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Top “10” Job Search Techniques

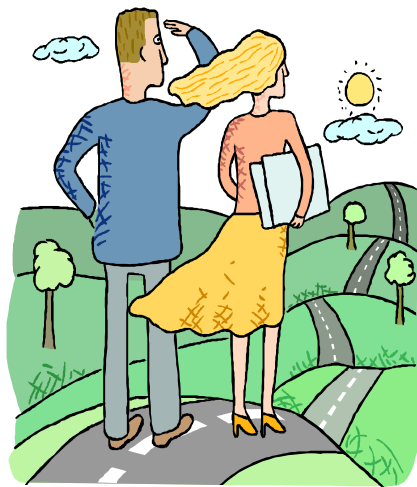
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CHAPTER ONE

TOP “10” JOB SEARCH TECHNIQUES

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BEGINNING YOUR JOB SEARCH CAMPAIGN

You've got that professional résumé in hand and you're ready to "hit the pavement" (or the computer) and head out on your search of all searches, to find a job! But wait, it takes much more than having just a résumé to have a successful job search and this chapter is designed to provide you with all of the methods you will need to apply in order to be successful. The job hunter or career changer can find job hunting to be a very frustrating experience. In other words, it's a job finding a job! There are no set in stone rules for job hunting; no magic formulas or solutions. However, by utilizing all the options available to us, we can make the job search more efficient and be successful in the long run.

A successful job search starts with thorough preparation and planning. This is true whether you are beginning your career, seeking re-employment or considering a more satisfying occupation. An important step in this process is to assess your personal characteristics; take a good look at who you are and what you have done. This will require time and effort, but the time you invest will be worthwhile. Self-assessment can help you to decide on a realistic job objective. The information you discover will also be helpful when writing your resume, completing job applications and preparing for job interviews.

Assessing Your Strengths

The self-assessment worksheets that follow are designed to help you inventory your skills, knowledge, abilities, interests, accomplishments, values and personal traits as they have been demonstrated in your day-to-day activities at work, school, home and in the community. Make sure you include all your talents. Sometimes people take their biggest positives for granted. Have someone who knows you well review your worksheets to ensure you include all your positives. When completing this worksheet think about "transferables." These are skills and abilities that you can take with you to a new job. They are characteristics you have in which your new employer will be particularly interested. Remember, the employer is going to be looking for how you can benefit his or her organization.

Use the following form to summarize your accomplishments, abilities and personal characteristics.

Work Experience. (Use a sheet like this for each position you have held, including military service.)
Company:
Address:
Supervisor's Name and Title:
Dates of Employment:
Position(s)/Title(s)/Military Rank:
Duties and Responsibilities:
Accomplishments (including awards or commendations):
Skills, Knowledge and Abilities Used (Make sure you include "transferables"):
Duties Liked and Disliked:
Reason for Leaving:
Education and Training
School, College, University:
Dates of Enrollment:
Major:
Degree or Certificate:
Date:
G.P.A.:
Career-Related Courses:
Scholastic Honors, Awards and Scholarships:

College Extracurricular Activities:
Other Training: (Include courses sponsored by the military, employers or professional associations, etc.)
Courses, Activities Liked and Disliked:
Skills, Knowledge and Abilities Learned:
Professional Licenses:
Personal Characteristics: (e.g., organizational ability, study habits, social skills, like to work alone or on a team, like or dislike public speaking, detail work.)
Personal Activities
Professional: (association memberships, positions held, committees served on, activities, honors, publications, patents, etc.)
Community: (civic, cultural, religious, political organization memberships, offices or positions held, activities, etc.)
Other: (hobbies, recreational activities and other personal abilities and accomplishments)
Overall Assessment
Take a look at all the work sheets you have completed: Work Experience, Education and Personal Activities. Considering all you have done, list your strengths and positive attributes in each of the areas below.
Skills, Knowledge and Abilities:
Accomplishments:
Personal Characteristics:
Activities Performed Well:.
Activities Liked:

Exploring Career Options

Review your Assessment Sheets. Do the strengths and positive attributes listed suggest possible careers for you? Your choice of a career does not have to be limited to the ones in which you have the most direct education, experience or training. Ask yourself:

Do I want to remain in that field?

Would the strengths I have listed serve in a related field of work?

Would I consider returning to school to learn new job skills which are in demand?

As a recent college graduate, could I translate my strengths into a career?

Is self-employment a possibility?

In answering these questions, carefully consider personal circumstances, your lifestyle, health, family circumstances and financial needs. Keep these factors in mind when making career plans.

Considering everything you know about yourself, try to think of some career possibilities that you could do well and would enjoy.

List these career possibilities below:

You can obtain additional information about careers from a number of useful publications. Three examples, published by the Department of Labor, are listed below:

Guide for Occupational Exploration (GOE). The GOE lists more than 12,000 occupations and organizes them into a structure developed specifically for career guidance. It provides a wealth of information on how to relate your background to jobs and where to obtain additional information.

Occupational Outlook Handbook(OOH). Designed for career guidance, it presents useful information, including requirements and duties, for a wide variety of jobs.

Organization is Key

Stayed organized in the hunt is imperative! It is *extremely* important to be organized. Maintain a notebook with contact sheets for recording names and information relative to your efforts. Keep copies of all job leads or ads that you respond to. Maintain a calendar or weekly plan of action for your job hunt and record and review the number of contacts made each week.

As stated earlier, *it is a job looking for a job!* If you are experiencing a career transition, staying in the routine of a job hunt is difficult. Remember, you are marketing yourself each and every day. Begin each day with the attitude that you are “open for business.” Follow the plan you established for yourself and keep with it until you’ve reached your goal. Don’t unwittingly extend your job search time by limiting the techniques you use. There are several techniques to utilize in any job search campaign.

Job Search Technique #1

NETWORKING

Networking is a key process in job seeking, job keeping, and position advancement. In the future it will be necessary to give greater attention to this process as competition for good jobs becomes keener and advancement opportunities become fewer.

More and more, individuals must learn to develop and use networks of contacts if they are to best achieve their goals and career potential.

Sixty to Ninety percent of jobs are found informally -- mainly through friends, relatives, and direct contacts. The U.S. Department of Labor reports that 63.4 percent of all workers use informal job finding methods.

Networking is both a technique and a process centered on specific goals. As such, it involves purposeful development of relations with others by connecting and interacting with other individuals through prospecting, networking, and informational interviewing. Its purpose is to exchange information and to acquire advice and referrals that will assist you in promoting your ultimate job search goal: getting job interviews and offers. Through the process of networking you build, expand, and activate your contacts.

The basic tasks of a job search are fairly simple. Once you have figured out what kind of work you want to do, you need to know which employers might have such jobs and then make contact with the hiring authority. These tasks are also known as researching the job market and generating leads and interviews. Networking, or developing your personal contacts, is a great technique for finding out about market and industrial trends and is unsurpassed as a way to generate leads and interviews.

Networking is nothing more than asking the people you already know to help you find out about the job market and meet the people who are actually doing the hiring.

Mark S. Granovetter, a Harvard sociologist, reported to *Forbes* magazine that "informal contacts" account for almost 75 percent of all successful job searches. Agencies find about nine percent of new jobs for professional and technical people, and ads yield another ten percent or so.

Simply defined, networking means meeting with people to exchange information. Some people use networking to find a new job or increase their business, some use it to help improve their professional and personal skills, and others simply want to develop a supportive cast of new acquaintances.

Networking means developing and maintaining relationships with others. It involves staying in touch with people to keep track of new ideas, services, or job openings. Networking is most effective when done with persistence over a period of time. And when it works, networking leads you from one contact to another. By all accepted measures, networking is the single best way to uncover promising job leads.

Don't hesitate to talk to friends, acquaintances, and neighbors about your job search. In reality, you are asking for advice, not charity. Most of the people you contact will be willing to help you, if only you will tell them how. You probably know more people than you think. The key to making progress is to start asking the right people for the right kind of assistance.

The most difficult part of any job search is getting started. You will want to maintain a calendar or engagement diary of appointments and contacts. You should keep a written record of every person you contact in your job search and the results of each contact. Your log will keep you from getting confused and losing track of the details of your job search.

The object of your job search is to convince the person who has the power to hire you that you ought to be working for him or her. The one you want to talk to is not necessarily the president of a company; it is rather the one who heads the department that could use your expertise.

How do you find the hiring authority? If you are lucky, someone you know personally will tell you whom to see and introduce you. Otherwise, you will have to do some homework. If you cannot find out who heads the department that interests you, call the company and ask the operator.

Do not assume you can get to the hiring authority through the personnel department. If at all possible, you will avoid filling out any personnel forms until you have had a serious interview. The same goes for sending resumes. In general, resumes are better left behind after an interview than sent ahead to generate a meeting.

Direct contact with the hiring authority is far and away the most effective job-hunting method. Your strategy and schedule should reflect that fact, and most of your energy should be devoted to direct contact. You may want to explore other methods of contacting potential employers, but that should take up no more than a quarter of your job-hunting time.

The contacts you make during your preliminary informational interviewing will be the core of your network in your job hunt. You will also want to zero in on other contacts within your career area. Your goal is to get referred to the person who has the power to hire you.

To make new contacts in your career area, use the following resources:

- People you know in the career or related area.
- Professional organizations, associations, or unions.
- Community service organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce, Lions, or Rotary.
- Department chairmen in your field at colleges and universities.
- Professional or trade magazines.
- Newspaper articles.
- Yellow pages.
- Directories at the library such as:
 - Poor's Register of Corporations
 - Thomas' Register of American Manufacturers
 - Dun & Bradstreet's Million Dollar Directory
 - Who's Who in America
 - Ward's Directory of 55,000 largest U.S. Corporations

To be effective at networking, there are certain steps you must follow, for example:

1. Determine which organizations, positions, career path, or specific persons are of interest to you. Do enough research so that you will be able to talk intelligently to your new contact.
2. Ask the individual when it would be a good time to chat. Give a brief summary of your background and what you are seeking. Focus on what you have in common. Have a goal in mind and state your purpose.
3. Be flexible. If they offer another time for a meeting, make every effort to make yourself available to their schedule.
4. Ask for information, direction and advice, NOT A JOB! Be prepared and have a short list of questions or topics in mind.
5. At the meeting, be sure to ask for referrals.
6. Always listen attentively and take notes if necessary.
7. Respond to any questions directed to you with comments.
8. Be sure to bring your resume and ask for their critique of it.
9. By all means, be courteous and thankful and be sure to follow-up by sending a handwritten note thanking him or her for their time.

Be sure that you don't make the following mistakes:

1. Don't be too pushy or abrasive by insisting on meeting with someone who just isn't interested or able to speak with you.
2. Don't ask personal questions or questions about their salary.
3. Don't ask for a job.
4. Don't overstep your time limits.
5. Don't come unprepared, either about the company, the career path, or yourself.
6. Don't interrupt the speaker.
7. Don't focus entirely on your own needs. You're there to learn.
8. Don't ask the person to circulate your resume for you (unless he or she offers).
9. Don't forget to say "thank you."

10. Don't become a pest, continually calling the contact for advice and referrals after your initial meeting.

Ask the “right” questions

Ask the type of questions that will assist you in your networking efforts. In networking, you are trying to identify certain individuals who can assist you in finding your next job. With that thought in mind, you will need to prepare questions that can help you do just that.

Everyone has one favorite subject...himself or herself! We all like to talk about what we do and who we are. Knowing this, as you begin to talk to people ask them about their line of work or industry. If what they say has relevance to your job search, inquire further about their organization. At some point, express an interest in their company and ask them whom they would recommend you talk to regarding a possible employment opportunity. This is known as getting a referral. In your networking efforts, you should always try to get a referral. You may wish to ask the person you are speaking with, how they feel about using their name when contacting the individual they suggested.

The overall objective of networking is to build relationships. When speaking with someone, be sure to give him or her your undivided attention. Politely ask for a business card. Write down any pertinent information on the back of the card after you have concluded your conversation. It may be helpful to also send a letter or handwritten note after that conversation thanking the person for his/her time.

Networking Resources

Identifying whom to network with is a challenge for most job seekers. However, the average person knows at least 250 people. When you really begin to consider all the people you have encountered, you will probably come up with a number very close to 250. Networking means connecting, and there are a number of ways to connect, including in person, by telephone, email or through a card or letter. Let's look at where you can find your network so you can get started on your search!

The first one we will identify is our **Personal Network**. The personal network would be those individuals such as family, friends, acquaintances, work peers, vendors, customers, teachers or professors, our children's friends, parents, our parent's friends, our child's baseball, soccer, or basketball coach; in other words, people we see or have seen on a regular basis. Check your address book, holiday card list, old business cards, and business listings as sources for personal contacts. If you haven't had recent contact with these individuals, don't let that deter you from networking with them. After all, they will probably be very happy to be in contact with you. Make a list of 25 people from your personal network that you can contact within the next 7 to 10 days.

Another networking resource would be your **Service Providers**. These are individuals that you have developed a rapport with that may have provided a business service, or you may have come in contact with among the local population. Consider your community leaders, small business people and the local chamber of commerce. Below you will find a listing of potential professional contacts from your service providers.

Financial Planners	Dentists	Hairdressers
Attorneys	Community Leaders	Barbers
Accountants	Clergy	College Professors
Business Owners	Realtors	Bankers
Insurance Salespeople	School Personnel	Physicians
Senior Executives	Salespeople	Store Clerks
Business Consultants	Executive Recruiters	Veterinarians
Restaurant Owners	Caterers	Bartenders

Now you will want to make a list of 15 people to contact from your service provider list.

Professional organizations you are involved with provide a great way to network while staying updated on your industry or occupation's latest trends. If you currently don't belong to any professional organizations you may want to consider joining an

appropriate one for you. Professional organizations post job opportunities from other members on their web sites. Besides the networking opportunity, professional associations offer professional growth and development through their many educational programs and services. If you are unsure of the right association for you, you may wish to consult the Encyclopedia of Associations or do an on-line keyword search.

Networking situations can occur when you least expected. Networking opportunities can occur in any social situation. A party, standing in line, sitting next to someone. Many times, we find ourselves in an unplanned or opportunity networking situation. The conversation can begin as “small talk”, and move to a more personal topic such as our line of work. This is a tremendous opportunity to network by applying what you learned about listening and asking the right questions earlier in this e-book.

To assist you in your networking efforts, we’ve provided a ***Networking Contact List*** on the following pages. This will help you to stay organized as you build your contacts.

NETWORKING LIST

Contact Name: _____

Network Event & Date: _____

Comments:

Contact Name: _____

Network Event & Date: _____

Comments:

Contact Name: _____

Network Event & Date: _____

Comments:

Contact Name: _____

Network Event & Date: _____

Comments:

Contact Name: _____

Network Event & Date: _____

Comments:

Contact Name: _____

Network Event & Date: _____

Comments:

Job Search Technique #2

COLD CALLING BUSINESSES

You've read all about it: Internet recruitment, networking, referrals, and more! But often, these methods take up too much time and waiting. Now, my next suggestion is possibly the most powerful, yet difficult strategy to get your foot in the career door of your choice - cold calling, the art of uninvited job-hunting.

Before you dismiss this as "simply beneath me", consider the odds that four-fifths of the job market is "closed", meaning you won't find out about available openings until they come up for advertisement. The hiring cycle is a long and arduous one. It begins with the internal identification of a position opening by a manager or supervisor. The lead-time to process this vacancy up until its appearance in an advertisement can often take from six to nine months. Hiring is expensive. By cold calling, you're saving the company time, money and resources by placing yourself on a platter for them to consider even before any advertisement has been launched. And even if there are no immediate vacancies available, you gain by getting a vital contact name and inside company information, such as particular application periods or how exactly the company recruits. In the long run, should you have made an impression, your name and Resume may be stored for future openings before they even go "open".

Just as all responsible entities must do, let me warn you of the pitfalls of this strategy. "Cold-calling", or calling employers directly, is often a very difficult task for most people unless you're born with a sales talent and a "thick skin". Cold calling means making contact with people whom you have not had any previous contact and selling yourself in such a way that you set up an interview for yourself or convince them to keep you at the top of their minds should a position come up in future. Some people say it's like a radio ad: Concise, to the point, focused at meeting the employer's needs, charismatic and informative about yourself. The key to cold calling is to be prepared for anything. At any point in the process, you could find yourself dealing directly with the person who is responsible for hiring. You must always be ready to sell yourself and your skills.

So Where Do I Start?

There are several parts of the cold-calling process. Each part has some similarities to what professional telemarketers do when preparing to market their product:

1. Craft yourself a list of choice employers.

The first step in this process is compiling a list of all companies that you would be interested to work with. The more, the merrier; the longer the list, the better your odds at success. You can source for this list via your personal network, the yellow pages, corporate websites, business listings from industry publications and even your local Chamber of Commerce directory. You could create this list of companies by focusing on a specific geographic area, a particular industry, corporate rankings, or the like. Do some research into the career opportunities in your field of profession with each company as far as possible before progressing further. This ensures that you don't waste your time with organizations that won't be able to match your career goals. Once they pass this test, narrow your search to an address, contact name and number/email of the hiring manager or supervisor in the department of your choice. If these are not indicated on directories or websites, make a call to the general line and ask for this contact from the receptionist so that you get direct connection with the person responsible for hiring. (Often, this means bypassing Human Resources and going directly to the source of the vacancy.)

2. Get your pitch down pat.

Your pitch is your personal introduction. To ensure you're not tongue-tied at the crucial point of a telephone conversation, prepare a short script to guide you on your self-introduction to the prospective employer. A simple outline includes an introduction, an explanation of your purpose, summarizing three top skills you possess pertinent to the type of job you are inquiring about, finding about immediate or potential vacancies, asking if you might send them a copy of your Resume or arrange an interview date. A pitch allows you to relax and focus on what you need to say and how to say it prior to calling an employer. Be sure to relate your previous professional experience with what this new company needs. You may have more than one pitch that you refer to depending on the type of job that you are applying for.

3. **Practice makes perfect.**

Telephone etiquette is extremely important in cold calling as this is your first point of contact with the prospective employer. So don't get sloppy! Here are some tips to help you get it right:

- Practice your script either with a friend or another job seeker, making him/her work through different scenarios as the secretary or employer;
- Tape record yourself to ensure you come off as calm, clear and confident;
- Identify yourself. Don't assume the person you are calling will recognize your voice or that the secretary has passed on your name. If you were referred by someone else, mention their name;
- Talk to the right person (the hiring authority) at the right time. Be aware that businesses have busy or inconvenient times when they would not appreciate a phone call: for example, 12:00 noon just before lunch or at the end of the month for accounting firms;
- Keep control of the conversation. If the person you want is not in, never leave a number and passively wait for your call to be returned. Inquire about another time to call and promise to call again later;
- Put on your good phone voice. Don't mumble or shout. Talk at a moderate pace. Be friendly and precise;
- Get down to business. People don't have time for small talk, so get to the point briefly;
- In your anxiety to be heard, don't forget to listen - it's a two-way thing. Remember, you need to motivate your listener to pave the way for you, so listen when they are speaking. Take notes if that will help you! If you can't provide answers to questions asked spontaneously, tell them you'll get the answers and call them back when you say you will;
- Ask for a meeting (interview) at a definite time, yet do it as "lightly" as possible. Give them alternative options, for example: "Would Wednesday morning or Thursday afternoon be more suitable for you, Mr. _____?" If the employer informs you that there are no positions available, ask for an informational meeting to find out more about the company. That will help you

get to know more people within the company and make connections for future use.

- Get it down on paper. Write brief notes while on the phone to record what was discussed and agreed upon between you and the contact and when it took place. Memory is a fleeting thing. Don't rely solely on your memory. Transfer this to your job tracking sheet so that you are always on the right page should a contact call back.

4. **Prep your cold call toolkit.**

Before you pick up the telephone, make sure you have the following in hand: your pitch, company research notes, a copy of your relevant Resume, a calendar, pen and paper, your "contact tracking" sheet formatted for notes on the date, time, person, company, address, telephone, reason for calling, follow-up date, interview date/time, and comments.

5. **Practice getting past gatekeepers.**

One of the hardest parts of the process is reaching the person who does the hiring. Secretaries or operators are there to screen calls for busy individuals. So, a few methods are beneficial in bypassing these gatekeepers. One of them is to take advantage of automated "dial the extension of the person you want" features. If you do not know what it is, connect at random and courteously ask if they can connect you to the person you're after. It may take several calls before you compile enough information to find the right person. Remember, this won't work unless you're pleasant and nice to the other person, who may be busy too. So use this technique carefully.

6. **How to break the ice**

Be genuine. Try to avoid reading a script like most telemarketing people do, and open the conversation with intelligent points. Knowledge of company projects underway and intended areas of expansion and development is crucial to breaking the ice with an employer. For example: "I remember reading recently that the company was bringing out a new product to the market. I must say, after reading the specifications on this product (try naming the product if you know what it's called) I am really looking forward to its launch. I've worked in the field of marketing in this industry

and I know the potential of this product. I want to be a part of the team to work on this product and I know that I can contribute a great deal of expertise towards the marketing campaign. Is your company looking at expanding its Product Marketing team for this upcoming launch?"

7. When the going gets tough...

"Why should we hire you?" "How will your experience help my team?" "What proof can you give me that you can generate revenue for this company?" Reading off a Resume won't help you answer these tough questions. You have to anticipate them and know how to respond in a relevant manner.

8. Don't let it get you down.

Be prepared for negative responses but don't let "No" be the end of your conversation if you believe that you have a future with this company. Never argue. Practice sidestepping objections by presenting alternative ways to fill a need with your skills. By preparing for common objections, you stand a better chance of swaying negative attitudes to place your candidacy in a better light. Should the end of the discussion be a dead end despite your efforts, use this experience to prepare for your next cold call.

9. When to hang up.

Be true to your mission - an appointment for an interview or application details - and don't hang up until you've either achieved the goal or exhausted all possibilities.

10. Wind down by following up.

If ever there was a time to be true to your word, this is it. Make sure you follow up with that fax, or call, email that response, send in those documents or call back at a better time. This is a representation of your respect for the company and contact, and a measure of your professionalism.

Cold calling may not be the easiest route to a job, but it has proven to be effective and advantageous to anyone on the trail to career nirvana. Whichever way the cold call turns out, you can only win - a new job, new inside contacts, or valuable information on hiring cycles or practices.

Through the means provided above, identify at least 25 companies you want to target.

Job Search Technique #3

GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

Have you ever thought about how new positions are created? As a business grows, it discovers that more people are needed to perform all of the duties that need to be done. If you could only know when that situation would be present, you could submit your resume and beat your competition and secure employment. It is very possible to do just that but you must look for *growth opportunities!*

Everyday we encounter growth opportunities. We see those opportunities on the television, hear about them on the radio, and read about them in the newspaper. Growth opportunities are situations occurring in a company that would facilitate new positions. The factors to stimulate job growth would be company growth, expansion, reorganization or relocation. Examples of company growth would be contract awards, growth in earnings, issuance of IPOs, moving to a larger facility. Examples of expansion would be introduction of a new product or venturing into a new market. Reorganization would be promotion of an executive. Many new executives are more comfortable hiring new staff and relocation of a company would mean new jobs created.

When learning of a growth opportunity, think about how your skills, experience, and background could benefit that organization. Tailor your cover letter demonstrating ways you might be of “service” to that company. Sometimes companies in “distress” can be a growth opportunity, especially if you can demonstrate an action plan for a business turn around plan of some sort.

Consider how you can help a company? What experiences and skills do you possess that a company in a growth mode may benefit from?

Write a paragraph describing how you could help a company. Next, review the business section of your newspaper or a local business journal, and over a one-week span, identify 5 companies that could use your help.

Job Search Technique # 4

CREATE A JOB

While discussing growth opportunities, we recognized the importance of researching company expansion, reorganization and relocation as a way to anticipate job growth and meet that need. However, along with that idea is the thought of creating your own job and proposing the new position to a company.

With the changing job market, it is apparent that the concept of lifetime employment is gone. If these trends continue, we will see more individuals' careers comprised of working for companies and doing consulting work. In fact, a "typical" 30 year work experience will probably have 3 to 5 years at a company, work as an independent consultant 1 to 2 years, work for another company 3 to 5 years. This really forces us to take responsibility for our career and understand the skill sets and knowledge base we offer organizations. This mind set will assist us in creating our job.

The crux in creating a job is organizational need. In other words, what do you provide that an organization can benefit from? As you review the newspapers or trade journals, keep that thought in mind. Here's an example. You read about a company losing money in the last quarter. Why did they lose money? Was it market conditions or more related to an internal problem, procedure, etc. You may discover after a little investigation, that an opportunity exists for you to create a job that will assist them in their business turnaround.

The process of creating a job begins by viewing it as a job proposal. First, state the situation, as you perceive it. In other words, a description of the organization's current problems or challenges. Next, state the various scenarios that could occur if the present course of events does not change. Most likely, these scenarios will not be too favorable to the future of the organization.

The third element of your proposal would identify strategies that assist the organization in altering their current course. Obviously, the strategies involved would be derived from your experience and would have a positive affect on their bottom line. The last section of your proposal will express your interest in meeting with the organization to discuss these issues further. Keep in mind, you can use this idea in approaching a

company as either an employee or a consultant. Much of that depends on your individual circumstances.

When you hear of a company that could benefit by your experience, write out a proposal of how you could help them. Search out five companies that you feel could benefit from your skill set and submit your proposal letter.

Job Search Technique #5

NEWSPAPER ADS

Employers, employment agencies, or recruiters might place classified job ads. When a job ad is identified or “open”, the company’s name will be listed with the advertisement. When the advertisement is unidentified or “blind”, the company’s name is not given.

Use your own judgment to determine whether you meet the job requirements listed in an advertisement. You do not have to meet every job requirement listed. The closer the match, of course, the better your chances are for obtaining an interview.

Although many organizations place advertisements in major newspapers and elsewhere in their attempts to recruit, you should be aware that your chances of getting the job you want by replying to such ads are relatively slim. Nevertheless, as paradoxical as it seems, you should always respond when you read an ad that appeals to you. The reason is simple: Ads are a very small time investment. Ads can also be an opportunity to “try on” a job you hadn’t thought of before.

Employment advertisements may appear in the business or the classified sections of newspapers. Take time to look through your local papers, particularly the Sunday issues, very carefully. Ads of interest to you may appear under more than one heading. Most trade and professional journals also have display and/or classified sections that might be worth following.

Open Ads

An open ad lists not only the qualifications an individual employer is looking for, but also includes the name and address of the company. In addition, the ad might identify the person whom you should contact.

While “open” ads are more likely to represent actual positions, they also attract more responses, especially when run by well-known organizations.

The virtue of an open ad is that it affords you the opportunity to research the company and to make inquiries about the job itself through knowledgeable personable contacts. This can help you considerably in tailoring the cover letter to the company’s requirements. An open ad also allows an opportunity for the job seeker to follow up rather than simply sit and wait. You may even be able to develop an inside contact who will help you circumvent the screening process. You can increase your odds by “networking” in.

Blind Ads

Blind ads do not include the name of the company; instead, responses are forwarded to a box number that appears at the end of each ad. Such advertisements make your task more difficult, because you are not able to customize the letter you send to the company. You are also unable to follow up or use contacts, and there is less likelihood your response will be acknowledged. If you are employed, be careful, the advertiser just may be *your current employer!*

Blind advertisements find their way into newspapers or magazines for many reasons. During a tight economy, many employers do not want to be deluged with calls and “walk ins” so they put a blind ad in the paper. In other cases, employers might want to find out how many job seekers are in the area that meets the company’s needs. As a company chooses between geographic locations for a plant start-up or relocation, it might check the local labor pool by running a blind ad or two. In this case, there might not be an actual opening yet.

If the blind ad incorporates a post office box (rather than a newspaper box), you can call the local post office and identify the owner. This changes it to an open ad for you, but not your competition.

Additionally, while employment agencies and search firms are often legally required to have a legitimate job to back up every advertisement, some less scrupulous firms may advertise nonexistent positions to acquire resumes of individuals who are currently engaged in a job search.

If an ad is a blind ad, or an ad placed by a particular company, it sometimes may require a salary history, or a salary requirement. Whatever the case, you must respond to either request, or you may be eliminated based on the fact that you didn't follow directions.

The following is an example of a salary history:

<u>Company</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Years</u>	<u>Salary</u>
ABC, Inc.	Director	1993-2002	\$50,000.00
Wright Co.	Asst. Director	1989-1993	\$40,000.00
Leaman Bros.	Manager	1983-1989	\$30,000.00
MWP Inc.	Asst. Manager	1981-1983	\$20,000.00

If a particular ad requests a salary requirement, you must provide an expected salary. However, you can always state that this is negotiable. You will want to consider any benefits package along with a starting salary. A good place to research salaries can be found at www.salary.com.

Find and respond to five newspaper, trade journal or business journal ads a week.

Job Search Technique #6

RECRUITERS

What is a Recruiter? A recruiter can mean anything from an Army recruiter to a contractor who recruits general laborers. Perhaps the best known are Corporate Recruiters who work in the human resources department of a company or a Recruiter in a Consulting firm who refers contractors to companies for temporary assignments.

Recruiters will:

- Evaluate your resume
- Present you as a candidate for opportunities that fit only your goals and desires
- Provide interview counseling, to assure that you present yourself in the best light.

- Provide feedback from interviews
- Negotiate salary and benefits
- Maintain your resume in a database to apprise you of opportunities in your industry
- Provide confidentiality up to and through acceptance of a new position

A recruiter is a person who is engaged in actively finding qualified candidates for professional level permanent positions with a client company. Sometimes the term "headhunter" is used interchangeably with the term "recruiter," but in the professional search business, the term headhunter is usually reserved for those recruiters who work on retainer and are paid in advance for doing a search, whether or not the search results in a candidate being hired by the client company. Headhunters conduct searches for positions at the upper management level, while recruiters' work on technical or middle management positions. Most recruiters work on a contingency basis, which means that they are only paid if the Client Company hires a candidate whom they refer.

Recruiters and headhunters differ from placement counselors in that they are paid by the client company to represent the interests of the company, rather than working on behalf of the applicant to find him or her a job. Placement agencies sometimes charge a fee to the applicant, but the Client Company always pays the recruiter's fees. Sometimes applicants are critical of recruiters because they feel that the recruiter is not working hard enough to find them a job. It's important to remember that recruiters work for client companies who pay them a fee to find candidates with specific skills or experience. If an applicant's background fits the job specifications of a recruiter's current search assignment, the applicant benefits by having what is essentially a free placement service.

Common Definitions

Recruiter: Anyone who is receiving compensation for filling an open job.

Agency: Employment agencies, sole purpose to fill open jobs permanent or temporary. Typically, hire no permanent staff of their own other than office and recruiters. Job seeker is on the agency's payroll for duration, need or contract.

Contingency/Fee recruiter: Paid by the company, not by job seeker. Compensation is

contingent upon filling a position.

Outplacement Service: Job seeker pays fee to recruiter to provide employment services.

(Do not guarantee you will find employment) May disguise themselves as recruiters?

Contract/Consultant recruiter: Some consultant companies hire permanent staff to their payroll to fill ongoing client needs as well as temporary and short-term people to meet commitments.

Corporate recruiter: Recruits for large corporation from Human Resource to others whose primary client is a corporation.

Independent recruiter: Individuals not associated with large local or national recruiting companies or agencies. (Sometimes called headhunters)

Consider Using Multiple Recruiters

Different recruiters know about different positions. They do not usually know about the same ones. By sending your resume out to more than one recruiting agency, you will be placed in many different confidential databases and become aware of many different positions. If you send your resume to only a few, it may be that none you send to will be working with positions which are best suited for you. Remember to throw your net widely. If you change jobs, it is also wise to send follow-up letters to your recruiters to let them know of your new job change. Many search firms follow people throughout their careers and enjoy being kept up-to-date. It is a good idea to also have your resume prepared in a plain text format so that you can quickly copy and paste it into an email message box window when requested to do so. It would also be appropriate to follow-up that submission with a rich text formatted copy on good bond paper by regular postal mail.

Remember, it is estimated that only 1% to 3% of all resumes sent will result in actual job interviews. Let's say you send 50 resumes, you may receive less than 2 job interviews, at best. Send your resume to as many recruiters as you can. It will be well worth the postage spent. Generally, recruiters will not share your resume with any employer or give your name to anyone else without obtaining your specific permission to do so. The recruiter will call first, talk to you about a particular position and then ask your permission to share your resume with that employer.

Confidentiality Guaranteed

Recruiters are professionals. They recognize that in order to assist job seekers and professionals in their career development, they will need to ensure the professional of strict confidentiality. The recruiter will hold all of your information confidential at all times. You can send your resume to a search firm and not have to worry that the search firm will reveal to anyone that you are job searching. Recruiters will call you each and every time they wish to present you to an employer in order to gain your permission. Only after they have gained your permission will they submit your name or resume to the identified employer. The great thing about working with recruiters is that you can manage your career and your job search in confidence and privacy. Also, keep in mind that recruiters know about your industry and they know about job openings that you may never hear about on your own. You can choose several recruiters to follow you throughout your own career path.

Employers Pay Fees

Recruiters and search firms work for the employer or hiring entity. The employer pays them a fee for locating the right individual for the job opening. This is important to remember, in that when you interact with executive recruiters, you are essentially interacting with an agent or representative of the employer. Recruiters are more loyal to employers than they are to job candidates because they work for the employer. This should not present a problem, but, should cause you to develop your relationship with the recruiter with the same integrity and professionalism that you would with the employer. Recruiters are usually paid retainer or contingency fees. This is an important distinction and will affect your process with both the employer and the recruiter. Some employers prefer working with contingency firms and some with retained firms. Both are respected by employers and useful in your job search, but, the two types of firms will not be handling the same positions with the same employers simultaneously. The "retained" recruiter has entered an exclusive contract with an employer to fill a particular position. The retained recruiter, then, is likely to advertise a position, sharing the specifics of the position, location and employer openly. The retained firm feels a great obligation to

fulfill the contract by finding the best person for the job. The contingency recruiter, on the other hand, usually does not have an exclusive relationship with the employer, and is only paid a fee if the job search is successful. Often, if the employer uses contingency firms, there will be more than one contingency firm competing to fill a certain position. As a job hunter, if you are sent to an interview by a contingency firm, you may find that you are competing with a larger number of applicants for a position. Generally, retained firms only send in from 3 to 5 candidates for a position.

Recruiters will be paid fees equal to about 25% to 35% of the resulting salary of the successful candidate plus expenses. This does not come out of the job candidate's salary. This is paid to the recruiter through a separate relationship between the employer and the search firm. These may seem like large fees to you, but, keep in mind that recruiters incur a great many expenses when searching for successful job candidates. They spend enormous amounts of money on computer systems, long distance calls, mail-outs, travel and interviews. Recruiters work very hard for these fees. Employers recognize the value of using recruiters and are more than willing to pay recruiters the fees. All you have to do is contact the recruiter to get the process moving.

Recruiters Work Worldwide

If you are from a particular state, and want to remain in that state, don't make the mistake of only sending your resume to recruiters in your state. Often the recruiters in your state are working on positions in other states, and recruiters in other states are working on positions in your state. This is usually the case. Regardless of your geographic preference, you should still send your resume to many recruiters who specialize in your particular field. If you really only want to remain in your area, you can specify that preference in your cover letter. Do keep in mind, however, that by stating your geographic preference, you may be eliminating yourself from the running for a dream job somewhere else.

Directories of Recruiters

If you visit The Riley Guide at www.rileyguide.com and go to the A-Z search section, a click of the letter "R" will lead you to a multitude of information on working

with recruiting agencies. You will even find listings of recruiter directories. This will give you some great starting points. It also lists recruiting and search firms that concentrate on a specific region or industry.

Through your research, develop a list of 25 recruiters who specialize in your field or industry.

Job Search Technique # 7

The Internet Search

Whether you need help deciding on a career direction, want to show your resume to as many hiring managers as possible, or want to search the job market, the information superhighway can be the fast lane to a rewarding career. To take advantage of the Internet, however, you must know what to look for, where to look for it, and how to evaluate what you find. The following three-step process will help you use the Internet to your advantage.

First, what do you want?

With more than 11,000 job-related websites already on the Internet, you could spend months just trying to find the few that would benefit you. To avoid wasting your time, you need a goal. Ask yourself, "What do I really want from an on-line employment site?" To help you answer that question, consider the following:

There are four basic types of sites:

Job banks, which allow you to search through a database of advertised positions. Start here if you already know what type of job you want. Look for sites that offer lots of listings in your field. Check on how often they update the site. Daily updates would be best so you won't waste time considering jobs that have already been filled.

Resume databases, where you can post your resume and hope that an employer sees it. Although this is a less aggressive approach, it's a good choice if you want to have a lot of employers look at your qualifications.

Pick a site that brags about how many desirable employers use their database.

Career information services, which offer various forms of job search advice. They usually have a wealth of information about how to improve your chances of getting an interview and then how to prepare for it. In addition, they often have good information about various career fields and occupational trends. There are a lot of would-be experts out there, so be sure the site you use is operated by a reputable organization that has counselors with a solid record of success in the career search business.

Career Centers, which offer a combination of two or three of the above. These one-stop shopping centers make the most efficient use of your time, but because they try to please everyone, they may not have exactly what you are looking for. A more specialized site may offer better support in your career field.

Once you have determined what it is you want, write a short list of the assistance you need. For example, if you are looking for an accounting job, describe as specifically as possible your ideal position. List your desired title, preferred salary range, geographic location, and company size. List what you value and be precise about what you want web sites to provide.

Second, seek help from experts

Your second step is to identify which websites offer what you want. Screening through the thousands of hits you are likely to get when you use a search engine is a huge task, but you can speed your research by seeking assistance from sources that have already had some experience.

If you are in college, start with your career center. The career center's trained counselors have experience in helping people find the best job sites for their search. They

may even have their own on-line service as well as a large amount of library material on traditional job search methods and techniques.

Another great resource is your college's alumni office. The staff will probably know which employers like to recruit graduates of your school and may be able to provide the Internet addresses of those companies and the employment sites they use. Like a career center, the alumni office may have its own home page, job bank, résumé database, and links to recommended employment websites.

If you have a chosen career field, consult the relevant professional societies and industry associations. Most of these organizations now operate websites, and many offer members' access to job banks, resume databases, and links to employment sites that specialize in their field. The site may also offer links to firms that frequently recruit among association members.

You might also consider referring to a service that evaluates and describes employment websites. One such resource is **The Riley Guide** (www.rileyguide.com), developed by Margaret Dikel, an Internet job search and recruiting consultant. Another is **Catapult** (www.jobweb.org/catapult/catapult.htm) provided by the National Association of Colleges and Employers. Other organizations evaluate websites and publish their findings in written form. You can find them at most bookstores and some libraries.

It is easy to get confused as you review the many sites available, so stay focused on what you want and limit your top prospects to no more than five to seven sites. Once you have done that, you're ready for step three.

Third, check the sites out

Visit each of your preferred websites. Look at the home page and compare its content to your needs. For example, does the site offer access to jobs in your field and in the cities you prefer? Is its job search assistance detailed enough to help you? The closer

the fit between what you want and what is offered, the more helpful the site will be to you.

Finally, consider what it will cost to use the site. Most sites don't charge job hunters, but there are a few that do. Learn the cost before you give them that credit card number and be sure the cost is worth the service. Other sites will ask you to fill out an on-line registration form, which may involve providing all sorts of personal data about yourself. Be sure you know how they will use this data and look for some guarantee of confidentiality connected with the disclosure. If you would rather not share personal data, move on to another site.

The Internet is a dynamic environment with employment sites coming and going everyday. The website you use should offer a wide variety of information to assist you in your job search. By following the above three-steps, your search should go a lot more quickly with better results.

At the end of this chapter, you will also find a detailed listing of both Core Sites and Discipline Specific Sites that you will want to become familiar with on the Internet. Identify and bookmark at least 20 of these sites to begin your Internet part of the job search campaign.

Filing System

A simple filing system should be developed in order to stay organized. At the very least, have a 3-ring binder to hold descriptions of jobs applied for. Attach a copy of your cover letter to each job description, along with the e-mail that the material was sent in response to. Make notes in this file on any phone conversations made relative to the job opening. If you are using more than one resume version, make sure to note which resume was sent.

If you find yourself applying for a number of positions, it is a good idea to create an index at the front of the binder so it is easy to find your notes when a phone call comes in from a recruiter, or the actual company that is hiring.

Include in your filing system a separate area to record all information relative to your “on-line” job search campaign. Be sure to include the following:

- Name of job site and the date you established an account at that job site, if registration is a requirement.
- Your account name and pass code information.
- Include any job site services that you sign up for at each site.
- Record any e-mail correspondence you receive or send related to a job board posting.

Resume Preparation

Resume rules have changed because many companies are now using resume-tracking systems. What that means is that the jobseeker must take time to create both an “electronic” or “plain text” version of their resume as well as a “scannable” version so that it can transmit in readable fashion, and that the probability of your resume being selected from a tracking system is increased.

You must become familiar with transmitting your resume within the body of the e-mail, or as a formatted attachment, for example as a Microsoft Word document.

Job Search Technique #8

Non-Profits and Public Sector

A non-profit organization is not a company that's having trouble making ends meet. It's a type of organization to which the government has granted tax-exempt status. We like to think of these organizations as ones that "make the world a better place."

You see them everywhere. Museums, churches, colleges, private schools, hospitals, foundations, social service agencies and performing arts groups are all types of non-profit organizations. In fact, non-profits employ more than 8 percent of the US and Canadian workforce.

What types of jobs are available at non-profit organizations? All types. These organizations need bookkeepers, managers, clerical staff, fundraisers, membership and volunteer coordinators, public relations practitioners and many other positions. No matter what your background, you can find a match for your skills and experience at a nonprofit.

Web sites to check out, besides search engines would be www.nonprofits.org, www.tripod.com, and www.clearinghouse.net.

The public sector would be defined as the federal, state, county, and city governments as well as school districts, special districts and even colleges. To discover what opportunities exist, visit the web site of your local county or state. That site should provide employment openings and links to other relevant sites. For federal jobs try www.fedworld.gov, www.fedjobs.com or www.jobsfed.com. Keep in mind that most job functions performed in the private sector can be duplicated in the public sector.

Visit at least one government and non-profit web site.

Job Search Technique #9

Temporary Employment Agencies Services/Contract Hire

The biggest work place change in the past several years has been the role of contract hire or temporary services. At one time, temporary agencies would supply basically clerical, administrative, and technical workers. The staffing services industry continues to provide both a flexible alternative as a career lifestyle and also a "bridge" to full-time employment. The staffing services industry benefits both the worker and the business.

Benefits to the Worker –

- Training and on-the-job experience in skills that are in demand in the workplace.
- Opportunities for workers to showcase their talents to a wide variety of potential employers.
- Access to positions through temporary-to-full-time assignments and through qualified placement and executive search agencies.

Benefits to Business –

- As new technology drives the need for highly skilled employees, employers are experiencing an increasingly difficult time in locating and attracting those

employees. Therefore, business is turning to other companies that have expertise in providing properly skilled staff that can best accomplish the necessary tasks.

- Offers business and industry that are under increasing competitive pressures: 1) the right employees to cope with wildly fluctuating workloads, 2) unique skills to meet new product and service opportunities, and 3) solutions to the increasing regulatory complexities of managing a modern workforce.
- Temporary help companies are responsible for their employees' wages and benefits, and all legally required payroll deductions including unemployment and workers' compensation.

Temporary Staffing Agencies are serving a growing corporate customer base. Studies show that between 90% and 100% of U.S. companies' use staffing services. The industry has experienced a steady growth rate, and by 1997, 2.5 million people were employed by temporary help agencies. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that it will continue to be one of the fastest growing industries.

The image of the temporary employee has long been that of the secretarial job, but that stereotype is very outdated. Today's temporary employee chooses from a wide range of technical and professional positions. Jobs abound in the areas of computer programming, accountancy, public relations and nursing.

When you are pursuing a temporary help agency, be sure to ask for a list of clients the agency serves. If you have a specific position in mind regarding work in the media, law, or medicine, for example, go with an agency that provides workers to a magazine, a law firm or hospital. Be sure to ask about any bonuses, raises, evaluations, and rates of pay and health benefits. Many temp agencies do not offer health insurance, so you may have to locate and buy your own if necessary.

Once you're actively working at an assignment, the best way to work your way up is to acquire new skills. Being flexible and working in a variety of departments will help to familiarize you with a number of different jobs and may make you more appealing to those doing the hiring.

Although there are many benefits to being a temporary worker, the downside is that there is no job security. If the company experiences difficulties, you may be the

scapegoat. If layoffs are on the way, temporary staff is usually the first to go. It could easily be a week or more before you are assigned to a new temp job. Therefore, it's a good idea to establish a monthly budget for less than your bring home pay.

Keep in mind though that the flexibility afforded to you as a temporary worker also means you get to call the shots. You can obtain a temporary job ranging from one day to more than a year. If you perform your duties well and establish a good, professional relationship with others, you may be first in line to leap to a more permanent position. Whatever you do, take your time. You may want to experience a variety of temporary positions before committing permanently to anyone.

Also consider that working for a temporary agency may allow you to pursue other career avenues such as returning to school, starting your own business, service or consulting. According to British management philosopher Charles Handy, many workers in the future will be a *portfolio worker*. In other words, it will not be uncommon to work two or three jobs at once in distinct careers.

Identify three temporary agencies (probably listed under employment in your yellow pages) that may have assignments you are interested in. Pay close attention to those agencies that specialize in your area.

Job Search Technique #10

JOB FAIRS

Job fairs are being utilized by an increasing number of recruiters. They offer a cost-effective and convenient way to contact a large number of candidates in a relatively short time. Job fairs also offer similar benefits to candidates – as long as you know how to work them. Plan in advance and your job fair visit will be very worthwhile. Be sure to investigate all participating companies in advance. When possible, obtain a list of these companies from fair organizers, and begin to research about six to ten companies that may be of particular interest to you. In making your decision, consider the type of candidates sought, company location, company reputation, etc. Once you've drawn up your list, do some research on these companies at your local library, on the worldwide web, or through directly contacting the company. Be sure to uncover basic information

such as company product and services, company size, etc. You may even want to explore what the company's philosophy or approach is. In particular, what they emphasize in their literature. Write this information obtained on index cards, a notebook, or in a PC file.

Your next step is to check out your own communication tool for the fair, your resume. Be sure to give it a once-over to make sure that it highlights and showcases your skills in a professional and concise way for the job you are seeking. If it doesn't, revise it in advance of your visit to the job fair. Now it's time to put both items together. For each company that you have researched information on, write down the basic details obtained. Next to this information, list some skills, qualifications, achievements, or specialized training from your resume that would match the company's "ideal" candidate. A typical entry in your notebook may look like this:

ABC CORPORATION

*Manufacture and sell office products and equipment.

*Pittsburgh Based

*550 Employees

*Family Owned and Operated with Strong Commitment to Customer Service

*Looking for Sales Professionals

*Five Years Outside Sales Experience and an Associate's Degree in Marketing

*Worked in retail during school, completed an internship, have strong letters of recommendation for friendliness and courtesy to customers.

As the date for the job fair approaches, check out your logistics. Make sure that you know where the event is being held, where to park, job fair hours, etc. Depending on the number of companies scheduled to attend, it's a good idea to allow yourself at least one and a half hours to talk with prospective employers. Be sure to dress appropriately for the fair, and bring along 10 to 12 copies of your resume. Plan on arriving about 45 minutes to one hour after the official start time. Look for your targeted companies, did they all show up? How busy are they at the moment? If a recruiter is busy talking to other candidates, look for another targeted company whose table is free. The trick is to

minimize waiting in line, and maximize talking with prospective employers. Be sure to shake hands with the recruiter and introduce yourself. Provide them with a copy of your resume to look over, along with your references, or any letters of recommendation you may have. As they review your resume, describe your background and qualifications. Make this a brief, to the point presentation recapping your skills and abilities.

At this point, the recruiter may have some additional questions about your qualifications and also provide you with information about current job vacancies. Keep your talk concise – your total time spent with a recruiter should not be more than eight to ten minutes. To wrap up, thank the recruiter for their time, express an interest in a more formal interview in the future, and ask for a business card in order to send a follow-up thank-you letter. After you've talked with the recruiters of your "targeted" companies, talk with other employer representatives if time allows. By doing so, you can often uncover information about certain companies and jobs that you were unaware of prior to the job fair. Finally, take one last tour of the area before you leave, and stop by the tables of any recruiters who had been especially helpful or interested in your background. Reintroduce yourself, remind them of your earlier meeting, and reiterate your interest in scheduling to meet with them at a later date.

Visit a local job fair and interview with at least 5 companies and collect at least 10 business cards.

Internet Site Starter List

The following listed sites include most of the regularly visited job board sites on-line, however, this list is by no means complete. We are simply providing the material as a means to assist you in beginning your on-line job search campaign. Additionally, by stating these websites does not mean that the author is personally endorsing any of them. All sites listed cater to most job functions and industries unless otherwise noted.

TOP JOB BOARD SITES

4Work.com, <http://www.4work.com>

This site is part of the About.com network, and is a general, nationwide career site. Candidates can search the database by keywords and location. This site also features a job search agent.

America's Job Bank, <http://www.ajb.dni.us/index.html> (Recommended**)**

This is the national clearinghouse for the public Employment Service. Developed by the U.S. Department of Labor and State Employment agencies. Job postings (currently over 840,000) are drawn from more than 1,800 state employment service agencies in 50 states. There are also direct links to more than 2,300 employers' web sites and 700 personnel agencies & recruiters.

Two levels of service are offered, **both free**. The basic level allows you to search the job bank (**no registration required**) where you can look for openings by occupation and a new feature lets you pinpoint available openings within miles of a certain zip code. The database's size ensures a broad range of job openings, especially for those without college degrees.

If you register, you can take advantage of a range of additional services, such as posting your resume online as part of America's Talent Bank, creating and saving customized searches and cover letters. America's Job Bank also offers up to ten job scouts to search for jobs automatically at specified intervals. The scout then e-mails the results.

Start with the instruction link at the Job Seeker page to learn more. This site has excellent links to occupational trend information and wage data.

BestJobsUSA.com, <http://www.bestjobsusa.com/index-jsk-ie.asp>

A wealth of information and resources can be found at this site. The jobs database can be searched by category and state/city. When the results page appears, you can further refine your search by date. The site also has a resume bank, but you will need to start by registering. The "Resume Masking" option allows you to remove your personal identification and contact information from your resume.

Their Career Guide features guides to the Best Places to Live and Work and Relocation, Career Fairs, Trade Shows, and much more! Other features of the site include a link to Employment Review Online where you will find the results of their (annual) Salary Review.

Boldface Jobs, <http://www.boldfacejobs.com>

This site allows you to search for a recruiter or corporation within a geographic range (area code or state) and by specialty. The site also has job listings, Resume posting and links to other employment resources.

Career.com, <http://www.career.com>

Small collection of jobs. Top three fields are Engineering, IT, Sales & Marketing. Primary salary ranges are from \$50 to \$100k. The site helps you create and save a resume bank and offers two levels of confidentiality.

Career City, <http://www.careercity.com>

Specifically designed for professional and technical people, this site includes links to Healthcare, Bio/Pharma, Government, Education and Computer/Hi-Tech careers as well as a Diversity Job Center.

Career Giant, <http://www.careergiant.com/jobseekers.shtml>

CareerGiant.com was established to provide a one-stop, online career resource center for job seekers and employers. The site includes job and resume banks, as well as communities geared toward specific professions, career related articles, occupational information relocation tools and more.

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Careermag.com, <http://www.careermag.com>

This site was recently acquired by VerticalNet. The site's new design allows the jobseeker to search for jobs by profession, location or to pull job postings from other sites such as Career Journal (WSJ) and dice.com. Create a free account to submit a resume and sign up for a Job Agent. Career enhancement services such as their job placement program and career club are offered for a fee.

CareerPark, <http://www.careerpark.com>

Is a small site with an emphasis on certain states (e.g. PA and MD). Jobs are organized for you to view by **category** or by **employer**. There is also a library for additional career planning & employment information & web sites.

Employment Guide, <http://www.employmentguide.com>

Job seekers may search jobs and register to deposit a resume at the site. Choose the Fast App and you'll be directed to the fastest way to get your application and resume seen by employers who are hiring in your area. Fill in your contact information, answer a few short questions about your skills and experience, add your resume, and click "submit."

ExeCon Information System, <http://www.execonweb.com/>

Execon is a national electronic job advertising service utilized by companies and recruiting firms. View job listings online or have them sent to you via e-mail.

Headhunter.net, <http://www.careerbuilder.com/index.htm> (Recently acquired by CareerBuilder.)

Hirenet, <http://www.hirenet.net>

Offers job opportunities in the U.S., Canada and International, plus a job scout and career profile where you can post and modify your resume.

HotJobs, <http://www.hotjobs.com> (**Recommended**)

Offers a number of ways to search the job bank, including keyword, location, and company or career channel. Within each option, you can narrow your search even further. Within the main job search page, you can even view all jobs by level (e.g. executive, mid to senior etc.), when you scroll towards the bottom of the page. When you create an account, (select the MyHotjobs link to get started), you can create an online resume, control the searchability of your resume, set up automatic job search agents, track your job applications and view your resume statistics. A favorite site among the recruiting communities. There are currently over 250,000 jobs listed here. Yahoo's recent acquisition of HotJobs (April 2002) makes this website an even more powerful contender as a top career site.

Internet Career Connection, <http://www.iccweb.com>

Run by Gonyea & Associates, this site links to Help Wanted USA, State Government and International jobs. The Worldwide Resume Bank is place where job seekers are invited to post their resumes free of charge. To find these resources within the site, select the drop arrow field on the opening page and scroll through the list of resources.

JobBank USA, <http://www.jobbankusa.com/>

The site includes job postings and a resume bank. Job Agent is the site's e-mail agent.

JobOptions, www.joboptions.com

You can search the database by location, categories, channels and keywords. You can allowing specification of the exact phrase or all or any of your keywords. You can respond to positions of interest by e-mail at the site (using an online form), or by submitting a stored resume. The resume privacy options are worth noting. You may choose to post your resume "Openly" or "Privately".

Open Resumes (Paste-In or Form-Built) allow JobOptions' clients (employers and search firms) to view all the contents of your resume.

Private Resumes (Paste In) allows JobOption clients to search ALL of the data that you paste in, but only your profile is available to clients of JobOptions. That is, only your credentials are visible online, and nowhere will your name, address, or even past employers appear. With "Private Resumes," employers must send a blind message to you through JobOptions (thereby protecting your e-mail address), requesting your permission for a copy of your complete resume BEFORE JobOptions will release it.

Job Alert is the e-mail notification service to automatically receive job postings that matches the criteria you specify, once you have registered. (You can create three agents).

Monster.com, www.monster.com (Recommended)

Over 800,000 job listings (January 02) are included in the jobs database, which can also be searched by US City/State, Company, or International country. You can apply online using your saved online resume or by sending an e-mail. You can also attach one of up to five saved cover letters. Your My Monster page will keep track of all the jobs for which you apply.

By registering with My Monster, you can submit your resume online, search for jobs, set up a job search agent, and access the chat rooms and message boards. Monster.Com allows you to build and store online resumes and cover letters and to track the number of times employers view your resume(s). If you're looking for more than one type of position or if you want to target your resume to the needs of a particular employer, you can create and store different versions of your resume. You also have the option of keeping your resume or personal information confidential. You can hide your entire resume from employers, hide your contact information and current/last employer, hide just your contact information, or make your resume viewable for all employers to see.

Monster.com also features a free subscription-based newsletter, real-time chat and message boards for networking and expert advice. Career Center offers helpful content targeted for various industries and career experience levels.

TIP! Copy and paste from your text resume to the online resume submission form to save time and avoid typos. Submitting a resume and continuing to search the job bank (or set up a job agent) to apply for positions of interest will maximize your chances of success since employers and recruiters have varied levels of access to the database.

Preferred Jobs.com www.preferredjobs.com (Recommended)

Preferred Jobs is a network of regional job banks tied into several national job banks. You can search the job banks, post your resume, search for job fairs, and join career discussion groups just to name a few. There is also a good series of articles relative to job-hunting, as well as a Q&A board where visitors can post their questions and get answers on items related to resumes, interviewing, and more.

ResumeBroadcaster www.resumeblaster.com

Gives you the ability to distribute your resume to employers or recruiters where there is a match (criteria includes industry/function classifications, geography and qualifications). The service will cost you \$49 and is free for employers.

JOB BOARD MEGASITES

CareerBuilder <http://www.careerbuilder.com> (Recommended)

CareerBuilder's recent acquisition of Headhunter.net means job seekers now have exposure to more than 300,000 continuously updated jobs, representing top employers in virtually every industry and field. CareerBuilder includes the Web's most visited newspaper sites as well as leading portals, industry, professional and diversity-focused sites. Use the **Advanced Job Search** feature to put a full set of parameters on your job search. The site offers a **resume database** that allows you to store up to five resumes and one cover letter. Once you have posted your resume, you can privately respond to job listings, block certain employers from viewing your resume(s) and view your resume statistics in order to determine the number of times their resume has come up in a search or been viewed by an employer.

The Job Leads Folder lets you file favorite job postings in one place to respond to later. The site's Personal Search Agent allows you to create up to five job search profiles, which then alert you via e-mail when a job listing matches your criteria on either a daily or weekly basis.

Career InfoFinder <http://www.infogist.com/CarInfo.htm> (\$)

Lets you search top job banks, company sites, and Usenet newsgroups. You can also run searches on web search engines and search company and industry news. You will need to download and install this software on your PC. You can use the software for 14 days (free of charge), after which the subscription price is **\$29.95** for 3 months. However, the **HR version is free**, and will allow you access to virtually the same information.

Direct Employers <http://www.directemployers.com> *NEW*

In a new development in job posting sites, employers have formed an association to put up a job site that they actually own and manage. Direct Employers acts as a search engine that allows you to search by job category or geographic region or both, and be linked directly to company websites. This gives job seekers the opportunity to apply for jobs without intermediaries and establish relationships with potential employers with total privacy and confidentiality.

If you choose to **register** for an account, you may establish personal search agents for all companies or with select companies only. These agents will return opportunities not posted on other employment sites. In addition, you may enter a resume into the database and have the option of making it searchable by employers or keeping it confidential and using it only to apply to employers of your choice.

Employment 911 <http://www.employment911.com/asp/index.asp>

In partnership Wanted Technologies, Employment 911 allows you to search job postings its own jobs and those from over **35 major career sites**. There are currently over 3,000,000 jobs that can be simultaneously searched (August 2000). Results are viewed through a job search page. Employment 911's additional tools include a free web based

e-mail account, free web based calendar, free web based organizer and a "save my job" search feature, which allows you to come back and view the same results instantly.

FlipDog.com <http://www.flipdog.com/index.jhtml> (Recommended)

Launched in April 2000, this site has already established itself as one of the top ten job sites (according to the latest Media Metrix survey). Its database contains over 460,000 opportunities from over 50,000 employers. All postings taken directly from employers' own Web sites and continuously refreshed in the FlipDog.com database. The **job search** feature allows you to start a search with your targeted location and then allows you to narrow by function. You can also choose to remove recruitment agency listings in the results.

TIP! Select your geographic location and then "Finish" without specifying a job function. This will allow you to identify which employers are posting their positions at their web sites in your city or town and who's hiring.

A **resume bank** has just been added and since this is currently free for recruiters to search, you can be sure that it will be a popular haunt for executive and corporate recruiters.

GrassIsGreener.com <http://www.grassisgreener.com/main.asp> *NEW*

Aggregator of over 4 million jobs across the web - they index from job boards, corporate sites and community boards. Describe the job you want and their MatchEngine finds all available opportunities and helps you narrow your search. Unlike other job boards, this search engine searches concepts as opposed to keywords so that you can fine-tune your search.

Their candidate profile system is set up to let you decide if you want to share your personal resume information with employers who identify your anonymous profile as meeting their job specifications. To further protect your privacy, GrassIsGreener will create an anonymous e-mail address with your username (e.g.username@grassisgreener.com) and forward messages to your personal account.

Everyone who searches for jobs is given personalized search agents, resume service and calendar to manage all aspects of your job search. **Register** for a free account to access all these features.

Job Search Engine.com <http://www.job-search-engine.com>

Facilitates on-line job-hunting by retrieving employment opportunities from the job boards in parallel and in real time. View the job openings from **250 American, 60 British and 110 English and French Canadian job boards**. The results are an aggregate of the employment opportunities listed.

Wanted Jobs www.wantedjobs.com

Wanted Jobs is a career-management tool that includes a job search agent that simultaneously searches the major job banks - **150 job sites** in all. One-stop resume posting to over 75 career sites.

Zoom Jobs www.zoomjobs.com

Designed to simplify the process of identify sources of job leads in your field. Start by completing a short profile (free) and this site will link you to relevant job banks (which you can search by industry, level of position and category of job bank), newspapers (national or your State's papers) and trade magazines (by industry). There is also a good series of articles, organized by subject under the link to "Professional Job Hunting Counsel Online". Additional services are available by taking out a membership, details of which can be obtained by calling 1-800-772-4446.

TOP 25 100K+ EXECUTIVE JOB BANKS

ExecutiveOpenings.com

http://www.executiveopenings.com/cfm/usr_profile.cfm

The Wall Street Journal (M)

<http://www.careerjournal.com/marketplace/resumedatabase/index.html>

<http://www.LucasCareers.com> (networked)

<http://www.USJobs.com> (networked)

Heidrick and Struggles

<http://www.heidrick.com/contact.htm>

ExecSearches.com

<http://www.execsearches.com/ssl/registry/#Sign%20Up%20and%20Logon%20On>

Russell Reynolds Associates

<http://rresweb.russreyn.com/register.asp>

ExecGlobalNet

<http://www.execglobalnet.com/app/?cmd=pfunction>

<http://www.execglobalnet.com/app/> (log on page)

Job.com

<http://job.com/jobseekers/index.cfm?tid=signup.cfm>

(make sure to check off that you want the resume to go to HotResumes)

<http://www.RON.com> (networked)

<http://www.EmployMax.com> (networked)

<http://www.123Hire.com> (networked)

<http://www.HotResumes.com> (networked)

Spencer Stuart

<http://www.spencerstuart.com/rgCountrySelection.aspx?PageID=10262>

KornFerry

<http://www.ekornferry.com/RegisterNewCandidate.asp?P=RegisterNewCandidate>

GoldJobs.com (email resume only)

<http://www.goldjobs.com/overview/default.asp>

CareerSite.com

<http://careersite.com/perl/vaui/Register?xid=Mo.29732.3dd840e6.4eae6.0>

Employment Wizard (networked)

<http://employmentwizard.com/perl/vaui/Register?xid=Be.4869.3dd84110.33834.0&pid=empwiz>

FlipDog.com (RM)

<http://www.flipdog.com>

DirectEmployers.com (RM)

<http://www.directemployers.com/signup.asp?popup=&popdown=&links=0>

Headhunter/Careerbuilder (RM)

<http://www.headhunter.net/JobSeeker/Resumes/AddResume.asp>

<http://www.USAToday.com> (Networked)

HotJobs/Yahoo (RM)

<http://www.hotjobs.com>

JobBank USA.com (RM)

<http://www.jobbankusa.com>

Monster Board (Monster Chief Upgrade for Executive) (RM)

<http://www.monster.com>

Executive Manning Corporation (email resume only)

http://www.exmanning.com/resume_submission.htm

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SITES

www.dol.gov/

U.S. Department of Labor home page.

www.onetcenter.org/

Automated replacement for the Dictionary of Occupational Titles. Also has a tool for career exploration and links to related sites.

www.fedjobs.com/

American Federal Jobs Digest Listings. Commercial organization with access to over 1,800 federal personnel offices.

www.disability.gov/

A job site for individuals with disabilities. Employment section contains information about employment rights, resume preparation, work incentives, job banks, and job accommodations.

A wealth of information is also contained in the employment, jobs, career, and classified sections of the many search engines available.

TOP 10 HIGH TECH JOB BANKS

ComputerJobs

www.computerjobs.com

BrassRing

www.brassring.com

Career Web

www.careerweb.com

Dice

www.dice.com

Headhunter/CareerBuilder

www.headhunter.net

IT Jobs

www.itjobs.com

TelecomWeb

www.telecomweb.com

SiliconValley

www.siliconvalley.com

SwiftJobs.com

www.swiftjobs.com

Monster.com

www.monster.com

Computerwork

www.computerwork.com

TOP 10 DIVERSITY JOB BANKS

LatPro

www.latpro.com

Saludos

www.saludos.com

Job Latino

www.joblatino.com

HireDiversity

www.hirediversity.com

Bilingual-Jobs

www.bilingual-jobs.com

jobcentro

www.jobcentro.com

CVLatino

www.cvlantino.com

HispaniaNET

www.hispanianet.com

Diversilink

<http://www.diversilink.com>

Hispanic Business.com

<http://www.Hispanicbusiness.com>

IMDIVERSITY

www.imdiversity.com

ihispano

www.ihispano.com

careerbuilder

www.careerbuilder.com



CHAPTER TWO

CREATING EFFECTIVE COVER LETTERS

Authored by

Kay LaRocca, President/Owner K's Resume Service

www.preferredjobs.com/ResumePro

COVER LETTERS

Never submit any resume without a cover letter. The cover letter is a brief introduction to your resume. It is a way for you to convey particular information about yourself that may not be covered in a resume. Cover letters can be prepared in a variety of ways to accomplish different tasks. A cover letter can be targeted toward a particular job posting, a networking opportunity, or top off a cold mailing. Let's look first at some basic "do's" and "don'ts" in writing cover letters.

Cover Letter "Do's"

- Address your letter to a specific individual.
- Send an original letter to each employer.
- Use simple language, action verbs, and keep it brief and to the point. Eliminate all unnecessary words and be sure to check for any repetitive wording.
- Write targeted cover letters that are unique to each situation.
- Refer to the job requirements and relate them to your skill set.
- Keep your letter brief and never go beyond one page! Each paragraph should have three to four sentences at the most.
- Tell the employer how you can meet his or her needs and contribute to the company.
- Refer to specific achievements and accomplishments and set yourself apart from other job seekers.
- Make sure your letter answers the question that the employer will be asking while reading your letter: "Why should I hire this person?"
- Never bring any negative tone into a cover letter.
- Be sure you are providing all contact information, such as home phone, cell phone, and email address.
- Keep any e-mailed cover letter shorter and more concise than a letter being postal mailed.

Cover Letter “Don’ts”

- Don’t send a resume without a cover letter.
- Don’t use a sexist salutation, such as “Gentlemen” when answering a blind ad.
- Don’t waste your first paragraph by writing a boring introduction. Use the first paragraph to grab the employer's attention; give the employer the reasons you are qualified for the position. Read more.
- Don’t use such clichés as “Enclosed please find my resume” or “As you can see on my resume enclosed herewith.” Employers can see that your resume is enclosed; they don’t need you to tell them. Such trite phrases just waste precious space. And don't use pleonasm (wordy phrases), which also waste space.
- Don’t depend on the employer to take action. Request action. Request an interview, and tell the employer when you will follow up to arrange it. Then, Do So. It is imperative that you follow up. You will greatly increase your chances of getting interviews if you call the employer after writing instead of sitting back and waiting for a call. Those who wait for the employer to call them will generally have a long wait indeed.
- Don’t send a cover letter that contains any typos, misspellings, incorrect grammar or punctuation, smudges, or grease from yesterday’s lunch.
- Don’t rehash your resume. You can use your cover letter to highlight the aspects of your resume that are relevant to the position, but you’re wasting precious space -- and the potential employer’s time -- if you simply repeat your resume.
- Don't forget to personally sign the letter, preferably in black ink.

Simply put, your letters should tell the reader why you are writing, what position you are applying for, what you have to offer, and why this organization is of interest to you. You should close any letter by advising them of your intention to call them in several days, to arrange further discussion of employment opportunities.

Why are you writing - Let the reader know what has prompted you to communicate with them. Was it something you read or heard, if so, paraphrase the

content. If your correspondence is in regards to an advertisement, clearly indicate what position you are applying for and where the advertisement was found.

Promise a benefit - Specify special skills, training, or educational experience that may increase the reader's interest in you. Cite a particular example of a recent accomplishment in a way that will wet the reader's appetite and help him/her see the benefits that you can bring to the company.

Refer to your particular interest in an organization - Here is an opportunity for you to tell them where your special skills can best be put to use. Through the use of words, create a picture that will actually assist the reader in imagining you as a member of their team.

The closing - This area provides the writer with an opportunity to control further communication and follow through between the writer and the recipient. Always make certain to request an interview. Give an approximate time in which you will contact the company. Never ask them to contact you at their convenience (with exception to executive recruiters and blind ads). Although a cover letter is not intended to land you the job, it most definitely can either increase or hurt your chances of your resume being read.

Types of Cover Letters

Targeted Cover Letters - The most common way to hunt for jobs is to check newspaper and online listings. Many people turn to the Sunday paper to see who is hiring, how much they are paying, and how much experience these positions demand. The effectiveness of responding to these ads is debatable. Often, companies list openings only because of "open door" regulations, and have already chosen an internal candidate. Many openings are filled through connections before the first letters come in. Other ads are placed by companies or recruitment agencies that simply wish to test the waters. Even if the ad is legitimate, it is sure to attract dozens, even hundreds of other applicants. That's why having a standout cover letter is vital.

When responding to an advertised position, spell out in the first sentence where you learned about the job opportunity. List the exact name of the advertised job title, the name of the newspaper the ad was in (or which web site it appeared on) and the day and date the ad ran. Because companies often run several different ads at once, or ads for more than one position within a department, writing "I'm responding to the advertised marketing position" may not be enough.

Networking Cover Letters - Friends, acquaintances and family may sometimes tip you off to openings or currently employers. This necessitates a different approach to the cover letter - the "*schmoozing*" cover letter. Connections are great things that need to be cultivated, so make sure you follow proper networking etiquette. Do *not* use networking cover letters to ask for a job. People with the power to hire new employees take their responsibilities as gatekeepers seriously, and some stranger asking for a job only turns a gatekeeper off. But networking cover letters asking for career advice, information on the industry or just more contacts can often convince a powerful person like a hiring manager to become a more welcoming mentor. By using all of your connections and sending your cover letter and resume to all contacts will inform them of everything they need to know about you. By the time you do your follow-up phone call, they are prepared to tell you if you can fit into their hiring plan. Depending on how strong the contacts are, they might also be able to give you insider information on how you can make your cover letter and resume even more effective for the company in question.

General Cover Letters (Cold Mailings) – Companies do not have to have a “hiring” sign hanging on their door in order for you to apply. If you are interested in a particular company, by all means send your cover letter and resume. These types of letters have a great advantage as they show your initiative and genuine interest in a company. The effectiveness of cold mailings ultimately depends upon the establishment you contact. Some well-organized companies actually keep resumes on file and pull them when they begin hiring. But before you rush to mail letters to every Fortune 500 company, understand that most companies lack the organization to take such care with your resume.

Be sure to demonstrate your interest in a company by presenting your knowledge about that company's history, current projects, and business plan. Once you know its plan for the future, you can tell the company how you will contribute to that strategy.

Make sure you're addressing an individual. Call reception and ask for the head of the department in which you're interested. Hiring decisions are made by the people within the department, not Human Resources, so if you have a choice, avoid HR. Contacting an individual can also create a feeling of personal responsibility in the reader that might save your documents from the shredder. Seeing one's own name creates a sense of accountability that an anonymous posting doesn't inspire.

In closing, remember to send a cover letter with each and every resume submission. Many employers will discard resumes sent to their attention if they do not have a cover letter included with them.

Review the cover letter samples that we have provided and see how we create *attention grabbing* cover letters for our clients.

SAMPLE COVER LETTER FOR INTERNSHIP

Christina Jobseeker
838 Fernvue Drive
Anytown, USA 12345

Today's Date

Mr. Hiring Manager
ABC Company
Anytown, USA 12345

Dear Mr. Hiring Manager,

I am a third year student at Byrnmawr University studying for a degree in Marketing. My educational studies, combined with my prior work experiences, make me an ideal candidate for a summer internship with ABC Company.

You will note that I have acquired valuable sales and customer relationship management experience. Through my studies in Marketing, I believe that I am fully equipped with the tools I need to be successful.

More importantly, an internship with your company would be mutually beneficial. I've researched your organization and noted that ABC Company has an excellent reputation for outstanding customer satisfaction. The combination of my work experiences, education, and motivation to excel will make me an asset to your Marketing Department.

I believe that it would be beneficial for us to meet and discuss in greater detail my qualifications and a summer internship. I will call you within a week to arrange for a convenient meeting time. If you have any questions in the interim, please feel free to reach me at 123-456-7890, or via e-mail at Christina@hotmail.com.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Christina Jobseeker

SAMPLE COVER LETTER FOR COLLEGE GRADUATE

David Jobseeker
129 Greenleaf Road
Anytown, USA 12345

Today's Date

Mr. Hiring Manager
ABC Company
Anytown, USA 12345

Dear Mr. Hiring Manager,

My enthusiasm and dedication, along with my recently completed education make me a strong candidate for a position as a Sales and Marketing Representative for ABC Company.

In reviewing the attached resume, you will note that I recently graduated from the University of Pennsylvania with a Degree in Marketing. While I attended school, I also held numerous leadership positions with both the Student University Marketing Association, and the Future Business Leaders of America. These experiences further enhanced my communication, project management, and follow up skills.

Additionally, throughout my studies, I worked in various positions that allowed me to fund most of the cost of my college education. I acquired valuable experience in advertising sales, direct mail marketing, and newspaper subscription sales.

As you can see, my background has provided me with the maturity, skills, and abilities to flourish in a career in Sales and Marketing. Therefore, I'd like to meet with you in person to discuss in greater detail my credentials and the current position available. I will call your office in a few days to arrange for a mutually convenient time.

Thank you for your time, attention, and serous review of this application. I look forward to meeting with you soon.

Sincerely,

David Jobseeker

SAMPLE COVER LETTER - REFERRAL

Brian Jobseeker
110 Mountainview Drive
Anytown, USA 12345

Today's Date

Mr. Hiring Manager
ABC Company
Anytown, USA 12345

Dear Mr. Hiring Manager,

A Ms. Diana Scott of Greenbrier and Associates Advertising referred me to you. She suggested that I contact you regarding the possibility of joining your firm in a public relations role.

As a Copywriter for the Yorktown City Magazine, I've significantly developed my talent and expertise as a Public Relations Writer. In this role, I performed a variety of assignments that included researching story ideas and concepts, writing numerous articles, editing copy, laying out the magazine, and supervising production. Prior to my current assignment, I worked in Public Relations for Smith and Darnett, where I prepared numerous press releases and media guides, and managed several major direct mail campaigns.

I am highly motivated with a strong desire to succeed in all tasks I undertake. This has been well demonstrated by the fact that I have rapidly advanced into positions of increased responsibility and challenge.

Because I believe that I have much to contribute to your company, I'd like to meet with you at your earliest convenience for the opportunity of an interview. I will follow up this letter in a few days with a phone call to schedule an appointment.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Cordially,

Brian Jobseeker

SAMPLE COVER LETTER - COLD CONTACT

Today's Date

Ms. Diane Feldman
Department Manager
XYZ Industries, Inc.
112 Morrisville Avenue
Anytown, USA 12345

Dear Ms. Favor,

If you are in need of a valuable addition to your marketing team, please consider what I have to offer. A new staff member can provide innovative approaches to the challenges of marketing. I am an innovator of new ideas, an excellent communicator with buyers, and have a demonstrated history of marketing success.

Currently, I am marketing computer products for a major supplier using direct mail, television, radio, and news advertising. I have an established reputation for putting forth the effort required to make a project succeed.

Because XYZ Industries has maintained an excellent reputation for excellence, I believe my talents are well suited to market your quality line of technical products. Many of my other achievements, skills, and abilities are identified on the attached resume.

I will call you in a few days to arrange for an appointment so that we can discuss in greater detail how I may contribute to your organization. If you prefer, you may reach me in the evenings at (123) 456-7890.

Thank you for your time. I look forward to meeting you.

Sincerely,

Karen Jobseeker

PERSONALIZED COVER LETTER IN RESPONSE TO AN AD

Today's Date

Verizon Wireless
Employment Department
Pittsburgh, PA

Attention: Mr. Brian Scott, Human Resources Manager

Dear Mr. Scott,

With regard to your current posted opening for a Store Manager in Pittsburgh, PA, please accept this letter as my interest in being considered for employment in this capacity with Verizon Wireless.

As a highly experienced Sales Management professional with valuable skills acquired throughout my career in the Telecommunications industry, I have established a solid reputation and excelled in all assignments. In my capacity as Assistant Store Manager, I successfully performed many similar duties that will be required of a Store Manager. My ability to effectively train and mentor others, combined with my excellent administrative, technical, and computer operations background, will prove to be beneficial. I possess excellent communication and documentation skills, am multi-task oriented, welcome a challenge, and thrive under pressure. Other positive traits and achievements are identified on my resume.

If you are seeking a Store Manager who has a demonstrated understanding of all Telecommunications products, understands technology, earns 100% staff support, and who is as career-committed as it takes to achieve total success, then please consider what I have to offer.

I will contact you in a few days to follow up on this application and arrange for an appointment at a mutually convenient time. Thank you for your serious review of this application.

Very truly yours,

Matthew Jobseeker

FOLLOW-UP LETTER

Today's Date

Hiring Agent Name, Title
Company Name
Address
City/State/Zip

Dear -----,

Sometime ago, I submitted my resume to you in response to your ad for a _____ . As of this date, I have not received a reply, and I'd like to express my continued interest in employment with _____ .

In reviewing my resume, you will note that I have more than 18 years of progressive experience in the Environmental, Health and Safety field; and am well versed in the areas of Health and Safety issues in conjunction with state and federal guidelines. I have considerable experience working with Federal, State, and Local Regulators and Inspectors; and a thorough knowledge of the process and procedures of the corporate environment, as well as OSHA/ACGIH standards. I work well with people and enjoy getting the work at hand completed.

I believe that my background and credentials will allow me to make an immediate and positive contribution to your firm. Please contact me at (555) 555-0941 so that we may arrange for a meeting.

Thank you for your time, attention, and serious review of my qualifications.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Jobseeker

INTERVIEW THANK YOU LETTER

Today's Date

Hiring Agent Name, Title

Company Name

Address

City/State/Zip

Dear -----,

It was a pleasure to meet with you on _____ to discuss the position of _____ currently available with _____.

After meeting with you in person and discussing at length the position available and my qualifications, I am confident I can make an immediate and positive contribution to your firm as a communications specialist with expertise as a Computer Graphic Artist and Webmaster.

Again, thank you for the time and attention afforded to me. I look forward to hearing from you soon regarding your decision.

In the interim, do not hesitate to contact me should you have any other questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Larry James Jobseeker



CHAPTER THREE

RESUME WRITING

Authored by

Kay LaRocca, President/Owner K's Resume Service and

<http://www.preferredjobs.com/ResumePro>

RESUMES

Much advice has been given and numerous books have been written on preparing a resume. You may have read statements such as “resumes should never be more than one page,” or “don’t choose a colored paper.” The fact is, there is no universal format, but there are some guidelines to follow, whenever you are writing your own professional resume. The most important factor to keep in mind when designing and writing a resume is that its function should be to get the immediate attention of the reader and land you an interview, not a job offer. Often times jobseekers feel it is necessary to give dissertations on their work experience. Unfortunately, all that this does is burden the reader with unnecessary information that can later provide reasons for disqualifying you as a candidate. The average solicited job posting generates up to 200 resumes per day. Human Resources personnel spend approximately 15 seconds looking at each resume. Within that time frame, a decision will be made to place you either in the “yes” pile or the “no” pile. **It’s critical that specific accomplishments and achievements are emphasized on any resume. The resume must speak loudly on what you can do for that prospective employer!**

Those who “screen” resumes first will be looking at the overall appearance, format, and key areas of strength or competency. *Any errors in grammar or spelling will immediately disqualify you at this stage.* Once you have survived this preliminary screening, your resume will enter into the next stage. Here, a thorough review will be done upon your resume. If you are successful through this process, the contents of your resume will become the outline of your interview. In other words, a good resume will land you the job interview. Your performance in that interview is what will determine if the job offer follows.

Traditional Resumes

Length

Generally, a resume should be no longer than two pages in length. If you are seeking employment in diverse areas, develop a separate resume for each objective. You may consider “tweaking” the resume when appropriate to match the particular position.

On occasions, when the candidate's experience has resulted in materials being published or having received a patent, this information can be put on a separate page. Typically, these areas would be titled, "Credits, Patents, or Publications" depending on its application.

Format

The types of resume formats include chronological, functional, the modified combination format, *and* with the usage of the Internet by jobseekers, the plain text, or "scannable" resume has become the newest format.

Chronological

Perhaps the most popular resume format is CHRONOLOGICAL. This resume allows you to present your work history and education in chronological order. Information is listed in categories with headings for related work experience, education/training, and any special skills, abilities, or achievements. This format is widely familiar to most employers and works best for individuals who have several years experience in the same field, and/or, have no gaps in their employment history. It is generally not suitable for anyone just out of school or someone changing careers.

Functional

A resume that focuses more on the skills you've acquired than on the positions you have held are best expressed in a FUNCTIONAL resume format. Information is listed in categories with headings for relevant skills, capabilities, work history, and education/training. If you have extensive work experience, are pursuing a position outside of your industry, or have gaps in your employment history, this format is best suited for you.

Combination

The COMBINATION resume format uses elements of more than one resume format. Many resumes are written this way and it provides you with your own unique style. The COMBINATION resume incorporates parts of the Chronological Resume with parts of

the Functional Resume. This type of format is best for those changing jobs. It is most effective when skills and job experience need to be emphasized.

Electronic/PlainText/Scannable

With the Internet and the increasing use of technology in the transmission of data, the ELECTRONIC resume format is the newest style. This type of format is the same as the Chronological, Functional or Combination format, with a much simpler appearance. All material is typed flush left with adequate spacing between paragraphs. No symbols, bullet points, graphics, or underlining can be incorporated in this document. Here are some tips to keep in mind for this type of format:

- ❑ Choose a standard font such as: Helvetica, Futura, Optima, Universe, Times, Palatino, New Century Schoolbook or Courier.
- ❑ Use a font size of 10 to 14 point (avoid Times 10 pt)
- ❑ Avoid the use of italics, underline, shadows reverses, vertical and horizontal lines, graphics and boxes. All this accomplishes is to confuse the computer.
- ❑ Avoid two-column formats in your resumes.
- ❑ The computer is designed to extract information from your resume. This information comes under the phrase "key words". Key words are incorporated at the very top of this document under the heading "key words." Key words are any and all job titles of interest to the job seeker. It's not necessary to repeat words that refer to specific skills, achievements, or abilities already described elsewhere on the copy.
- ❑ Use more than one page, if necessary. The computer can easily handle multiple page resumes and it uses all of the data it extracts. This allows you to provide more information than you would, if you were submitting you resume to human eyes.
- ❑ Use the same headings that appear on your rich text resume such as: Objective, Experience, Employment, Work History, Positions Held, Appointments, Skills, Summary, Summary of Qualifications, Accomplishments, Strengths, Education, Affiliations, Professional Affiliations, Publications, Licensees, Certifications, Examinations, Honors, Additional Information, Miscellaneous, References, etc.

Once reaching a decision on which format to use, you can proceed to the other areas necessary for preparation of your resume (i.e. paper selection, printing, and color). Paper selection is a personal preference. We suggest using a basic white, off-white, or ivory colored paper. The weight of the paper to be 22-24 lb. stocks with a 25% cotton content. However, it's important to mention here that in some cases, you will be requested to fax your resume and resumes printed on colored paper often do not fax well. Your resume and cover letters should be printed on a high quality printer. The use of a laser printer will provide optimum effect. When selecting envelopes, it is not a good idea to fold bond paper, so we suggest using large manila envelopes. The postage may be slightly higher, but the recipient will receive a crisp and clean resume ready for their job interview file folder!

Essential Information

The resume should include your name, address, and phone number immediately followed by a position objective or summary of qualifications. If your resume is to succeed in this highly competitive market, it is critical that it's neat, accurate, and attractive but it is also:

- Easy to read
- Well written
- Clear and concise
- Contains perfect grammar and spelling
- Uses action verbs
- Presents your strengths and qualifications in an organized and meaningful way.

Web or “HTML” Resumes

There are numerous sites on-line where a job seeker can create and post (free of charge) a Web or “HTML” Resume. This is also a great way for someone to demonstrate their

computer savvy skills to a potential employer. We suggest the following site if you want to create your own Web or “HTML” Resume:

www.webresume.com/resumes/new.shtml

Review the before and after resume samples that we have provided to see how we create resumes that get results for our clients.

Before

Troy Jobseeker

391 Division Lane
St. Louis, MO 35426
412-866-6661
troyjobseeker@excite.com

Objective:

Office Management and Business Administration

Proven background working in office management and administration. Enjoy working with others and mentoring staff. Excellent organizational, administrative, and problem solving skills. Able to assume multiple duties and work well under pressure. Computer skills include: Microsoft Office, Outlook, and Internet/Intranet.

Work Experience:

Morrison Technology, Inc., St. Louis, MO

2000 – Present

Office Manager

Managed daily office operations and distributed mail, e-mails from website, and scheduled conference rooms and orientation of new staff, and coordinated all office moves. Responsible for receptionist area and hire and train staff. Administered office/facilities budget of \$400,000. Negotiate with vendors and order office supplies and maintain inventory. Coordinate office security systems and telephone network. Established new procedures that streamlined operations and achieved substantial cost savings. Created a new Office Procedure Manual that was accepted as a company standard.

Highmark Insurance Company, Plymouth, MN

1998 - 2000

Service Team Associate

Processed and updated beneficiary changes on existing life insurance policies. Assisted clients and agents in making changes and disbursements on their life insurance products. Trained new customer service representatives. Introduced a new workflow sheet for Settlement Options Service Team and improved customer service operation.

Education:

University of St. Louis, 1997
B.S. Communications

After

Troy Jobseeker

391 Division Lane • St. Louis, MO 35426
412-866-6661 • troyjobseeker@excite.com

**Highly skilled in Office Management and Business Administration
with a solid background in project management and interpersonal communications**

QUALIFICATIONS PROFILE

- Demonstrated record of success in office management and administration.
- Talent for identifying ways to streamline procedures and enhance operations.
- Personable and outgoing. Excel in a leadership role to motivate and direct staff.
- Excellent follow-up, time management, and problem resolution skills.
- Multi-task oriented, enjoy challenges, and thrive in a fast-paced environment.
- Clear and effective communicator, attentive listener, and a team player.
- Well-organized, honest, and dependable with a high level of integrity.
- Computer proficiency with Microsoft Office, Outlook, and Internet/Intranet.

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

MORRISON TECHNOLOGY, INC., ST. LOUIS, MO, 2000 - PRESENT

Office Manager

- Manage all daily office functions such as high-volume mailings, distribution of incoming mail, screening of e-mails from company website, scheduling of conference rooms, orientation of new personnel, and coordinating all office moves.
- Oversee receptionist area, and hire, train, and direct staff.
- Establish, maintain, and administer office/facilities budget of \$400,000.
- Negotiate with vendors, order office supplies, and maintain inventory.
- Administer office security systems and telephone network.
- Created new procedures that streamlined operations and achieved substantial cost savings.
- Wrote and implemented an Office Procedure Manual accepted as company standard.

HIGHMARK INSURANCE COMPANY, PLYMOUTH, MN 1998 - 2000

Service Team Associate

- Received and processed beneficiary changes on existing life insurance policies.
- Supported clients and agents in executing assorted changes and disbursements on their life insurance products.
- Trained and mentored new customer service representatives.
- Implemented new workflow sheet for Settlement Options Service Team that significantly improved customer service operation.

EDUCATION

University of St. Louis, 1997, *B.S. Communications*

Before

Blanche R. Jobseeker

129 Greenlea Street, Chicago, IL 60614

(773) 454-1234

blanche@hotmail.com

Objective: Seeking job as an IT Consultant using skills in Web Development and possess a Master's Degree in MIS

EDUCATION:

INDIANA UNIVERSITY, MASTER OF ARTS IN MIS, 2002

UNIVERSITY OF WISCON, BACHELOR OF ARTS IN HISTORY, 1996

EXPERIENCE:

Rhymore, Chicago, IL, 2000-Present

Consultant

Worked as a Java Developer at Foxwood Communications for a Global Craft Access System that was a wireless application for Foxwood Technicians. Worked with Visual Age for Java and Web Sphere. Supervised staff and increased productivity. Worked with team members and found ways requiring less code and increased data sharing.

Worked as a ASP/VB Developer and created B2B E-Commerce site to increase sales and used ASP/VB and COM. Worked in Microsoft Interdev and Visual Source Safe environments. Completed a redesign of site and increased traffic and large accounts requiring completion of work within specified time frame. Troubleshoot issues and ensured appropriate resolution.

Indiana University, SLIS, Bloomington, IN, 1998-2000

Technical Consultant/Webmaster

Administered database-driven website and completed updates as required. Troubleshoot hardware and software issues. Responsible for all technical equipment. Completed a successful update of website and also assisted staff during project.

COMPUTER SKILLS:

Operating Systems: Windows, Mac OS, UNIX, DOS

Web Development: HTML, DHTML, Homesite, Dreamweaver, FrontPage

Languages: Java, ASP/VB Script, Java Script, Perl, JSP, XML, Cold Fusion

Applications: Microsoft Office, Adobe Photoshop, Visual Interdev, Visual Age for Java, Flash, Quark Xpress, and Microsoft Access

After

Blanche R. Jobseeker

129 Greenlea Street • Chicago, IL 60614 • (773) 454-1234 • blanche@excite.com

A highly organized and accomplished IT consulting professional with a Master's Degree in MIS and solid skills in web development

Summary of Qualifications

- Motivated self-starter with a unique blend of creative and technology skills.
- Adaptable team player with a proven record of performance in Web Development and Technical Consulting.
- Enjoy creating Web pages, designing art/graphics, and writing advertising copy.
- Extensive experience on various PC systems and use of organizational and people skills to coordinate personnel and technical projects.
- Dynamic public relations representative with strong communication skills.
- Successfully lead and motivate staff in all strategy, coordination and implementation activities to deliver highest quality web based applications.

Computer Skills

Operating Systems: Windows, Mac OS, UNIX, DOS

Web Development: HTML, DHTML, Homesite, Dreamweaver, FrontPage

Languages: Java, ASP/VB Script, Java Script, Perl, JSP, XML, Cold Fusion

Applications: Microsoft Office, Adobe Photoshop, Visual Interdev, Visual Age for Java, Flash, Quark Xpress, Microsoft Access

Education

INDIANA UNIV., **MASTER OF ARTS, MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION SYSTEMS**, 2002
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN, **BACHELOR OF ARTS IN HISTORY**, 1996

Professional Background

RHYMORE, CHICAGO, IL

2000 – Present

CONSULTANT

Foxwood Communications: Served as **Java Developer** of Global Craft Access System, a wireless application for Foxwood Technicians. Utilized Visual Age for Java and Web Sphere.

- Successfully motivated and led team to increased productivity through training and cooperation.
- Worked closely with team members to find synergies and share the work effort, resulting in less code and increased data sharing.

Blanche R. Jobseeker
Page Two

Gilmore Electronics: Acted as **ASP/VB Developer** responsible for creating B2B E-Commerce site to increase sales, using ASP/VB and COM. Worked in Microsoft Interdev and Visual Source Safe environments.

- Successfully redesigned site to accommodate increased traffic and large accounts within extremely tight deadline.
- Performed troubleshooting of issues as they arose and resolved problems in a timely manner.

INDIANA UNIVERSITY: SLIS, BLOOMINGTON, IN

1998 – 2000

TECHNICAL CONSULTANT/WEB MASTER

Maintained and updated department database-driven web site. Performed troubleshooting of hardware and software related problems. Set-up and maintained technical equipment.

- Successfully updated website and assisted staff and students during transition.

Before

David R. Jobseeker

2921 Circle Drive, Dallas, TX 34685, (627) 779-9103, drjobseeker@aol.com

Qualifications Summary:

Highly skilled and dedicated IT professional with proven technical skills working with clients in the Transportation, Manufacturing, Retail, and Educational industries. In-depth knowledge of operations, on-line sales, and customer services business units. Established record of increasing sales and revenues and introducing ways to promote operational efficiency while improving the bottom line.

Significant skills in Marketing, Information Technology and E-Commerce including:

Business Unit Start-Ups, Turnarounds, and Restructures, Margin Improvement and Revenue Gain, Legacy and Back-end Integration Initiatives, E-Commerce Order Entry, Tracking, and Fulfillment, Budgeting, Planning, and Forecasting Business and Technology Project Management, Market-share Enhancement Strategic Account Management , High-level Relationship Management, Enterprise Application Integration (EAI), Enterprise Information Systems (EIS), Civilian/Military Logistics Systems, Joint Application Design (JAD), Outsourcing MRP System Implementation, Purchasing/Receiving Systems, and Real Time Satellite Systems

Work Experience:

Morgan Consulting Services, Dallas, TX

2000 - Present

Director of Data Warehouse Practice (Consultant)

- Introduced software tools and management reporting issues to relocate from one system to another.
- Used Informatica ETL, MS SQL Server, AS/400 DB2, and Brio Business Intelligence (BI) tools.
- Worked with company executives, management, and other staff with B1 and Decision Support reporting.
- Provided methods for project planning, status reporting, and accountability.
- Held meetings, conducted JADS, and enhanced relations between systems and manufacturing entities.

David R. Jobseeker
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BDL Systemhouse, Dallas, TX
1996 - 2000

Account Manager

- Worked with staff in building a data warehouse environment for a large international resort time-share company.
- Used MS SQL Server, Oracle, Data Mirror and Brio.
- Hired and directed company's internal data warehouse staff.

Rymore, Dallas, TX
1985 - 1996

Director, Architecture and Strategic Planning

- Created and used a client server architecture including HW, SW, Network, DBMS, WEB and Data Warehouse technology.
- Client server architecture, including LAN/WAN, was built to support a large custom order management system with up to 1,200 users.
- Prepared RFP for system, located a vendor, and negotiated terms to establish a system in India.
- Instituted data warehouse concepts, developed an overall strategy, and purchased Information Builders.
- Bought tools and developed a number of data marts that rationalized data to efficiently satisfy business needs.
- Created a savings of \$2,000,000 yearly from this system.

Computer/Technical Skills

Hardware/Software: DB2, Oracle, SQL Server, SYBASE, Informatica, MS DTS, Data Mirror, Data Junction, Information Builders, Cognos, Windows, MS Office, MS Project, Erwin, and Bpwin.

Operating Systems: UNIX, NT, Web Dev Tools, PowerBuilder, MVS, VSE, VM, VSAM, CICS, TSO/SPF, and ADABAS.

Education

American Technological Institute, 32 of 36 Hours Toward M.S.
The University of Texas at Dallas, B.S. Business Administration

After

David R. Jobseeker

2921 Circle Drive ♦ Dallas, TX 34685 ♦ (627) 779-9103 ♦ drjobseeker@aol.com

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

More than sixteen years' active participation in the Information Technology field with an established reputation for providing hi-tech solutions to a wide array of business situations within the Transportation, Manufacturing, Retail, and Educational industries.

Visionary "power user" of technology, with a 360° view of corporate operations gained through work in operations, on-line sales, and customer services business units. Strong management skills transform corporate goals into profitable reality; proactive management and marketing initiatives ensure increased sales and maximum revenue gains.

Equipped with the skills and experience to analyze a business unit's performance, to reinforce its core functions while outsourcing others, marry technology to business need, and find ways to develop systems that drive operational efficiency and improve unit's bottom line.

AREAS OF ABILITY

MARKETING • INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY • E-COMMERCE

Business Unit Start-Ups, Turnarounds, and Restructures • Margin Improvement/Revenue Gain
Legacy and Back-end Integration Initiatives • E-Commerce Order Entry, Tracking, and Fulfillment
Budgeting, Planning, and Forecasting • Business/Technology Project Management
Market-share Enhancement • Strategic Account Management
High-level Relationship Management • Enterprise Application Integration (EAI)
Enterprise Information Systems (EIS) • Civilian/Military Logistics Systems
Joint Application Design (JAD) • Outsourcing • Purchasing/Receiving Systems
MRP System Implementation • Real Time Satellite Systems

PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

*Established Critical Discipline for \$1.5M Data Warehouse
that Created Annual Cost Savings of \$1,000,000*

- Implemented critical software tools and management reporting tactics to relocate from one system to another.
- Utilized Informatica ETL, MS SQL Server, AS/400 DB2, and Brio Intelligence (BI) tools.
- Provided company executives, management, and technical staff with B1 and Decision Support reporting.
- Instituted methods for project planning, status reporting, and accountability.
- Chaired status and design meetings, conducted JADS, and enhanced relations between systems and manufacturing entities.

Spearheaded Development and Implementation of Strategy for an Enterprise Data Warehouse that Created Annual Cost Savings of \$4,000,000

- Supported internal staff and consultants in building a data warehouse environment for a large international resort time-share company. Utilized MS SQL Server, Oracle, and Data Mirror.
- Recruited, hired, trained, and motivated company's internal data warehouse staff.

Developed Client Server Architecture and Data Warehouse Technology for a Large Electronics Manufacturer Owned by AT&T that Created Annual Cost Savings of up to \$6,000,000

- Designed, introduced, and facilitated use of client server architecture including HW, SW, Network, DBMS, WEB and Data Warehouse technology.
- Client server architecture, including LAN/WAN, was built to support a very large, \$20M custom order management system with up to 1,200 users.
- Prepared RFP for system, selected vendor, and negotiated contract for system in India.
- Bought the tools and developed a number of data marts that rationalized data to efficiently satisfy business needs and created year savings of \$2,000,000.

Significantly Improved Customer Service, Manufacturing, and Logistics Systems

- Pioneered the use of on-line systems (OLTP) utilizing Database Management Systems.
- Supported staff of up to 30 consultants from a "Big 5" consulting firm in the design, construction, and implementation of a \$9M dollar DB2 based Customer Service system.
- Modernized Customer Service Division, including Order Management and promotion tracking systems that saved the company an estimated \$6M annually.
- Constructed a company wide COBAL/CICS/DB2 on-line sales detail and promotions tracking systems (Data Warehouse) that provided the ability to closely track sales and promotions on a daily basis. System saved the company over \$2M annually.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Morgan Consulting Services, Dallas, TX <i>Director of Data Warehouse Practice (Consultant)</i>	2000 – Present
BDL Systemhouse, Dallas, TX <i>Account Manager</i>	1996 – 2000
Rymore, Dallas, TX <i>Director, Architecture and Strategic Planning</i>	1985– 1996

EDUCATION

American Technological Institute, *32 of 36 Hours Toward M.S.*
The University of Texas at Dallas, *B.S. Business Administration*



CHAPTER FOUR

THE ART OF SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEWING

Authored by
Kay LaRocca, President/Owner K's Resume Service and
<http://www.preferredjobs.com/ResumePro>

JOB INTERVIEWING

Individuals facing a job interview often find the process itself to be more challenging than finding the job itself. A job interview is an employer's opportunity to assess you and your opportunity to evaluate the employer. In reality, you both want to know if you and the job's requirements match, if you are motivated to succeed in this assignment, and if your and the employer's values and styles mesh. When you are invited for an interview, be prepared to give the best interview you can. We've included information below on the types of interviews, as well as the most common questions you can expect to be asked in any interview. Keep in mind that an interview is really just an exchange of information. In other words, interviewing is formalized conversation. We say "formalized" because we do not want to use any language that would be considered inappropriate or in bad taste.

TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

Before we go into interviewing dynamics, let's review the various types of interview settings so you will know what to expect from each one. Most interviews are conducted with the interviewer and interviewee sitting across from each other. However, there are other types of interview scenarios that you will want to become familiar with, some which are fast becoming very common.

Telephone Interview

A telephone interview is the first step in the interview process. It is a screening process. Usually, a company will contact you and schedule a time to interview you by telephone. However, you should always be prepared for the possibility that the initial telephone contact may be the actual telephone interview. Either way, read the following tips to ensure your own telephone interviewing success.

1. Have a cheat sheet accessible and near the telephone. Keep your resume or list of achievements handy as a reminder of topics you want to cover.
2. Find a quiet place to have the telephone conversation and by all means, ignore the call waiting.

3. Stand-up for the first several minutes of the interview. When you stand, you speak with more authority, and sound confident. Do not speak in a monotone voice. Remember, this is a conversation. Do not chew gum, smoke cigarettes, eat or drink anything while on the telephone.
4. Be an active participant in the conversation. If the interviewer is extremely talkative, you can show interest by answering with a “yes” or “I see.” Demonstrate enthusiasm in your voice and smile. The interviewer will readily notice this enthusiasm.

Panel Interview

A panel interview is a formalized setting with three or more individuals in attendance who are prepared to interview a job candidate at the same time. This is a fairly common interviewing technique for positions in education and government. Often times, for those being interviewed in this setting, it can be somewhat intimidating. To reduce your level of anxiety, keep the following in mind:

1. Obtain business cards if possible from each participant of the panel interview. You will want to place these cards on the table in front of you, in accordance to where they are sitting on the panel. This will help you to remember their names.
2. Use visualization to put yourself in a relaxed frame of mind immediately upon entering the room. It helps if you can picture the interviewers in costume or disguise.
3. Answer each question to the best of your ability. Remember, you can only answer one question at a time. Be inclusive in answering your questions. Make eye contact with all members of the panel when answering any question.

Behavioral Interview

The purpose behind the behavioral interview is to make the interviewing process as objective as possible. To achieve this, the interview questions are designed by a psychologist in order to identify particular personality types. The interview questions are

open-ended, requiring an elaboration of an answer relating to your work experience. Questions can also deal with ethical or hypothetical dilemmas or situations. The interviewer will write down or record your answer verbatim. In a more “traditional interview”, you will also find some open-ended questions. Either way, in a behavioral interview, all questions are recorded in some way.

Reflect on the contributions you have made in your work history, especially where there is measurable or noticeable change. Later on, we will discuss a formula called the *3 Whats*. This formula provides a framework for answering behavioral related questions.

Situation Interview

In a situation interview, the work environment is artificially created. It can be something as common as a typing test, or something more elaborate requiring you to spend a good portion of the day in the work environment. The purpose of situation interviewing is for the company to get a good idea of how you would actually react in certain work situations. In many instances, a group or individual will observe you performing your work. For example, you may be asked to develop a procedure or method, solve a hypothetical problem, write a proposal, or give a presentation. Situation interviews are becoming more common because of the number of individuals misrepresenting themselves on a resume. This type of interview assists the interviewer in observing whether the candidate actually possesses the required skills and/or experiences required.

Meal Interview

You may be asked to go to a luncheon meeting with a prospective employer. This is a less formal method for employers to interview potential employees. Normally, if you make it this far, the odds are in your favor that you will probably be hired for the job. However, it is still an interview nonetheless and a certain precaution should be followed. Here are some helpful tips for meal interviewing:

1. You will probably be asked to order first. Once you've ordered, don't change your mind on the food item. This could make you appear to be indecisive.
2. Order menu items that are priced in the "middle of the road" and are not "sloppy" foods.
3. Avoid alcohol. If drinks are ordered, politely decline or "nurse" a drink.

THE CONCEPTS OF INTERVIEWING

When most people are asked, "what is the purpose of interviewing", they usually reply, "to get a job". Undeniably, that is the objective. However, the purpose of an interview from the company's perspective is that they have a need to fill. They are looking for an individual who can assist them in solving their "need". The challenge for the job interviewer is to be able to demonstrate how your background and abilities can help them meet their goals and objectives, thus relieving the "need".

THINK OF YOURSELF AS YOUR OWN COMPANY

Someone in the workforce several years ago could reasonably expect to have that job for life. However, it's almost certain that most individuals in today's economy will more than likely experience working for several organizations.

Instead of thinking of yourself as an "employee", it is better to think of yourself as your own company. As your own company, you are providing a "service" to a "customer". You must fully understand all that you have to offer and establish your own career goals. It's not up to your next employer to define and plan your career, as you need to take charge of that yourself. The desired result of any job interview is to create a winning presentation, highlighting the strengths of your own company. Your goal is to demonstrate how your company is a better choice than someone else with a similar skill set.

Interview Preparation

Assess your strengths and weaknesses

You will need to spend some time assessing your own strengths and weaknesses. For each area of strength you should be able to demonstrate (provide examples) of how it was developed and utilized. As for your areas of weakness, you have to know what you are doing to improve in that area. It is advisable to list on a sheet of paper all your skills, abilities, accomplishments and weaknesses and be able to provide examples from your past experience as to how you developed, utilized or improved these qualities. Relating your areas of strength to the required qualifications is a key factor in gaining the interviewer's attention.

Study the position available

Review your understanding about the type of work/position you will be interviewed for. If you are interviewing for a marketing position, be aware of the typical job duties/responsibilities for that position as well as the required qualification to perform the job tasks. If you are not clear about the nature of the position you will be interviewed for, make sure to use your network of contacts to help you develop a better understanding of the job.

Research the company

Find out as much as possible about the employer. Learn about the company from its website, annual reports, brochures, and other similar sources. You should be able to know the company's exact name, history, purpose, services/products, major competitors, approximate number of employees, where its branches are located and its future prospects.

Know the dress code

Did you know that approximately 60% of job applicants are screened out because their appearance does not fit the organizational image? You should dress like other employees in the organization. If you are well-groomed and neatly dressed, your appearance will inspire a basic confidence in your work habits.

Bring appropriate materials

Take along additional copies of your resume, a list of questions to ask about the organization and position, a portfolio (if applicable), a pen and a pad of paper on which you can make a few notes to yourself. Make sure to note on a piece of paper the name of the interviewer, company address, and telephone number in case of emergency.

Find interview location ahead of appointment

Be sure to get specific directions for getting there. Repeat the directions and make sure they are correct. It is even better if you can make a “dry run” to determine the exact location prior to the meeting. You need to find out the approximate travel time to the interview location, check out the best route and parking locations. Make sure that you arrive 5-10 minutes before the interview.

Dress for success

Men

- Traditional business attire, i.e. navy blue or gray suit or sports coat and nice slacks, and a long sleeved pressed dress shirt.
- Ties should be silk and coordinate well with the suit. Avoid any flashy or “theme” ties such as ties with cartoon characters or seasonal events.
- Jewelry should be limited to one ring per hand a dress watch. No earrings, and of course, no visible body piercings!
- Shoes should be polished and leather dress shoes in black, dark burgundy or brown are best. Socks should match suit color.
- Hair neatly combed and clean. Facial hair well groomed as well.
- Avoid wearing too much cologne or after-shave.
- Well manicured nails.

Women

- Conservative business suit, dress or pants suit. Most appropriate colors are blue, gray, black or tan. Blouse color should be white or any complimentary colors.
- Jewelry should be modest with one ring per finger, earrings no longer than ½ inch and necklace, and no visible body piercings!
- Avoid excessively long fingernails. Your nail polish should be a subtle color and applied neatly.
- Shoes should be no more than a 2-inch heels and should complement your outfit.
- Your hair should be well groomed and clean.
- Avoid wearing too much cologne, perfume, or make-up.

THE ART OF POSITIVE THINKING

It is very common to worry about something unfavorable occurring at the interview, but don't allow yourself to worry too much. When you find yourself having negative thoughts, visualize yourself having a highly successful interview. This would be an interview where you are in control and performing your best. If you would like to further your relaxation try a deep breathing exercise such as inhaling through your nose for 4 slow seconds, holding your breath for 4 slow seconds and exhaling through the mouth for 8 long seconds. Try doing this three times before the interview. (but not in the interview itself).

Approaching the interview

In approaching the interview, keep in mind that you are really approaching a potential "customer". Think of yourself as your own sales representative. You will be presenting the benefits of what services you have to offer. The decision to work for a particular company should be based on a mutual benefit to both parties.

First Impressions most important

You have heard it said, “First impressions make lasting impressions”. This is very true whenever we meet someone for the first time. Typically, when we meet someone, we “*take him or her in*” on two different levels, the analytical and the intuitive. The analytical is what we think of an individual. The intuitive is how we feel about an individual. The same dynamics described above are also found in the interview. We need to be aware of first impressions and how we can use them to our full advantage.

Communications Skills

To help you to make a positive first impression in the interview, let’s examine the importance of communication skills. The three forms of communications skills we will examine are your body language, speaking, and listening.

Body Language

Both your words and your behavior will affect whether you establish a connection with the interviewer. When you meet the potential employer or human resources officer, you will want to show that you are confident, trusting, open, attentive, and eager, but restrained.

All of this can be communicated in a handshake. Make sure that your hand is about perpendicular to the floor. If you extend your hand with your palm facing down, you indicate that you need to be in control-something that can be off-putting in an interview scenario. If you extend your hand with your palm facing up, you can appear overly docile. Try extending your hand with your palm relatively flat, so that you offer to make full contact with the other person's hand. If you cup your hand, you indicate that you mistrust the other person.

Your posture throughout the interview indicates whether you are open and attentive, or somehow withdrawn from the interviewer. Leaning back shows boredom or sometimes insolence. It is better to sit up straight and lean forward just slightly, facing the interviewer directly. Crossing your arms in front of you may indicate that you are somehow defensive, whether from insecurity or mistrust. Try to keep your arms open, even if your legs are crossed.

Eye contact is crucial. Look the person in the eye when you are speaking and listening. To avoid giving the interviewer the impression that you are boring through him with your transfixed gaze, take breaks and look away to the right or left.

Listening

The following are some basic tips on being a good listener:

1. Give your full attention to the interviewer. Don't look out the window or at what else is going on in the room.
2. Let the interviewer finish a question before you begin to talk. When you interrupt, it looks like you aren't listening, even if you really are.
3. Ask questions. If you are not sure you understand what the interviewer has said, just ask. It is a good idea to repeat in your own words what the interviewer said so that you can be sure your understanding is correct.
4. Give feedback. Sit up straight and look directly at the interviewer. Now and then, nod to show that you understand. At appropriate points you may also smile, frown, laugh, or be silent. These are all ways to let the interviewer know that you are really listening. Remember, you listen with your face as well as your ears!

Speaking

A common perception of job interviews is that the interviewer controls the interview. Remember, you interview as equals. The object is not to control or be controlled but to find a mutually advantageous situation for both parties. An interview can be defined as having a conversation. As in any conversation, there is a certain give and take in the process. Anytime you speak, whether in an interview or daily communication, you control the direction of the conversation. Observe this point in your own daily conversations. Typically, we flow from one subject to another. The same can be said in the interview process. If in the interview, we find ourselves in an area uncomfortable to us, we can guide the conversation away from that subject.

Here are some basic tips to remember when speaking in a job interview:

1. Look at the interviewer. Communication is a two-way process. Always make steady eye contact with the interviewer.
2. Ask questions. A good way to capture the interviewer's attention is to ask a question.
3. Speak slowly and loudly.
4. If you are not a native speaker of English, do not feel embarrassed about your accent when you answer questions in an interview. Feel proud that by communicating in a second language, you are exhibiting a talent that many of your competitors may lack.

Establish Rapport

Your goal is to establish a positive rapport with the interviewer. Look for objects or pictures in the office that will give you a chance to initiate conversation. Try to develop an instant rapport so that the interviewer can feel relaxed and comfortable around you.

RESPONDING TO THE “TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF QUESTION”

This is often the most dreaded of questions, but it's usually the first one asked by the interviewer. Remember, you are representing yourself, and like any company wishing to promote their product or service, you must come up with your own personal marketing plan.

DEVELOPING YOUR PERSONAL MARKETING PLAN

We are influenced by the commercials we see. Think about a television or radio commercial that you remember. What made it so memorable? Was it unique, funny, informative? Did the commercial highlight why the product is better than the competition? Whether the commercial did or did not highlight the product's strength, chances are you remember the product, which of course is the objective.

When creating your own job winning commercial, you will want to make it memorable by highlighting your strengths and relating it to their needs. Your

commercial should have a general framework describing your skills, experiences or competencies. Your objective is to provide a clear picture of how your “service” will benefit that particular company.

Play to the Audience

Commercials are designed to play to a particular audience. For example, if you are watching a ball game, chances are you will not see too many laundry detergent commercials. However, you will see car, fast food and beverage commercials, because the viewing audience may be inclined to purchase those items. Conversely, a soap opera is usually sponsored by household products companies and not by those producers of cars or beer. Advertisers understand the importance of targeting their commercials to a particular audience.

We can learn from this observation when developing our own commercial. Play to the audience! In other words, when giving your commercial, try to plug into the needs of the “customer”. The best way to identify those needs is to review the qualifications as stated in their job description. To give you an example, let’s say you are looking for a Sales and Marketing position. Your experience is ten years in the Sales and Marketing industry, the development of new territories, training of sales personnel, and operational responsibility for the existing territories.

Let’s say you have an interview at two different companies for the position of Sales and Marketing Manager. At the first company, they are interested in someone who has been in the Sales and Marketing industry and has experience developing both territories and personnel. The second company, on the other hand, is looking for someone with experience managing a territory with emphasis on the administrative/operational functions. Should you use the same exact commercial for both positions? If you use the same commercial, you may miss the needs of your target audience.

With the first company, your commercial would emphasize your background in Sales and Marketing, and your experience developing territories/personnel. At the second company, your commercial would have a greater emphasis on the administrative/operational aspect of the position. Your commercial will have the same

basic framework in each interview. However, your “spin” on the commercial will change with each interview depending on the needs of your “target audience”.

Applying your Marketing Plan

Since this may be your first answer, you want to start off right. Sometimes it is hard to remember what points we want to make without our commercial sounding canned. A few methods for remembering your commercial would be to think about those items you highlighted on your resume. One other method is to create an acronym. In the case of our Sales and Marketing Manager, he or she may wish to emphasize the following:

Developing new territories

Organizing sales promotion campaigns

Training new sales associates. The acronym? DOT

Length of presentation

As with most commercials, it is beneficial to have a short and long version. The “long” version is used to answer the “tell me about yourself” question. The commercial should be approximately one to two minutes in length. Do not go beyond three minutes because you may lose the interviewer’s attention.

A shorter version of your commercial is perfect for networking activities and voice mail. It should be about 30 seconds in length, an elevator speech if you will. In other words, what would you want to tell a prospective employer in an elevator? If you find yourself constantly getting someone’s voice mail, a well prepared ten to twenty second commercial may entice the listener to return your call. In any case, make your commercial reflect that most remarkable of people... YOU.

RELATING YOUR APPLICABLE SKILLS

Companies are always interested in problem solvers. Whenever you can provide an example of how you solved a problem, or benefited a company in a particular way, it will lend greater credence to your point. For example:

1. Recall a particular situation, problem, challenge or project you worked on.

2. What action or actions did you take as a result of the problem.
3. What was the positive outcome.

When you are describing your **situation, challenge, problem, or project**, remember that you are “establishing a scene” for the listener. The **action** portion is where you can elaborate on the proactive way you reacted. The **positive result** obviously being the “happy ending”.

Action Words

When you are telling your “story”, you will want to make your example interesting to the audience. A way to accomplish this is by using action words. Let’s look at an example of how you might tell your story.

I recall a particular time at John Doe Company when productivity was greatly effected by very low employee morale. My assignment was to investigate the morale issue and respond to upper management in detail on my findings. My approach was to interview a select number of employees and get their feedback. To accomplish this, I developed a questionnaire related to various working conditions at our company. After conducting my interviews, I reviewed the data and my research indicated specific problems in two areas of operation. It was apparent from my research that lack of training and employee recognition was key. In my recommendation to management, I suggested that the company conduct more training programs to better assist employees in completing their tasks, as well as implement strong employee recognition programs. As a result of my suggestions, John Doe Company achieved a 10% net gain in productivity over the previous year.

Notice how the example of a percentage was used. By using specific numbers, percentages, or mention of recognition or awards can many times augment your example. Try to keep your example within a sixty to ninety seconds framework. Be sure that you have several examples to draw from.

ALWAYS ASK QUESTIONS DURING A JOB INTERVIEW

Whenever a company employs your services, you are entering an economic relationship or partnership with that organization. As with any type of “relationship”, both parties will be satisfied as long as it is mutually beneficial for both. Since you are entering into a partnership, it is important that you learn as much as you can about the other party. One way to accomplish this is through asking questions. Think for a moment about your personal relationships. When they were in the formative stages, did you ask questions? What would your opinion be of someone who never asked you questions about yourself? Chances are good, your impression would be that individual is not too interested in me. If you do not ask questions during the interview, the interviewer may have that same perception of you.

Questions to avoid asking

Before discussing the type of questions to ask, we will cover the two pitfalls to avoid.

1. *Asking too many or irrelevant questions.* Be prepared and ask intelligent questions that will demonstrate you did your research and have knowledge of that company.
2. *Uninformed questions.* Never ask a question that you already know the answer to. Never ask a company “what do they do” or “who their major competitors are”, you should already know that information. Be sure to ask questions that demonstrate your knowledge of the company and how they can benefit from that.

Questions to give you an advantage

Any question you ask should serve two purposes; to provide information for you and to promote your “service” through thoughtful informative questions. We have divided the types of questions to ask into four categories: *positive feedback, information,*

example, and concern questions. On the following pages, you will find an explanation of questions and examples.

Positive Feedback Questions

The purpose of these questions is to elicit an affirmative response from the interviewer through their feedback. In many cases the questions illustrate a point showing how an interviewee's skills or accomplishments may benefit the potential company. Note underlined words or phrases are interchangeable.

1. Can you see how my experience parallels that of the position?
2. Is this the type of leadership ability you are looking for?
3. Does that give you an idea of my ability to motivate others?
4. Do you see how I could improve productivity?
5. Do you feel my team building skills could be an asset to your company?

Information Questions

The information questions can be important in several ways. First of all, information questions are designed to assist you in learning about a company's "corporate culture". By this we mean, what does a company value and how does that compare with your work values. For instance, if you are a very competitive person, chances are you will excel in a culture that values competition. If on the other hand, you are a strong team player, a competitive environment may not serve you as well.

A second purpose for asking information questions is that it provides a vehicle to ask pertinent questions regarding the company's direction and goals. This will assist you in making a decision regarding your interest in working for a company.

Finally, you can phrase the information question in a way to demonstrate your industry or company knowledge. For example, say you are in an interview and you want to know about that company's current growth. You could ask, "*What is your expected growth for the coming year?*" However, if you asked, "*I noticed last year your revenue was at 250 million. This year with the addition of your new product, you are anticipating revenue of 350 million. Are you still on target for your goal?*" Which question sounds more impressive? The second question demonstrates your level of interest in the position and you did your homework. Here's some additional types of information gathering questions you can ask:

1. How would you describe the ideal employee?
2. What type of training does the company provide?
3. What are the current goals of the department?
4. What area is the most growth anticipated in?
5. What do you see the company excelling in within the next few years?
6. What are the most critical responsibilities of the job?
7. What is the standard for company promotions?
8. What is the company's basic operating philosophy?
9. What is this company's management style?
10. Do you encourage employee decision-making?

Example Questions

The following questions have two purposes. One is to give you some idea as to the job's particular problems or challenges. The other will allow you to demonstrate how you have handled a similar problem in the past, by citing an example of your problem solving abilities.

1. What would you expect me to achieve in the first several months?
2. What is the department's biggest challenge at this time?
3. How close is the company to achieving its stated goals?
4. Are projects completed on schedule? What would be the biggest obstacle that caused delay (if applicable)?
5. In your opinion, what do you see as the greatest challenge to this organization's future growth?
6. Does the company have a domestic and international presence?

Concern Questions

If your intuition tells you that you are the candidate of choice, you may give consideration to asking concern questions. These questions are designed to assist you from pursuing or accepting a position that may not be in your best career interest. In asking these questions, you should wait, until you are sure you are a viable candidate. Also, as you will notice, most questions are phrased in the third person. This is done to "depersonalize" the question and not make you appear to be a "whiner".

1. Does the employee group work on Saturdays?

2. What happened to the employee who previously held this job?
3. Is frequent overnight travel required of staff?
4. How does the company historically respond to business slowdowns?
5. What type of employee evaluation system do you use?
6. Is there a possibility of (relocation, merger, and acquisition)?
7. How many people have held this position in the last five years?
8. What is the average yearly employee turnover for the department?

The interview is a conversation and the questions you ask will be a part of the normal conversational flow. The numbers of questions you ask are really not as important as the quality. One of the biggest decisions in our life is where do we work and what do we do. If you do not ask the right questions to assist you in this decision, who will?

INTERVIEWER'S COMMON QUESTIONS

During any job interview, you can expect to be asked a variety of questions. There may even be times when an interviewer can ask some “off the wall question”. If this should occur, be sure to compose yourself prior to responding and answer the question to the best of your ability. The following are many of the most frequently asked interview questions. We followed that by identifying ten common questions. We then provided an explanation for the question and how you might prepare an answer.

The 25 most common interview questions

1. Tell me about yourself? (we already covered this one)

2. Where do you hope to be in five years?
3. What can you do to improve our (bottom-line, productivity, procedures, etc.)?
4. How well do you work under pressure?
5. What is your biggest career accomplishment?
6. What is your greatest strength?
7. What did you think of your last boss or company?
8. When are you available?
9. What do you like most about your current or last job?
10. How would you describe the ideal boss or management style?
11. What is your greatest weakness?
12. What did you like best about your last or current job?
13. How do you define success?
14. What suggestions have you offered former employers that were implemented?
15. What is the most difficult assignment you ever completed?
16. What do you know about our company?
17. Why are you making this career change?

18. What would your immediate supervisor say about you?
19. What would your employees or peers say about you?
20. How do you feel about relocation?
21. What motivates you?
22. Give an example of your creativity, analytical, administrative or leadership skills?
23. In what way do you feel you can make the biggest contributions to our firm?
24. What do you like to do in your spare time? Do you have any hobbies?
25. Give us an example of your innovative abilities?

HANDLING EMPLOYER CONCERNS

Every so often, an employer may mention a concern. Typical concerns are in the areas of education, experience, and age.

Understanding the Basis for Concerns

By understanding what the real concern may be, we can demonstrate how it is not really a concern. We will review the three areas of most concern and discuss how to defuse the concern.

Educational level- in discussing this concern, we assume an individual meets most of the qualifications. If you hope to be a brain surgeon and you have only a Bachelor's degree in advertising, the understanding is you would need further education. However, if your background is tilted more towards experience than education, we can discuss that

situation. In this case, your emphasis is on your practical knowledge, (i.e. the “real world”). Also express your interest in learning new ideas and to reach that goal you have attended seminars and conferences. Do not forget informal education such as company sponsored seminars, in-house courses or on-line.

Experience- this could be a concern for those changing careers. Even before the interview, identify those experiences, skills, or competencies that were present in the past jobs and related them to the current position. A few possible suggestions could be your people, analytical, problem solving, or communication skills.

Age- mention age and the assumption is someone is too “old”. However, young people can also face this problem. For them it is a question of maturity in dealing with certain situations. It is important to demonstrate a sense of responsibility and maturity. For those workers over forty, the age concern focuses on flexibility and current knowledge. Most individuals in this category are able to show their interest in learning new things especially in the area of computers. As to flexibility, you want to emphasize your interest in learning new ways to do things. Do not appear to be someone who will say, “this is the way I always did it”. That statement will certainly hurt your chances. Also you may have to be open to different work environments, hours and pay scales, as long as they are “in the ballpark.”

Approaches for handling concerns

Chances are by understanding the concerns; you will be able to defuse them in the course of the interview. However, there are two more formalized methods for handling concerns.

The take away approach

In using this approach, the object is for you to indirectly refer to the concern first. By doing this, you will take the “sting” away from the concern. For example, you may be a ketchup salesperson interviewing for a job as a mustard salesperson. The concern may be no experience in the mustard industry.

However, you are aware of the transferable skills you possess that could be used to promote mustard. In using the take away approach you might say, “My experience in ketchup sales helped me to learn about promoting, displaying, and pricing a product in the food industry. I also managed personnel and assisted them in setting their sales goals, which I know is very valuable in any industry”.

As stated, you acknowledged being in ketchup sales. However, you were able to show how your experience can be applied in the mustard industry thereby weakening the employer’s concern.

The three-step approach

In this approach an employer has an actual concern. The following formula is offered to assist in that situation.

Step 1. Acknowledge the concern but do not give it validity. You might say, “ *I understand your concern*” or “ *I thought that might come up*”.

Step 2. Discuss your perception of what the position requires. For instance, “ *I understand you are looking for someone with...*”

Step 3. Qualify yourself. This may be through a transferable skill, “*and in my experience I have.....*” then proceed to relate your applicable experience.

In the case of our salesperson, the answer to the concern about “no experience in our industry” may be handled as, “*I thought this concern may come up. However, as I understand the position, you are looking for someone with a strong sales and management background able to establish new territories. I have that experience. In fact, I establishes a new territory for our...and so on.*” With either one of these formulas, the main point is to defuse the concern so it does not become an issue for the employer, thereby effecting your employment.

The 25 Most Common Interviewing Mistakes

1. Poor appearance
2. No eye contact
3. Lack of courtesy
4. Lack of career plan
5. Slang language - not speaking in complete sentences
6. Short-term employment
7. Being overbearing
8. Late
9. Sloppy application
10. Lack of enthusiasm
11. Lack of confidence
12. Showing nervous habits
13. Over emphasis on money
14. Poor scholastic record
15. Lack of tact
16. Lack of maturity
17. Lack of knowledge of field of specialization
18. Unwilling to relocate
19. Intolerant prejudices
20. Never heard of the company
21. Wanting too much too soon
22. Being cynical/lazy
23. Limp-fishy handshake
24. Unwilling to start at the bottom
25. Not speaking well of past employer

Interviewing Suggestions

1. Treat everyone you encounter with respect, warmth and courtesy.

2. While waiting in the reception area for your interview, do some positive visualization and project that image when beginning the interview..
3. Know the proper pronunciation of the interviewer's name. It may get you off to a bad start if you cannot pronounce the interviewer's name correctly.
4. Greet the interviewer with a firm handshake. Establish good eye contact.
5. On the way to your interview location, engage the interviewer in small talk, possibly a sincere compliment about the office décor or the friendliness of the staff.
6. Wait until the interviewer sits down and offers you a seat. Lean slightly forward, relax, look alert, show interest, and smile naturally.
7. Be a good listener. Listen for their challenges and the type of individual they are looking for.
8. Learn an interesting fact about the interviewer before you leave, so you can use it in your follow-up letter. Also, ask the interviewer for a business card so you have the correct spelling of the name, title, and address.

Remember, no formula for successful interviewing is better than being prepared. Practice for job interviews with a family member or friend, and BE YOURSELF during any job interview! You have a lot to offer. Keep that attitude in mind and know that a particular company or organization is getting one of a kind with you.



CHAPTER FIVE

SALARY NEGOTIATION STRATEGIES

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SEVEN STEPS FOR NEGOTIATING THE BEST SALARY

You have identified the company. An interview date is set. Now what do you do to help ensure that you negotiate the best salary. Here are seven strategies to negotiating your best deal.

Step 1 - Do Your Homework

Before you go into the interview, know as much as you can about the job and the company you are striving for.

- Is the company expanding or contracting? Is it in a growth industry? You have more negotiating flexibility with an expanding company in a growth industry.
- Is it a large corporation or a small startup company? You probably want to focus your negotiation on salary and position with a large company. Small companies may be more flexible on position, benefits, and hours worked.
- Why is the job open? Having this information may tell you how much the company needs a replacement and what the job conditions are like.

Step 2 - Sell Yourself

You should take a position of quiet, understated confidence. Your career record speaks for itself. Do not get nervous and do not try to finalize the deal too quickly. Deal from a position of strength.

Step 3 - Let the Employer Set the Interview Pace

You should be ready to small talk or get right down to business depending on the cues you get from the interviewer. Be flexible and argue logically. Do not bluff or make promises you can't keep. Be honest, direct and respectful of the employer's position but stand up for yourself.

Step 4 - Define Your Negotiating Limits

Your negotiating position is based upon the following points:

- Prior salary,
- Industry salary range,
- Value of benefits/job conditions,
- Cost of living in job location, and
- Individual strengths.

Before you quote your prior salary make sure you are not comparing apples and oranges. For example, a 40-hour a week job that pays \$48,000, pays all of your medical insurance premiums (valued at \$3,000) and gives you four weeks vacation pays the same amount per hour as a 50 hour a week \$68,000 job with no insurance and no vacation. ***Make sure you negotiate the package not the salary!***

Industry salary ranges can be obtained from professional societies, industry contacts, and from the U.S. Department of Labor. You can find a lot of this data on the world wide web (www.salary.com) or at the local public library.

If your current job has better benefits, **do not forget** to factor these "intangibles" into your considerations. If the potential job has better benefits, don't bring it up. Also consider, does the new job have flextime or other advantages such as educational reimbursement, or pay for overtime, a better title, or an opportunity to gain experience, which will ultimately benefit your career. Also, consider the working conditions. No amount of money is worth working in an office where employees are treated like furniture and every day is miserable. Consider stopping someone in the Lady's room and asking about the company culture.

Factor in the cost of living difference between the old and new location. Career magazine has a web site that lets you enter the old and new locations and your current salary and

gives you a rough idea of what you would have to earn to make up for cost of living differences (<http://www.homefair.com/calc/salcalc.html>).

Honestly appraise your job skills versus the market to determine if you are at the top or bottom of the range for your potential job. Also identify how many similarly skilled people are on the market. If you are going for a hard to fill position in a growth industry, you can negotiate for a higher price. Also consider the market value of your current job. In some cases, the market value of what you are doing may be less than what you are currently making. If this is the case, you need to evaluate whether other factors are worth the change.

Step 5 - Stress Your Accomplishments But Understand the Company and its Goals

Employers want to pay a fair wage but do not want to pay more than they have to. Therefore, you need to package your accomplishments to emphasize how they fulfill the employer's needs. Drive home your accomplishments and do not be falsely modest. However, do not expect a company to pay you for a skill that they cannot use.

Step 6 - State Salary Demands Firmly, Tactfully, and Diplomatically

It is usually better to let the employer name the salary range first. Employers who present broad salary ranges are more flexible on salary but often do not know what they are looking for. Employers who present narrow ranges usually know what they want and will not compromise. When negotiating, ask for a salary higher than you want to give room to compromise. If an employer makes a low ball offer, do not make a scene but nicely explain that you are flattered with the offer but disappointed with the salary and make a counteroffer. Be prepared to politely turn a job down if you cannot come to terms. Remember that the employer may come back to you later if you decline in a professional manner and they are not able to fill the position.

Step 7 - Get the Whole Deal in Writing.

Get every aspect of your deal in writing. I have known people who were promised promotions after six months by supervisors who left before the six months were up,

people who were paid bonuses in plummeting company stock options rather than cash, people who were asked to work 50 hour rather than 40 hour per week after they accepted a position, and people who were not reimbursed for moves. If it is important to you, get it in writing.

Benefits to negotiate

Below you will find a list of items to consider when negotiating, which could put money back into your pocket if you are presently paying for them. Choose your items carefully and always negotiate your important items first.

Association Dues	Home Computer
Automobile	Laptop
Automobile Expenses	Life Insurance
Cellular Telephone	Matching Funds Programs
Child Care Expenses	Maternity/Paternity Leave
Commuting Expenses	Outplacement
Compensation Time	Pensions/401K/Profit Sharing
Continued Benefits after Termination	Relocation Expenses
Continuing Education	Sales Commission
Deferred Compensation	Severance Pay
Dental Insurance	Sick Leave
Expense Accounts	Sign-On Bonus
Financial Planning	Stock Options/Equity
Flex Time	Vacations
Health Club Membership	Vision Care

Good people skills

A good negotiator recognizes that they are negotiating what is on the table and therefore in the process, never “personalizes” the negotiations. Instead, they will concentrate on what is presented.

Learn from good negotiators

In our discussion of “good negotiators”, we learned the importance of having a focus, communicating your needs, and using good interpersonal skills. This cannot be emphasized enough. We as job seekers will many times question ourselves when it comes to negotiations. This is especially true in the area of salary negotiation. We are afraid we will “blow the interview” by negotiating. We need to appreciate the fact that we can negotiate on salary and it is perfectly all right.

Counter offers

Upon receipt of the written offer, you will be requested to sign and return. If you agree with the presented terms of employment, by all means sign and return. However, if not, you should write a counter offer. In the counter offer, be enthusiastic in tone and state areas of agreement first. In other words, say for example you like the benefit package. Then you would state that you would concur with the benefit package as it now stands. Next identify areas where you may differ by suggesting a “modification in the offer.” For example if the compensation is lower than expected you would state “I would like to recommend a modification in the compensation package.” End the letter on a positive note such as you look forward to being a part of their organization.

Oral offers

What do you do if it is an oral offer? Your strategy needs to be a little different. Ideally, you want to have some idea what the position pays before you reach this point in the interview. If the information on the position’s salary is not available, you can try various methods to find the salary range for the position. One method is to check the Internet for wage and salary information. Typically, your state bureau of labor statistics will have this information. If not, try the federal government or do a web search. You may also check a local college library or public library for a wage and salary guide. This information can be especially valuable in your negotiations and in mentioning a sum if

you are asked. Another method is to talk to individuals currently in that position and ask them for an average salary.

Mentioning Money

There is an old saying in negotiating pay. “He/she who mentions money first...loses.” In other words, if you mention an amount first, you will give yourself a ceiling. The employer does not have to go higher but can go lower. On the other hand, if the employer mentions a sum first; they have given themselves a floor. They will not go lower, but they can go higher.

The Salary Game

This is where the gamesmanship of negotiations comes into play. You are trying to learn what the employer salary range is so you can negotiate. Sometimes the employer may ask for a salary history, which provides the employer with an idea of your range. In that case, you need to respond to the request. However, if no mention of salary has been made to this point, you could try to glean that information from the employer. No doubt, at some point the employer will ask you how much money you are asking for. It now becomes a matter of who can get the information first.

Discovering the Salary Range

Below are some techniques for discovering the employer’s salary range and answering the question, “How much do you want?” Your best response is to find out what the range is. Here are some techniques to get that question answered.

1. *Have the employer state the responsibilities of the job.* As they state the duties and responsibilities of the position, ask them “What is the range for that position?”
2. *You state the responsibilities of the position.* As you are stating what you perceive the duties to be, you interject the question, “what would your range be for this position?”

3. *A direct approach.* Your answer could be “What is the range?”

Stating A Salary

There are circumstances in the negotiation process where you must give the employer a salary figure. You could approach your answer in a number of ways.

The Highball Method

As you might guess, with this method, your stated salary would be higher than you really anticipate. The reason for using this tactic is to get the employer to raise their offer. If you decide to use this technique, be prepared for some type of resistance on the part of the employer. This resistance may take the form of verbal questioning to complete silence, hoping to “wait you out”. If you sense the interviewer’s resistance is working against your negotiating position, you can “always backpedal” by “assuming” the employer meant the **total** compensation package (benefits, commission, vacation, bonus, etc.).

The Approximate Method

In using this method, your stated salary would be given as an approximate. For instance, if you are thinking about a \$40,000.00 a year salary, you could state this as “low forties”. This may actually raise your offered salary by one to two thousand dollars annually.

Percentage basis

This approach is based on an expected percentage of salary increase. Average your last 3 to 5 raises and use the percentage of increase as your benchmark. For example, if you have averaged a 10% increase over the last five years and you are currently making \$40,000.00, then in this method, you would suggest \$44,000.00.

Stating Hardship

One dilemma you may find yourself in is to be offered a position that you really want but the compensation would create an economic hardship. You may want to state that to the employer or try to find other areas you can negotiate on besides money, which would put more money in your pocket. For example, let's say you figured \$40,000.00 a year to meet all your obligations and you are offered \$37,000.00. You could mention to the employer your wish to accept their offer but you would need an extra \$3,000.00 annually. However, another method would be to examine your own expenditures and determine what you could negotiate. Perhaps, in this case you are spending \$400.00 a month on medical insurance for your family. Your medical insurance could be an item to negotiate. In this particular scenario, if the employer included medical insurance for your family as a benefit, your salary would be \$41,800.00 annually. That is \$37,000 + the \$4,800.00 a year savings in medical insurance.

Avoid Owning the Job

As you are going through the negotiation process, consider what skills, experiences, or competencies you are adding to the position. This will assist you in demonstrating the value you will add to the organization. However, you do want to avoid "owning the job". In other words, you do not want to tell yourself "I have to have that job", thinking it is the one and only job available. This will certainly undermine your negotiating. You need to detach yourself from the process and negotiate in an objective manner. Think of yourself as an agent negotiating a contract for a client. Keep your focus in mind and be ready to compromise.

Prepare To Walk

In the process of negotiations, it should be the aim of both parties to provide a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. This may not always be the case. Sometimes an agreement cannot be reached. That is one reason we suggest you prioritize the items to negotiate. Chances are very good you will have to compromise on some of those items. However, there may be times when you will have to decide whether to walk away from the offer. That too can be a part of the negotiating process.

Negotiations Summary

Our intention is to assist you in recognizing the importance of being prepared for negotiating. Give yourself permission to negotiate and have a focus; communicate well using good people skills to present your offer. Remember you are negotiating as equals and your objective is to reach a common agreement. This agreement would be a win-win situation for you and the employer.

BUDGET PLANNING

During your career transition, one of the biggest concerns will be your financial stability. Of course this varies with each individual situation; however, a loss of income will have an effect on your financial situation to one extent or another. The effect can be quite significant if you are the sole support or a “two income” family. Beside the loss of income, there are other issues to consider. One issue could be the changing dynamic of your relationship with your spouse or support system.

Emotional Concerns

For those individuals going through a career transition, the temptation is to pull away from our families and other support systems. However, it is important during your transition to discuss your concerns both emotionally and financially. Many times the pay we earn provides a sense of power in our lives as well as a sense of contributing to the family’s welfare. When we are not able to contribute, they may have a sense of loss and a questioning of our self-esteem. Sharing your concerns with a spouse or support system will help them understand your anxieties and feelings. It is also best to discuss your feelings and emotional state before you get into the “hard facts” of working on a budget.

Teamwork

As you begin to analyze your financial plan during your transition, discuss your budget priorities with your spouse or support system. There can be a temptation in some relationships for the dynamics to change due to the couple’s employment status. However, it is very important to your relationship to approach your budgeting as a team.

Calculating Expenses

To assist you in developing a negotiating focus, we enclosed this sheet to itemize expenses. You may begin by classifying items into essential and non-essential categories. For those items that are monthly expenses, utilities for example, try averaging the last three months to get an idea of your payment.

	MONTHLY EXPENSES			
<u>Expenses</u>	<u>Projected Cost</u>		<u>Actual</u>	
Mortgage / Rent				
Car Payment				
Car Insurance				
Gasoline				
Utilities				
Telephone				
Internet Access				
Taxes				
School Expenses				
Food				
Life Insurance Premiums				
Health Insurance Premiums				
Bank Credit Cards				
Retail Credit Cards				
Membership Dues				
Subscriptions / Publications				
Related Job Search Expenses				
Clothing / Accessories				
Dry Cleaning				
Church / Synagogue Offerings				
Miscellaneous				

Final note: Do not be afraid to negotiate salary with a future employer. Almost every employer understands that potential employees may have a different view of what salary is appropriate for a given position. Before beginning the negotiation process, be sure to do your homework, a good place to start is www.salary.com, and investigate what the salary range is for comparable positions, and be prepared to tell them why you think that you should receive a certain salary level, etc.).

CLOSING

A successful job search is a matter of attitude. A positive attitude is the cause of a successful job search, not the result. Let's face it, if you have a negative attitude about yourself and your abilities, your job prospects, the companies you apply to work for, and life in general, the less likely you are to be successful in the job market. Employers want people who believe in themselves and their skills. If you are enthusiastic about yourself and have a positive attitude, this will play greatly into how fast you will succeed at landing that next job.

Although maintaining a positive attitude is vital to a successful job search, there will be times when you get discouraged. Expect it and know that it is a normal part of the process. How does one maintain positive and upbeat while job-hunting in a bad economy? Print out these pages and review the following tips frequently to keep yourself in the right frame of mind:

- **Feel good about yourself.** This is essential in order to have a positive attitude, and all the points that follow are ways of helping you feel enthusiastic and good about yourself.
- **Always speak in a positive light about yourself and your abilities.** How you feel about your skills, abilities, and achievements will reflect in your answers to job interview questions. Know what your key strengths are and speak confidently about them.
- **Accept that you are the master of your own fate!** Accept responsibility for your life and your job search. It is not up to your friend, neighbor, former boss, or relative to find you a job. Although it certainly helps to network, the bottom line is that you are the one who will make or break your job search campaign.

- **The past is gone, so let go of regrets.** Don't keep blaming yourself and rehashing past mistakes. Learn from the past and move on. That was then and this is now.
- **Don't worry about what's to come.** While you don't want to live in the past, you also don't want to fret about what is to come. Worrying is a bad habit, and you can change the habit if you really try. I once read, "The greatest weapon against stress is our ability to choose one thought over another." This is a powerful principle to apply.
- **Pat yourself on the back!** The job search is no time to be humble. Read every complimentary thing about yourself that you can find. Letters of commendation, prior awards or recognitions, performance appraisals, or any other positive recognitions you have are great ways to remind yourself of your unique abilities. Keep these handy and read them whenever you need a boost.
- **Begin each day with a bright disposition.** The start of your day will set the tempo for everything that follows. Do something every morning to put you in the right frame of mind, whether that is taking a walk, listening to some upbeat music, meditating, or just relaxing with a good cup of coffee.
- **Get physical!** We've all heard the saying, "healthy body, healthy mind." Keeping yourself healthy and fit will boost your energy level and make it easier to maintain a positive mental attitude. Be sure to exercise regularly, eat a well-balanced diet, and get adequate sleep.
- **Create a game plan and stick with it.** Knowing what you are supposed to do each day can keep you from feeling lost or bored. Create a schedule and abide by it as closely as possible to keep yourself focused in the job hunt.

- **Pay attention to your appearance.** Of course nobody will expect someone to wear a tie or suit, or Sunday's best every day during your job search campaign, but you certainly don't want to dress too casually as well. Be sure to keep your workspace and living area neat and tidy as well. Lying around like a couch potato with pizza boxes strewn about may be relaxing, but it won't help you set a positive framework for your job search.
- **Utilize a team approach to finding a job.** Even if the team consists of two people, it's always helpful to have a buddy to share ideas with and review your progress on a regular basis.
- **Join a professional association.** If you are looking for a job in a certain profession, joining an association can be a great way to keep up-to-date on developments and trends. It will also help to build your network of contacts by putting you in touch with people who have interests similar to yours.
- **Keep growing and learning.** Continue to develop your skills and knowledge while you are looking for work. This also looks great on a resume as well. Do this by taking a class, attending conferences, workshops and seminars, subscribing to trade magazines, or doing volunteer work that uses the skills and knowledge you want to use in your next job.
- **Don't take rejections too personally.** Very few people ever land the first job they apply for, or are interviewed for. Your attitude really depends on how you look at things. You can see a job rejection as a personal attack on your abilities or character, or you can see it as an opportunity to grow and learn more about yourself. Remember, the choice is yours!
- **Attitude is contagious.** Surround yourself with supportive, positive people.

- **Reward yourself.** Make sure you take time out to relax after a day of job hunting. Go to a movie, rent a video, read a book, take a long walk, or do something that you find relaxing and enjoyable and this will take your mind off of job hunting. After all, you're working hard and you deserve it!

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