

CAREER CONTINUATION OUTPLACEMENT MANUAL

The **Career Continuation Outplacement Manual** has been designed to assist you in a successful career search once you have transitioned out of a company.

In this manual, you will learn the objectives of your job search process through self-analysis and self-assessment. In the self-assessment phase, you will be asked to complete exercises that focus on what you have done and what you would like to accomplish. This will assist you in your job search by identifying the skills and experiences you can offer to an employer; providing basic building blocks for résumé and letter preparation; and preparing you for successful interviewing.

The **Career Continuation Outplacement Manual** contains the following sample forms to reference during your career search: *Education History, Employment History, Other Accomplishments, Résumé Template, Telephone Call Worksheet, Networking Contacts, Sample Résumés, and Sample Cover Letters.*

We wish you success!

Paychex, Inc.

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MANAGING CAREER CHANGES

Statistics show individuals will probably work for eight to 10 different companies during their career. This means most people are in the “change” mode every three or four years.

In some people, change can instill a feeling of doubt and cynicism, challenging their faith in the future. Alternatively, change can give you a fresh start, a rush of adrenaline, and a new beginning.

Managing change takes work. Your first step will likely be the toughest. Take control of your own destiny and be energized to accept change. Building a satisfying career requires your commitment to being positive and taking control.

You must also accept that the emotions you are feeling are normal and real. Loss of employment can stir a host of feelings from disbelief, shock, betrayal, frustration, denial, anger, and even depression. A person who normally carries a positive attitude may even start to feel isolated and disengaged. Remember, you are not alone. Chances are that many of your friends, coworkers, neighbors, and relatives have experienced a job loss at some point in their lives. Talk about your feelings with a friend, relative, or support group. If your company had an Employee Assistance Program (EAP), you may be eligible for counseling through an EAP referral. Realize that the final emotion associated with loss is ACCEPTANCE.

Start by focusing on what you can control - a commitment to making a positive change. You have heard Alexander Graham Bell’s adage, “When one door closes, another door opens.” Embrace your future and open new doors. Look for new beginnings, establish a new attitude, develop new competencies, and build new relationships. Make plans for your future!

Steps to Success

The following seven guidelines will help you successfully manage your transition from one career to another.

1. **Let go of the past.** Acknowledge your feelings regarding your job loss, but understand that being positive and proactive are necessary to move on.
2. **Take responsibility.** The circumstances behind your job loss no longer matter. It is time for you to take charge and change the situation.
3. **Be positive.** Your emotional outlook affects your success. Focus on new possibilities.
4. **Get organized.** Strategize and plan. Use this guide as a resource to assist you in identifying the steps necessary in a job search or career change.
5. **Be passionate.** Believe in yourself. Invest in yourself and push for change.
6. **Be self-disciplined.** Your new job is to find a new job. Plan and organize your day. Follow your plan and work a full day (for example, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.).
7. **Use every resource.** Research indicates more successful job search results when multiple resources are utilized (for example, newspapers, Internet, library, employment agencies, networking, college placement offices, etc.).

The key is to manage your attitude and yourself. The best self management tool may be a mirror. Realize that “change” is constant and that this can be an exciting opportunity if you take control. Believe in yourself and never underestimate the power of desire and motivation.

Career Self-Assessment

Education History

Use the table below to record key facts pertaining to schools attended, years completed, dates attended, degree(s) or certificate(s) received, and subjects you enjoyed. Indicate any additional training such as apprenticeships, military, or on-the-job training.

	Years Completed	Dates Attended	Degree(s) or Certificate(s) Received	Subjects You Enjoyed
Elementary	1 2 3 4 5 6			
High School	7 8 9 10 11 12			
College				
Graduate School				
Trade School				
Apprentice				
Military				
Company Training				
Other				

Notable Educational Accomplishments

Create statements regarding your educational accomplishments. Statements should be measurable (include numbers or percents). Use action verbs to describe what, when, and where.

Notable Educational Accomplishments
<p>Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Received BA in Business in four years while working 20 hours a week as a telemarketing representative.• Maintained 3.5 or higher GPA during all semesters in college.

Employment History

Use the table below to list your previous work experience. For each position held include dates of employment, position(s)/job duties, rate of pay, and favorite and least favorite aspects of the job.

Employer	Dates of Employment	Position(s)/Job Duties	Rate of Pay	Favorite and Least Favorite Aspects of Job

Notable Work-Related Accomplishments

List any notable work-related accomplishments. Accomplishments should be measurable. Use action verbs to describe what, when, and where.

Notable Work-Related Accomplishments
<p>Example</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developed an in-house training program for customer service center to provide on-the-job training for new representatives.

Activities

Record outside activities, including sports, hobbies, community service, and accomplishments associated with each activity. Accomplishments should be measurable. Use action verbs to describe what, when, and where.

Outside Activities (sports/hobbies/community involvement)	Accomplishment
<p>Example</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Soccer	<p>Awarded MVP of college soccer team for two consecutive years (1989 – 1990).</p>

Reviewing Your Accomplishments

Now that you have reviewed your accomplishments in education, employment, and activities, select six of your greatest accomplishments.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

Develop one of your accomplishments further to determine how you achieved success. This template can be used to do the same exercise for your other accomplishments.

Accomplishment _____

What was the situation?

What did you set out to do?

What were the difficulties?

What did you do to make a difference?

What were the results?

What were the qualities or abilities demonstrated?

Career Planning Tips

Now that you have identified your past experiences and accomplishments, ask yourself, “What do I want to do? What type of job do I want?” Answering these questions and following the career planning tips below will help create a career plan that may aid you in your job search.

Identify your interests. Develop an understanding of yourself along with your values, interests, aptitudes, abilities, personal traits, and desired lifestyle. Be aware of the interrelationship between these traits and your chosen occupation.

Identify your skills. Job hunting requires you to start at “square one” by identifying your skills, abilities, and knowledge to assist you in choosing a career path.

Match your interests to career-related skills. Making a successful career choice requires you to match your interests with your skills. There are a variety of tests that can assist you in determining your strengths and matching them to career-building skills (for example, Strong Campbell Interest Inventory or MBTI Personality Profile). Consult your local college placement office, your local library, or independent career consultants for further information.

Identify a career direction. Career planning is a lifelong process that requires a continuous effort to meet changing employment conditions.

Research occupations and maximize your resources. Find out more about the nature of the jobs that interest you, such as duties and responsibilities, salary range, educational requirements, and opportunities for advancement. The U.S. Department of Labor/Bureau of Labor Statistics’ *Occupational Outlook Handbook* and *Career Guide to Industries* are good reference tools to get you started. The *Occupational Outlook Handbook* is a nationally recognized source of career information that provides valuable assistance to individuals searching for new careers. Both publications are available online at www.bls.gov. College placement offices, local libraries, and independent career consultants are also good resources.

Think outside the box. A “hot” career today will not always be a hot career tomorrow. Do not limit yourself. Let your research carry you into unexpected and unanticipated areas.

Talk to people whose careers interest you. Find individuals who hold positions that interest you. Schedule time to meet with them and learn more about their careers, job duties, required skills, work hours, etc.

Determine what skills an employer wants. Find out what skills employers are looking for. Today, technology changes on a daily basis.

Learn new skills. If you do not have the skills that employers are looking for, make sure you pursue the proper training. Explore your options at local colleges, libraries, high schools, vocational schools, community libraries, and local government agencies.

Gain practical experience. Evaluate your occupational choices and determine where you have skill gaps. Gain practical experience through internships, summer employment, volunteer work, and part-time jobs.

Develop a career portfolio. Maintain an up-to-date résumé, along with current letters of recommendation or references, transcripts, work samples, and other pertinent data.

Target possible employers. Make a list of the companies you would like to work for and who you think will have job openings in your career choice. Contact your local chamber of commerce to gather listings of employers in your area.

Explore the Internet. There are hundreds of sites devoted to helping you find your perfect job.

Network. Talk to friends, parents, teachers, and relatives about your job search. Also, network to develop other job leads.

Market yourself. Think of your job search as a campaign where you are promoting your skills, training, and experience to potential employers. Your campaign includes your résumé, cover letter, networking opportunities, interviewing skills, and the ability to search the hidden job market for opportunities that may not be advertised or posted.

Prepare for the job application process. It is important for you to develop your skills in writing résumés and cover letters, networking, completing employment applications, and interviewing to have a successful job search. Research and practice are key.

Develop a daily plan. Map out what activities you will complete each day of your career search. Once you develop this plan, stick to it. You will find it easier to manage when you have a schedule. Remember, finding a job is your new full-time job. Use discipline and an 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. approach.

Be realistic. Do not expect a glamorous career and big money immediately.

Recordkeeping

Plan to keep detailed records of contacts, interviews, ads answered, phone calls, meetings, and copies of letters sent and received. As your contacts begin to develop, you should know exactly where you stand in each specific situation, what needs to be done, and when to follow-up.

The following are two methods of organization:

- Set-up a loose-leaf binder with a section for each source which includes all pertinent information (for example, personnel agency name, phone number, address, e-mail address, Web site, contact name, leads generated by company name, date interviewed, name of interviewers, and results).

In addition, you may want to keep a separate section on interviews by company name, date, and status, as a quick reference point.

- Start an index card system of selected contacts. Use one card for each person. The face of the card should contain key business data (for example, name of contact, title, company name, address, phone number, e-mail address, Web site, secretary, and referral source). On the reverse side, you can put relevant personal data such as: spouse, children, interests, schools, associations, and home telephone number.

Good recordkeeping allows you to keep things in order and help you gain control of time, your most valuable commodity. Accurate records will also help you to contact everyone who assisted in your job search.

The following charts may be used to help organize your records.

Employment Agency Checklist				
Agency	Contact Name	Contact Date	Interviewed By/Date/ Telephone Number	Referred To/Position/ Company Name

Interview Record			
Company Name and Address	Date	Interviewers	Status

Weekly Schedule		
Day	A.M.	P.M.
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday		

Expenses

Job searchers can deduct most out-of-pocket expenses associated with job hunting provided they are searching for a job in their current trade, business, or occupation, but **not** if they are planning to switch fields. Expenses are deductible whether or not a job is obtained.

Normal travel and entertainment expenses are deductible as long as a job is seriously being sought. These include travel expenses to and from interviews, telephone calls, meals, business magazines, newspapers, photocopies, faxes, postage, and stationary.

Courses are only deductible if they help maintain or improve skills needed in the job searchers present trade or business.

Keeping track of expenses is essential in the event of an Internal Revenue Service (IRS) audit. Retain receipts for any items or services purchased. If entertainment expenses exceed \$25.00, receipts must be retained; items for less than that amount must be accompanied by a diary entry made at the time of the event. In addition to costs, entertainment expenses listed in diaries must contain **who** you were with, **what** the purpose was, **where** the meeting took place, and **when** it was held.

If you paid an employment agency a fee, the fee would be deductible, provided you are employed in the same trade or business. The same holds true for legal services in connection with employment contracts, as well as accounting services for tax advice and assistance in negotiating with a prospective employer.

It is recommended that you consult an accountant, tax attorney, or the IRS directly for further information and guidelines.

State Unemployment Insurance

The State Unemployment Insurance system pays benefits to eligible workers who are unemployed and looking for work. Unemployment payments (compensation) provide an unemployed worker time to find a new job equivalent to the one lost without major financial distress.

Unemployment benefits are provided by state unemployment insurance programs within guidelines established by federal law. Eligibility for unemployment insurance, benefit amounts and the length of time benefits are available are determined by state law.

To apply for unemployment benefits, you will need the following:

- Social Security Number
- Mailing address (including ZIP Code)
- Telephone number
- Names, addresses, and dates of employment of all your past employers for the last two years
- Alien Registration Card if you are not a United States citizen
- A copy of your separation papers (DD Form-214) if you are an ex-service member

Benefit Period

- It generally takes a few weeks after your claim has been filed to receive your first benefit check. Some states, like New York, require a one-week waiting period; therefore, the second week claimed is the first week of payment.
- Once your claim is approved, you should be able to file weekly by phone, e-mail, or mail.

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Purpose of a Résumé

Your résumé is a written statement of who you are, your experiences and accomplishments, and your career objectives. A solid résumé accomplishes the following:

- Organizes your past experience and illustrates how those experiences support your career objectives.
- Describes your background in a positive manner.
- Reminds potential employers of who you are.
- Emphasizes your most marketable skills and abilities by referencing past responsibilities and major accomplishments.

Types of Résumés

Two common types are:

Functional Résumés. A summary of key roles, traits, and/or responsibilities in which you have been involved. This format best serves individuals with employment gaps, significant employment accomplishments, or those pursuing a new career.

Chronological Résumés. A list of your previous work experience in reverse order with the most recent position first. Chronological résumés present information in a clear-cut manner providing prospective employers with a synopsis of your work history.

Key Elements

Below is a summary of the key elements of an effective résumé. Not every résumé will contain all of these elements. The titles of each section may also vary from one résumé to another.

Heading

Identifying information, including your name, address, telephone number(s), and e-mail address should head the first page in a balanced, friendly layout. You may wish to have this information on the right-hand side of the page, making it easily visible to someone flipping through a stack of résumés.

Objective

A statement describing the position you hope to attain along with your greatest strengths.

Summary of qualifications

A highlight of your key skills and abilities that support your objective.

Achievements

Major accomplishments and achievements should be summarized using quantifiable terms. Refer to section one, *Reviewing Your Accomplishments*.

Experience

A summary of your employment history, generally listed in chronological order, beginning with your most recent employer. Identify the position(s), followed by the company name, location by city and state and number of years employed. Provide a brief description of duties performed, emphasizing the strengths noted previously in your résumé (for example, summary and accomplishments).

Education

A listing of your educational background starting with the highest degree obtained first, followed by your major and name of the educational institution. List any additional degrees if applicable. Include high school information only when it is the highest level of education.

Other

This optional section may include additional languages, organizational memberships, certifications, patents, or other personal data that supports your objective. Avoid including information about religious affiliations, political orientation, age, height, weight, marital status, and other personal or controversial subjects.

Résumé Style

Personalize your writing to increase reader interest. Describe yourself in the first person, using a natural tone combined with a clear style.

Utilizing action words is an effective technique for communicating your abilities. The following is a partial list of action words you may consider to describe your responsibilities and accomplishments.

Accomplished	Examined	Performed	Streamlined
Achieved	Expanded	Planned	Strengthened
Administrated	Founded	Presented	Stressed
Analyzed	Generated	Presided	Stretched
Approved	Governed	Processed	Structured
Arranged	Grouped	Produced	Succeeded
Built	Guided	Promoted	Superseded
Catalogued	Harmonized	Proposed	Supervised
Completed	Headed	Provided	Systematized
Conceived	Implemented	Purchased	Terminated
Conducted	Improved	Recommended	Traced
Consolidated	Improvised	Recruited	Tracked
Contracted	Incorporated	Rectified	Traded
Controlled	Increased	Redesigned	Trained
Converted	Indexed	Reduced	Transferred
Coordinated	Innovated	Reorganized	Transformed
Created	Installed	Researched	Translated
Cut	Instituted	Reshaped	Trimmed
Delivered	Introduced	Revised	Tripled
Demonstrated	Invented	Scheduled	Uncovered
Designed	Investigated	Serviced	Unified
Developed	Launched	Simplified	Unraveled
Devised	Led	Sold	Utilized
Directed	Maintained	Solved	Vacated
Distributed	Managed	Sorted	Verified
Doubled	Moderated	Sparked	Widened
Earned	Negotiated	Staffed	Withdrew
Edited	Operated	Started	Won
Eliminated	Organized	Planned	Worked
Established	Originated	Straightened	Wrote

Résumé Template

The following template can be used to outline your résumé.

Name _____

Address _____

Home Telephone _____

Business Telephone _____

Alternate Telephone _____

E-Mail Address _____

Objective _____

Summary of Qualifications (An overview of your career)

Achievements

List 1 to 10 achievements of which you are the most proud, describing them in approximately 25 to 30 words. Note *specific* contributions or achievements.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

Experience

List your previous work experience in chronological order beginning with your most recent position.

Employer	Location	Title	Dates	Description

Education

List your educational background including name of college, degree(s) obtained, major(s), dates attended, and any special achievements, awards, honors, or contributions.

Name of College	Degree(s)	Major(s)	Dates Attended	Achievements/Awards/Honors/Contributions

Additional Training

List all special training courses or seminars attended, including on-the-job training.

Name Of Seminar/Training	Date(s) Attended	Key Learning Objectives

Professional Organizations and Clubs

List professional organizations to which you belong, including membership dates and offices held, if applicable.

Professional Organization/Club	Membership Dates	Offices Held

Résumé Writing Tips

- **Attract the employer's attention.** Focus on highlighting accomplishments that will capture the interest of the employer. Portray yourself in the best possible light. Do not under-emphasize your strengths and experience.
- **First impression.** Generally, employers are more concerned with career accomplishments than education. Most hiring managers only spend about 30 seconds on an initial review of a résumé. Strategically place your greatest accomplishments at the beginning where they will likely be noticed.
- **Be organized and logical.** Present your information in an organized, logical manner to give hiring managers a quick overview of your experience.
- **Be neat and error-free.** Review the final draft for typos and grammatical errors. Use spell-check, but do not rely on that as the only proofing mechanism. Have several people proofread your résumé. Even the smallest error can land your résumé in the "no" pile.
- **Stick with common section headings.** Use common headings to organize the information in your résumé. For example, Objective, Experience, Employment, Work History, Skills, Summary, Summary of Qualifications, Accomplishments, Strengths, Education, Professional Affiliations, Publications, Licenses and Certifications, Honors, Awards, and References.
- **State specific objectives.** Form a solid, clear objective that will help you carry a focused message throughout your résumé. Remember, the objective is a summary of the position you hope to obtain and a highlight of your strengths.
- **Emphasize your skills.** Organize your résumé around the skills you have to offer to an employer.
- **List recent information.** Show your work experience only for the last 10 to 15 years.
- **Quantify your experience.** Use measurable terms to quantify your experience. For example, "Developed three new territories that resulted in a 15% increase in sales."
- **Use key words.** Include specific key words and phrases that concisely describe your skills and experiences. For example, income statement, balance sheet, sales, MS Office, Word, Excel, management, financial management, staffing, quality management, etc.
- **Use action verbs.** Describe your accomplishments and work history using action verbs. Portray yourself as a motivated, self-starter capable of making a contribution.
- **Avoid personal pronouns.** Never use "I" or "Me" in your résumé.
- **Be concise.** Use short, action sentences instead of long, wordy sentences. For example, "Developed and implemented a new ISO 900 Quality Management Program." Your paper résumé should be not more than two pages. Your electronic résumé should not be more than three pages.
- **Avoid jargon.** Communicate in simple terms everyone can understand. Avoid acronyms and jargon.
- **Omit salary information.** Never make reference to salary in your résumé. You could include salary information in a cover letter, if requested.
- **Use caution with personal traits.** Include positive, personal attributes, such as dependable or responsible only if they apply to the position desired. Ask yourself whether you think a hiring manager would consider this to be a valuable trait.
- **Avoid questionable subjects.** Avoid references to race, religion, marital status, age, political party, health, gender preference, or personal views. Also, avoid using humor and clichés.
- **Highlight key points.** Use **bold**, *Italics*, and underlining to ensure key information stands out. For electronic résumés, use CAPITAL LETTERS, "quotation marks", or *asterisks* to emphasize important words or sections.
- **Be honest.** Don't exaggerate your abilities. This may come back to haunt you when your potential employer contacts references or conducts a background check.
- **Be positive.** Remove any negative comments or feelings. Emphasize a positive, can-do attitude.

Sample résumés are available in the Appendix.

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Once you begin your job search you will need a variety of letters, including but not limited to cover letters, thank you letters, job acceptance letters, and reference letters. The **cover letter** is often the most important as it is your initial communication with a prospective employer. This section will provide you with a general overview of the purpose and tips for well-written cover letters. Samples of other letters that may be needed during the job search process are available in the Appendix.

Purpose of Cover Letters

Never send a résumé without a cover letter. Cover letters serve a variety of purposes.

Cover letters allow you to:

- Introduce yourself to someone to whom you have been referred.
- Identify the source of your referral (for example, responding to a job advertisement).
- Explain why you are the best person for the job.

Cover letters may also be used for:

- Contacting recruiters, search firms, and agencies.
- Contacting personal acquaintances for possible referrals.

Cover Letter Writing Tips

Cover letters are your first pitch to a potential employer. Employers are likely to receive hundreds of résumés and cover letters from people applying for the job you are seeking. A good cover letter sets you apart from almost everyone else.

- **Address your letter to the appropriate person.** Call the company to find out the name and title of the person to whom to address your letter. It shows initiative and resourcefulness. You want to send your letter to an individual, not a company. Your goal is to get the letter to the hiring manager.
- **Open with an attention grabber that immediately generates interest.** Create a strong opening on how you can contribute to the organization within the first paragraph.
- **Be organized.** State the purpose of your letter in your opening paragraph. Keep the letter focused. You should cover two important points.
 1. What you can do for the company.
 2. How your skills can meet the company's needs.
- **Learn about the company.** Your letter should reflect your knowledge of the company and indicate you chose this organization to seek employment.
- **Use terms and phrases that are meaningful to the employer.** Customize your letters to the extent possible to meet the needs of the employer. Use the job posting or advertisement to obtain information about the employer's needs.
- **Provide insight into who you are.** Use concrete, specific language to provide the reader with a good sense of who you are and what you have done.
- **Be brief.** Use no more than seven lines per paragraph (five or less is ideal). Vary the sentence length. Keep the cover letter to one page.
- **Call attention to skills and qualifications.** Core skills are those all applicants are expected to possess. These will get you in the door. Additional skills will make you stand out from the competition. Use underlining, **bolding**, or indenting and bullets to highlight your skills and qualifications.

NOTE: Use these sparingly just to make the highlights stand out.

- **Sound confident, not arrogant.** If you meet all the stated qualifications, spell this out in your letter. Accentuate the match between your skills and the employer's needs.
- **End with a request.** The goal of sending your letter and résumé is to get an in-person interview. Ask for an interview at the end of your letter. Be prepared to initiate the follow-up communication and let the employer know you plan to do so.
- **Include a return address.** Include your contact information: street address, city, state, ZIP Code, and telephone number.
- **Proofread for errors and tone.** Your cover letter should be error-free, containing no spelling, typographical, or grammatical mistakes. Use a variety of reference tools to assist you with grammar, spelling, and letter writing. Such errors often cost job applicants the opportunity to interview. Ensure the tone of your letter is friendly, yet professional.
- **Use your own words.** Avoid copying sample letters. Use your own writing style; use samples and templates only to generate new ideas that fit your situation, style, and personality. Your cover letter should be an accurate reflection of you.
- **Send originals.** Cover letters should be professional, original drafts. Do not send hand-written, form, or mass-produced letters.
- **Use professional grade paper.** Imprint your name and address at the top. Either monarch-size (7" X 10") or standard (8½" X 11") is appropriate.
- **Include your résumé.** The purpose of a cover letter is to get your résumé into the hands of the employer and to obtain an interview.
- **Do not enclose a photo.** The employer will see what you look like at the interview.

Other Types of Letters

In addition to cover letters, your job search process will likely require you to write other correspondences to prospective employers and others you contact during the process. The following sample letters are located in the Appendix.

- Follow-up Letter
- Letter of Recommendation
- Networking Letter
- Offer Acceptance Letter
- Offer Rejection Letter
- Referral Letter
- Relocation Letter
- Thank You Letter

TELEPHONE COMMUNICATIONS

Telephone skills are achieved through preparation and practice. During your job search, you may be contacting prospective employers by telephone to gather information and/or to make an initial contact. Telephone contacts can aid you in creating interest with a prospective employer, setting up a meeting, confirming information, or maintaining contact throughout the job search process.

Pre-Call Preparation

A well-prepared telephone call sounds focused, professional, and creates an effective image that generates positive responses. For maximum effect, carefully choose words, phrases, and sentences, when preparing a telephone call.

The first calls may take a long time to prepare. The more calls you make, the sharper your skills become. With better preparation, you are more likely to sound confident and persuasive.

Key Planning Steps

- **List the calls.**
- **Establish the purpose of each call.**
- **Prepare an opening statement.** The first 10 seconds can make or break the call. In this time an image is created, interest is generated, maintained, increased or decreased. In an effective opening statement, you should:
 - ◆ Identify yourself.
 - ◆ Establish rapport.
 - ◆ Generate interest. A direct-approach phone call must create interest for the person who picks up the phone and the person you are calling. The name of a good referral usually creates an immediate interest and a willingness to listen further.
 - ◆ Acknowledge that your contact's time is valuable.
 - ◆ Gain permission (confirm contact has a few minutes).
 - ◆ Clearly state the purpose of the call.
- **Prepare interest-generating comments.** Identify something you have in common, if possible.
- **Prepare questions.** Well-directed questions will enable you to:
 - ◆ Obtain information.
 - ◆ Verify the listener understands your goals.
 - ◆ Obtain a commitment for a future meeting.
- **Prepare closing to confirm and thank.**
 - ◆ Repeat key information and confirm next step.
 - ◆ Thank the contact for their time.

Tips for Cold Calling

This involves calling a potential employer with no introduction and trying to secure an interview. Cold calling is perhaps the most uncomfortable part of a job search. If you cold call, you should:

- **Maintain professionalism.** Never express irritation or anger at the other person, regardless of how they are speaking with you. Treat everyone with respect and courtesy.
- **Speak clearly.** Speak slowly and clearly, focusing on the message you are trying to convey.
- **Watch your tone.** Be careful of inflections that make you sound as though you are talking down to someone.
- **Take notes.** Keep good notes of phone conversations. This will help you write follow-up letters more easily.
- **Ask for names.** Learn the names of individuals you may have to talk to again. This will help personalize future conversations.

Tips for Follow-Up Calls

- Introduce yourself.
- Ask: "Have you had a chance to read my letter?" If no, ask the person if they have a few minutes and summarize the contents of your letter.
- Ask: "Is the purpose of my letter clear?" If no, ask what is not clear and briefly clarify.
- Ask: "Would you have some time to meet with me next week? Fifteen to 20 minutes is all I need." If the answer is no, try to schedule for the following week. If the answer is still no, ask for a few minutes on the phone. Use the time to ask the questions you have prepared for the meeting.
- Before ending the conversation, confirm the next steps to be taken.

Telephone Call Worksheet

The following worksheet can be used to prepare your telephone call.

1. Documents (company research, name and title of contact, updated résumé).

2. Purpose of phone call (for example, I am calling to inquire about the position of file clerk that was advertised in yesterday's newspaper).

3. Name of person who referred you, if applicable.

4. Opening statement (for example, My name is Tony Dow and I am calling to inquire about the position of file clerk that was advertised in yesterday's newspaper. I realize you are probably very busy, but I wanted to know if you have a few minutes? I wanted to share my background with you and see if we could set up a time to meet in person).

5. Interest-creating comments: mutual interests, your background, reasons for wanting to see the individual, etc. (for example, I have five years of related experience and I would like to arrange a time to meet with you to discuss my credentials. I believe I would be an asset to the department and the company. Can we arrange a meeting?).

6. Questions.

7. Confirm information and next steps.

8. Closing. Thank the contact for their time.

SOURCING JOB LEADS

At this point, you should know what kind of job you are looking for and where you want to find a job. Your résumé and your cover letters should be updated and organized. Your next step will be marketing and sourcing job leads.

Employers use many different applicant sources. You need to utilize all sources that are available. To do this you will need to understand each job source and eliminate any preconceived ideas you have developed concerning various job sources.

Networking

Friends, neighbors, former coworkers, clergy, and relatives are the best sources available to you. If you approach these individuals seeking their help and advice, they will almost always be sympathetic and responsive. These contacts should be people you know professionally as well as socially. Do not overlook anyone.

Develop your list of contacts. Possible contacts include:

- Former employers
- Business associates
- Former coworkers
- Friends and relatives
- Religious and political leaders
- Alumni and fraternity or sorority members
- Social and community contacts
- Former teachers

Do not be hesitant or embarrassed. Contact everyone on your list and let them know your situation. Chances are they have been through a similar employment situation. Although each contact may not have something specific to offer, they may give you valuable leads. Do not let it stop with just leads; ask if they can make a contact for you, or get permission to use their name in your next contact. Using a name will open more doors for you because it constitutes an endorsement of you. This should help you in arranging networking interviews.

Contacts Worksheet

Use the following worksheet to identify possible networking sources.

Former Employers	Friends
1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____
Salespeople	Lawyers/Accountants
1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____
Insurance/Real Estate	Club Members
1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____
Past Associates	Professional Associations
1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____
Neighbors	Business Owners
1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____
Consultants	Bankers
1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____

College Associates	Doctors/Dentists
1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____
Clergy	Civic Leaders/Politicians
1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____
Common Interest Associates	Met While Traveling
1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____
Teachers	Relatives
1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____
Others	Others
1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____ 6. _____ 7. _____ 8. _____ 9. _____ 10. _____	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____ 6. _____ 7. _____ 8. _____ 9. _____ 10. _____

Searching Potential Employers

Your next job action is to directly contact companies, institutions, and organizations where you would like to work. Many people making job transitions give this little thought and only consider a listing of the Fortune 500 companies, and indiscriminately mail résumés.

Just as you have taken the time to identify what skills you enjoy using and where you would like to use them, you need to identify for whom you would most enjoy working and what companies and industries can use someone with your skills.

The following resources may assist you in searching companies:

Advertisements

- Subscribe to newspapers such as the Sunday *New York Times* (Business and Finance and Classified sections), the *Wall Street Journal* (Tuesday's edition), the *National Business Employment Weekly*, and any other newspapers in your area. Read all appropriate journals and trade publications for your industry and functional area.
- Eliminate your misconceptions about classified advertisements. Answer any job ad that is of interest. Blind ads (those that do not identify the employer) pose no problems now that you are looking for a job.
- Read the ad several times. Tailor your response to meet the company's identified needs.
- Submit your résumé and cover letter immediately after the ad appears. You may want to send a second copy four to five days later so that your name and résumé is fresh in the recruiter or hiring manager's mind.
- Avoid including your salary requirements and history even if requested. Instead, suggest a meeting to discuss your qualifications and how they fit with the position.
- If the advertisement identifies an employer, indicate you will make a follow up call on a specific day, at a specific time to arrange an appointment.
- If you respond to a blind ad, follow up 4 to 5 days later with another copy of your résumé and cover letter.
- If you can identify the hiring manager, write to that manager in addition to answering the ad. Refer to the ad, and indicate that you have already responded, but that you are taking this opportunity to further introduce yourself.
- Always include a cover letter.

A twist on the classified ad is to publish your own **Position Wanted Ad**. Typically these are placed in trade publications, newspapers, or industry-specific magazines. The ad publicizes your unique skill set. For example: *Biologist with outstanding skills in technical sales has proven record for getting results, experienced in recruiting and training technical salespeople, budgeting, forecasting, etc. For detailed résumé contact:_____.*

These ads may cost you a few dollars, but can generate some interesting leads.

Employment agencies and executive search firms

Employment agencies and executive search firms sometimes referred to as "third parties" are often the most misunderstood of all sources. However, third party agencies can be extremely useful once understood and used correctly. There are good agencies/firms and there are bad agencies/firms. The good agencies are those who specialize in certain disciplines; the not-so-good are "paper mills" (simply farming out résumés to any and all employers regardless of the fit). If you have completed all of the steps in the job hunting process to this point, you will be able to avoid most of the problems that arise when dealing with agencies and search firms.

An **employment agency** does not receive payment until they place you in a position. They work on a contingency basis. The hiring company pays their fee in almost all instances. By law, in most states, you will be asked to sign a contract which states you will pay the fee if the company does not. ***Make it clear that you will only accept "fee paid" positions.***

Since employment agencies work on a contingency fee, they will work as hard as they see fit based on what they might get for their efforts. To get them working for you, get an introduction (use your networking skills) to open the door. Make them want to work for you by showing them you are a professional with highly marketable skills and experiences.

A good agency is characterized by:

- Courteous treatment throughout all phases of your association with them.
- An in-person interview that uncovers your abilities, experiences, skills, and desires. This interview should provide the agent with information to assist in finding you a job.
- Honest answers to your questions.
- In-depth knowledge of your particular discipline.
- A lack of pressure getting you to accept interviews or jobs.
- Offer good, open, honest feedback that helps you to improve your job hunting skills.

Agencies are required by federal law to ensure that applicants are United States citizens and are authorized to work in the United States. They may request completion of the *Employment Eligibility Verification, Form I-9*.

Executive search firms

These firms are retained by companies and get paid for their time spent on specific assignments. They do not work on a contingency basis. Because they work on assignment, they are selective with which candidates they spend their time.

Odds are slim that the timing is right for your background to fit into a specific search currently underway. However, it never hurts to network and provide the firm with your résumé.

Career development offices and college placement offices

All colleges today have a career development/career placement office. They function as a clearinghouse for companies looking to fill positions. Most colleges will hold job fairs each semester. If you are an alumnus/alumna, you may have access to their job database. You may also consider contacting a local community college and/or a local university.

Libraries

Do not rule out your local library. Many libraries have extensive collections of newspapers, job search books, and local/national company directories. Some libraries have government grants that allow them to run résumé preparation and job searching classes. In addition, they have free computers with Internet access.

Technical society placement services

Technical society placement services allow members to put their résumés into a national database for review by companies. Many of these societies have local chapters where you can attend meetings and educational seminars, network, and hear about open positions with member companies.

Internet job searches

Many leading career Web sites offer search agents that constantly monitor listings and notify you through e-mail when a position is available that matches your qualifications. Some sites provide agents that can check for listings at other sites across the Web. All of these services let you post your résumé (almost always for free) and give you the option to let companies view it.

Online career sites have a wealth of interactive tools. For example, a résumé builder provides a step-by-step process that results in a properly formatted document. Employers find potential candidates based on key words contained in each résumé. Many sites also offer chat groups, discussion groups, career articles, cover letters and résumé examples, relocation guides, salary calculators, and free city and school reports. Many local governments, colleges and universities post job listings on their Web sites.

The following are examples of Internet recruiting sites to get you started.

- Career Builder www.careerbuilder.com
- HOTJOBS www.hotjobs.com
- Spherion www.spherion.com/careers
- Monster www.monster.com
- America's Job Bank www.ajb.org
- Society for Human Resource Management www.shrm.org
- Technical Jobs www.dice.com
- National Job Network www.nationjob.com
- U.S. Department of Labor/Bureau of Labor Statistics www.bls.gov

Information available on this Web site includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- ◆ Fastest growing occupations/industries
- ◆ Salaries
- ◆ Occupational Outlook Guide
- ◆ Wage projections
- ◆ Self-Assessment and Career Exploration Tools and links

State Department of Labor

Your state Department of Labor (DOL) is another good place to search. Many states' DOL offices provide the following resources:

- DOL job bank site
- Post résumé on DOL job bank
- Recent articles about companies hiring
- Search engine for the name and address of employers by occupation
- Information on civil service examinations and applications for positions
- Local job fairs
- Job search guide
- Apprenticeship opportunities
- Career service locations
- Career planning seminars
- Veterans services
- Ex-offender re-entry services
- Labor market information

Additional Resources

- Local chamber of commerce
- Business section of local newspaper
- Cable TV news and/or employment shows
- Local industrial organizations
- Local government Web sites

Contacting Potential Employers

There are three ways to contact a possible employer. Listed below are the contact methods in order of their effectiveness.

- **Referral.** Ask a personal contact that works for that company or who knows someone in that company to help arrange an interview for you.
- **Direct letter/résumé to hiring manager.** Send a cover letter and résumé directly to the hiring manager or individual with the authority to hire. For example, if you want a sales position, send your résumé to the Vice-President of Sales. Know the name and official job title of this individual prior to sending the letter.
- **Direct letter/résumé to human resources.** Send a cover letter and résumé to the Human Resources department. This is best used in conjunction with the first two methods. The Human Resources department usually has a list of all the open positions within the company and there is a chance that you might be qualified for several positions.

PLANNING REFERENCES

Establishing references is a critical step in the job hunting process. Reference checks are made to assure you told the truth about your employment history, learn about your work ethic and how you got along with others, and ascertain any additional (positive or negative) information about your work history.

Preparing a Reference List

In order to be prepared to provide potential employers with a list of references, complete the following steps:

- **Develop a reference list.** Decide who your references will be. Have at least five references. References should be people who know your job capabilities and have influential backgrounds themselves. Always include your former manager as a reference, regardless of the circumstances. If applicable, include a contact in your previous employer's Human Resources department, since most employers will want to verify salary and employment dates.
- **Obtain permission.** Ask each individual if they would be willing to serve as a reference.
- **Verify information.** Ensure your references know, and will communicate the reasons why you left your previous employment.

Tips for Providing References

- **Do not list references on your résumé.** Avoid any premature contact between your references and potential employer until there is a mutual interest. Once you are in the interview situation, you will be asked for references. Supply references by name, occupation, and business telephone number.
- **Notify individuals after using them as a reference.** Once you have provided reference information to a prospective employer, notify each reference. Tell your reference the company that is interested in you, the specific position, and the parts of your background most appealing to the potential employer. This will ensure that when and if the reference is called, they will be prepared with specific answers.
- **Follow up and thank them.** Let your references know when you have found a job and thank them for their help.

Reference List Worksheet

Use the following worksheet to list all references.

Reference List				
List and contact at least five references, excluding relatives. Ideally this includes your previous managers and supervisors, etc.				
Name	Address	Telephone Number	Occupation	Years Known

Personal Appearance

Your appearance is the first thing a prospective employer will notice about you regardless of your talents. People who are well-dressed and well-groomed are often found to be better liked, thought to be more intelligent, successful, competent, and earn more money than their counterparts who are not as concerned with appearance.

Human resource professionals admit they use visual clues to narrow a group of applicants. Studies show a decision **not** to hire an applicant is made within the first two minutes of an interview. The primary reason: unsuitable appearance.

Maintaining a professional appearance at all times is critical during your job search. You never know who you may meet and where. Dress for your audience. Acceptable attire for an interview with a manufacturing facility may not be suitable for a bank or insurance company. Neat, professional, properly fitting clothing makes a person feel good and enhances overall appearance.

General Guidelines for Men

When dressing for an interview, the following guidelines should be considered:

- Opt for a conservatively tailored, well-made suit. Always have the suit altered by a tailor.
- White or blue shirts are color preferences.
- Button-down and straight-collars are acceptable.
- Ties should have conservative prints and be of good quality. Bolo or western ties are not acceptable in most interview settings.
- Shoes and belts should match in color. Shoes should be polished.
- Socks should be high enough so that your legs do not show when you sit down.
- Jewelry should be simple and limited to a wedding band or signet ring on your hands.
- Grooming should be impeccable. The clean-shaven look is the best, however, a neat mustache or beard is also acceptable.
- Your hairstyle should be neat and up-to-date.
- Cologne, after shave or a fragrance should be avoided as it may be offensive or distracting to an interviewer.
- Remove any visible body-piercing prior to an interview.
- Tattoos should be covered when possible.

General Guidelines for Women

When dressing for an interview, the following guidelines should be considered:

- Wear a conservative, quality suit in a style that is complimentary to your figure. Neutral colors such as brown, navy, gray, or black are best.
- Blouses can be worn in almost any color that is flattering to your skin tone. Silk, cotton, and polyester are good fabric choices.
- Accessories are important and can upgrade an outfit. Choose leather pumps (maximum two to three inch heels) in classic styles for interviewing.

- Invest in a good handbag and/or briefcase; these are status items that most people tend to notice. Do not carry both a handbag and a briefcase to an interview. It looks clumsy and requires too much juggling.
- Jewelry should be simple. Appropriate jewelry could include simple earrings (no dangles), a string of pearls, a chain, a watch, and no more than two rings.
- A light fragrance can be a positive factor in an interviewing situation. Avoid heavy scents.
- Hosiery colors should be limited to neutral tones. Always carry an extra pair.
- Hair should be neatly styled. If makeup is worn, it should be carefully applied for a natural look.
- Visible body piercings, other than earrings, should be removed prior to an interview.
- Tattoos should be covered when possible.

General Guidelines for Men and Women

When dressing for an interview, the following guidelines should be considered:

- Make sure your coat is clean and pressed.
- Your suit should be freshly pressed.
- Your shoes should be polished.
- Avoid wearing a brand new suit or clothes to an interview. Your interviewing outfit needs to be comfortable.
- Have an umbrella that is in good condition.
- Carry a needle and thread in your briefcase in case a button falls off.

Body Language

Body language can tell an interviewer a lot about you. The interviewing process becomes more complex because personal appearance (clothes, physical attributes, personal hygiene), the way an applicant shakes hands, enters a room, or introduces themselves, etc. may cause the interviewer to pre-judge the applicant's qualifications. The most important aspects of body language to be aware of during an employment interview include your **entrance**, **handshake**, and **eye contact**.

When it comes to body language during an interview, keep the following in mind:

- **Entrance.** When entering someone's office, hold your head up, make good eye contact, and smile.
- **Handshake.** Always initiate the handshake; it will make you appear more in control.
- **Eye Contact.** The American culture puts a lot of emphasis on eye contact. During an employment interview, it is important to look at the person with whom you are speaking 80 percent of the time. Nodding is another gesture of support and agreement that is a complement to good eye contact.

Practice before your interview; look at your body language in the mirror. Analyze your strengths and weaknesses and determine what you can improve.

The interview is the **most important** activity in your search for a position. Everything you have done up to this point in the job search process has been designed to prepare you for a job interview. Your ability to do well in a job interview has a direct impact on your chances of getting hired for the position you want.

An interview is a conversation with a purpose. For the hiring manager, the purpose is to find the most qualified candidate for a position. For the applicant, the purpose is to convince the hiring manager that they are the best person for the job.

Job interviews are competitive. Most likely, the candidate that interviews the best will get the job. Effective interviewing is a learned skill; once acquired you can use this skill to successfully compete for open positions.

Types of Interviews

Telephone screens

Telephone screens are commonly used to narrow the field of applicants. Often, a member of the Human Resources department will do the screening. The individual conducting the telephone screen is generally comparing the applicant to a pre-determined set of job qualifications. They may or may not have functional knowledge to make an assessment of your qualifications. Your task during a telephone screen interview is to learn as much as you can about the job and show how you meet the qualifications. Ask questions about the position and the expectations of the person to whom you would report. Often the interviewer will have useful insights that will help you in the next interview. Your goal is to get to an in-person interview.

In-person interviews

Candidates who successfully pass the telephone screen interview are called for an in-person interview. During the interview, provide concise, illustrative answers and examples to questions asked. Illustrate your relevant strengths and capabilities by citing accomplishments. Provide examples of how you achieved these accomplishments. Confirm your confidence in your ability to do the job.

Follow-up interviews

Many companies will hold second or follow-up interviews with their top candidates. If you are invited back to meet with others, you have clearly generated an interest. Your goal is to confirm an already good impression or to resolve concerns that may be present, but not expressed.

You may find that the interviewer has specific concerns about your career history, salary, potential conflicts, etc. Offer reassurances that you have learned from past mistakes; your results speak for themselves.

Tips for Successful Interviews

Know the job. Applicants who are not educated about the position for which they are applying, or the company to which they are applying, are often over-looked in the selection process. It is important for the interviewee to be familiar with the job duties and responsibilities, reporting relationships, and other key organizational information. Interviewers can detect an applicant's company knowledge level within minutes. If lack of company knowledge is uncovered, the applicant is put on the defensive, having revealed they did not care enough about the job to investigate it further.

Applicants can obtain this valuable information prior to an interview from a variety of sources including: job descriptions, incumbents, people in similar positions, representatives in the Human Resources department (during the initial screening), the company Web site, etc.

Know the interviewer. Applicants should find out who will conduct the interview. Initially, it may be someone from the Human Resources department. While the Human Resources department does not make the final hiring decision, they are often relied upon for input into the decision. Whenever possible, obtain the name and job title of the person who will be conducting your interview. Find out something about their work background, and current role in the company. This knowledge provides the applicant the advantage of being able to talk about experiences and topics that are of interest to the interviewer.

Know the hiring criteria for the position. Criteria can be objective and subjective. Examples of **objective** criteria include technical skills, years of experience, educational background, and work history. **Subjective** criteria include personal manner, poise, maturity, self-motivation, etc. Prior to the interview learn the hiring criteria and be prepared to present your skills, abilities, and interests in the best possible light. Knowing the criteria in advance allows you time to review previous work experiences and identify accomplishments that highlight those skills.

Dress appropriately. Conservative, professional attire is generally the best. Attend to all elements of personal grooming.

Arrive on time. Plan to be on time or slightly early so you will be relaxed.

Make a good first and last impression. The first five and the last five minutes of the interview are the most important because this is when first and last impressions are made. First and last impressions are everything, since this is usually when the interviewer decides if they like you or not.

Be polite and personable. Ensure you act in a friendly, professional manner to everyone you encounter. People hire people who they like and whom others in their organization like.

Follow the interviewer's lead. Let the interviewer indicate where you should sit, avoid leaning or placing anything on their desk. Ask for a business card.

Watch your body language. Avoid appearing overly nervous. Scratching, drumming fingers, playing with your hair, etc. are signs of nervousness. Try to look alert, energetic, and focused. Make eye contact.

Be confident. If you have done your homework and prepared for the interview, you will come across as confident. If you are unprepared to answer questions, interviewers will pick-up on it.

Demonstrate enthusiasm. Let the interviewer see that you are there because you **want** the job, not because you **need** a job. Show the interviewer that you are interested. If the interviewer senses indifference, boredom, or opportunism, they will feel that you have wasted their time and will have little interest in you.

Be an active listener and observer. What you say and what you ask are determined by what is relevant and meaningful to the interviewer. React appropriately to signs of confusion, agreement, or strong interest.

Ask questions. Be prepared to ask several questions relevant to the job, employer, and organization.

Know yourself and your accomplishments. It is important to market yourself and your technical skills, qualifications, experiences, and personal traits.

Relate stories or examples that heighten your past experience. Past performance is the best indicator of future performance. If you were successful at one company, you are more likely to be successful at another company.

Read the interviewer. If the interviewer wants details, provide them. If they want past experiences and behaviors, provide them.

Be realistic and truthful. Do not over-promise. Let your record speak for your abilities.

Be positive about past mistakes. Do not apologize for past mistakes. Mistakes can provide you with valuable experiences. You can usually reshape a question that allows you to show a positive.

Do not talk about personal problems. Interviewers do not want to deal with personal problems. Hiring managers will choose someone who does not bring their personal problems to the office.

Avoid premature salary discussions. Do not discuss salary, benefits, bonuses, etc. until your value to the organization has been built and understood. Do not let compensation become the focus of the interview.

Practice interview questions in advance. The process of thinking through potential questions will help you prepare for the interview and feel less stressed. Practice will also help you communicate more effectively and strong verbal skills are highly desired by employers.

Know how to respond to tough questions. The best strategy is to be prepared, stay calm, collect your thoughts, and respond as clearly as possible.

Protect the confidences of past employers. How you speak of a former employer reflects on your integrity. Do not speak negatively about or reveal confidential information of a former employer.

Be yourself. Do not try to be who you expect the employer wants.

Fill out company applications completely, even if you have a résumé. Many companies require a completed employment application in addition to your résumé. Your thoroughness in completing the application will convey a great deal about your professionalism and ability to follow through. Ensure the information on the employment application is consistent with your résumé.

Bring extra copies of your résumé. Come to the interview prepared with extra copies of your résumé. You may be asked to interview with more than one person and it demonstrates professionalism and preparedness to anticipate needing extra copies.

Remember the purpose of the interview. You must impress your interviewer both professionally and personally to be offered a job. At the end, make sure you know the next steps and when the employer anticipates making a decision.

Common Interview Questions

The following is a list of questions most often asked during an employment interview. Study the questions carefully and develop strong positive responses.

- Describe your present duties and responsibilities?
- How do you spend a typical day?
- What were the things that you enjoyed when you were working for XYZ Corporation?
- What did you least enjoy?
- What are/were your major accomplishments at XYZ Company?
- What were some of the setbacks and disappointments you experienced? Tell me about them.
- Looking back at the time you spent at XYZ Corporation, what do you feel you have gained from your association with that company?
- What are your reasons for leaving your current job?
- How would you describe your present supervisor? What do you consider to be their major strengths and limitations?
- What management style do you respond the best to?
- How do you think your present supervisor would describe you?
- If I called your supervisor, what do you think they would say?
- What were some of the problems you encountered on your present job and what did you do to overcome them?
- What are some of the things that you and your supervisor disagreed on?
- What is your impression of your former company?
- In what ways has your present job prepared you for greater challenges and responsibilities?
- How long have you been looking for another position?
- Why did you answer our ad in the newspaper?
- What, from your perspective, would be some of the advantages of you joining this company?
- In what ways does this job meet your goals?
- If you joined our organization, where do you feel you can contribute most?
- Looking 10 years into the future, what changes and developments do you anticipate in your field?
- Why did you choose to attend _____?
- Why did you major in _____?
- How would you describe your academic achievements?
- How did you spend your summers while in college?
- What made you decide to become an _____?
- What class or club offices did you hold?
- What additional training or education have you had since college?
- What was your most difficult course? Why?
- What was your most enjoyable course?
- What was your most unforgettable moment in college?
- Why do you feel you have management potential?

- What is your leadership style?
- How would you describe yourself?
- If you could relive your last 15 years, what changes would you make?
- Have you helped increase sales or profits? How? Reduced costs? How?
- What did you think of your last boss?
- What does success mean to you?
- Aren't you overqualified for this position?
- What new goals have you established recently?
- How do you rate yourself as a professional?
- If you are hired, what do you see in your future?
- Can you work under pressure and meet deadlines?
- What do you consider to be your outstanding qualities?
- What are some things in a job that are most important to you?
- Where do you see yourself in five years? Ten years?
- What are your present salary expectations?

When structuring answers to the above questions remember the following:

- Hiring managers do not want problems. If the applicant had problems on the old job (for example, did not get along with boss or coworkers, etc.), they will probably have similar problems in the new job.
- Characteristics of a previous position that an applicant found undesirable will be a reflection of aspects of a new job that the person most likely would not enjoy.
- If the applicant can not describe "how" they accomplished something, they probably do not have the practical experiences they claim to have.

Common Hiring Criteria

It has been established that knowing the hiring criteria is a key point in the interviewing process. You can identify hiring criteria by:

- Carefully reviewing job postings or employment ads.
- Talking to individuals in similar positions.
- Asking previous employees or people who work in the company.
- Asking the Human Resources department.
- Asking the employment agency or recruiter, if applicable.

In addition to required skills and educational background, other criteria may come into play during the interviewing process. The following are common hiring criteria used to describe a “successful applicant” (assuming education and experience requirements are met).

- **Perception.** Ability to observe and differentiate quantitative, qualitative, and other details and/or relationships between objects, forms, symbols, or events.
- **Concentration.** Ability to pay attention to the details of work amid distractions.
- **Comprehension.** Ability to recognize and readily understand spoken, written, numerical, graphic, or symbolic behavior or material.
- **Memory.** Ability to retain and recall details, ideas, and directions well enough to work independently.
- **Problem solving.** Ability to analyze information and use inductive reasoning to arrive at a specific conclusion or solution.
- **Creativity.** Ability to combine information from various sources to produce new ideas, products, or solutions.
- **Numerical expression.** Ability to solve arithmetic and mathematical problems.
- **Oral expression.** Ability to speak clearly, grammatically, and effectively.
- **Written expression.** Ability to write clearly, grammatically, and effectively.
- **Planning.** Ability to project a course of action based on a relatively complex set of variables and foreseeable events.
- **Decision making.** Ability to choose a course of action in certain situations on the basis of policies and guidelines without specific instructions.
- **Craft knowledge.** Possession of unique and specialized information normally acquired by formal training.
- **Craft skill.** Ability to perform a complex set of psychomotor activities acquired by formal training and practice.
- **Adaptability/Change.** Adaptability to interruptions in work routine or to changes in work situations, rules, standards, or assignments without dissatisfaction or loss of efficiency.
- **Adaptability/Pressure.** Adaptability to critical and responsible work activities, rapid workflow, constant deadlines, with minimum tolerance for error, without dissatisfaction or loss of efficiency.
- **Adaptability/Discomfort.** Adaptability to cold, hot, cramped, crowded, smelly, noisy and/or dirty work situations without dissatisfaction or loss of efficiency.
- **Adaptability/Repetition.** Adaptability to highly predetermined and repetitive activities that vary little over time without dissatisfaction or loss of efficiency.
- **Adaptability/Isolation.** Adaptability to work situations with little contact with other people or frequent travel away from home without dissatisfaction or loss of efficiency.
- **Adaptability/Hazards.** Adaptability to work situations where danger to life or limb is present and real without dissatisfaction or loss of efficiency.
- **Dependability.** Sufficiently self-controlled to work with a minimum of supervision and follow-up.
- **Perseverance.** Sufficiently self-controlled to stick to a task despite frustration, discouragement, boredom and/or difficulties.
- **Initiative.** Sufficiently self-controlled to act on own, to take charge, to take moderate risks in situations not covered by existing procedures.
- **Integrity.** Sufficiently self-controlled to adhere to standards or moral and ethical behavior.
- **Aspirations.** Sufficiently self-controlled to limit aspirations for promotion.
- **Personal appearance.** Ability to meet specific standards in physical appearance, dress and/or grooming.
- **Tolerances.** Ability to deal effectively with many types of people in delicate, frustrating, or tense situations.
- **Influence.** Ability to influence people to act in desired ways in situations where they have freedom to act otherwise.
- **Cooperation.** Ability to work effectively with people in situations where actions are interdependent

Common Reasons Applicants are Rejected

The following list contains reasons given by national organizations for rejecting applicants (assuming that the experience and technical qualifications are present).

- Poor personal appearance.
- Lack of self-confidence; too nervous; not at ease.
- Not really sincere; not friendly, not outgoing.
- Not courteous; poor manners, not tactful.
- Show signs of immaturity.
- Has no foundation in planning their career; no life goals; no direction; and/or no purpose.
- No enthusiasm; no interest; passive.
- Poor verbal expression, poor grammar, monotone.
- Handshake: sweaty, clammy, or a “bone crusher.”
- Poor eye contact.
- Does not get along well with parents.
- Dislike for schoolwork.
- Moral standards are low.
- Uses foul language.
- Intolerant of others’ beliefs or actions; prejudiced.
- Emphasizes whom they know and not what they have accomplished.
- Not showing up for the first interview without a valid reason.
- Late for the interview without a valid reason.
- Does not ask questions concerning the company or the job.
- Does not know the company and its products/services.
- Answers to questions are vague, inadequate.
- Salary demands are too high for experience.
- More interested in salary, benefits, and retirement than in job.
- Not willing to work for opportunity.
- Fails to thank interviewer for the time spent interviewing.
- Conceited.
- Overaggressive.
- Fails to participate in activities.
- Low scholastic record without a bona fide reason.
- Too evasive on past work history.
- Speaks badly of past employers.
- Messy application, misspelled words, incorrect information.
- Wants only a fill-in job until they received a better offer.
- Inability to take criticism.
- Makes excuses for mistakes and shortcomings.
- Past shows that they cannot make decisions.
- Cynical.
- No sense of humor.

Salary Negotiation

At any stage in the interview process, you may be asked to disclose your salary history, most recent salary, and salary expectations. **Avoid premature salary discussions.** Once you have given a salary number, you may not get the job because:

- The number seems too high.
- The number seems too low.
- The number is “in range” but your bargaining position is compromised.

If salary is raised **early** in the discussions, you can say:

- You would prefer to discuss the position further before getting into salary considerations.
- You would like to come back to those questions after providing a better understanding of your background and qualifications.

If the issue is raised **later** in the discussions, you can say:

- “Are you considering making me an offer? If so, perhaps you can give me some idea of the range you have in mind for this position.”
- “I do not think salary will be an issue. Your company has a reputation for fair pay.”

If the questions become more pointed, such as what is your current compensation, you can say:

- “I can see so many opportunities to contribute that I would prefer to go according to your scale. Can you give me some idea of the range you have in mind?”
- “Actually, the responsibilities are different so things are not readily comparable. I would prefer to fit into your structure.”

If the interviewer is insistent, package together all factors (for example, salary, bonuses, vacation pay, benefits, etc.) and say that your total compensation package was in the “X” range.

Handling Job Offers

Once you receive a job offer, do not respond immediately. Typically, you are offered the lowest salary they feel you will accept. By staying silent at least 30 seconds, you put the hiring manager under pressure to raise the offer or begin to be flexible. At this point, you can start to negotiate.

The following tips can benefit you in negotiating the best possible job offer:

Do not respond immediately. When a job offer is made, do not comment on the salary. Discuss the position, the responsibilities, reporting relationships, your contributions, etc. Then you can say that the offer seems conservative even though the position is attractive. Ask if they can do a little better, and ask for some time to think it over. By the next day, you may find that they have been able to raise the salary or come up with some other alternatives.

Never negotiate benefits in lieu of salary. After you have reached a salary agreement, then negotiate fringe benefits.

Remain silent on personal needs. Do not bring personal needs into the discussion. This will not get you very far.

Know your minimum salary range. Keep in mind the minimum salary you need to support your lifestyle.

Know the fair market value of your position. Knowing the appropriate salary range for your position and geographical area will help ensure you are not asking for too much and not accepting too little for a position.

Evaluating Potential Employers

Changing jobs without investigating new job opportunities can lead to an unhappy relationship between you and your new employer. The grass is not always greener on the other side.

The following questionnaire is designed to help you make a side-by-side comparison of the important characteristics of your current/most recent job with a new position. You may also use the chart to compare potential employers.

Questions	Company A	Company B	Unsure
Which company has better growth ? The faster the growth rate, the greater number of opportunities.			
Which company has a better reputation ? Does it have a reputation for being cutting-edge?			
Which company's structure will allow you to become more visible and enable you to get things done more efficiently?			
Which company's policies and procedures do you prefer?			
Which company offers a better benefits package for your needs?			
Which company offers a better compensation package ?			
Which company has better working conditions ? Consider noise level, facilities, etc.?			
Which company seems to have better team dynamics ? Consider how well the employees get along with one another? Do there appear to be rivalries? Are there signs of department conflict?			
Which company will offer you a preferred level of responsibility ? Is the amount of responsibility more than you can handle? Will the new job offer challenges?			
Which company has better opportunities or advancement ?			
Which company offers better job security ? Consider the reason for the job opening, the organization's turnover rate, etc.			
Which position has a greater degree of pressure ? Is it a high-pressure job? Will you have to deal with tight deadlines and over-time demands?			
Which position is more attractive in terms of the degree of risk ? What do you gain and what do you lose?			
TOTAL			

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SAMPLE FUNCTIONAL RÉSUMÉ

Name
Address
City, State ZIP Code
Home Telephone Number
E-Mail Address

OBJECTIVE

To secure a responsible position in industrial engineering, material management, logistics, or warehouse operations with a solid, progressive company that offers opportunity for career advancement.

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

Eight years of professional experience in the application of industrial engineering and expertise in public relations. Experience includes: material, quality, and project management, warehouse operations, resource and personnel management, statistical process, inventory control, aircraft supply operations, and protocol issues.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Received the "Admirals' Letter of Achievement" for the re-organization and computerization of the supply department aboard the USS Constitution.
- Graduated in the top 5% at Aviation training school.
- Twice awarded the U.S. Navy Good Conduct Medal.

EXPERIENCE

United States Army

Warehouse Manager, 1995 - 1999

Managed the Repair and Return warehouse for all repairable parts at Fort Bragg. Supervised 20 people who helped maintain a 95% inventory accuracy rating and issued, delivered and picked up materials. Acted as the Quality Assurance Representative for the Aviation Supply department.

United Stated Army

Warehouse Manager, 1994 - 1995

Managed a Hazardous Material warehouse with a 1.5 million dollar Just in Time Inventory. Supervised a minimum of 11 people who helped maintain a 97% inventory accuracy rating.

EDUCATION

Southern Illinois University

B.S. Industrial Technology, 1994

SAMPLE CHRONOLOGICAL RÉSUMÉ

Name
Address
City, State ZIP Code
Home Telephone Number
E-Mail Address

OBJECTIVE Seeking a position in a university or firm specializing in advanced biochemistry for the development of human immune system vaccines.

SUMMARY Ten years of experience in the field of biochemistry.
Six years of experience as an assistant laboratory technician working on vaccines and four years as a technician working on cancer research projects.
Presented 16 papers at seminars and training programs attended in the U.S. and Europe.
Analyzed customer requirements for future products.
Developed and implemented monitoring methods and procedures including project reports and staff conferences.
Utilized programs to analyze and predict outcomes of statistical models.

EMPLOYMENT

January 1997 to Present Spring Hills Laboratories Simi Valley, CA
Laboratory Technician
Conducted research on vaccine project under the supervision of Maxwell Raul, Ph.D.
Traveled as company representative to six international conferences.
Presented papers on various projects at 1994 and 1996 conferences.

August 1995 to January 1997 CGB Laboratories Wisteria, CA
Assistant Laboratory Technician
Specialized in cancer research project under the supervision of Victoria Samuels, Ph.D.
Worked on biochemical research papers presented at the U.S. Laboratory Technicians for Cancer Research annual meetings.

January 1990 to January 1995 BioTech Laboratory Research Beaver Falls, CA
Lab Technician Intern
Responsible for documentation of new lab research and assistant for 12 biochemists.

EDUCATIONAL PROFILE

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI
Ph.D., Oncological Research, 1995
M.A., Chemistry, 1993
B.A., Biology, 1990

SAMPLE FUNCTIONAL RÉSUMÉ

Name
Address
City, State ZIP Code
Home Telephone Number
E-Mail Address

OBJECTIVE Challenging administrative position in a growth-oriented organization which offers diverse job responsibility.

ABILITIES Strong organizational and interpersonal skills.

General office duties, including all daily correspondence, Dictaphone, shorthand, and phone etiquette.

Designing and creating new office systems, such as phone answering systems and filing systems.

Word Processing: 75 wpm, 100% accuracy.

Software: Windows XP, Word, Excel.

EXPERIENCE Campo Manufacturing, Eagle, Mississippi (1997 to Present)

Administrative Assistant

- Filed memos, letters, and contracts.
- Typed all company correspondence.
- Computerized 10,000 customer database.
- Supported four senior managers in all facets of company operations.
- Upgraded company-wide automated telephone system, and performed employee training and presentation.

Medical Acquisitions, Inc., Phoenix, Arizona (1993 to 1997)

Administrative Assistant

- Processed medical claims for over 30 employees.
- Performed data entry of daily sales and receipts.
- Assisted in publishing quarterly company newsletter for customer mailings.
- Cleared three-month backlog in three weeks.

EDUCATION Adeline Community College, Adeline, Texas (1992)
A.A., Business Management

SAMPLE CHRONOLOGICAL RÉSUMÉ

Name
Address
City, State ZIP Code
Home Telephone Number
E-Mail Address

OBJECTIVE A challenging and rewarding position as a Production Manager.

SUMMARY Directed research, development, and implementation of design engineering business.
Implemented manufacturing planning systems that increased schedule accuracy by over 200%.
Established engineering master schedules allowing for optimum output.

EXPERIENCE

Production Manager
1997 to Present

LCD Corporation, New York

Developed, implemented, and monitored management operations systems. Consolidated six planning groups, reducing expenses by \$2.4 million.

Production Manager
1987 to 1989

Elemont Industries, Inc., New Jersey

Efficiently managed manufacturing group to production start-up time by 45% as RF communications equipment sales increased. Maintained over 80% schedule accuracy while managing the implementation of new procedures.

Production Manager
1987 to 1987

Hunter Grove Manufacturing, Inc., New Jersey

Developed and managed semiautomatic assembly line systems, reducing touch labor costs by 50%. Structured product development policies and procedures into a program life cycle. Avoided \$4 million in costs when canceling non-competitive product design plans.

EDUCATION

M.B.A., Business, 1987

New York University, New York, NY

B.A., Finance, 1985

University of Notre Dame, Indiana

SAMPLE COVER LETTER: RESPONSE TO JOB AD

Date

Name
Company Name
Address
Suite
City, State ZIP Code

Dear Name:

Your ad in the _____ edition of _____ for a _____ caught my attention and interest. It appears that my professional qualifications and career interests are very much in line with your requirements.

I could not help but be impressed with the growth your company has accomplished in such a short period of time. It is obviously an exciting time to be part of _____ (company). If you take the time to review my enclosed résumé, I believe you will see that I have the necessary skills to assist your company reach its stated goals.

I am interested in scheduling an interview at your earliest convenience to discuss my qualifications in further detail. I will contact you in a few days.

Sincerely,

Name

Enclosure

SAMPLE COVER LETTER: RESPONSE TO JOB AD

Date

Name
Company Name
Address
Suite
City, State ZIP Code

Dear Name,

I am interested in a position with _____ (company). Review of my résumé will reveal that I have a strong background in _____, with _____ years of _____ experience. These are the exact requirements you listed in your recent advertisement.

As today's economic and competitive pressures place tighter constraints on business, _____ professionals with a diverse background can provide greater value when budgets are tight. In my position at _____ (company), I quickly learned to evaluate and measure biased criteria, handle many duties at the same time, organize material and information methodically, work within a set budget, and meet or exceed expectations.

I will be in the _____ area on _____, and would like to arrange a convenient time for us to meet. I know that I can make significant contributions to your company, and welcome the opportunity to demonstrate my potential in person.

Sincerely,

Name

Enclosure

SAMPLE COVER LETTER: RESPONSE TO JOB AD

Date

Name
Company Name
Address
Suite
City, State ZIP Code

Dear Name:

If you take the time to review my enclosed résumé, you will see that I have the skills and experience required to assist your company reach its stated goals in the near future.

Your advertisement asked for a person who likes taking up challenges and wants to make a difference in the industry. You offer the opportunity to work on state-of-the-art technology; I cannot think of anything I would rather be doing.

If you need someone who has both the technical and people skills to succeed as a/an _____, I am that person. I will call you next week to arrange an interview. Otherwise, please feel free to contact me at _____. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Name

Enclosure

SAMPLE COVER LETTER: BROADCAST LETTER

Date

Name
Company Name
Address
Suite
City, State ZIP Code

Dear Name:

I am seeking a/an _____ position with a/an _____ firm, which would utilize my _____ abilities. I am both experienced in all facets of _____ and capable of handling a great deal of responsibility.

With my _____ (number) years of _____ (field) background, I have the depth of experience it takes to make positive contributions. Of key importance has been my ability to handle day-to-day issues while planning and implementing future programs and systems. Some of my achievements are:

- _____
- _____
- _____

I welcome the opportunity to meet with you to explore how my experience could best meet your needs. Should you have an appropriate position that is a match for my qualifications and interests, I would welcome a call. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Name

Enclosure

SAMPLE COVER LETTER: BROADCAST LETTER

Date

Name
Company Name
Address
Suite
City, State ZIP Code

Dear Name:

I am seeking to relocate and apply my skills to an expanding firm like yours. My colleagues have advised me that your firm specializes in _____, a field with which I am very familiar. I am pleased, therefore, to forward a copy of my résumé for your review.

Some of my recent accomplishments are:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Should you agree that my skills match the requirements for a position you might have available, or expect to become available, I would welcome the opportunity to interview with you. I thank you for your time and look forward to meeting with you.

Sincerely,

Name

Enclosure

SAMPLE COVER LETTER: BROADCAST LETTER

Date

Name
Company Name
Address
Suite
City, State ZIP Code

Dear Name:

I am seeking a challenging _____ position with an organization that can effectively use my knowledge and skills. My professional business career exhibits a record of strong achievement and significant contributions. The enclosed résumé details my experience and accomplishments.

As a/an _____ with experience in _____, I feel my background may be of importance to you. My qualifications include:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Could we meet to discuss your position as well as how my experience might relate to your needs? I will call your office on _____ to arrange a convenient time to meet with you.

Sincerely,

Name

Enclosure

SAMPLE COVER LETTER: BROADCAST LETTER

Date

Name
Company Name
Address
Suite
City, State ZIP Code

Dear Name:

If _____ (company) requires a high-energy _____ (title) with a no-excuses attitude and is up to any task, then I'm the person you're seeking. My qualifications and experience will enable me to fulfill your expectations.

I am conscientious in my personal and professional life. I take pride in my work and myself, and derive considerable satisfaction from doing an assignment well. I cope well with high-stress situations and can manage a variety of projects simultaneously. My specific proficiencies include _____. I am seeking a responsible position that offers challenge and opportunity.

I believe my background provides the skills you require for this position. I would welcome the opportunity for a personal interview to further discuss my qualifications.

Sincerely,

Name

Enclosure

SAMPLE COVER LETTER: BROADCAST LETTER

Date

Name
Company Name
Address
Suite
City, State ZIP Code

Name:

Please accept the enclosed résumé as an expression of interest in exploring employment opportunities with your organization in the _____ department.

I am a candidate worthy of consideration. I am well-respected in my profession as an upstanding, hard-working individual who can be counted on to get the job done.

Though my résumé is detailed and comprehensive, it cannot fully demonstrate the manner in which I have achieved success. Character, personality, and the ability to work in a team environment can be evidenced in a personal meeting. I would welcome an interviewing opportunity at your earliest convenience.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am certain that I can be a contributing member of your company.

Sincerely,

Name

Enclosure

SAMPLE COVER LETTER: TARGETED COMPANY

Date

Name

Company Name

Address

Suite

City, State ZIP Code

Dear Name:

Enclosed is my résumé outlining more than _____ years of extensive experience in _____. As you will see, my credentials include progressive responsibility with documented success in the areas of _____ at various organizational levels.

My impressive background will provide your department with a self-motivated, helpful, and flexible associate who knows what is needed to get the job done. I am persuasive and capable of developing rapport and trust, as well as experienced in influencing the attitudes and ideas of others.

Should you have an appropriate _____ opening, I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you personally to explore the contributions that I could make to your corporation.

Sincerely,

Name

Enclosure

SAMPLE COVER LETTER: TARGETED COMPANY

Date

Name
Company Name
Address
Suite
City, State ZIP Code

Dear Name:

The enclosed résumé details the wide range and depth of my _____ experience. I can bring both technical expertise and understanding of people and their critical issues to your company.

I am particularly interested in a position with _____ (company) because of my background in _____. Recent examples of my work include _____ years of front-line management experience in marketing and selling international products and services.

Based upon my job experience and educational qualifications, I am confident that I can bring effective leadership to your company. I would appreciate the opportunity to further discuss my credentials with you during a personal interview.

Sincerely,

Name

Enclosure

SAMPLE COVER LETTER: GENERAL LETTER

Date

Name
Company Name
Address
Suite
City, State ZIP Code

Dear Name:

While working as a/an _____ with _____ (company), I spearheaded the _____ project. As a/an _____ with _____ (company), I facilitated _____ . My verifiable record makes me confident that I can contribute to your firm's goals as well by _____ .

I am organized and detail-oriented, work well under pressure and deadlines, enjoy working with a variety of people, and have a great attitude. I am looking for a creative, challenging, growth-oriented position and would like the opportunity to learn more about your corporation. What you need and what I can do sounds like a match.

I hope that we will have the opportunity to discuss my qualifications further during a personal meeting. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Name

Enclosure

SAMPLE COVER LETTER: GENERAL LETTER

Date

Name
Company Name
Address
Suite
City, State ZIP Code

Dear Name:

As a/an _____, with experience in _____, I feel my background may be of interest to you. My qualifications include:

- _____
- _____
- _____

I have always had an interest in _____, and believe that this enthusiasm shows in my work. I respond well to a challenge and enjoy the opportunity and the rewards of hard work and dedication.

I look forward to hearing from you in the near future to schedule an interview at your convenience. I hope to learn more about your company's plans and goals, and how I can contribute to its success.

Sincerely,

Name

Enclosure

SAMPLE COVER LETTER: TARGETED COMPANY

Date

Name
Company Name
Address
Suite
City, State ZIP Code

Dear Name:

Do you have opportunities for a professional with nearly _____ years of successful _____ experience? Your recent _____ article indicates that you may have clients who can benefit from my expertise.

Throughout my career I have been known as a quick learner, self-starter, and a dedicated worker. I have demonstrated my ability to handle a variety of tasks effectively and deliver on deadlines. Although I work well independently, I am equally comfortable working as part of a team.

I am convinced that I can make an immediate contribution toward the growth of _____ (company) and would hope that we may explore this opportunity further at your convenience.

Please contact me if my qualifications match your current opening in order to discuss my background.

Sincerely,

Name

Enclosure

SAMPLE FOLLOW-UP LETTER: AFTER INTERVIEW

Date

Name
Company Name
Address
Suite
City, State ZIP Code

Dear Name:

I appreciated meeting with you on _____ (date) and learning more about _____ (company). The more I learn about your firm, the more I believe I am the person for the job.

As I thought about your company's tight deadline requirements as described to me, I realized that my experience in _____ has given me the ability to meet such schedules. As a/an _____, I know the value of working with someone who cannot only meet immediate needs, but am able to work within a budget and a time frame.

Perhaps we should meet again to further discuss the contributions that I could make to your firm if employed as a/an _____ of your team. Should you agree, I can be reached during office hours at _____ or at _____ in the evening.

Sincerely,

Name

SAMPLE FOLLOW-UP LETTER: AFTER INTERVIEW

Date

Name
Company Name
Address
Suite
City, State ZIP Code

Dear Name:

Interviewing for a position with _____ (company) has been very informative. The best part is getting to know so many creative and bright people. I look forward to furthering this relationship.

As you may remember from our discussion, my reputation as a creative, innovative contributor is well supported by _____. I have extensive experience in many of the areas that match what I believe your company is seeking.

I will call you next week after you have had an opportunity to review the remaining candidates. I am confident that my abilities and qualifications will stand out from the rest.

Sincerely,

Name

SAMPLE FOLLOW-UP LETTER: TELEPHONE SCREEN

Date

Name

Company Name

Address

Suite

City, State ZIP Code

Dear Name:

I want to thank you for taking the time to speak with me yesterday over the telephone regarding the _____ position at _____ (company). I value your frankness, helpfulness, and direction. I finished our conversation feeling very positive about the possibility of working for your company.

In order to restate what I can bring to your company, I am known to: bring a positive mental attitude, experience, education, and a goal-oriented mentality; work well with others; have an insatiable appetite to gain and apply new knowledge; have gained valuable business sense through everyday experience.

Once again, thank you for your time and help. I will set-up another appointment next week as we discussed, and follow-up on the possibilities you mentioned.

Sincerely,

Name

SAMPLE LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

Date

Name
Company Name
Address
Suite
City, State ZIP Code

Dear Name:

I have known _____ through his/her work experience with our firm during the _____ when he/she served as an _____ in our office.

_____ has shown the kind of initiative that is necessary to be successful over the long-term in the _____ field. He/She has excellent _____ skills, yet remains focused on the overall needs of the client. I believe he/she will be a strong _____ and has an excellent future in the _____ field. He/she is a conscientious worker and has an excellent work ethic.

I recommend _____ to you without reservation. If you have any further questions with regard to his/her background or qualifications, please do not hesitate to call me.

Sincerely,

Name

SAMPLE LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

Date

Name
Company Name
Address
Suite
City, State ZIP Code

Dear Name:

Over the past _____ years I have had the opportunity to work with _____ on _____ different projects, including _____.

I have always felt very fortunate to have a solid relationship with _____ and to know that all of our company's needs would be met during each project. _____ consistently worked in a very professional manner that impressed everyone within the company. We learned that we could always count on _____ for providing service in a reliable and flawless manner. We highly recommend his/her ability and service.

If you have any questions regarding _____ work with our company, don't hesitate to call me at _____.

Sincerely,

Name

SAMPLE NETWORKING LETTER

Date

Name
Company Name
Address
Suite
City, State ZIP Code

Dear Name:

For the entire time we've been acquainted, I have been in the field of _____. Although I have enjoyed my years of experience and broadening opportunities, I feel it is time for a change. I have always wanted to be involved with _____ (field), and there is no better time than the present to make this change. Naturally this led me to think of you, since you have contributed so much to this field throughout your career.

I believe my enclosed résumé demonstrates that I have a reputation as a self-sufficient, innovative problem-solver with a background in teamwork and superior performance. I also believe that I could be just the type of employee that companies in this industry are searching for.

I would appreciate any advice or referrals you might be able to give me and will be in contact with you early next week.

Sincerely,

Name

Enclosure

SAMPLE NETWORKING LETTER

Date

Name
Company Name
Address
Suite
City, State ZIP Code

Dear Name:

As the _____ (job title) of one of the most renowned companies in the _____ industry, I feel you might be in a position to give me advice concerning my career. I have been active in the _____ field since _____, and have experience in _____ and _____. I am seeking a career change at this time and would appreciate any suggestions you may have.

I am a/an _____ with over _____ years of experience in the field, who is ready to pursue a new career using the skills that I have sharpened through my previous work experience. It seems that working for _____ (company) would provide the opportunity to combine my experience with today's corporate objectives.

I will be contacting you in the next few days to set up an appointment. Thanks again for your help.

Sincerely,

Name

Enclosure

SAMPLE NETWORKING LETTER

Date

Name
Company Name
Address
Suite
City, State ZIP Code

Dear Name:

I am writing to you as a member of the _____ Association. After _____ years in the _____ industry, I am planning a career move. As a leader in the community, I feel you might be in a position to suggest avenues that I may take in this pursuit.

As the enclosed résumé indicates, I have a _____ (degree) in _____ (major) and _____ years of experience in the _____ field. I am known for my attention to detail, problem-solving skills, and ability to meet tight deadlines.

I will call you next week after you have had a chance to review my résumé. Perhaps we can set up a convenient time to meet.

Sincerely,

Name

Enclosure

SAMPLE OFFER ACCEPTANCE LETTER

Date

Name
Company Name
Address
Suite
City, State ZIP Code

Dear Name:

I would like to thank you for the offer of employment for the position of _____. I have analyzed your offer deliberately and carefully, and am pleased to inform you that I accept wholeheartedly.

Thank you for the confidence you have shown. I look forward to working with you and the other members of your staff.

I look forward to my future association with your firm. As advised, I will report to your office at 8:30 a.m. on _____.

Sincerely,

Name

SAMPLE OFFER REJECTION LETTER

Date

Name
Company Name
Address
Suite
City, State ZIP Code

Dear Name:

I would like to thank you for extending me an offer to work for _____ (company) in the capacity of _____ (title). At this time, however, I have chosen to pursue another opportunity.

I have decided to return to college to continue my education in this field and to broaden both my skills and experience at _____ (skill).

Thank you for your time and help throughout this process. I will always retain a favorable memory of your firm.

Sincerely,

Name

SAMPLE REFERENCE LIST

Name
Address
City, State ZIP Code
Home Telephone Number
Business Telephone Number

References

Name

Title
Company Name
Home Telephone Number
Business Telephone Number
E-Mail Address

Name

Title
Company Name
Home Telephone Number
Business Telephone Number
E-Mail Address

Name

Title
Company Name
Home Telephone Number
Business Telephone Number
E-Mail Address

Student Work Reference

Name

Title
Company Name
Home Telephone Number
Business Telephone Number
E-Mail Address

SAMPLE SALARY HISTORY

Name
Address
City, State ZIP Code
Home Telephone Number
Business Telephone Number

Salary History

Manager (1998 - present)

WORLDWIDE INSURANCE GROUP, FRESNO, CA
Current annual salary: \$55,000.
Beginning annual salary: \$42,000.

Senior Claims Representative (1995 - 1998)

GLOBAL INSURANCE, VISALIA, CA
Ending annual salary: \$38,000.
Beginning annual salary: \$22,500.

Claims Representative (1990 - 1995)

DLG PROPERTY & CASUALTY, WHITE PLAINS, NY
Ending annual salary: \$16,500.
Beginning annual salary: \$13,000.

Claims Intern (1991 - 1995)

ABC INSURANCE COMPANY
Ending annual salary: \$13,000.
Beginning annual salary: \$ 9,000.

SAMPLE REFERRAL LETTER

Date

Name
Company Name
Address
Suite
City, State ZIP Code

Dear Name:

It has been almost _____ years since we attended _____. I hope things are going well for you. Since that time, I've been considering a move into the _____ field. The industry is on the upswing now, and I am confident that my skills and experience can be put to good use in a company committed to carving its niche in the marketplace.

If you are in search of a strong candidate for a senior-level position with your corporate staff, you may want to take a moment to consider my credentials. My background in _____, coupled with significant contributions in the _____ area, may well be of interest to you.

Next week, I'd like to call and set up an appointment with you. By then, after you've read my résumé, I think you'll see that I would be a valuable addition to _____ (company).

Sincerely,

Name

Enclosure

SAMPLE RELOCATION LETTER

Date

Name

Company Name

Address

Suite

City, State ZIP Code

Dear Name:

With an upcoming plan to move to the _____ area, I have spent a considerable amount of time researching various employment opportunities. _____ (company) is known to have a determined, corporate course of action designed to reach a single goal: become the world's leading _____ (industry). I am more than interested in joining a firm with a committed vision of the future.

In over _____ years as a/an _____, I have gained the knowledge and insight necessary to successfully address the many challenges presented in an ever-changing marketplace. I have the depth of experience it takes to make a positive contribution.

My résumé is enclosed. I am eager to discuss with you personally a possible role for me with _____ (company). I will call you next week to see about arranging an interview.

Sincerely,

Name

Enclosure

SAMPLE THANK YOU LETTER

Date

Name
Company Name
Address
Suite
City, State ZIP Code

Dear Name:

Thank you for meeting with me recently to discuss my continuing efforts to reposition myself in the field of _____ . I really appreciate the information you gave me concerning the various opportunities I have open to me at this time.

As I mentioned in our appointment, I am planning to continue my research before targeting any specific career goal. As I refine my ideal job description, I may give you a call to expand upon some of the issues we have already discussed, or to explore a possible new opportunity. I certainly value your input and advice and plan to contact you again in the near future.

Thank you again for being so supportive and informative. You truly did make a difference.

Sincerely,

Name

Enclosure

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