses on providing world class customer service

Example 3: A full time food service management position involving menu creation, budget management, and staff training for a hospitality industry organization that focuses on delivering top quality meals and service in a strong team environment

Education

This section lists your highest or most relevant degree first. If you attended a college but did not complete it and did not earn a degree, it should probably be left off. In addition to credit-based traditional degrees, this section can also include relevant technical diplomas, training certificates or licenses earned. The name and location of the institution must be included, as well as the date of graduation or anticipated date of graduation.

Always list your program name first and **bold** it, so it stands out from the rest of the information around it. If however, you have earned multiple degrees or certifications from one school, list the school name first. If your GPA was 3.5 or higher, or you were involved in **program-related** organizations in school, you can include this information in the Education section. If you have extensive additional training related to your objective, you may want to include it under a **Continuing Education** or **Professional Development** section.

Examples:

Dental Hygienist Associate Degree – August, 2014
Fox Valley Technical College – Appleton, WI
Currently Red Cross CPR Certified

Natural Resources Technician Associate Degree
Fox Valley Technical College – Appleton, WI
Anticipated completion – May, 2014
Internship: Naturalist Assistant

Medical Transcription Technical Diploma – May, 2012
Medical Coding Specialist Technical Diploma – May, 2009
Fox Valley Technical College – Appleton, WI
G.P.A. – 4.0
Phi Theta Kappa Academic Honors Organization

BONUS TIP:

After graduation, how long should you include educational skills and accomplishments on your resume? Check out this YouTube video from technology career experts Dice® for more thoughts on this topic.

Professional Skills

This section is a listing of the professional skills that relate to the position you're applying for or field that you want to enter. The skills you will list should be *technical* in nature, meaning they are skills that can be demonstrated, or measured. They should not be general attributes. For example, in the case of a nurse, "IV Insertion/Removal" is a skill. Someone working in IT might list "Windows 7 and 10 Operating Systems" as a skill. A carpenter could list "Veneering" as a skill. "Hard Worker", "Team Player" and "Punctual" are not skills.

An example of a professional skills section in a combination format resume for someone in food services could look like this:

Cooking Skills

- Fabrication of different cuts of meat, including chicken, pork, lamb and fish
- Variety of specialty cuts such as chiffonade, oblique, brunoise and batonnet
- Dry and moist cooking methods including baking, braising, smoking, broiling, barbecuing and combination cooking

Baking Skills

- Production of fondant for cake covering, cake decals and modeling
- Cake production from 2 – 4 tiers
- Cake airbrushing and sculpting

Leadership and Management

- Upgrading of quality food operations and profitability through innovative menu planning
- Planning full-service catering operations, serving groups of 300+
- Recipe and menu development, product ordering, directing kitchen operations, scheduling, regulating compliance and food/labor cost management.

Work Experience

Section Title Options: This section may be titled in different ways.

- **Work Experience, or Related Experience**
 - Use this title for varied paid experiences.
- **Clinical (or Internship) Experience**
 - Use this title to feature the important accomplishments and applied skills from your clinical(s) or internship.
- **Professional Experience**
 - Use this title if your professionally relates to your objective.
- **Experience**
 - Use this title if you are including a combination of paid, volunteer, internship, clinical experience.
 - Clearly distinguish paid experience from volunteer experience.

Work Experience for a chronological resume: This section is a reverse chronological list of your individual past positions. Omit short-term irrelevant work and work that you did **more than 10 years ago** unless there is a strong connection to your objective. A resume is different from a job application which may require you to list all previous work experience. Also, omit your high school work experience unless it is both very recent and relevant.

For each position, list your job title first and make it bold so it jumps off the page, then list the employer name, location and dates. **Include a bulleted list of key accomplishments, successes, and achievements that are relevant to the position(s) you are applying for.** Emphasize your **relevant transferable skills** in your experience bullets. These are skills that may have been gained in seemingly unrelated jobs, but market you well for your current objective. They may relate to your customer service, presentation, organization, or conflict resolution skills. Look at the transferable skills resource at the end of this guide for additional skills that could promote an interview opportunity.

BONUS TIP:
Bullets should market you as action oriented and therefore start with a verb (present tense if you are still performing the action and past tense if not). When possible, it is essential to qualify and quantify achievements/successes by stating what you did and the end results.

Example:

Sales Manager

JC Penney Company, Inc., Oshkosh, WI 2012 – Present

- Created new layout, grouping like items together, creating additional customer traffic and increasing profit margins by 60% within 2 years
- Trained 50 customer service representatives on new system software without need for re-training
- Consistently ranked in top five percent of top performing stores in the state

Work Experience for a functional resume: Within a functional resume, the work experience section is a summary of previously held positions. It is identical to that of a chronological resume, but without the bulleted list of achievements or responsibilities.

Example:

Professional Summary

Sales Associate

JC Penney Company, Inc., Oshkosh, WI

August 2008 – Present

Sales Assistant

Mid-West Communications, Neenah, WI

June 2005 – August 2008

You're not done yet! Review the Resume Checklist, then look at the following examples to see how we pull all this together.

Resume Checklist

Overview

	Is your resume professional looking, error free, and a statement of honesty?
	Does your resume demonstrate that you have kept your objective in mind?
	Does the language positively market your qualifications and achievements?
	From the employer's perspective, is your resume an impressive, easy-to-read document that provides enough reasons to invite you for an interview?

Organization

	Did you use the proper format: chronological, functional, or combined?	
	If your contact information complete and ALL at the top of the page?	Are experience entries listed most recent first?
	Are the most relevant or professionally impressive sections toward the top of the page?	Are education entries listed either highest or most relevant first?

Content – Does your resume...

	Gives a complete and sharply focused picture of why you should be called for an interview?	Include jobs usually from the past 10 years only?
	Includes at a minimum: objective, skills or qualifications, education, and experience sections?	Use bulleted verb phrases to describe your accomplishments/duties, NOT hard-to-read paragraphs?
	Includes additional RELEVANT sections: honors, awards, volunteer experience, professional interests, and memberships?	NOT include lists of unrelated duties, references, work addresses, supervisor names, photos, and salary information?
	Uses keywords and key phrases from your career field and action verbs to make your experience and training jump from the page?	

Appearance

	One page? – Unless you have lots of relevant experience.	Appealing to the eye with enough white space to make it easy to read AND not a template?
	100% error free of spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and spacing errors?	Clearly organized by section headings in bold font
	Saved as a .pdf for easy emailing?	Consistent use of dates, dashes, font, character size, and style (bold, italic, underline)?
	Tabbed margins and bullets line up perfectly?	

BONUS TIP:

If you left any box unchecked, you need to continue to improve your resume before actively using it in your job search. Consider making an appointment with an Employment Advisor to help you. This is a free service. Visit the Employment Connections office on the Appleton Campus in Room E135 or Call Us at (920) 735-5627

BONUS TIP:

Once you've completed your resume, consider **posting it on Wisconsin TechConnect™**. This is our free, statewide job search website for all students and graduates in Associate Degree and Technical Diploma Programs. Once posted, employers can view your resume when they post jobs in your program area. Some may even contact you directly!

Resume Example
Chronological Format

Danielle Nichols

987 Drews Street
Appleton, WI 54915
920-555-1234
dnichols@email.net

Objective	A full-time Claims Cost Management Specialist position with Humana Insurance, processing claims, providing data analysis, and delivering exceptional customer service to increase business efficiency and customer satisfaction	
Professional Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Medical business accounting• Employee training• Claims processing• Accounting software	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Customer service• Data reporting and analysis• Microsoft Office 2013• Windows 7
Education and Training	Accounting Associate Degree Fox Valley Technical College Appleton, WI <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Phi Theta Kappa Academic Honors Society	May 2015
	Medical Business Specialist Certification Northeast Wisconsin Technical College Green Bay, WI	May 2013
Work Experience	Medical Services Assistant Davis Eye Clinic Green Bay, WI <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Perform patient customer service for four physicians related to office, testing, and surgical appointments• Maintain patient and insurance billing spreadsheet records• Develop new clinic patient data spreadsheet to replace outdated tracking system	May 2013 – Present
	Retail Clerk Sporting Goods, Inc. Appleton, WI <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provided customer service to the general public in-store and by phone• Managed cash sales, cashiering, and performed minor accounting duties• Worked within a sales team to schedule work and market sales on floor• Performed on-floor training for all new clerks	Jan 2011 – May 2013
	Waitress Joy's Pizza and Family Restaurant Kimberly, WI <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provided customer service related to ordering, servicing, and billing in an 80-customer restaurant with expansive take-out component• Created and wrote procedures for take-out customer service• Assisted in training of over 20 new waitresses	Feb 2007 – Jan 2011
Volunteer Experience	Accountant and Tax Consultant Appleton Community Church Appleton, WI	May 2013 – Present
Professional Associations	Wisconsin Institute of Certified Public Accountants National Institute of Accountants	June 2013 – Present August 2013 – Present

Resume Format
Chronological Format

Jessica Monroe, RN

123 Herb Street
Appleton, WI 54915
(920) 555-4321
jessmonroe@email.net
linkedin.com/in/jess.monroe

Recent Nursing graduate, seeking health care position providing compassionate, patient-centered care in a strong team environment focused on a holistic approach to patient health

EDUCATION

Fox Valley Technical College – Appleton, WI

- Nursing Associate Degree May 2015
 - GPA 4.0 – Dean’s List
- Practical Nursing Technical Diploma May 2014
- HIHSS Stroke Certification (#90028) December 2015
- Nursing Assistant Certification (#81971) March 2014
- American Heart Association BLS/CPR Certification March 2014

MEMBERSHIPS / VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

- **President** (two terms), FVTC Student Nursing Association
- **Member**, FVTC Phi Theda Kappa
- **Medical Pavilion Volunteer**, Fox Cities Marathon
- **Jamaica Service Trip**, FVTC
- **Wheelchair Wash**, FVTC

INTERNSHIP

Surgical GI Oncology Nurse (96 Hours) Appleton Medical Center | Appleton, WI December 2014

- Participated in full patient care under supervision of nurse preceptor
- Collaborated with healthcare team members about patient status and treatments
- Performed central line removals, dressing and wound care, HG tube placement, administered vaccines

CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

- **Med/Surg, Cardiac, Behavioral Health, LTC and OB/GYN** units April 2014 – Present
at various facilities including Appleton Medical Center, St. Elizabeth Hospital,
Mercy Medical Center and Peabody Manor

WORK EXPERIENCE

Certified Nursing Assistant, Valley VNA | Neenah, WI June 2014 – Present

- Assist 35+ elderly residents with Activities of Daily Living (ADLs)
- Function when needed as acting CNA manager for facility
- Record vital signs and administer medications in accordance with care plan

Direct Support Provider, Clarity Care | Neenah, WI April 2013 – June 2014

- Worked in two group homes and assisted 50+ residents with personal care and needs, including those with brain injuries, autism, learning disabilities, and rehabilitation needs
- Trained clients in appropriate behaviors and social skills in various community settings and outings

Resume Example
Functional Format

Ian McDonald

222 E. Terrell Road, Appleton, WI 54911
920.555.8525
ianm@email.net

Employment Objective

An automotive mechanic position involving testing and diagnosis of engine problems, parts replacement, and repair for an auto dealership focused on providing superior customer service

Education

Automotive Technology Associate Degree
Fox Valley Technical College | Appleton, WI
• GPA 3.6

Anticipated Graduation May 2017

Professional Skills

Technical

- Interpret manuals, computer programs, and procedures provided by manufacturers in the service and repair of highly technical vehicles
- Demonstrate technical abilities in the areas of electrical/electronic systems, automatic transmission/transaxle, manual drive train and axles, suspension and steering, brakes, heating and AC, and engine performance and repair

Diagnostic

- Analyze vehicle problems by testing to determine which vehicle parts need repair or replacement
- Achieved competency in the operation of the chassis dynamometer for diagnosis of problems
- Problem-solved FVTC drag car operational problems to achieve higher performance

Safety

- Use safety procedures and practices in all phases of service and repair of machinery, test equipment, chemicals, and solvents

Computer and Communication

- Test and diagnose vehicle operation using appropriate computer software
- Produce quality written documents using Microsoft Office 2013

Volunteer Activities

Beat the Heat Auto Club

2015 - Present

- Assist in organizing various auto club events every year as class representative
- Work on the FVTC drag car that the school races in the summer and fall

Work Experience

Bartender

Appleton Beer Factory

Appleton, WI

August 2014 – Present

Dishwasher

Wok This Way

Milwaukee, WI

June 2013 – August 2014

General Labor

New Berlin Packaging

New Berlin, WI

September 2011 – June 2013

Resume Format
Combination Format

Bruce Matthews
74 Titan Drive | Appleton, WI 54915
920-983-2001 | Matthewsb@email.com
[linkedin.com/in/matthewsb](https://www.linkedin.com/in/matthewsb)

OBJECTIVE

LTE Fisheries Technician with the Wisconsin DNR, using various assessment tools such as fyke nets and electrofishing gear to assist fisheries biologists with spring and summer lake and stream surveys in Northeast Wisconsin.

EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATIONS

Natural Resources Technician Associate Degree
Fox Valley Technical College | Appleton, WI

May 2016

- GPA 3.8
- Natural Resource Club Member
- Project Learning Tree Certification
- Project Aquatic Certification
- Project Wild Certification
- FISTA Class 1 Certification

SKILLS

- Fyke netting and stream shocking
- Lake and stream surveying
- Biological data collection
- Water quality assessments
- Habitat improvement, design and construction
- Egg collection and fertilization
- Water sample analysis
- Fish age and growth analysis
- Design, construction and maintenance of fishing gear
- GPS Mapping

EXPERIENCE

Fisheries Technician Internship

May 2015 – Present

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resource | Wild Rose, WI

- Cut and remove woody vegetation along stream corridors
- Install in-stream habitat such as brush bundles, bank covers and lunger structures
- Cut braided stream sections by dredging sand
- Empty in-stream sand traps

Summer Naturalist

May 2014 – December 2014

Mosquito Hill Nature Center | New London, WI

- Controlled/eradicated invasive species via backpack spraying and cut/dab methods
- Installed pollinator garden and memorial tree/shrub display
- Managed nature center property via mowing, chainsaw work, timber stand, reclamation/improvement and trail maintenance
- Oversaw a variety of volunteers and volunteer groups

Cover Letter Writing

In the past, employers required or expected cover letters for most jobs, however, this is changing. A cover letter is still an important part of your job search toolkit, but be sure to understand the target employer's expectations before sending one. When applying for a posted position, following directions is essential to your success. If the employer requires a cover letter, then send one. If a cover letter is "optional", then send one because you will appear lazy if you don't. Finally, if a cover letter is not required, follow directions and do not waste the employer's time.

The Purposes of a Cover Letter

The cover letter's purposes are to:

- Introduce you to an employer for the purpose of employment
- Match your professional qualifications, skills, and accomplishments to the position's requirements
- Market yourself by positively presenting your key skills
- Demonstrate your written communication skills
- Show your professional personality

Cover Letter Content Format

A cover letter includes seven parts. Refer to the cover letter samples later in this guide to see how these parts come together.

1. **Heading** – The preferred heading option is to copy and paste your resume heading onto your cover letter to create a "matched set" appearance. Below that, include the date. The date should be the same date as the date you plan to mail your resume and cover letter.
2. **Inside Address** – This includes the name of the person to whom your cover letter is being sent, his/her position, title, company name, and address. The job posting may give you this information, but it may not. Take the initiative by calling the company to confirm the name, spelling, and position title.
3. **Salutation** – This is brief and formal, preferably *Dear Ms. ___:* or *Dear Mr. ___:* Use the last name only. Current business writing etiquette suggests NOT using *Mrs.* or *Miss.* If you are unable to obtain a name, write *Dear Hiring Manager.* Do NOT use the impersonal *To Whom It May Concern.*
4. **Body Paragraphs** – These paragraphs comprise the major content of your cover letter. There are usually four paragraphs as specifically described here.
 - **1st Paragraph**
 - Identify the position you are applying for, how you found out about it and refer to some complimentary research information about the company as a rationale for your letter.
 - Use language that results in favorable attention.
 - Do NOT mention personal problems or why you are leaving your current job.
 - Provide a transition into your next paragraph.

- **2nd Paragraph**
 - Convince the employer that you fit the job and the company.
 - Specify the job requirements and how you're qualified for each.
 - Refer to your resume and emphasize your experience and most significant qualifications and accomplishments.
 - Sell yourself using positive, flag-waving language without overdoing it.
 - Include your specific self-management and transferable skills that would apply to the job.
 - Consider using bullets to make a list readable and noticeable.
 - Do NOT be generic. Your cover letter should specifically reflect you.
- **3rd Paragraph**
 - This is your call to action. Indicate your willingness to have a meeting about the position and ask for the interview.
 - Use polite language and continue to be positive about yourself.
 - Refer to a positive future by saying that you look forward to hearing from that person soon.
 - Consider being assertive by saying that you will contact the company within a week to inquire about the status of available position, the company's needs, the interview schedule, or whatever is appropriate for your purpose.
- **4th Paragraph**
 - Say thank you for considering your resume.

5. **Closing** – Use *Sincerely*, or *Sincerely yours*, and type it three lines below the last paragraph.
6. **Signature** – Type your name five lines below the closing, making certain that you use the complete name that you used in your resume heading. Don't forget to sign your letter.
7. **Attachment(s)** –This refers to your resume and other possible documents you include in your resume packet. Type the word below your typed signature.

BONUS TIP:

When emailing your resume and cover letter to an employer, include your name and the position you're applying for in the email subject line. This will make it easier for the company receiving your documents.

Cover Letter Tips

Layout and Formatting Tips

- **Copy and paste** the heading section from your resume into your cover letter. This will give both your documents a professional, matched appearance.
- Use at least **one-inch** margins left, right, top and bottom.
- **Length**-wise, write a letter that is $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a page long, including only information relevant to the available position related to your qualifications, skills, accomplishments, or traits.
- Use a **block format**, aligning text to the left. Skip a line between paragraphs. *Do not indent paragraphs.*
- Use **consistent** symbols, bullets, font type, and dash lengths.
- Do not use any **graphics**.
- Select a formal **font** and readable **character size**; for example, consider Times New Roman (11-12 pts.) or Tahoma (10-11 pts.)
- Insert three lines below the closing before the signature line. **Sign** your letter if sending a hard copy!!
- DON'T use **staples** or paper clips as these can catch other papers and annoy the reviewer.
- **If you are mailing** your resume and cover letter, use a large mailing envelope or business size envelope, and type the address.

Writing Tips

- **Spelling** – Get it right! Don't just use spell check. To catch all errors, several people should carefully proofread your letter. Don't use abbreviations or contractions.
- **Capitalization** – Be correct and consistent. Also, spell out most acronyms.
- **Punctuation** – Be formal and consistent. Good punctuation enhances comprehension, but unneeded punctuation is distracting.
- **Word choice** – Sell yourself using a variety of words, including action verbs, and descriptive adjectives and adverbs. Use key word nouns and verbs that resume and cover letter scanners would identify related to the specific job qualifications. Avoid redundancy.
- **Attitude** – Demonstrate interest and enthusiasm in the position and field. Share your passion without going overboard.
- **Variety of sentence length and type** – This keeps interest and discourages the overuse of "I".
- **Good content** – Reflect on the highlights of your resume content. Make sure you have ample content that positively and enthusiastically markets your qualifications and skills for your stated objective.
- **Transition language** – Use words that link paragraphs and sentences, like *first, next, then, also, in addition, as well as, however, as a result, this, therefore,* etc. These words create flow and readability and demonstrate good writing skills.
- **Parallel verb/noun lists and phrases** – This means using the same form of verb endings within a list, or using nouns as key words within a list. The result is better comprehension and flow.

Cover Letter Example
(Column style)

Danielle Nichols

987 Drews Street
Appleton, WI 54915
920-555-1234
dnichols@email.net

January 18, 2015

Ms. Karen Smith
Human Resource Manager
Humana
1100 Employers Road
Green Bay, WI 54344

Dear Ms. Smith:

I am writing to apply for the position of Claims Cost Management Specialist advertised on the Humana job web site. The enclosed resume illustrates how my qualifications are an excellent match for the position's requirements.

Position Requirements

- Associate Degree in related area
- Customer service skills
- Working knowledge of various insurance plans and accounting
- Analyzing and problem-solving
- Communication skills

My Qualifications

- Both Associate Degree in Accounting and Medical Business Specialist Certification with continued training in medical insurance
- Two years of customer service experience in a medical office patiently servicing adults of all backgrounds; two additional years serving customers within retail and food industries
- Verified, reviewed, and billed insurance claims for four physicians; Assisted in accounts payable and receivable for retail business; practiced all areas of accounting in coursework for Financial Accounting and Cost Accounting
- Analyzed hundreds of claims, payments, and reviews; resolved patient tracking information problems by creating new spreadsheet; Developed new take-out procedures for restaurant.
- Developed excellent phone, verbal and listening skills with customers; maintained good rapport with patients, physicians, supervisors, and staff

I am confident that my skills, experience and education would make me a great Claims Cost Management Specialist and I would appreciate the chance to meet with you and discuss this position further. I will contact you after the posted application deadline to discuss that possibility.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to our discussion.

Sincerely,

Danielle Nichols

Danielle Nichols

Attachment: Resume

Cover Letter Example
(Bulleted Paragraph
Style)

Ian McDonald

222 E. Terrell Road, Appleton, WI 54911
920.555.8525
ianm@email.net

April 14, 2015

Mr. Charlie Cupp
Service Department Manager
Zimbrick Honda Service Center
430 Grand Canyon Drive
Madison, WI 53719

Dear Mr. Cupp:

As a highly trained professional in the field of automotive technology, I am applying for the position of Automotive Technician-Entry Level as advertised in the Madison Capitol Times. I believe that my skills, energy level, and dedication will combine to make me a very good addition to your service technology team.

My background and qualifications are very much in line with the requirements outlined for this Technician position.

- My recently completed Associate Degree in Automotive Technology from Fox Valley Technical College has prepared me extremely well for your entry-level position.
- Within my program, I demonstrated high competencies in all eight areas of Automotive Service Excellence Standards using both my diagnostic and technical abilities.
- Within my academic work and class projects, I worked hard to develop my team work skills so that assignments and tasks were efficiently completed in a productive and cooperative environment.
- As required, my driving record is clean, my personal tool set is complete, and my personal vehicle is in excellent condition.

I would enjoy meeting with you to learn more about this position and answer your questions. I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Thank you for considering my qualifications.

Sincerely,

Ian McDonald

Ian McDonald

Attachment: resume

Cover Letter Example
(Bullethead Paragraph
Style)

Jessica Monroe, RN

123 Herb Street
Appleton, WI 54915
(920) 555-4321
jessmonroe@email.net
linkedin.com/in/jess.monroe

January 16, 2016

Ms. Melissa Burton
Human Resource Manager
Mercy Medical Health Clinic
500 S. Oakwood Road
Oshkosh, WI 54904

Dear Ms. Burton:

As a recent graduate from Fox Valley Technical College with an Associate Degree in Nursing, I was excited to see the Registered Nurse position posted on your web site. My goal has always been to provide skilled, passionate, holistic medical care to those in need. This is an exciting time at Mercy Medical Center and I would love to be part of your organization's growth. I believe my training and experience would add tremendous value to your care team.

Allow me to highlight the excellent qualifications and contributions I can bring to this position:

- Over two years' experience working with patients as a Direct Support Provider for Clarity Care and a Licensed Practical Nurse at Valley VNA with proven success in elder and disabled client care resulting in four outstanding supervisory evaluations
- Completion of four 9-week practical nursing clinical rotations within clinic and hospital settings
- Excellent patient relations, time-management, interpersonal and communication skills, developed through work experiences and rigorous clinical studies, resulting in high evaluations.
- Ability to perform both independently and as part of a team, being personable yet focused in an effort to contribute toward cooperative working relationships among management, physicians, and support staff.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and discuss this position in greater detail. I will contact you within the next week to discuss this position and answer any questions you may have.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely

Jessica Monroe

Jessica Monroe, RN

Reference Tips

Preparing references may seem like a far less important job search task compared to networking, researching, resume writing, and interviewing. However, having good references is crucial your job search.

Think about references from the viewpoint of the hiring manager. An accepted offer means an employer is about to make a significant investment in hiring you. Do your references confirm who you project yourself to be?

Since your references can advance the hiring process or stop it cold, consider these suggestions:

1. Do NOT list names of references on your resume.

Unless an employer's application process directs you otherwise, references should always be written on a separate document. If you have a job-search portfolio, keep the list in your portfolio.

2. Give your references only when requested.

You want to be viewed as someone who follows directions. Also, you want to discourage employers from contacting references before interviewing. If at all possible, have your positive face-to-face interview before submitting your references.

3. Copy and paste your resume heading.

The heading should match your resume and cover letter. Under your heading write and center the title *References*. [See the sample reference page.](#)

BONUS TIP:

How many references should you include? That can depend on your work and education history, but the standard is generally considered to be three to five references.

4. Think carefully about reference choices.

Three to five references is the standard number to include. Base your choices on who will offer the strongest recommendations for you. Former supervisors, managers, co-workers, customers, vendors, and academic instructors are people to consider. Think of contacts not only from paid experiences, but also from internships and volunteer experiences. Don't include family members or personal friends. Hiring managers won't consider them because they don't know you as an employee or won't present an honest evaluation of you. Select references based on who best knows your work habits and achievements and who will say positive things about you.

5. Make sure you receive permission to use someone as a reference.

Be polite and smart! Before including a name on your reference list, ask for permission. Not everyone wishes to be a reference and failing to ask can create a reference catastrophe for you and end the hiring process. You want your references to be comfortable and prepared to talk about you when the hiring manager calls.

6. Inform and even coach your references.

Give a copy of your current resume to all of your references. Share your skills, accomplishments, and goals, and inform them of the positions you are applying for. It is appropriate to ask them what they plan to share with the hiring manager. To strengthen their responses to possible reference questions, consider politely coaching them. Alert them if you expect a potential employer to call.

BONUS TIP:

Remember to thank your references once you get the job. They may or may not have been contacted. Either way, they were willing to help you, and thanking them is the polite thing to do.

7. Collect all the details for each reference.

Confirm all contact information from each reference: full name, current title, company name, business address, phone number(s), and e-mail address.

Danielle Nichols

987 Drews Street
Appleton, WI 54915
920-555-1234
dnichols@email.net

References

Gerald Smith
Accounting Program Lead/Instructor
Fox Valley Technical College
Appleton, WI
(920) 735-1234
smithg@fvtc.edu

Susan Miller
Accounting Instructor
Fox Valley Technical College
Appleton, WI
(920) 735-4321
millersu@fvtc.edu

Gary Morgenson
Manager
Radio Shack
Neenah, WI
(920) 722-3911
garymorg@radioshack.com

Michael Graziano
Production Manager
LS & S, Inc.
Neenah, WI
(920) 722-4311
mgraziano@lfs.com

BONUS TIP:

If you would like to use an instructor as a reference, you must first fill out an Employment Reference Form and hand it in to Enrollment Services in E111. Without signing this form, an instructor is legal prohibited from speaking about you to an employer.

[Click Here to Access the Employment Reference Form](#)

Action Verb List

Communication/People Skills

Addressed	Conveyed	Formulated	Moderated	Reported
Advertised	Convinced	Furnished	Negotiated	Resolved
Arbitrated	Corresponded	Incorporated	Observed	Responded
Arranged	Debated	Influenced	Outlined	Solicited
Articulated	Defined	Interacted	Participated	Specified
Authored	Developed	Interpreted	Persuaded	Spoke
Clarified	Directed	Interviewed	Presented	Suggested
Collaborated	Discussed	Involved	Promoted	Summarized
Communicated	Drafted	Joined	Proposed	Synthesized
Composed	Edited	Judged	Publicized	Translated
Condensed	Elicited	Lectured	Reconciled	Wrote
Conferred	Enlisted	Listened	Recruited	
Consulted	Explained	Marketed	Referred	
Contacted	Expressed	Mediated	Reinforced	

Creative Skills

Acted	Customized	Fashioned	Invented	Revised
Adapted	Designed	Formulated	Kickstarted	Revitalized
Began	Developed	Founded	Modeled	Shaped
Combined	Directed	Illustrated	Modified	Solve
Composed	Displayed	Initiated	Originated	
Conceptualized	Drew	Instituted	Performed	
Condensed	Entertained	Integrated	Photographed	
Created	Established	Introduced	Planned	

Data/Financial Skills

Administered	Audited	Corrected	Marketed	Projected
Adjusted	Balanced	Determined	Measured	Qualified
Allocated	Budgeted	Developed	Netted	Reconciled
Analyzed	Calculated	Estimated	Planned	Reduced
Appraised	Computed	Forecasted	Prepared	Researched
Assessed	Conserved	Managed	Programmed	Retrieved

Helping Skills

Adapted	Clarified	Educated	Helped	Represented
Advised	Coached	Encouraged	Insured	Resolved
Advocated	Collaborated	Ensured	Intervened	Simplified
Aided	Contributed	Expedited	Motivated	Supplied
Answered	Cooperated	Facilitated	Prevented	Supported
Arranged	Counseled	Familiarized	Provided	Volunteered
Assessed	Demonstrated	Furthered	Referred	
Assisted	Diagnosed	Guided	Rehabilitated	

Management/Leadership Skills

Administered	Coordinated	Headed	Navigated	Reviewed
Analyzed	Decided	Hired	Organized	Scheduled
Appointed	Delegated	Hosted	Originated	Secured
Approved	Developed	Improved	Overhauled	Selected
Assigned	Directed	Incorporated	Oversaw	Strategized
Attained	Eliminated	Increased	Planned	Streamlined
Authorized	Emphasized	Initiated	Presided	Strengthened
Chaired	Enforced	Inspected	Prioritized	Supervised
Considered	Enhanced	Instituted	Produced	Terminated
Consolidated	Established	Led	Recommended	
Contracted	Executed	Managed	Reorganized	
Controlled	Generated	Merged	Replaced	
Converted	Handled	Motivated	Restored	

Organizational Skills

Approved	Corrected	Maintained	Purchased	Submitted
Arranged	Corresponded	Monitored	Recorded	Supplied
Catalogued	Distributed	Obtained	Registered	Standardized
Categorized	Executed	Operated	Reserved	Systematized
Charted	Filed	Ordered	Responded	Updated
Classified	Generated	Organized	Reviewed	Validated
Coded	Incorporated	Prepared	Routed	Verified
Collected	Inspected	Processed	Scheduled	
Compiled	Logged	Provided	Screened	

Research Skills

Analyzed	Determined	Formulated	Measured	Surveyed
Clarified	Diagnosed	Gathered	Organized	Systematized
Collected	Evaluated	Inspected	Researched	Tested
Compared	Examined	Interviewed	Reviewed	
Conducted	Experimented	Invented	Searched	
Critiqued	Explored	Investigated	Solved	
Detected	Extracted	Located	Summarized	

Teaching Skills

Adapted	Coordinated	Explained	Instilled	Taught
Advised	Critiqued	Facilitated	Instructed	Tested
Clarified	Developed	Focused	Motivated	Trained
Coached	Enabled	Guided	Persuaded	Transmitted
Communicated	Encouraged	Individualized	Simulated	Tutored
Conducted	Evaluated	Informed	Stimulated	

Technical Skills

Adapted	Constructed	Fabricated	Programmed	Solved
Applied	Converted	Fortified	Rectified	Specialized
Assembled	Debugged	Installed	Regulated	Standardized
Built	Designed	Maintained	Remodeled	Studied
Calculated	Determined	Operated	Repaired	Upgraded
Computed	Developed	Overhauled	Replaced	Utilized
Conserved	Engineered	Printed	Restored	

Taken from website: http://www.quintcareers.com/action_skills.html#manage

Adjective & Adverb List

academic (ally)	dignified	Large (ly)	quiet (ly)
accurate (ly)	discreet (ly)	leisurely	rational (ly)
active (ly)	dominant (ly)	liberal (ly)	realistic (ally)
adventurous (ly)	eager (ly)	likable	reflective (ly)
aggressive (ly)	easygoing	logical (ly)	relaxed
alert	efficient (ly)	loyal (ly)	reliable (ably)
ambitious (ly)	energetic (ly)	mammoth	reserved
analytical (ly)	enormous (ly)	mature (ly)	resourceful (ly)
artistic (ly)	fair-minded	methodical (ly)	responsible (ibly)
assertive (ly)	farsighted	meticulous (ly)	robust (ly)
attractive (ly)	firm (ly)	mild (ly)	self-confident(ly)
bold (ly)	flexible (ibly)	moderate (ly)	self-controlled
broad-minded (ly)	forceful (ly)	modest (ly)	sensible (ibly)
businesslike	formal (ly)	motivated	sensitive (ly)
calm (ly)	frank (ly)	natural (ly)	serious (ly)
capable (ably)	friendly	obliging (ly)	significant (ly)
careful (ly)	generous (ly)	opportunistic	sincere (ly)
cautious (ly)	good-natured (ly)	optimistic (ally)	sociable (ably)
challenging	healthy	organized	spontaneous (ly)
cheerful (ly)	helpful (ly)	original (ly)	stable
clever (ly)	high (ly)	outgoing	strategic (ally)
competent (ly)	honest(ly)	painstaking (ly)	steady (ily)
competitive (ly)	huge	patient (ly)	strong (ly)
confident (ly)	humorous (ly)	persevering	strong-minded
conscientious (ly)	imaginative (ly)	persistent (ly)	successful (ly)
conservative (ly)	imposing	pleasant (ly)	supportive
considerate (ly)	independent (ly)	poised	tactful (ly)
consistent (ly)	individualistic	polite (ly)	teachable
cooperative (ly)	industrious (ly)	practical (ly)	tenacious (ly)
courageous (ly)	informal (ly)	precise (ly)	thorough (ly)
creative (ly)	intellectual (ly)	progressive (ly)	thoughtful (ly)
curious (ly)	intelligent (ly)	prudent (ly)	
deliberate (ly)	inventive	purposeful (ly)	
determined	Kind (ly)	quick (ly)	

Transferable Skills for Your Resume and Cover Letter

Doing a good job of marketing your job skills within your resume and cover letter can increase the likelihood of obtaining an interview or job offer. Job skills can be organized into various categories or skill sets that can be used to demonstrate how skills that have been learned and applied in one job situation can be transferred and applied to a similar or new job or career.

Below is a list of five broad skill areas, which are divided into more specific job skills:

Communication:

- Speaking effectively
- Expressing ideas
- Negotiating
- Providing feedback
- Writing concisely
- Persuading
- Interviewing
- Listening attentively
- Editing
- Facilitating discussion
- Describing feelings
- Reporting information
- Presenting information

Research and Planning:

- Forecasting, predicting
- Designing
- Analyzing
- Extracting important information
- Creating ideas
- Identifying resources
- Prioritizing
- Brainstorming alternatives
- Identifying problems
- Gathering information
- Setting goals
- Developing evaluation strategies
- Solving problems
- Defining needs
- Concluding

Human Relations:

- Developing rapport
- Listening
- Motivating
- Entertaining
- Counseling
- Working on a team
- Providing support
- Delegating
- Representing others
- Teaching
- Perceiving feelings
- Conveying feelings
- Asserting
- Cooperating
- Supervising
- Training
- Selling/Marketing
- Mediating
- Negotiating
- Translating

Organization, Management, and Leadership:

- Initiating new ideas
- Handling details
- Coaching
- Diagnosing
- Holding others accountable
- Coordinating tasks
- Counseling
- Decision making
- Troubleshooting
- Delegating responsibility
- Managing groups
- Teaching
- Promoting change
- Leadership
- Analyzing
- Prioritizing
- Managing conflict
- Team Building

General Work:

- Implementing decisions
- Being punctual
- Meeting goals
- Maintaining equipment
- Troubleshooting
- Gathering data
- Setting and meeting deadlines
- Cooperating
- Managing time
- Enlisting help
- Making decisions
- Researching
- Data Entry
- Enforcing policies
- Attending to detail
- Desktop publishing
- Sketching/Drawing
- Budgeting/Accounting
- Data Management
- Calculating
- Organizing
- Keyboarding
- Assembling
- Repairing
- Accountability

Preparing for an INTERVIEW

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Research and Personal Inventory

CONGRATULATIONS! Your resume and cover letter worked! You have an interview! Now you have to prepare for your interview through research and the development of a personal inventory.

Research the Company or Organization

This will take some time but it's a MUST for two reasons. First, is to **demonstrate your knowledge and interest in the organization to your interviewers**. This alone could mark the difference between you and all other candidates and land you an offer. Richard N. Bolles, employment specialist and author (*What Color Is Your Parachute*) wrote of a graduating senior whose interview ended abruptly when the senior couldn't tell the IBM college recruiter what IBM stood for. Why should an employer consider investing time and money in you knowing you won't even take the initiative to do basic research?

Research company literature, the company website, or any other company resources. Learn as much as you can about its history, products/services, mission, current goals/projects, as well as the current employment scene and specific opening. Also, consider researching the organization's competition. All of this information will help you respond intelligently to interview questions and demonstrate your knowledge and interest in the organization.

The second reason is **to help you decide if this particular business is a good match for you**. Of course, you'll learn a lot about the organization at the interview, but the information you pick up from your research before the interview will enable you to formulate a sense of whether you want to invest your future in this organization. From your research, you can start a list of questions that YOU want answered. At appropriate times in the interview process, you can ask these questions to help you decide if you want to continue to be considered for employment.

Preparation for salary or wage discussions

Get as much salary or wage information as you can from the organization beforehand. The job posting may include some information. Use various online and print resources to determine a range of appropriate pay for the level and type of position you're applying for in your geographic area. Your local chamber of commerce, employment agencies, university and technical college career and employment departments, and public libraries have salary/wage information in print. Program salary information is available at Employment Connections for entry level positions for the past 5 years. There are many online websites offering free wage range information. These include www.salary.com, www.payscale.com, and www.salaryexpert.com.

Prepare a Personal Inventory

Before you have your interview, make an inventory of your skills, areas of expertise, training, strengths, weaknesses, personal work traits, interests, and areas of knowledge, etc. Create a list of these with some detail. Add to this inventory as you progress in your career. Review it before every interview so that you grow in confidence and can more effectively market yourself. Prepare for each interview by selecting the inventory information that is most relevant to that position. Choose 3 or 4 areas that you want to feature about yourself during the interview. It is crucial to have confidence and know how to make yourself shine in comparison to all the other candidates being interviewed.

The First Interview Question: Tell Me About Yourself

Few questions strike as much fear in the heart of a job seeker as this one. Answering this question incorrectly creates a poor first impression, which is difficult to recover from during the rest of the interview. The key to answering this question is to truly understand what the interviewer is asking for. The employer wants to know what you can do for them, or why you believe you are the best person for the job.

As with all interview questions, preparing your answers in advance is the key, but this is especially important when preparing to answer "Tell Me About Yourself". You can't just "wing it". The proper response for this question is to give your "**60 Second Commercial**", also known as your Elevator Speech. This is your chance to set yourself up as an expert in your field, build credibility and really gain the interviewer's attention.

The "60 Second Commercial" contains five parts:

1. Who you are and what you do

Restate your name and identify yourself with the industry in which you work, or, if a new graduate, the industry in which you want to work.

2. Provide a brief work and/or education history

Tell the interviewer where you have worked in the past (if previous work experience is relevant to the position you are seeking) or, if just entering your field, indicate you are a student or graduate and identify what you studied in school. Additionally, briefly summarize your responsibilities in that position or what courses you studied in school. You should only mention responsibilities or classes that are **directly** related to the job you are interviewing for. These are the skills you want to emphasize.

3. Describe an achievement you are proud of or mention something you have done that has brought value to a past employer

This accomplishment should be measurable (which may mean using numbers) and demonstrate the skills you claim to possess. Or, if a new graduate, this could be a significant accomplishment in school. A major class product, a high GPA or a recently completed internship would be appropriate.

4. Describe what you are looking for in your next position

This means duties, level, responsibilities and the type of company you wish to work for. Your description of these items should closely match what the employer has indicated they want in the job posting.

5. Offer a work-related anecdote that can serve as a jumping off point for further discussion

Include something unique about you that demonstrates the value you would bring to the organization.

BONUS TIP:

A personal 60 Second Commercial can be a very helpful tool when networking. [Click Here to view the Networking section.](#)

Sample 60 Second Commercial

"My name is Charles Tucker and I recently graduated with an Associate's degree from the Marketing program at Fox Valley Technical College. I earned a 4.0 GPA in school and was involved with several marketing related activities, including serving as the president of the student chapter of DECA, where among other achievements, I oversaw the launch of a new dining service for students on one of our smaller campuses.

I interned with the Oshkosh Convention and Visitors bureau where I assisted with the promotion of several large events including EAA Airventure, Country USA and Lifest. Among other things, I was responsible for all social media marketing for these events, utilizing Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube to help drive attendance.

I received feedback from my internship supervisor that he had never seen such creative use of online content and to this day, they continue to use some of the techniques I brought with me to the job. I'm now looking to use my social media marketing skills to help promote your company's upcoming events and create more awareness of your brand."

Interview Questions of All Kinds

You may have only one hour or less to express yourself with confidence and align your skills set and strengths with the requirements of the available position and the organization's or department's goals. Good preparation for all kinds of questions will help assure that this hour will propel you further along in the hiring process.

Most interviewees under-prepare for possible interview questions. You may be the most qualified skill-wise of all the interviewing candidates, but lose the job offer to the person who knows how to interview the best! Prepare! You don't want to fail to impress the interviewing team because of your:

- incomplete or poor responses,
- many "Umm..."s and "Ahh..."s,
- long pauses, or
- anxiety due to lack of good preparation.

While there are countless interview questions that an employer can ask, nearly all of them are ways to ask these five basic questions:

- **Why are you here?** (Why are you interested in this job?)
- **What can you do for us?** (What education, skills and experience qualify you for this job?)
- **What distinguishes you from the other people who can do this same job?**
(What about your past experiences make you the best person for the job?)
- **Will you fit in here?** (Will you fit the corporate culture? Will you get along with existing employees?)
- **How can you fix our problems?**
(A position is being filled because of an employer need. How will you meet that need?)

How these five questions are asked depends on the question types used by the interviewers. Essentially, **there are four basic types of interview questions.** Click the blue heading on each to see a list of sample question

- 1. Traditional** – These questions are standard questions that many recruiters, hiring managers, and supervisors use. They focus on your goals, strengths/weaknesses, educational and work history, skills, etc. They are asked in a straight forward manner.
- 2. Situational** – The interviewer describes a hypothetical situation or task that you may likely face in the position and you must describe how you would handle the situation or complete the task.
- 3. Behavioral** – Recent research shows that these questions are better predictors of future job behavior and performance than traditional or situational questions. **Many companies use this question type exclusively.** Your answer should include a description of an actual past situation or task, the actions you took, and the result of those actions. Behavioral questions are difficult to answer well and definitely require preparation.
- 4. Illegal** – These are questions that you should NOT be asked, but which you must be prepared. Federal and state laws prohibit their use because the information being sought is irrelevant to the job and may be used to discriminate against candidates. Some employers don't know they are illegal, and others know but ask anyway.

Traditional Job Interview Sample Questions

Interview questions like these have been used by employers for decades. [Traditional questions](#) help the interviewer focus on a job candidates' basic credentials. Research indicates that they are not particularly good indicators of future performance, yet many employers still use them. You should therefore prepare for them.

General

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Do you have the qualifications and personal characteristics necessary for success in this position?
3. Given the investment our company will make in hiring and training you, can you give us a reason to hire you?

Skills, Strengths, Weaknesses

4. What are your top three skills for this job?
5. What strengths do you bring to this position?
6. What weaknesses do you have that could be a problem in your work?
7. What quality or attribute do you feel will most contribute to your career success?

BONUS TIP:

For detailed instructions on how to answer the "Tell Me About Yourself" question, [click here to jump to that section of the guide.](#)

Goals

8. What specific goals, including those related to your career, have you established for your life?
9. What will it take to attain your goals, and what steps have you taken toward attaining them?
10. What do you think it takes to be successful in this career?
11. What (short-term/long-term) goals and objectives have you established for yourself?
12. What plans do you have for continued study or training?

Accomplishments / Performance

13. What has been your most rewarding accomplishment?
14. How would you describe yourself in terms of your ability to work as a member of a team?
15. What motivates you to put forth your greatest effort?
16. How would you evaluate your ability to deal with conflict?
17. How do you deal with multi-tasking challenges?

Conflict / Stress

18. How do you resolve conflict?
19. Would you say that you can easily deal with high-pressure situations?

Persuasion, Problem-Solving, Good Thinking, Decision-Making

20. What steps do you follow to study a problem before making a decision?
21. What strategies can be effective to persuade someone to do something?

Related to the Company

22. Why do you want to work here?
23. What do you know about our company / organization / business?
24. Do you think the services we provide / products we make are important?
25. Would it be a problem for you to travel / relocate?

Salary

26. What level of compensation would it take to make you happy?
27. Tell me about the salary range you're seeking

Situational Job Interview Sample Questions

Situational questions ask what the candidate would do in a relevant hypothetical situation. The interviewer describes a scenario or defines a task that the candidate would typically face or have to do on the job. The candidate must then describe how he or she would handle the situation or complete the task.

One way to prepare for situational question responses is to:

- ✓ list your relevant skills and how you've used them;
- ✓ list your challenges and how you've met them,
- ✓ list your major accomplishments and successes and then the actions you took to gain them,
- ✓ prepare brief stories from your experiences that can turn a hypothetical situation into an actual situation which better markets your experience and actual skills

Keep in mind the *who, what, where, when, why* and *how* of possible situational questions that will come up in interviews. Planning ahead by doing this can really pay off when faced with challenging questions that start like these:

- ✓ Who would you talk to if ...?
- ✓ What would you do if ...?
- ✓ When would it be appropriate to ...?
- ✓ Where would you make changes in the process if...?
- ✓ Why would a manager do ... in this situation?
- ✓ How would you organize...? Or How would you react if ...?

BONUS TIP:

If you would like to practice your interviewing skills, you can sign up for a Mock Interview at Employment Connections. Just call 920-735-5627 and set up a date and time

Specific examples of situational questions:

1. A co-worker told you in confidence that another co-worker is habitually stealing. What would you do and why?
2. As a supervisor, you've made an unpopular decision. What action would you take so that morale in the department is not negatively affected?
3. What would you do if the work of a team member was not up to expectations?
4. You don't have the expertise necessary to complete an assigned task. Your co-workers and supervisor are unavailable for you to ask for assistance. How do you handle this?
5. In a new-hire training session, one of several trainees is continually interrupting you by asking unrelated questions. You've already asked her to save the unrelated questions for another time. What would you do next?
6. List the steps that you would take to do
7. As a supervisor you've identified an employee who doesn't stay on task, is sometimes late to work, and distracts others from their work. What action would you take so that morale in the department is not negatively affected?
8. You can't complete an important project by an agreed upon deadline because your co-worker didn't contribute her part yet. What would you do?
9. How would you deal with a colleague or supervisor at work with whom you seem to be unable to build a successful working relationship?
10. When would it be appropriate to bring in your supervisor while dealing with an angry customer?

About Behavioral Job Interview Questions

Today, employers are using more **behavioral questions** in job interviews. Some are using them exclusively. These are questions that ask you to give specific examples of past experiences or behaviors. Successful behavioral interviewing is challenging because it forces you to think critically about yourself and your behavior related to your past job experiences. The use of behavioral questions results in a more accurate prediction of job performance success compared to other types of interview questions.

Be prepared by knowing the 3-step STAR method of answering behavioral questions:

- Describe the **Situation** that you were in or the **Task** that you needed to accomplish. You must describe a specific event or situation, not a generalized description of what you have done in the past. Be sure to give enough detail for the interviewer to understand.
- List the **Actions** you took in response to the situation, focusing on what you did.
- Share the **Resolution** or **Results**. What happened? How did the event end? What did you accomplish? What did you learn?

BONUS TIP:

Behavioral Questions often begin with "Tell me about a time...". If you are asked a question that begins this way in an interview, they will be looking for you to respond in the manner described in this section.

A complete answer must include all three parts!

An example of a behavioral question and STAR answer:

Question: Tell me about a past work experience that demonstrates how you deal with customer conflict?

Situation or Task: I had a customer who didn't want me to explain the characteristics of some new company merchandise because he had recently had some difficulty when interacting with one of our other company marketers.

Action: I listened to his complaint, affirmed some of his feelings, and explained how I would have dealt with the situation differently. I affirmed his value to the company and shared my excitement about some new product directions the company was taking.

Resolution or Results: He calmed down, thanked me for being a good listener and looking at things his way, and bought the merchandise. He is now one of the company's best customers.

Some suggestions about preparing for behavioral interview questions:

- Study the list of behavioral question examples in this guide and make a list of those you feel you should be prepared to answer.
- Ask friends or colleagues in your field what behavioral questions to expect and add these to your list
- Be prepared to tell stories! Behavioral Interview answers are simply stories. Think back to memorable experiences from work or school and be prepared to share.
- Determine what behavioral success stories of yours would be best to use. Think closely about what stories might closely align with this job.
- Write out your **STAR** answers.
- Practice your answers so that you sound natural and convincing.
- Keep your answers brief (30 seconds to 2 minutes tops).

Behavioral Job Interview Sample Questions

Problem-Solving / Good Thinking / Decision-Making

1. Tell me about a situation where you failed and how you recovered from it.
2. Describe an instance when you had to think on your feet to get yourself out of a difficult situation.
3. Give me a specific example of a time when you used good judgment and logic to solve a problem.
4. Tell me about a time when you were forced to make an unpopular decision.
5. Describe a specific problem you solved for your employer or instructor. How did you approach the problem? What role did others play? What was the outcome?
6. Recall a time from your work experience when your manager or supervisor was unavailable and a problem arose. What was the nature of the problem? How did you handle that situation?
7. Tell me about a major problem you recently handled and how you dealt with it. Were you successful in resolving it?
8. We can sometimes identify a small problem and fix it before it becomes a major problem. Give an example(s) of how you have done this.
9. Tell me about a situation in which you have had to adjust quickly to changes over which you had no control. What was the impact of the change on you?
10. Give me an example of a time you had to make an important decision. How did you make the decision? How does it affect you today?

Communication Skills – Listening / Verbal / Written

11. Describe a time when you had to use your written communication skills to get an important point across.
12. Give me an example of a time when you were able to successfully communicate with another person even when that individual may not have personally liked you (or vice versa).
13. Sometimes it's easy to get in "over your head." Describe a situation where you had to request help or assistance on a project or assignment.
14. Tell me about a time when your active listening skills really paid off for you - maybe a time when other people missed the key idea being expressed.
15. Give me an example of a time you had to persuade other people to take action. Were you successful?
16. Give me a specific example of a time when you sold your supervisor or instructor on an idea or concept. How did you proceed? What was the result?

Goal Setting

17. Give me an example of an important goal which you set in the past and tell me about your success in reaching it.
18. Tell me about a time when you worked with a team to set goals and objectives that were specific and measurable. What processes did you use?

Performance Issues

19. Tell me about a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.
20. Describe some projects or ideas (not necessarily your own) that were implemented, or carried out successfully primarily because of your efforts.
21. Tell me about a time when you were assigned a complex project. What steps did you take to prepare for and complete the project? Were you happy with the outcome? What one step would you have done differently if given the chance?
22. Give me an example of how you applied knowledge from previous coursework to a project in another class.
23. Tell me about a time when you failed to meet a deadline. What things did you fail to do? What were the repercussions? What did you learn?
24. Give me an example of a work or school experience that was especially satisfying.
25. Tell me about a time when a new idea of yours helped an organization or group work better.
26. Tell me about a time when you came up with an innovative solution to a challenge your company/class/organization was facing. What was the challenge? What role did others play?

27. Tell me about a time when you helped a co-worker learn a new task or procedure.
28. Tell me about a time you had to handle multiple responsibilities. How did you organize the work you needed to do?
29. Describe the system you use for keeping track of multiple projects. How do you prioritize your tasks? How do you track your progress so that you can meet deadlines? How do you stay focused?
30. Tell me about a time you adapted to a wide variety of people, situations and environments.
31. For a team to function effectively, every member must be committed to the team and its goals. Tell me how you've demonstrated your commitment to the team. What were the results?
32. As a past manager or supervisor, describe a situation that required all of your management/supervisory abilities.

Conflict / Relationships

33. Describe a situation where others you were working with on a project disagreed with your ideas. What did you do?
34. Tell me about a time when you worked with a colleague who was not completing his or her share of the work. Whom, if anyone, did you tell or talk to about it? Did the manager take any steps to correct your colleague? Did you agree or disagree with the manager's actions?
35. Describe a situation in which you had to arrive at a compromise or guide others to a compromise.
36. Tell me about the most difficult customer service experience that you have had to handle?
37. Give me a specific example of a time when a co-worker or classmate criticized your work in front of others. How did you respond? How has that event shaped the way you communicate with others?
38. Give an example of a time when you had to work with someone who was difficult to get along with. Why was this person difficult? How did you handle this person?
39. Describe a situation where you found yourself dealing with someone who didn't like you. How did you handle it?
40. Describe a time when you got co-workers or classmates who dislike each other to work together. How did you accomplish this? What was the outcome?

Attitude

41. Tell me about a difficult situation when it was desirable for you to keep a positive attitude. What did you do?
42. Give me a specific example of something you did that helped build enthusiasm in others.
43. Describe a time when you put your needs aside to help a co-worker or classmate understand a task. How did you assist him or her? What was the result?

Stress

44. Describe a situation when you were faced with a stressful situation that demonstrated your coping skills.
45. Describe a time when you were faced with great stress on the job. How did you handle it?

Dealing with Illegal Interview Questions

It's important to know about and prepare for possible illegal interview questions. There are laws that govern what employers can legally ask you. Know your rights and prepare for the possible uncomfortable illegal question a potential employer could ask. It's easier than you think!

You have three easy choices related to answering an illegal question:

- **Answer it** → Not suggested because once you share the information, it can be used to discriminate against you.
- **Don't answer it** → Not suggested as it will make it seem like you are hiding something.
- **Answer your own rephrased question** → the best way!

Answering the illegal question is definitely legal. Feel free to. Just know that once you do, the information you share could result in false judgments or presumptions and be used to discriminate against you. For example, if you answer the "family question" saying you have two young children, you may not be considered for a position that involves travel or the need for flexibility in hours.

Not answering the question is legal too! However, your refusal could cause the employer to think poorly of you. You should also not tell the employer "I'm sorry, but your question is illegal", as it points out his or her ignorance of the law and doesn't market your quick-thinking or problem-solving skills.

Answering your own rephrased question is usually the best way to respond. It subtly informs the interviewer that you are aware of your rights and the intended meaning of his or her question. Your answer shares useful information, and so a possible sticky situation is resolved. Referring to the "family question" again, you could answer, "If you are wondering about my availability for travel or my work time flexibility, I'd like to assure you that I am anxious and willing to perform my responsibilities at the required level." If the interviewer isn't tuned in to your subtlety and asks the question again, then answer, "I'm sorry, I feel I've answered your question."

Though state laws vary, illegal questions typically relate to these categories of discrimination:

Category	Illegal Question	Possible Interview Answer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Race ▪ National Origin ▪ Citizenship 	Were you born in the U.S.? What country are your parents from? Are you a U.S. citizen?	If you are asking if I can legally work in the United States, I can.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Arrest Record 	Have you ever been arrested?	If you are concerned that there is something in my legal background to hide or prohibit me from working responsibly in this position, there definitely is not.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Age 	How old are you? What's your date of birth? Are you over 40? (Are you over 18? is legal.)	If you are concerned about my abilities, I am certain you will find my age will not be a factor in my ability to do an excellent job in this position.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Disability 	Do you have any disabilities? How is your health? What's your medical history?	If you are concerned about my abilities, I know that I am more than able to perform all functions of this position. I'd be happy to demonstrate them to you.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Family 	Are you married? Planning a family? Do you have children?	If you are concerned about my commitment to this company, I would definitely be able to work overtime or travel when needed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Religion 	What's your religion? Are you a Christian? Do you believe in God?	If you are concerned about a conflict between my personal life and my work, I'd like to reassure you that I would keep the two strictly separated.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Personal 	How tall are you? How much do you weigh? (Minimum standards may legally be set.)	If you are concerned about my abilities to do the job well, I am certain that my height/weight will not be a factor in any way.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sex 	Male or female (on application)	Leave the question unanswered or write N/A.

Interview Questions for YOU to Ask

Most interviewers will allow you the chance to ask them a few questions. This is a sign that the interview is drawing to a close, and that you have one more chance to make an impression. It is important that you prepare such questions for two reasons. First and most important, you need information to help you decide if you would accept the job if offered. Second, asking relevant questions indicates a higher level of interest and that you have done some serious thinking about the job and company. **You won't have a great deal of time to ask questions, so do your research first and don't waste everyone's time by asking questions you could have easily answered by going online!** Listed below are some sample questions for you. Not all of them are appropriate for every interview situation.

1. What do you feel are the greatest challenges of this position?
2. What are some major concerns that need to be addressed in the first few months?
3. What projects do you anticipate that I would be involved with in the future versus now?
4. What are some of the longer-term objectives that you would like completed?
5. What is an example of some best work produces by people in this position?
6. What would you like done differently by the next person who fills this position?
7. What has the growth of this company/organization/department been in the past several years?
8. Has there been any downsizing in the last few years? What does the future look like in this regard?
9. Who will be my immediate supervisor and how does he or she fit into the organizational structure?
10. What is the supervisor's management style?
11. Why is this position open?
12. How often has this position been filled in the past five to ten years? (If the number is high, you may want to ask what the reasons are for the turnover).
13. Why did the last person leave?
14. With whom would I be interacting most frequently, what are his or her responsibilities, and what would be the nature of our interaction?
15. Are there opportunities for internal growth and advancement?
16. What type of training is offered and how is it delivered?
17. What opportunities does your company offer for further training and education?
18. What are the travel requirements, if any?
19. What would my first assignment be?
20. What is a typical day like?
21. What is the work environment like?
22. May I see the work area for this position?
23. How do you (the supervisor) like to operate in terms of assignments and delegation of responsibility and authority?

BONUS TIP:

How many questions should you ask in an interview? You should prepare three to five questions prior to your interview. You may not end up asking all of them, as some are likely to be answered during the interview.

24. How do you measure job performance?
25. How regularly do performance evaluations occur?
26. To where have successful people in this position advanced?
27. What are the skills and attributes most needed to advance in the company?
28. What are some of the problems you feel a new employee would face in this position and do you have any suggestions for dealing with them?
29. What significant changes do you foresee in the future for this position and perhaps for the company?
30. What do you (the people interviewing you) like about working here?
31. Is there anything else that would be good to know?
32. Is there anything else you'd like to ask me?
33. What particular things about my background, experience and style interest you?
34. Do you have any concerns about me? What can I do to address them?
35. What else can I do to get a job offer from your company/organization?
36. What is the time frame for making a decision on this position?
37. What is the next step in your interview process?
38. When would it be best for me to contact you about the hiring decision?

Telephone Interviews

Telephone interviews often precede in-person interviews, often to trim the hiring pool or for candidates who are not local to the job for which they are applying.

➤ **The Screening Interview**

The company calls you based on your application or resume for the purpose of trimming its list of applicants to a sizeable number for personal interviews to be conducted at a later time. This is usually a brief 15-30 minute interview, including only a few standardized questions asked by a human resources employee, not the position's direct supervisor. The questions will center on your experience, education/training, and availability. You may or may not receive any warning before this call. If it comes at a bad time, definitely do two things: show your interest in the position and politely request a mutually convenient time that same day. Then prepare yourself just as you would for a personal interview!

➤ **The Extensive Interview**

Usually this interview replaces the in-person interview to save travel costs for a company. It is arranged in advance at an agreed upon time. It could be an hour or more in length and involve several interviewers using a speakerphone or via a conference call. Apply all your interviewing skills in this situation. Have you done your research? Prepared your answers to typical and tough questions? Developed a list of your own questions? If so, a job offer may be on the horizon!

Preparing for Your Telephone Interview

Just like a personal interview, the better you're prepared, and the more you practice, the more successful the phone interview will be. For the screening interview, your goal is to get a personal interview. For the extensive interview, you want the job offer.

The content of the are-you-interested and screening telephone interviews will probably be more general, including:

- a focus on your resume and cover letter details,
- your goals,
- your skills set
- the reason-for-leaving question.

The advantage of telephone interviews to you, the candidate, is you can take advantage of the fact that you can't be seen, and surround yourself with helpful information, tools, and a quiet environment.

The challenge of telephone interviews is you can't see the interviewer's body language or detect his or her attitude and interest level except by listening. Accordingly, they can't see your facial expressions or hand gestures when making a point. You only have your voice to convey your enthusiasm, so it is important to listen carefully to the interviewer's questions and respond using a positive and enthusiastic tone.

BONUS TIP:

Many organizations are now using video interviews through sites such as Skype™ to evaluate job candidates. While the technology is new, the traditional interviewing etiquette still applies. However, there are some unique challenges that can arise with a video interview. Check out this [article by Vivian Giang of BusinessInsider.com](#) for some special tips for Skype interviews.

The Tools List

- A charged up phone
- Your resume, cover letter, and the job ad or job description
- Pad of paper and a pen
- A list of your major achievements and skills relevant to the job
- The essential information from your research on the company
- The notes you've prepared for the interviewer's questions
- Your list of questions to ask
- A calculator
- Your calendar

Make it Private

- No pets, kids, spouses, friends, or co-workers in the vicinity
- No TV, radio, or music in the background

Listen and Speak

- Listen to the interviewer. Let the caller do the majority of the talking
- Listen without interrupting.
- Listen carefully to questions. If needed, ask the interviewer to repeat or clarify.
- Listen to the interviewer's reaction to your answers and make possible adjustments to your voice, attitude, or answer content.
- Consider reengaging your interviewer by asking one of your great questions.
- SMILE! Your voice quality is more positive.
- Be positive and enthusiastic from the moment you answer the phone.
- Speak into the phone and use your voice to project confidence.
- Sit erectly or consider standing. Your voice will be steady and stronger.
- Don't tap your pen, eat, chew gum, or smoke. These can all be heard.
- Let the interviewer know that you're pausing to take a drink if you need one.
- Don't use fillers like "ya know", "uh", "um", etc. They're annoying to listen to and make you sound unprepared. If you need time to think, tell the interviewer you need a moment. Brief silences are fine.
- Speak slowly and with control. Your face and hands can't be seen and aren't able to help you get your points across.
- Use the interviewer's name occasionally to make a connection, but don't overdo it as you may appear false.

Get it Right

- Answer questions briefly, but with enough information or examples to sell your relevant skills and experience, and to emphasize your achievements. Avoid answering with just a "yes" or "no".
- Ask how to spell the interviewer's name and get the phone number, position title, and address (regular mail and e-mail). You'll need this information for follow-up activities.
- Deflect wage and salary questions at the telephone interview level. At this point you can honestly say you don't know enough about the job to discuss salary. State that you are flexible and would be happy to discuss it in person. If pressed, share your well-researched range. You can also say that you are hoping for a fair offer based on your experience and the value of your skills to the company.
- **Ask for an overview!** Remember, your goal for the phone interview is to get a personal interview. After thanking the interviewer, ask what type of employee, skills, and experience the company is looking for. If you have it, ask to meet in person.

After the interview

- Say thank you!
- Follow up with an email or handwritten note to express your continued interest in the job, or your desire to withdraw from the interviewing process.

Follow up & Thank You Letters

Why say thank you?

IT CAN GET YOU THE JOB! It's what you've been taught to do since you were a child. It's polite and people remember you for it. Saying thank you promptly and courteously when you're job seeking:

- Can make the difference between getting the job offer or not
- Can positively influence continued consideration for other current or future positions
- Is essential for expanding your network and gaining additional leads.

Say it often!

Say Thank You after any time an employer gives you their time, including:

- Job interview (not only the first, but the second, and, if you have it, even the third)
- Informational interview
- Reference use
- Job offer
- Rejection call or notification

Say it in a variety of ways.

Always say thank-you **in person** upon leaving an interview. It's crucial to say it **in writing within 24 (preferably) to 48 hours**.

Personalize your comments to each person who participated in the interview. That means you should **send a different letter to each interviewer**. It might even be wise to send one to the administrative assistant who greeted you, made you feel welcome, got you some water, ushered you into the interviewing area, and introduced you.

Your letter can be written in a variety of **formats**:

- Email
- Handwritten note card
- Typed Letter

The preferred format of hiring managers is an **email letter** inserted into the text area of an email. From the interviewer's point of view, email is convenient, easy to forward to interview team members, and more apt to arrive before the hiring decision or second interview decision is made.

From the job seeker's point of view, when time is of the essence, an emailed thank-you arrives immediately. Remember that an email letter should be written using business English standards.

If you use postal mail, you have two choices. **A short handwritten note is preferred over a business letter** because it's more personal. Though a note can't include as much reflection and summary, its personal effect is greater. Use the type of card that is blank on the inside, and make sure your penmanship is very legible. All emails, notes and letters should be absolutely error free.

You may also send a thank you e-mail immediately after the interview and follow up with a thank you card.

BONUS TIP:

Oh no! You forgot to send a thank you note after the interview you had a few days ago. Should you still send one? Ronnie Ann of Careernook.com says it's never too late to send a thank you. Check out this article to learn how you can turn this late mistake into an opportunity!

Say more than Thank You

A thank-you is your opportunity to thank the interviewer for the opportunity to interview and confirm your continued interest in the position or company. It can also be used to:

- Pass on a compliment about the company or individual,
- Summarize the interview,
- Reiterate how you can contribute and reaffirm your value,
- State how your goals match the company's or department's goals,
- Solve an observed problem,
- Clear up a misconception,
- Mention something significant you forgot to say at the interview,

Obviously, your letter is not going to include all of these. Think about the interview, reflect on what you heard and observed and whom you met, and then briefly sell yourself in a **professional and confident tone** to meet specific needs.

See some [examples of thank-you letters](#) below:

Email Letter Format

Subject Line: Samantha Falkner – Thank you for Sheriff's Deputy position interview

(No date is necessary as email is dated.)

Dear Captain Nelson,

Our meeting today left me feeling enthusiastic about the possibility of joining your team as Sheriff's Deputy. Thank you for your introduction to the department and detailed description of the position's requirements and your expectations.

Considering your immediate goal of improving relationships between the department and community neighborhoods, I know my verbal communication skills and interpersonal strengths would be an asset on the job and bring positive direct results. I'm glad you were pleased by the extent of my volunteer work with youth. It's an important part of my life. I have given some thought to your concern for improved city park security, and offer the idea of involving park area teens in an organized cleanup and landscape effort.

As we discussed, I will call the city's Human Resource Department in a few weeks to learn of your department's selection. Call (920) 333-3333 or email me if you have any questions. Again, thank you.

Sincerely,

Samantha Falkner

Job Interview Thank You Examples

Business Letter Format Using Resume Heading

Thomas M. Riley

123 Macintosh Drive Appleton, WI 54914
(920) 333-3333 tmriley@sbcglobal.net

January 10, 2014

Ms. Abby Danielson
ABC Consulting
456 Business Drive
Kimberly, WI 54136

Dear Ms. Danielson,

Thank you for the opportunity to interview for the marketing position. The desire of ABC Consulting to meet client needs as personally, thoroughly, and timely as possible is commendable. I feel confident that my enthusiasm and diligent efforts would support this goal.

After speaking with you, I reflected on some of the skills and qualities that you felt are vital in this position, especially the ability to foster strong client relationships. In my experience as marketing intern, I have gained valuable knowledge and skill in this area. You mentioned that miscommunication between the company and client too often results in lost time and frustration. Since I am proficient in the process of listening to, rephrasing, and confirming the client's concerns before taking action, I believe my value to ABC Consulting team would be immediate.

As we agreed on, I will call you in a week once your interviews are complete. Thank you again.

Sincerely,

(your signature)

Thomas M. Riley

Short Handwritten Note Format

January 10, 2016

Dear Ms. Danielson,

Thank you for the opportunity to interview for the marketing position. The company tour was exciting to me because I saw how my enthusiasm and diligent efforts would advance your goals. I believe that my information system skills and ability to truly listen to and define client needs would build trusting relationships and add immediate value to your business.

I appreciate the time you extended to me and look forward to talking with you in a week.

Sincerely,

Thomas M. Riley

Informational Interview Thank You Example Business Letter Format

December 15, 2015

123 Grand Avenue
Oshkosh, WI 54904

Ms. Julie Carter
Nursing Supervisor
Horizon Rehabilitation Center
111 Carroll Avenue
Milwaukee, WI 53200

Dear Ms. Carter:

Thank you for taking time to meet with me yesterday to discuss the broad field of nursing. You provided me with a wealth of information and advice that will help me to determine the best approach to take in planning for a career in rehab nursing. As you suggested, I plan to locate a part-time job in practical nursing at a rehabilitation center next semester to help me further investigate this area and gain related skills while I finish my degree.

Thank you for referring me to Mr. David Summers and Ms. Jackie Chong. I look forward to speaking with them soon. I will keep you posted on the status of my career exploration.

Sincerely,

(your signature)

Molly O'Casey

BONUS TIP:

What is an Informational Interview? It's a networking meeting where you meet with a professional in an industry you want to work in to learn more about it. [Click here](#) to jump to the Networking section and learn how to successfully conduct an informational interview!

Reference Use Thank You Example Email Letter Format

Dear Craig,

I got the job! Thank you so much for promoting my skills and positive attitude to Colin Lukes of Anchor Financial. I knew I did well in the second interview and thought I had a chance at an offer. Your reference helped to put me over the top! My first day is next week Thursday, and I can't wait.

I so appreciate your kind support and guidance all through my job search process. I'll let you know how things are working out after a couple of weeks on the job.

Gratefully,

Carrie Waller

Job Offer Acceptance Thank You Example Short Handwritten Note Format

November 14, 2014

Dear Mr. Stenson,

Thank you for selecting me as your new sous chef. I feel honored to have you as my supervisor and mentor so early in my culinary career. I'm so excited to be part of the team that will take La Scorola's to its new location. I know my new position presents a fabulous opportunity to demonstrate my skills and support your challenge of expansion. I'll see you in two weeks, ready to dig into my new responsibilities.

Sincerely,

Charlie Randall

Other Follow up Activities

Follow-up activities usually involve more than just writing thank you letters. What you do can significantly impact your abilities to obtain a second interview, get a possible job offer, and make the most out of informational interviews.

Write down comments and make a list of things to do.

As soon as possible after each informational and job interview, fill in your notes taken during the interview. What went well, or what didn't go well that you need to attend to? What additional research is needed? What question answers need more preparation or practice? What addresses or names are needed? Make a list and schedule these tasks on your calendar.

Prepare and send promised or required documents.

While at the interview, you may have been informed of additional documents desired or required by the interviewer. These could be any number of things, such as your transcripts, work samples, reference sheet, or certificates. Foster your application by filling requests quickly and completely. Attach a short note identifying your documents.

Make your follow-up phone calls.

It's advisable to contact your interviewer within an agreed upon timeframe to find out about the progress of the interviewing process or the hiring decision. **You should ask the interviewer before you leave the interview about a realistic contact time.** Just politely ask if and when it would be okay to call. Sometimes it's difficult to learn of your status because all you get is the interviewer's voice mail.

- **If you are able to connect with the person**, confirm your interest in the position, ask if the interview process has been completed, and if a decision date is known. If the person is open to your inquiry, but unsure of a decision date, you can ask if you could call again.
- **If you have to leave a voice mail message**, state your interest and that the purpose of the call is to inquire about your applicant status. Say that you will call again. You can leave your phone number if you wish, but don't expect a call back. Interviewers have more pressing tasks to complete. Definitely, don't leave any further messages because they could be annoying.

Don't Give Up - Keep Networking

Whether you get the job offer or not, whether your informational interview generates one or five new contacts, stay energized and continue to use your communication skills with new as well as old contacts. Use thank you letters, thank you and update phone calls, and letters requesting informational interviews to make yourself visible, develop additional leads and contacts, and stimulate progress. It takes time, but tapping into that hidden job market is the best way to proceed. Research shows that time invested in networking pays off more than time invested in classified ads and on-line job banks.

BONUS TIP:

Looking for some advice on how to successfully network? [Click here to read that section of the guide](#)

Evaluating a JOB OFFER

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Evaluating a Job Offer

When you receive a job offer, it's important to take the time to carefully evaluate the offer so you are making an educated decision to accept or reject the offer. The last thing you want to do is make a hasty decision that you will later regret.

Consider the entire compensation package - salary, benefits, perks, work environment - not just your paycheck. Weigh the pros and cons and take some time to mull over the offer. It is perfectly acceptable to ask the employer for up to a week to think it over.

Money Matters

Money isn't the only consideration, but it is an important one. Is the offer what you expected? If not, is it a salary you can accept without feeling insulted? Will you be able to pay your bills? If your answer is no, then don't accept the offer, at least right away. Make sure that you are getting paid what you're worth and you are happy with the compensation. Nobody wants to be in a position where they realize that the salary isn't enough - after they have accepted the job offer. If the compensation package isn't what you expected, it's important to be well prepared to negotiate a salary that will pay you what you are worth. Job seekers need to spend time researching salaries in their industry in order to successfully negotiate the maximum salary for the job offered. See more information on Salary Survey Information Resources at www.fvtc.edu/jobsearchresources.

BONUS TIP:

Do not accept any offer you don't have in writing: This may seem obvious, but many forget it. Only written offers constitute real offers.

Benefits and Perks

In addition to salary, review the benefits and perks offered. Sometimes the benefit package can be as important as what you get in your paycheck. If you're not sure about the benefits that are offered, ask for additional information or clarification. Find out details on health and life insurance coverage, vacation, sick time, disability, and other benefit programs. Inquire about how much of the benefits costs are provided by the company, in full, and how much you are expected to contribute. If there are a variety of options available, request copies of the plan descriptions so you can compare benefit packages.

Hours and Travel

Before accepting a job, be sure that you are clear on the hours and schedule you'll be expected to work. Also, confirm what, if any, travel is involved. If the position requires 45 hours of work a week and you're used to working 35 hours, consider whether you will have difficulty committing to the schedule. If the nature of the job requires that you will need to be on the road three days a week, be sure that you can commit to that as well. Also, consider travel time to and from work. Is the commute going to take an extra hour or will there be parking fees you're not paying now?

Flexibility and Company Culture

Many of us with small children, elderly parents, or other personal considerations, need flexibility in our schedules. To some of us the ability to work a schedule that isn't a typical forty hour work week is important. It is also important to feel comfortable in the environment that you are going to be working in. One candidate for a customer service job realized that there was no way she could accept it, despite the decent salary, when she was told she had to ask permission to use the restroom. Ask if you can spend some time in the office talking to potential co-workers and supervisors if you're not sure that the work environment and culture are a good fit.

Making a Decision

There is no right or wrong answer when it comes to accepting a job offer. You have to do what is best for you. Everyone has a different set of personal circumstances. What might be the perfect job for you could be an awful job for someone else. Take the time to review the pros and cons. Making a list is always helpful.

Also, listen to your gut - if it's telling you not to take the job, maybe you should listen. Keep in mind that if this isn't the right job for you, it's not the end of the world. The next offer might just be that perfect match.

After you have highlighted the most important items, but before you have made a decision, discuss your reasoning with people you trust. In talking, you may discover that you have some of your priorities wrong. If you have been honest with yourself, the most important elements should be clear.

Remember, it's much easier to turn down an offer than it is to leave a job that you have already started. The employer would prefer that you decline rather than having to restart the hiring process a couple weeks down the road if you don't work out. So, take the time to thoroughly evaluate the offer. Ask questions if you have them. Take the time you need to make an educated, informed decision so you feel as sure as possible that you, and the company, make an excellent match.

BONUS TIP:

One effective technique is setting up a decision tree for selecting among job offers: Even if you have only one offer, you should still go through this exercise. On a piece of paper list the pluses and minuses associated with each job; put down everything no matter how trivial. Using this list, organize your priorities. Pick those items that are most important to you and put them at the top of a new sheet.

Within a reasonably short time, make a decision: Sleep on it overnight or wait a couple of days. If it is the right decision, it will seem like the only decision. If it is not, you will have second thoughts. If this occurs, either you have been lying to yourself, or two of the jobs are essentially indistinguishable. Try going through the analysis stage again, watching for places you are fooling yourself. This is a particularly good time to go back to a person you trust who may be able to point out where you have mixed up your priorities. Normally, the first decision will stick, and you will experience increasing confidence in it.

Accepting a Job Offer

Whether you are accepting or rejecting a job offer, you should let the company know your decision as soon as possible. In either case, be polite, brief and to the point.

Announcing the decision

Accept the offer by calling the person who made it. You will need to follow this up immediately with a letter of acceptance. In the letter you should acknowledge the explicit offer you are accepting including any changes that occurred. Keep this simple. Further say when you will/can start. Do not forget to convey how enthusiastic you are at the possibilities this new job offers. Make the person who made the offer happy with the process.

Job Acceptance Letter

Even if you have accepted a job over the phone, it's a good idea to write a job acceptance letter to confirm the details of employment and to formally accept the job offer. Your letter can be brief, but it should include the following:

- Thanks and appreciation for the opportunity
- Written acceptance of the job offer
- The terms and conditions of employment (i.e. salary and benefits) as ultimately negotiated
- Starting date of employment

Address the letter to the person who offered you the position. Include your contact information even though it is on file with the employer. Make sure that your letter is well written and does not contain typos or grammatical errors. Even though you already have been offered the job, you want to make sure all your correspondence is professional.

Sample Job Acceptance Letter

Date

Ms. Jane Brown
Human Resources Manager
Open Door Company
Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Ms. Brown:

Thank you for offering me the position of Assistant Accountant with Open Door Company. I am pleased to accept this offer and look forward to starting employment with your company on August 3.

As we discussed, my starting salary will be \$40,000 and health and life insurance benefits will be provided after 60 days of employment.

Thank you, again, for giving me this wonderful opportunity. I am eager to join your team and make a positive contribution to your company. If there is any further information or paperwork you need me to complete, please let me know and I will arrange it as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Rejecting a Job Offer

When you have decided to reject a job offer, it is still important that you notify the company in a professional manner. Start by calling with a rehearsed, short speech. Typically, start out saying how great the offer was, how much you appreciated the effort that went into constructing it, and how sad you are that you have decided not to accept it. The offerer has probably worked hard to get the resources for the offer and will want to be able to put as positive a spin as possible on your rejection. Someday in the future, this person or the department may be able to do you a favor. In your rejection, you should strive to maintain the high regard the individual and the department has of you.

You should also let the employer know in writing that you are declining the offer. Your letter should be polite, brief, and to the point. You don't want to burn bridges because this employer may have a better offer for you down the road. Don't get into any specifics. Even if the hours are awful, the work environment is terrible, or the pay isn't enough to make ends meet – don't mention it.

You should include the following:

- Thanks and appreciation for the offer
- Written rejection of the job offer

Address the letter to the person who offered you the position. Include your contact information and phone number. Make sure that your letter is well written and does not contain typos or grammatical errors. Even though you are declining the job, you want to make sure all your correspondence is professional.

Sample Job Rejection Letter

Date

George Jones
87 Delaware Road
Hatfield, CA 08065

Dear Mr. Jones:

Thank you very much for offering me the opportunity to work at Bronson Associates. Unfortunately, I will not be accepting the position as it does not fit the path I am taking to achieve my career goals.

Once again, I'd like to express my gratitude for the offer and my regrets that it didn't work out. You have my best wishes in finding someone suitable for the position.

Sincerely,

Sample Job Rejection E-Mail Message

Subject Line: Job Offer – Your Name

Thank you very much for offering me the opportunity to work at ABCD Company. Unfortunately, I have accepted another position that more closely matches the career path that I wish to pursue.

I would, again, like to express my gratitude for the offer and my regrets that it didn't work out. You have my best wishes in finding a suitable candidate for the position.

Salary Negotiation

Before you start talking pay or negotiating salary with a prospective employer, you need to find out how much the job (and you) are worth. You will need to take the time to research salaries so you are prepared to get what you're worth and a job offer that's realistic and reasonable.

Once you know what you should be earning, how do you go about getting it? Start by being very patient. When interviewing for a new position, do your best not to bring up compensation until the employer makes you an offer. If you're asked what your salary requirements are, say that they are open based upon the position and the overall compensation package. Or tell the employer you would like to know more about the responsibilities and the challenges of the job prior to discussing salary. Another option is to give the employer a salary range based upon the salary research you've done up front. Once you've received the offer you don't need to accept (or reject) it right away. Sometimes just delaying your response, within a reasonable period of time, can get you an increase in the original offer. Most offers include an expiration or respond by date. It is essential to respond to the offer within this timeframe.

BONUS TIP:

Employment Connections has many salary resources for you to use, including average beginning hourly wages for each program.

They can be found online at www.fvtc.edu/jobsearchresources in the 'Salary Information' Section.

If you're ambivalent about the position, a "no" can bring you a better offer too. However, be careful. If you do definitely need that new job, there's a risk that the employer may accept your declining the position and move on to the next candidate.

Do's and Don'ts

Most people wouldn't put salary negotiation high on their lists of desirable activities. Even though you may prefer getting a root canal to negotiating your salary, if you want to get paid what you're worth, you better learn how to do it right. These dos and don'ts of salary negotiation can help you get the salary you deserve, whether you're entertaining a job offer or asking for a raise.

- **Do research salaries in your field:** Look at recent salary surveys, talk to others working in your field, and contact your trade or professional association to find out what other people are paid for doing the same work. Remember that salaries differ by geographic region.
- **Don't look at how much money your friends in other fields are making:** You may be envious of your friends who are earning more money than you are, but you shouldn't make those comparisons.
- **Do consider how much experience you have:** Those with more experience can hope to earn more money. Remember to talk about the amount of experience you have if it will help you negotiate a higher salary. If you don't have a lot of experience, be realistic about the salary for which you can ask.
- **Don't talk about how much money you need:** When you are going through salary negotiations, don't tell your boss (or future boss) that you need to make more money because your bills are high, your house was expensive, or your child is starting college.
- **Do talk about the salary you deserve:** When presenting your case during a salary negotiation, talk about how you will earn the salary you are requesting. Highlight what you have done, or will do, for the company. Also, discuss the salaries in your field (based on your research).
- **Do be flexible:** When going through a salary negotiation, you aren't likely to get the exact amount of money you want. You will probably have to compromise. The trick is to figure out how much you are willing to compromise and what you will do if your boss doesn't offer you a salary you find acceptable.

Using TECHNOLOGY In Your Job Search

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Social Media & Your Job Search

In today's world, social media websites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter are not only places where you can connect with your friends, family, and personal interests. They are also powerful recruiting tools for employers. In a recent survey conducted by mediabistro.com, **92% of employers said they used social media to recruit candidates**. Employers search through social media to find potential candidates and to screen out those who have applied for available positions. According to a recent Forbes article, **34% of employers who scan social media profiles said they have found content that has caused them not to hire a candidate**.

Here are some tips to make sure that your social media presence is working FOR you, not against you:

Google Yourself

Start your social media audit by finding out what information about you is online. Type your first and last name (and any previous names you might have had) into popular internet search engines like Google, Bing, and Yahoo and see what you find. If you uncover any content that may portray you in a negative light, take steps to remove those items from your social media profiles. If it is something you did not post yourself, contact the person or website who did post it and ask them to remove it. Most will do so without any trouble. At the very least, focus on eliminating negative content that shows up on the first few pages of a basic Google search. Few recruiters will investigate you more thoroughly than that.

BONUS TIP:

While your personal profiles like Facebook should be set to private, you want to make sure your LinkedIn profile is open to the public. You want to be visible to potential employers!

Set Your Profile Settings to (Mostly) Private

One easy way to control the visibility of online personal content is to control the privacy settings on your personal social media profiles. Most platforms allow you to decide who can see your content. Some sites also have features where your consent is required before anything can be posted to your profile by others. Use these settings to limit public access to your profiles, allowing full access to trusted friends and family only. However, don't assume that privacy settings will keep your information completely hidden from employers. It still may show up on another user's profile or through a Google search.

Clean Up Your Profiles

Taking advantage of privacy settings will mostly control who sees your content, but some will still slip through the cracks. The only surefire way to prevent controversial content from reaching an unintended audience is to get rid of it completely. Anything that links you with bad language, offensive material, or anything that an employer would deem inappropriate should be removed. As a general rule, if you're in any way unsure whether or not something is inappropriate or offensive, remove it. Once you cleaned up your profile, keep it clean by not posting controversial content in the first place.

Show Your Personality...but Make it Professional

While these tips may make it sound like you should hide away and avoid sharing anything on social media, this is not the case. A recent CareerBuilder survey showed that **29% of hiring managers have found POSITIVE content on a profile that drove them to hire one candidate over another**. Also, if employers are unable to find anything about you online, they may become suspicious that you might be disconnected from larger communities or lack a grasp of technology. Your social media footprint can show employers your interests, skills, hobbies, career aspirations, and overall personality. This will help them see what kind of person you are and how you might fit into their company culture. So don't be afraid to let your personality show, but be mindful of who could be watching.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is the world's largest professional networking site, with over 300 million members in over 200 countries. LinkedIn exists to connect the world's professionals and make them more productive and successful. LinkedIn gives you access to people, companies, jobs, news and insights.

With over 80% of professional jobs being filled through networking and referrals, a well-crafted LinkedIn profile is essential to making the connections you will need to land your next job or advance your career. Nearly all employers will look up job applicants online. A complete LinkedIn profile goes a long way towards creating your professional presence online. Employers expect to find you on the internet and LinkedIn allows you to be known.

Setting up a Profile

A complete LinkedIn profile contains several elements. The following steps will help you complete an effective LinkedIn profile.

- 1) **Write an informative profile headline.** Your headline is a short, memorable professional slogan. For example, a student might have a headline that reads "Honors Student seeking marketing position." An experienced professional's headline might read "Sales Professional, with a background in Business to Business and Business to Consumer Marketing".
- 2) **Pick an appropriate photo.** Your photo should be a professional-looking (not Facebook!) head and shoulders shot. Dress like you'd dress for an interview for this picture.
- 3) **Develop a Summary.** The summary section of your LinkedIn profile should be a paragraph or two long and be written in the first person ("I" statements). This section should describe what motivates you, what you're skilled at, your significant accomplishments and the career direction you want to go.
- 4) **Include Work Experience.** The experience section of your LinkedIn profile is very similar to your resume. List the relevant jobs you've had, the companies you worked for, the dates and an accounting of your job duties and accomplishments. If appropriate, you can upload samples of your work to the appropriate experience entry. Work samples are projects you have done in a job that can be viewed by others. This could be a PowerPoint presentation, a picture or Word document. You can also linked to YouTube videos.
- 5) **Indicate your Education.** Include the colleges you have attended and the degrees earned. If you have graduated in the last five years, include your graduation date. You can also include a list of the courses you took if appropriate.
- 6) **List Skills & Expertise.** You can include up to 50 skills. List your most relevant work skills. These skills are keyword searchable, so if you work in or studied Marketing, you should list that, as well as other marketing-related skills you possess. These skills can then be endorsed by your connections.
- 7) **Ask for Recommendations.** Ask managers, colleagues, teachers and classmates to write you a recommendation. This gives extra credibility to your strengths and skills.

BONUS TIP:

Including a photo is very important. A profile with a photo is **seven times more likely to be viewed** than a profile without one.

BONUS TIP:

In order to add more depth to your profile, consider adding additional accomplishments that are not work related. These can include school projects, volunteer experience, leadership experience in clubs and school organizations, and any honors or awards you may have received.

Making Connections

Once you have completed your LinkedIn profile, it is time to connect with people on LinkedIn. These people will be called your **"Connections"**. These are similar to "Friends" on Facebook or "Followers" on Twitter.

There are two primary ways to do this.

- 1) **Upload your email contacts.** You have the option to link your LinkedIn account to email account. When linked, you can send a LinkedIn invitation to everyone in your email address book. While this is a convenient option, you may not wish to connect with everyone in your address book.
- 2) **People search.** While this is a slower method of looking for people on LinkedIn, you can be more careful and choose with whom you'd like to connect.

To search using the **People Search**, you should start with people you already know well, either from employment, education or other personal experience. Enter their name in the white search box at the top of the page. When you have found the person you are looking for, click on their name and you will be taken to their profile. Another way to find professional connections is to type the name of a company in the search box. The search results will bring up the company's LinkedIn page plus the people who work there, or who have worked there in the past.

On their profile page, click the **"Connect"** button. LinkedIn will ask how you know this person: as a colleague, classmate, business associate, friend, a group, other, or "I don't know [name]." If you choose "friend" or "other," LinkedIn will ask for the contact's e-mail address. If you choose "I don't know [name]," LinkedIn will not allow you to send the invitation. For the other categories, you'll be asked to indicate from which job, school or organization you know the contact. Once these people accept your invitation to connect, they will become your **"1st Degree"** connections.

Finding classmates, colleagues and friends is just the beginning. The real power of LinkedIn is gaining access to your connections' connections (or **"2nd Degree" connections**). You have to invite these people to join your network, however since you don't know them, LinkedIn may not allow you to send a connection invitation. The easiest way to do this is through the **Introductions** feature. This allows you to ask the person you both know to introduce you.

To Request an **Introduction**:

- 1) Find the 2nd Degree Connection in LinkedIn, by searching for your 1st Degree connections.
- 2) Click on that person's profile and then click the down arrow next to the button that says **"Send [Name] in Inmail"**.
- 3) Click in **"Get Introduced"**.
- 4) You will then be prompted to choose a shared connection. Click the drop down arrow and select the mutual connection you would like to introduce you.
- 5) Include a brief message about why you are asking for the introduction and click **"Ask for an Introduction"**.

Your first level connection will receive your introduction request and if willing, can introduce you to the person you are trying to connect. This referral will make someone you don't know more likely to connect with you as compared to a blind connection request.

BONUS TIP:

Should you accept invitations to connect with people you don't know? There are differing opinions on this topic. Dan Schawbel on Forbes.com says you should accept all LinkedIn requests because it can broaden your network of potential referrals and make researching easier. Others, like Kim Shandrow of Entrepreneur magazine, say you should be protective of your LinkedIn brand. Kim cautions against connecting with people who you haven't met for fear they can tarnish your reputation. Who is right? Maybe both. Just keep in mind that who you add to your network can be seen by others and may reflect on you.

Groups

Another way to make professional connections with people you may not know is by joining and participating in a **LinkedIn group**. LinkedIn groups are groups of professionals on LinkedIn with something in common, usually their occupation or industry. Within these groups are other professionals like you who could be beneficial to know.

To join a group, use the white search bar at the top of the page. Select **"Groups"** from the dropdown arrow on the left and then type the name of the industry or occupation you are part of, such as "Marketing", "Information Technology", "Engineering" or "Insurance Sales". The results will yield many groups related to the term you searched on. Click the group's name to get more information about a group, browse its members visit the discussion forum. This forum can be used for sharing useful knowledge, linking to a web article of interest or posing questions and answers to and from other group members.

BONUS TIP:

You can find out if a fellow group member works at your target company. Within your group, click on the "Members" link. Then, in the search box on the left-hand side of the page, type in the name of your target company. If any group member works or worked there, their name will come up.

Some groups are open and some are restricted. Open groups are groups you can join instantly by clicking the yellow **"Join Group"** button and can immediately start taking part in the group.

Restricted groups require the group administrator to grant you access. Again, click on the yellow **"Join Group"** button. A message will be sent to the group administrator who will review your profile and then grant or deny access.

Because you are now a member of a group, you have that group in common with the other members and that group connection can be used to facilitate a connection request to become 1st Degree connection with another member.

Remember, the point of joining a group is to make new connections and be known. So be active in the group and share your knowledge of your industry, answer questions and become a recognized expert in your field.

Searching for Jobs

If you have target companies in mind during a job search, LinkedIn can help you find who you might know at a targeted company:

- 1) In the white search box at the top of the page, select **"Companies"** from the drop down arrow.
- 2) Type in the name of your target company.
- 3) Select the company from the search results list.
- 4) You will see some basic company information plus a **"How You're Connected"** feature on the right. It will indicate how many employees of that company is on LinkedIn and also show you the number of 1st Degree and 2nd Degree connections you have there. If you have 2nd Degree connections, click on the number or connections to get a list of who they are. The resulting list will show all your 2nd Degree connections and show the 1st Degree connections you have in common. You can then use the **Introductions** feature (above) to connect with the person you are interested in getting to know.

While the main purpose of LinkedIn is to build and maintain professional relationships that could lead to your next job, LinkedIn also has a job search engine that allows you to find jobs based on your profile content.

To search for positions:

- 1) Click **"Jobs"** at the top of your home page.
- 2) In the white search box at the top of the page, type in a job title, keyword or company name and click **"Search"**.
- 3) You will get a list of open jobs that match the criteria you entered in the search box. Used the **"Advanced"** search feature on the right to refine you search, based on whatever criteria you choose, including company name or location.
- 4) Click on the job you are interested in and follow the instructions for applying.

Using Facebook, Twitter, & Pinterest in Your Job Search

Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest are three of the most popular social networking sites on the internet, each with millions of users in the United States alone. While most users utilize these sites for personal use, they can also be powerful job search tools if you know what you're doing. Below are tips to help you get the most out of each platform.

Tips for using Facebook in your Job Search:

Facebook is the most popular social media platform in the world with nearly a billion users worldwide. While many are aware of how Facebook behavior can hurt your employment chances, it can also be used effectively in your job search as part of your broader social media brand.

- One strategy is to create a "Professional" Facebook profile and tie to your location and job title. Facebook pages are indexed in search engines. If you name your page "John Smith, Appleton Web Developer" for example, your profile should show up in Google and Bing search results when people search for your name or some combination of your name, location and industry.
- If you are in a creative field, take pictures of your work, upload them to your page and share them. These visual examples can serve as a type of online portfolio and demonstrate work to potential employers.
- Share web links to interesting professional articles you have read that are tied to your field. Be sure to include comments with the post sharing your thoughts about the content.
- The "Status Update" field can be used to write mini-blog posts or link to your own blog.
- "Like" companies in your field of work, especially those for whom you'd like to work.
- Encourage employers to contact you via the page or private messaging

BONUS TIP:

Some job seekers will change their name on the private Facebook page so as to not be found by employers. This works sometimes, but most of the time, you can still be found

Tips for using Twitter in your Job Search:

Twitter is an online social networking service that enables users to send and read short 140-character messages called "tweets". Effectively using Twitter during your job search can also improve your chances of finding employment.

- The key to using Twitter is to be an engaging member. Be active on the site and use your profile to share tweets that demonstrate expertise in your field.
- Many companies post job openings on Twitter, so follow companies you are interested in and find industry-specific groups to follow. Also, follow thought leaders in your field, the recognized experts in your industry or occupation.
- Use hashtags (#) in your posts so others can find you. When a term is hash-tagged, any Twitter user who searches for that term will be taken to your post and by extension, your profile. Eventually, you could develop a large following of other Twitter users who are interested in what you have to say. Interact with them and respond to people in your network.
- Link to your blog and LinkedIn profile to your Twitter page so your followers can learn more about you and what you have to offer a potential employer.

BONUS TIP:

Send private notes to potential mentors. A great way to find a job is to reach out directly to someone in your field and let them know that you are looking for new opportunities. It's best to do this after you have interacted with someone through retweets or responses to tweets they have made.

Tips for using Pinterest in your Job Search:

Pinterest is a visual bookmarking tool that helps you discover and save creative ideas. It's like having electronic bulletin boards where you can accumulate and organize information that is interesting to you. You can include

BONUS TIP:

New to Pinterest? Watch this video to learn more about it!
<https://about.pinterest.com/en>

photos, links, recipes, inspirational sayings or any other category YOU choose! Creating an account is free and available for individuals or businesses. While many of the features listed above have made it an attractive platform for personal use, Pinterest can also be used as a place to organize your employment interests and showcase some of your past work to potential employers.

- Pinterest allows users to create Boards with your own topics/titles. You can choose to make a Board (or your whole account) public (search/view-able by others) or private. Begin by pinning job search tips, resume examples, or websites you find helpful or follow a company you value. People or businesses can follow you, and you can choose to follow Pinners or Boards that interest you so that you are always viewing new information in your employment-related interests.
- Consider using Pinterest to create, save, and share an electronic portfolio about yourself. Pin copies of diplomas, certificates, awards, video clips, and your resume, for example. Or create boards for different job search areas such as: Resume Tips, Interviewing Skills, Job Search Tips, or inspirational sayings to remind yourself to never give up! Share your board (or create a group board) with your job search network or support group to expound on your resources. Link to your portfolio Board from your LinkedIn or Facebook or other social media account(s). Possibilities are plentiful!
- Pinterest is also very mobile friendly, allowing you to use the website on the go. The mobile app allows a one touch upload to Pin something such as a photo or website. You can 'Send' a Pin to someone via email or a different social media source. You can also 'Share' a Board with anyone for them to view it. If you want a more interactive approach, you can create a group board that you or anyone you invite can Pin to. Consider how you can use these features to interact with people you met at an event in your industry or share your experiences at the event on your employment-related Pinterest Boards. This will show your followers how you are actively involved in your industry.

BONUS TIP:

Pinterest has a reputation as being a social media site exclusively for women. While the majority of users are women, over 6.6 million men use Pinterest.

Connect with Us!

Stay up to date on all of the things happening at Fox Valley Technical College and FVTC Employment Connections by connecting with us on social media.

Fox Valley Technical College

- [Facebook](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [Pinterest](#)
- [Other Sites](#)

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ePortfolios

An ePortfolio (short for electronic portfolio) is a collection of examples from your education, work history, and other activities. They are organized online with the purpose of being a resource to share with employers to give evidence of your employment skills and potential.

There are two types of ePortfolios:

➤ **Career or Job Skills Portfolio**

This type of portfolio is designed to give potential employers a complete picture of who you are. This includes your work experience, education, accomplishments, skill sets, etc. This gives employers a general idea of what type of employee you will be...and what you could potentially become.

➤ **Interview Portfolio**

The interview portfolio is a smaller, more focused version of your complete career/job search portfolio that is most relevant to a specific job you're interviewing for. This eliminates all but the items that a targeted employer is specifically looking for.

Formatting/What to Include

There are no strict rules for what should and should not be in your portfolio. You should include those skills and accomplishments you believe will be the most appealing to employers you want to work for. For these reasons, everyone's portfolio will be somewhat unique. There are, however, some items that are generally included in most ePortfolios (courtesy of [EFolipa.com](#)):

- **Welcome/Summary:** Summarize who you are and preview what visitors will find in your electronic portfolio. Give your audience a flavor for what you're all about and let them know what you value.
- **Career objective:** Write a statement summarizing your objective. To be meaningful, your objective should be as specific as possible.
- **Resume:** For More Information on Creating an effective resume, see [our Employment Guide](#)
- **Work samples:** This information is as diverse as your experience. Upload articles, papers, projects, reports, and publications so your audience can see your work. You can even include audio, video, or any multimedia projects you may have worked on.
- **Awards and honors:** Scan certificates of awards and honors.
- **Additional education:** List conferences, seminars, workshops and any other professional development. Include any extra courses, degrees, certifications, and licenses that do not appear on your resume.
- **Volunteer and extracurricular activities:** List your activities or include items that you created during these activities.
- **References:** List three to five people who have agreed to talk about your strengths, abilities and experience. Be sure to include full contact information.
- **Letters of recommendation and testimonials:** Include any praise you've received from employers, customers, instructors, and colleagues throughout your work, education, and other activities.

BONUS TIP:

The contents of an ePortfolio can vary widely depending on what career field you are attempting to work in. Search online for examples of ePortfolios in your chosen field to see what people on a similar career path have included in their ePortfolio. [Click here to view examples from Students at Clemson University.](#)

Selecting an ePortfolio Platform

There are many places online where you can host your ePortfolio. However, not all hosts are created equal. There are things you should consider before selecting the right host for you. You do not want to put in all of the time and effort to create an ePortfolio only to find it is missing some features you need. Before starting to build your ePortfolio, consider the following:

➤ Storage Space

- Storage space may vary with different ePortfolio hosts. When determining how much space you will need, consider what you want include in your ePortfolio. You can upload thousands of documents with relatively little storage space (e.g. 1 GB can hold nearly 2,000 Microsoft Word documents). However, if you are sharing videos or other large files, you may run out of space very quickly (e.g. 1 GB only holds about 12 minutes of 720p HD video recorded on an iPhone)

➤ Ease of Use

- Some host sites are very easy to use, while some may require some more advanced computer skills to be used most effectively. As a general rule, the less complex the format, the less customization is possible. Do some basic experimenting with the formats you are considering and see if the technical requirements (and limitations) are acceptable for your desired ePortfolio.

BONUS TIP:

If you are technologically savvy, creating your own personal website is also an effective option. This gives you the freedom to build and share information in the exact way you wish.

➤ Cost

- Many sites will host your ePortfolio for free, but other more advanced sites may charge a fee. Paid sites may offer a free trial period. In these cases, take extra care to know when the trial period ends so you aren't unexpectedly charged at a later date.

➤ Have a Backup Plan

- An ePortfolio is designed to easily showcase examples of your past work and education accomplishments to potential employers. It is NOT designed to store documents for you to access when you need them. Always have copies of your ePortfolio items saved at another location like a home computer hard drive, USB drive, or online cloud storage.

BONUS TIP:

Research how long a provider company/website has been in business and how widely used they are. If it is a little used website, you can't be sure how long your portfolio will be accessible. Beware: some of these sites may close down abruptly.

➤ Note about LinkedIn

- Depending on what work you wish to share, a **LinkedIn profile can be a suitable substitute for an ePortfolio**. However, there are some added benefits to creating a separate ePortfolio. In addition to allowing you to customize the way your works are displayed, an ePortfolio is a better platform to share items that you created outside of a traditional work or education setting. Perhaps your hobbies include audio/video production or you created some items for a volunteer organization. With an ePortfolio, you can create a prominent spot for these types of projects, without having to attach them to work history or education experience on your LinkedIn profile.

Attending a JOB FAIR

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Attending a Job Fair

Why should I attend a Job Fair?

Job fairs are a very effective and personal ways to interact with a number of different companies in a very short period of time. A wide variety of companies normally participate. This is an excellent opportunity to browse, indulge your curiosity and gain a perspective on where you fit in the job market.

Large portions of modern hiring processes are completed online and by phone. Employers screen resumes and cover letter electronically and you research employers online. **Job fairs provide an opportunity to meet employers face to face and get answers to your questions about particular positions or companies straight from a company representative.** They provide an opportunity to be evaluated on more than just your resume. Interpersonal skills, communication skills and workplace appropriate social skills are critical. Many employers evaluate these skills heavily, because they want to hire people who can make a good impression on their clients and customers.

Job fairs provide many opportunities to:

- Investigate positions, occupations and/or career fields and companies in which you have an interest.
- **Network with professionals** in the career fields and companies in which you have an interest.
- **Network with other job seekers.** Talk to others while you're standing in line to exchange job-searching ideas, provide support and even obtain leads.
- **Polish your interviewing and professional skills by talking with employers.** Practice selling your skills, experience, and education to build your comfort level with interviewing. Pay close attention to the popular questions that you may not have anticipated and prepare answers to those questions for future interviews.

BONUS TIP:

Employment Connections holds many job fairs each semester

- Manufacturing Job Fair
- Health Care Job Fair
- Part – Time Job Fair
- Criminal Junctive Job Fair
- Automotive, Diesel, Collision & Refinishing Job Fair

For a complete list of upcoming FVTC Job Fairs, visit www.fvtc.edu/eventsandfairs

Before Attending a Job Fair

Don't even think about walking into a job fair unprepared. If you want to get the most out of your time there, you have to do your homework! Below are some tips that can help you get ready for the fair:

➤ Research the Companies Attending

- Preparing for the fair starts with knowing the organizations that are attending and which once you are interested in talking to. You could research these companies online. Luckily, most job fairs have web sites that showcase participating employers and some even include what positions they are looking to fill. Use these web sites to identify which companies that you want to approach and educate yourself on those companies. You can also check out each company's corporate website, and learn more about what they do. Being well versed in a company's background, environment and mission may very well go a long way in demonstrating enthusiasm to a recruiter. Likewise, knowing nothing about a company and admitting that you have absolutely no idea what your strengths and interests are is a prescription for disaster.

➤ Prepare your Resume

- **A well written, error free resume is a must!** If you're looking for more than one type of position, each being significantly different, you may need two different versions of your resume, each tailored to support a different objective. This doesn't mean you need an individualized resume for each employer at a fair. It simply means when you speak to an employer and say you're interested in a certain kind of work, don't hand the employer a resume that has nothing to do with that kind of work.

BONUS TIP:
Need help with your resume? Click here to view our [resume writing guide](#) or call Employment Connections at 920-735-5627 and schedule a resume review appointment.

➤ Prepare a 60 second introduction to use with employers

- You don't want to sound like a telephone solicitor reading a script; you do want to sound like you've thought about why you're there. It might be something like, "hello, I'm Daria Henderson, a second year Marketing student. I'm looking for an internship related to marketing for next summer. I read on your web site that (name of company) has an internship program in your corporate marketing department, and I've done some project work that I believe is related to the internship work. I'm very interested in your program" Get the idea? Keep in mind that some employer representatives may take control of the conversation quickly and you may do more listening than speaking, but you do want to be prepared to be proactive rather than passive.

➤ Practice Interviewing

- Be prepared to discuss what you like doing, what you're looking for in a job, and what your most relevant skills are.

BONUS TIP:
Interviewing tips can be found in our [interviewing guide](#). Click here to view it.

➤ Be Prepared

- Be prepared by bringing the following: **a pen, something to write on and supply of resumes.** You should also bring a **padfolio** or **carryall** that has easily accessible storage areas. Wear comfortable, professional-looking shoes designed for standing long periods of time.

During the Job Fair

You have done your research, perfected your resume, and prepared your 60 second introduction. Now the big day is here. You've made it to the fair, but now is not the time to let your guard down! Follow these tips while you're at the fair and make the most out of all the hard work you did in preparation.

Dress for Success

- **First impressions are lasting ones**, so treat the job fairs you are attending like a job interview. Come dressed for success, in conservative attire, with a winning attitude, and ready to answer probing questions. If they distribute **name tags**, by all means use them. Recruiters want to get to know you.

Arrive early

- Some well-known employers may have many job seekers wishing to talk to them, and long lines can build up at their locations. You can sometimes avoid lines by arriving early and getting into the fair first. This will also give you time to survey the layout of the job fair and determine the order that you plan to visit with company representatives once it begins.

BONUS TIP:

Be polite and considerate at ALL times. The person you meet in the parking lot, hallway or restroom may be the company recruiter you will see later in the day.

Prepare Some Questions to Ask Employers

- While this is a chance for employers to learn about you, you also want to learn about them! Prepare some standard questions that you can ask the employers you are interested in working for. Questions you may want to ask company representatives at a job fair include:
 - What types of career opportunities does your organization offer?
 - Can you describe your company's hiring/application process?
 - What are the main skills or qualities that you look for in an employee?
 - Are you aware of related occupations that I would be qualified for?
 - Could you provide some other contacts that might be helpful to me?
 - May I contact you if I need more information?

Prepare Your Answers to Employer Questions

- Recruiters will want you to be prepared to talk about your career objectives, strengths, willingness to relocate, interests, relevant skills, the kind of job you are looking for, why you want to work for their organization, and why you would be an asset. Be prepared to answer commonly asked questions and tailor them to the company's needs.

Be Professional, Confident & Enthusiastic

- Recruiters see you as a potential future representative of their company. Display confidence, enthusiasm and the ability to think and speak "on your feet" and under pressure.
- **Be prepared to assertively introduce yourself**, using your best handshake, showing enthusiasm and making eye contact with the interviewer. Be concise, polite, and direct because you only have a brief period of time to obtain the information you need and to make a good first impression.

Leave on a Good Note

- The people at these events usually do not make hiring decisions, so close to the conversation by asking for the representative's business card and discussing how and when to follow up.
- **Say "Thank You"**

After the Job Fair

You attended the fair and it was a great success! You've made a good impression on some potential employers, got some promising leads, and now you're ready to put this fair behind you. But wait! Following up on the fair is very important and how you do that can mean getting or not getting the job. Give yourself the competitive edge. Don't make the mistake of thinking that as soon as you have spoken to the last employer and left the facility that you are finished. **Follow-up is essential to making the most of your job fair experience!**

Send Thank You Letters

- Be sure to send thank you letters to employers that you are interested in **within one week**. Most candidates do not make the effort to send thank you letters; why not give yourself a competitive edge.

BONUS TIP:

Need help writing a Thank You Letter? Check out the Thank You Letter Section of our Interviewing Guide

Be Persistent;

- Be sure to observe the follow-up procedures suggested by each employer. Once you have complied with these procedures, if a reasonable amount of time has passed and you have not heard from the employer, it is okay to contact them to inquire about the status of your application.

Other Things to Remember about Job Fairs

- Keep in mind that all is not lost if you don't land a job. **Job fairs also offer great practice in perfecting networking and interviewing skills.**
- Talk to as many people as you can; **never underestimate the value of face time with recruiters** from leading companies. Pay attention to the questions you're being asked and to the kind of information they're offering.
- It's impossible to leave without something of value.

BONUS TIP:

Wisconsin TechConnect keeps a list of upcoming job fairs and employment events from not only FVTC, but from organizations all over the region. **Check it out!**

The Basics of NETWORKING

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Networking 101

“What is Networking?”

Many people believe that the best way to look for a job is to wait until a position is posted online that fits what you are looking for. The truth is that less than 25% of all jobs are filled this way. While you should use every job search method available to you, multiple studies have proven that **more than 70% of all jobs are filled through networking**.

You already network every day. How did you find your dentist? The best pizza place? The mechanic that works on your car? Get tickets to the sold out game? Most likely, you found those things by someone referring you to them. Getting a job works the same way. Someone who knows what you have to offer an employer can refer you to the right people.

Companies are looking for employees the same way. Most employers prefer to either hire someone they know, or someone that one of their employees refer to them. It is faster, less expensive, and generally creates better hires. This referral process is the path we want to take (in addition to all traditional methods of career search) because it is the only method where you are in control.

So, if 70% of all jobs are filled through referrals and companies like to hire this way, doesn't it make sense to spend 70% of your job search efforts on networking?

Networking solves the two biggest issues in job search:

1. Nobody knows you exist
2. You are unaware of 85% of the organizations that are out there

Put another way, employers and job seekers cannot find one another. An employer can't hire you if they don't know you are out there and you can't work for a business you don't know exists.

So how do you use networking to bridge this gap?

The first thing is to figure out what makes you unique. Why are you better qualified than the hundreds of other people who work in the same field as you? To determine this, think about your career goals and past significant accomplishments, either in school or in the workplace that support that career goal. From there, determine the skills used in achieving those accomplishments. Information about education and relevant work history is also important. Once you've figured out the value you offer employers, you have to deliver this in a real-life setting to people who can help you. The verbal delivery of this information is often called a **“60 Second Commercial”**.

BONUS TIP:

Not sure how to develop an effective 60 Second Introduction? Click here and read a walkthrough in the Interviewing Section.

Developing a Target List

Once you have your message figured out, you have to determine who you are going to deliver it to. There is a common misperception about networking. It is NOT walking up to random people and asking for a job. Networking is a step by step process of building and maintaining relationships with individuals who may have the potential to help you now or in the future. But who do you talk to? Below are two lists you should make to help you get started.

The “Who Thinks You’re Awesome?” List

The safest way to begin (and a way to boost your confidence) is by talking with people you already know. This is called the “**Who Thinks You’re Awesome**” list. These are people that want to help you succeed. This could be family, friends, classmates, teachers, co-workers, people you volunteer with...the list is almost endless. Make a list and write these names down. You’ll be surprised by the length of this list!

When you first begin networking, it is more important to connect with those who are WILLING to help you find a job, rather than just those who are ABLE. These are people who already know the kind of person you are and some of what you have to offer. Also, this gives you the opportunity to practice sharing about yourself with people who will be the most supportive.

The ABC List

Next you want to make a list of people who are ABLE to help you with your job search. List as many as you know. This is called an **A, B and C list** due to how you divide up the list you created.

Your **A List** should be made up of people who have hiring authority in any industry or own a business. Even though they may not work in your field, they are hiring managers and they know other hiring managers, including some in your field.

Your **B List** are people who work in the industry you want to work in. They may not have hiring authority, but they can introduce you to people who do hire in your field.

Your **C List** is everyone else. They are people who are willing to help you, but don’t have any authority to do so. You have to teach them how to help. Many of these people will be on your “Who thinks you’re awesome?” list.

Networking Meetings

Once you have created your list(s), it’s time to start meeting with the people on them! Set up **networking meetings**. Remember, start with the people you already know. It should be an easy conversation and far less nerve-racking than starting your process by meeting with someone you don’t know!

What to do in a Networking Meeting

1. Be prepared with your 60 second commercial, resume, and a list of companies you’re targeting. Discussions without these aren’t useful.
2. Clearly describe what kind of position you’re looking for based on industry, location, size of company, level, duties, business culture, personal values, etc. When you give your contacts a clear idea of your professional objective, they can more easily think of ways to help.
3. Ask them if they know anyone you could talk to in your industry or at a company on your target list in order to gain information and continue your search. These names are your **referrals**. Also, ask if they would be willing to introduce you to the referral.
4. Build a list of referrals from every networking meeting. Referrals will help to define your next job search action (the informational interview). Meet with these referrals and your network will continue to grow. Meeting more people will lead you further into your desired industry and target list companies.

Informational Interviews

So you have completed your first networking meetings. Now it is time to meet with the referrals you obtained from those meetings. Ideally, the person you first met with was willing to make an introduction for you. A discussion with someone who works in your industry is much easier to get if someone they know and trust makes the introduction. The formal discussion you have with this referral is called an **Informational Interview**. Informational interviews are meetings with people who work in the world you want to work in and have industry specific knowledge you will need to know. They know people and understand the type of people the industry values. They are a direct connection to others in your targeted industry.

An informational interview differs from a job interview because the conversation is not about hiring or about a specific job. You are there seeking guidance, feedback and advice about your career and your chosen industry. One problem with most discussions in the job-seeking process is that each side is hesitant to talk to the other because they are uncertain about whether they might be wasting their time with an unqualified candidate or an unsuitable workplace. The informational interview provides a non-threatening forum for discussion as the two sides learn about the other.

Conducting an Informational Interview

Informational interviews are short, often lasting just 30 minutes. Someone is freely giving you their time, but their time is not endless. Because of this short time span, you have to get right to the point. Begin the interview by thanking the interviewee by name, reiterate that you are there to get advice and guidance and share your 60-Second Commercial. Then, begin asking questions.

Below are some sample informational interview questions and what each question is hoping to accomplish.

- 1) **Can you give me an idea of what is happening in your industry right now?**
 - The goal is to get the person talking about things they deal with every day and help you uncover problems that need to be solved in this industry.
- 2) **How did you get involved in this industry?**
 - This keeps the conversation flowing. The interviewee is talking about themselves (everyone's favorite topic!) and this may establish common ground between the two of you.
- 3) **What skill sets are important for someone looking to be successful in this industry?**
 - As the interviewee lists skills, this is a chance for you to interject examples of your skills into the conversation. For example, if the interviewee says project management is a key skill to have and you have project management experience, give the interviewee details about that experience.
- 4) **What kind of person succeeds in this industry?**
 - The answer here will help you understand the personal traits of people who fit well in this field. If you have those traits, explain when you've used them.
- 5) **Do you have any advice for me as I continue my search?**
 - People love to give advice. The interviewee may talk about their last job search and how it was successful for them.
- 6) **I have more research to do before making a choice of organization or industry. If you were me, who do you think it would be important to talk with to continue my research?**
 - This is the most important question of the meeting. Stay silent and give them time to come up with some names. If you performed well during this interview, the interviewee should feel no hesitation in giving you the names of others in your field that you should talk to. The goal is to **get at least two direct referrals** from each person you meet. If you're getting names, you can never run out of people to talk to!

BONUS TIP:

Although you are not asking for a job during an informational interview, the industry professional you are interviewing is making judgements about you based on your demeanor, professionalism and questions you are asking. If you are presenting yourself in the best possible way, they may be already considering whether there might be a place for you in their organization.

Other Networking Tips

- The goal of each of informational interview is to get additional referrals. If you did not get any referrals from an informational interview, it could be that the person doesn't have many contacts; however it is more likely that you failed to connect during the informational interview. Perhaps you didn't clearly define what you were looking for, or maybe you didn't present yourself professionally. If this happens repeatedly, consider adjusting your presentation.
- It is important to follow-up with the people that have given you their time with a thank you note, progress report, results of your referral discussions, and news of your accepted job offer. Maintain those good relationships because you never know when you may need their help again. Also, let them know you'd be happy to help them in the future, just as they helped you.

Networking Tips to Remember:

1. The closer you get to those who hire, the more valuable the networking discussion.
2. This is work; it takes time, but the pay-off is big.
3. It's easier than you think. Do your homework, start networking (with family and friends first), and you'll find out.
4. Track your contact conversations in an Excel spreadsheet. Organize your notes and record your referral information. Use this information to prioritize and drive your job search, your next actions.
5. Measure the growth and results of your contact network week to week, and you'll feel your job search motivation grow.
6. Other traditional job search techniques should be used in addition to networking; however, networking allows you the MOST control over your search.

BONUS TIP:

For step-by-step help with the networking process, read *Human Search Engine for Career Search*. This jobseekers guide provides instruction on how to create all of the items mentioned in this section. You can check out a copy for FREE in Employment Connections (E135)

Completing JOB APPLICATIONS

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Successfully Completing Job Applications

In this day and age, are job applications still used? Yes. And while most applications have moved online, many employers still require job seekers to complete a paper application. The following tips will help you successfully complete both online and paper applications.

The main reason employers use applications is to easily screen potential employees; they use the information from the applications to determine who they are going to call for a job interview. It is also a way of standardizing the information they obtain from all job-seekers, including some things that may not appear on a resume. Job applications are typically used in the post-offer, pre-employment background check, so it is important to answer all questions accurately and honestly. In fact, some employers ask you to complete an application when you come in for a job interview or even after being hired.

Preparing to Apply – Collecting and Organizing your Information

Before you begin applying for jobs, gather the information you'll need to complete applications. This will commonly include:

➤ Previous Work History

- Names, addresses and phone numbers of previous employers as well as the name of your supervisor.
- Your job title, list of your responsibilities/accomplishments, starting/ending salaries and the dates of your employment.

➤ Education Information

- Required educational information includes the name of the college you attended, its location, your major, the type of degree you earned (Associate's, Bachelor's, Master's...) and dates you attended school. Some organizations may even ask for your GPA.

➤ References

- Many applications also require you to include 3 or more references. References are people who can attest to your skills and work ethic. Supervisors, co-worker and instructors are some potential references. On your application, you will need to include their name, place of employment and contact information, which may include address, phone number and email address.

➤ Other

- You might need to fill out sections of the application asking about technical skills and/or military experience. Track down that information and have it organized.

BONUS TIP:

Consider filling out a sample application with your information and keeping it as a reference to use each time you fill out a real application. This will allow you to apply for new positions more quickly.

BONUS TIP:

For more info on selecting references, [click here to visit the Reference section of the guide.](#)

Filling out the Application

A job application is a legal document. When you sign it, you are verifying that everything you have said is true. With modern technology, it is very easy to verify the information that you provide as either true or false. Answer each section honestly and as completely as possible. Here are some things to remember when filling out an application:

➤ Read and Follow Instructions Carefully

- Spend a few minutes reviewing the entire application before you start. Some applications ask for information differently – and all have specific spots on the application where you are expected to answer questions. Make sure you know what information will be required where before starting the application. If you are filling out an online application where you cannot page ahead, carefully review the parts that you are able to see, fill them out as completely as possible and then move to the next page. Most online applications will allow you to return to previous parts of the application and make changes before submitting.

➤ Fill Out the Application as Completely as Possible

- Your goal is to complete the application as completely and honestly as you can. Don't leave any blanks on applications. If there are questions that do not apply to you, simply respond with "not applicable," or "n/a."
- Do not leave the work history section blank, staple your resume to it and write "see resume". You may include the resume, but you still have to complete the entire application. If you do include your resume, be sure the information on both documents match in regards to titles, dates of employment, etc...

➤ Focus Your Information on the Position You Are Applying For

- Just as with your resume and cover letter, focus your content to the job at hand. Give details of skills and accomplishments relevant to this particular job and do not include information about unrelated experiences.

➤ Pay Attention to Detail

- When completing a paper application, complete it as neatly as possible. Sloppy handwriting may send a message that you are not fit for employment. Consider typing it if you have access to a typewriter. If completing it by hand, be sure to use only a blue or black pen. Do not make spelling mistakes.

➤ Be Honest

- This one should go without saying, but lies or inaccuracies will immediately destroy your chances of being hired. Always answer questions truthfully.

➤ Carefully Consider Your Salary Requirements

- You will likely be asked to include your salary requirements. Employers often use this question as a screening device and you don't want to be eliminated from consideration based on your answer. Do not give a specific number. Instead, research the salary range for that type of job and answer the question with the range. For example, writing "\$32,000 to \$38,000" is more effective than "\$36,000". You could also say "open" or "negotiable", but a range is better.

BONUS TIP:

TELL THE TRUTH!

Lying on an application can be a problem even if you get the job! Not only can an employee be terminated immediately upon finding false information in an application or resume, but in some cases, you even can be prosecuted for misrepresenting yourself if you lies damage the company!

➤ **PROOFREAD!**

- Once you've completed the application, **proofread** it. If possible, have at least one other person check for typos and misspellings.

Answering Difficult Questions

Depending on your background, some application questions can be very difficult to answer. Below are some tips for answering the most difficult questions.

➤ **Reason for Leaving a Previous Job**

- Most applications ask your reason for leaving a past job. If you left of your own accord and for a different job, you can answer by saying you resigned for a better opportunity. If you left because the job was not working out, you can say you were seeking a better fit. Do not say "the boss was a jerk" or "the company was dysfunctional" even if those things were true in your mind. Providing any negative comments on a past employer is a big mistake.
- If leaving was not your choice, answer the question as positively as possible. **There is a difference between being fired and being laid off.** Being laid off means your job ended because of business conditions, not because of your performance. "**Laid Off**", "**Downsized**" or "**Workforce Reduction**" are all acceptable reasons you can provide. On the other hand, being fired means you lost your job because of your actions, such as poor performance, disregard for safety or, attendance issues. Don't say "**Fired**" or "**Terminated**". Consider phrasing it more in a way such as "**job ended.**" Writing only "**Will explain at interview**" is usually a dead end. The potential employer may simply be checking on your honesty more than anything else. Just because you were discharged doesn't mean the employer won't hire you. If you were discharged and the application form allows, consider writing "**Discharged – Willing to discuss.**" This shows honesty and openness which could yield more positive results. If the application only allows for a checkmark, use your cover letter to address your interest in discussing the ethical (values, conflict, etc.) issue related to the termination at the time of the interview. However, don't go into too much detail. A short, general explanation may be enough to satisfy the employer. Regardless of what you put, be prepared to discuss this situation in the interview.

➤ **Criminal History**

- Most applications will ask about arrests or conviction records. Criminal background checks are now commonplace in the hiring world, and many companies have policies about employing people with criminal records. Criminal records are recorded in federal or state government data banks and are easily accessible, even those from other states. Any falsified information will be discovered and will eliminate you from further consideration. Honesty is the best policy here. Prior arrests and conviction records do not automatically disqualify you for a job. All cases are considered on an individual basis, and the offense will be compared to the position that you are applying for. Be prepared to discuss this issue in the interview.
- Be sure you understand the specifics of your criminal history. There is a difference between a **misdemeanor** and **felony**. Misdemeanors are often not looked on as harshly as felonies. If asked whether you have been convicted of a felony and you've only been convicted of a misdemeanor, you can legally answer "no". Also know the difference between being **charged** and being **convicted**. Simply being charged with a crime is far different than being convicted. Again, you can honestly answer "no" to the conviction question in this case because arrest doesn't confirm guilt. If you have been convicted of a crime, some experts suggest adding a paragraph to your application briefly describing your offense and how you've successfully applied what you learned from your experience.

➤ **Employment Gaps**

- Gaps happen no matter how great an employee you are! They can be caused for reasons that are very understandable: a layoff, a return to school, the need to care for a sick parent, a new baby, or a desire to travel, relocate, raise your children. They aren't necessarily a problem unless you have a history of gaps. It's best to be truthful. Enter the accurate dates, including month and year. Though your gap may stand out, you have the option of briefly explaining the gap in a cover letter. This should be done in a general and positive way. If you used your gap time to expand or apply your job related skills, include this.

➤ **Disability**

- When addressing disability, the first thing you should do is study state and federal law so that you know your rights. **The Americans with Disabilities Act makes it illegal for employers to ask if you have a disability.** If an application asks if you have a disability, it's therefore advisable to leave it blank or write a dash so the employer knows you read the question.
- If you have been informed of the requirements of the job AND you are asked if you are capable of reasonably performing these requirements with or without reasonable accommodation, then you should disclose. To decide what you will disclose means you need to know the requirements of the job and how you can fulfill them with or without accommodation. To receive the accommodation, you must by law disclose your disability.
- If you can reasonably perform the job duties without accommodation, you should not disclose.
- If you don't need reasonable accommodation for the job, but you do need it for the interview, then disclose your accommodation needs verbally when you are called to schedule an interview. This allows the employer to make arrangements ahead of time.
- Be well prepared for your interview. Practice how to answer both appropriate and even inappropriate questions. Refocus the interview away from your disability, but be open to briefly educating the interviewer by answering questions politely.

BONUS TIP:

If you are having difficulty addressing an issue on employment applications, consider scheduling an appointment with an employment advisor. They can meet with you one-on-one and help you develop a strategy for answering those questions in the future. Contact Employment Connections at (920) 735-5627

➤ **Recognizing Illegal Questions**

- Some applications may include questions that are illegal, although this is rare. This is because the information they are seeking is not relevant to your ability to do the job. This includes your **age, date of birth, race, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, health or medical conditions, citizenship, or credit history.** Write "n/a" if you see questions like this. In rare instances, it is legal to ask for a job seekers gender on an application. If you see this question, consider asking why this is necessary. It may be because the position is legally required to be a certain gender.

BONUS TIP:

For more information on illegal questions, see the "Dealing with Illegal Interview Questions" section

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