



FIND AND GET THE RIGHT JOB

Thanks to the Labor Market and Career Information Unit of the Texas Workforce Commission for allowing the California Career Resource Network (CalCRN) to reproduce and edit *The Job Hunters Guide Express* to create this resource for California job hunters.

How to Use this Guide

Find and Get the Right Job was created to assist the job seeker in closing the circle on the career development process.

Landing the perfect job can be a stressful and confusing process. *Find and Get the Right Job* will guide you through the necessary steps to: discovering and detailing your skills, preparing your job search portfolio, the job search, making contact with potential employers, applying, and getting through the interview. You can use this guide in its entirety or just visit some of the steps depending on what your needs are. Below is a short summary of each step in this guide:

Step 1: Assess Yourself

These assessments will help you discover what your strengths and weaknesses are including characteristics that are specific to who you are. It is always a good idea to do these assessments many times throughout your career as you gain competencies and skills from everyday life activities. This information is necessary for later when representing yourself in your résumé, cover letter, and interview.

Step 2: Prepare for the Job Search

Before you can start sending out résumés, you need to make sure you are organized and have all the resources at hand so you are ready to represent yourself to employers. This section will give you a listing of materials to compile, résumé samples, questions to be prepared to answer, and tips on how to identify your support and networking group.

Step 3: Search for a Job

Now for the easy part! Searching for a job, when properly prepared, can be one of the easier parts of the process. This section will provide you with some labor market realities, the most effective job search methods, and alternative job options for the meantime.

Step 4: Contact Employers

This portion of the job search can be very intimidating, even for the most outgoing job searcher. This section will provide you with guidelines on how to properly contact potential employers, creating a cover letter and personalizing the résumé to fit the job.

Step 5: Apply for a Job

After learning about job opportunities you will have to go through the application process. This will involve applications that may be hard copy or online, and sometimes online pre-employment tests.

Step 6: Interview

Getting an interview is exciting and scary all at the same time. Being ready is key to success in an interview. This section expands on the work you have already done in Step 2 by preparing you for many types of interviews, and giving you the inside psychology of what the employer is looking for when asking specific types of questions. You will also be prepared on what to expect before, during, and after the interview.

Step 7: Start Your Job!

After you've achieved your goal you can learn about the skills that are necessary to succeed and advance in your job by reviewing CalCRN's *Succeed at Work* guide.

STEP 1: ASSESS YOURSELF

Preparing for the job search begins with a self-assessment. You have to know what type of job you have skills for before you can find it. And you have to assess yourself, your situation and take a personal inventory. As a job seeker you need to identify your primary strengths and weaknesses. This is not job hunting. There is not a target to be hit, but a process of discovery of self and career options and choices of paths to take. Finding and getting the right job requires detective work to discover what the right skills are for the right work situations. The detective attitude is necessary for self-assessment, identifying job leads, communication, and selling yourself. These exercises will help you understand yourself and better communicate with future employers.

Upon completion of this section you will be able to:

1. Describe your personal characteristics, aptitudes, skills and interests.
2. Define and describe what you can offer employers.
3. Summarize what skills, knowledge and experience you need to gain.

Characteristic Inventory

Employers want employees with certain positive characteristics. Let's find out which qualities you possess. For each quality, indicate whether you are that way **Usually**, **Sometimes** or **Rarely**. Select the first thing that comes to your mind.

U Usually	S Some- times	R Rarely	Characteristic	U Usually	S Some- times	R Rarely	Characteristic
			Able to Follow Support your supervisor or team captain?				Articulate Can you express ideas easily, both verbally and in writing?
			Able to Lead Have you held positions of responsibility?				Cheerful Are you friendly to other students and teachers?
			Able to Learn Do you turn mistakes into learning opportunities?				Competent Do you meet deadlines? Is your work thorough?
			Able to Listen Do you listen closely to others?				Conscientious Do you do a full day's work? Do you double-check your work?
			Able to Remember Do you recall names, places, figures and ideas accurately?				Cooperative Do you volunteer to help? Do you do your part on teams?
			Able to Work Alone Can you work without supervision or reminders?				Courageous Do you take on challenges and stand up for your beliefs?
			Ambitious Do you take on extra assignments?				Creative Do you come up with new ideas? Do you look for possibilities?



U Usually	S Some- times	R Rarely	Characteristic	U Usually	S Some- times	R Rarely	Characteristic
			Decisive Can you make decisions under pressure?				Loyal Do you strive to be a good representative of your school?
			Dependable Do people trust you? Is your attendance good?				Observant Do you look for what needs to be done or could be improved?
			Diplomatic Can you handle difficult situations with grace and tact?				Organized Are you neat? Do you plan and arrange things logically?
			Discreet Do you avoid gossip or interfering in others' business?				Patient Can you keep your temper and stay calm under pressure?
			Efficient Do you try to work faster and better?				Persistent Can you stick with difficult and time-consuming tasks?
			Emotionally Stable Do you maintain self-control, staying even-tempered and cool?				Persuasive Can you sell ideas and products?
			Empathic Are you sensitive to others' feelings and circumstances?				Proactive Do you address issues before they become problems?
			Enthusiastic Are you interested in and excited by your work?				Resourceful Can you work your way out of difficult situations?
			Flexible Can you adapt well to new situations or challenges?				Responsible Do you treat your job as you would your own business?
			Focused Do you focus on work despite personal challenges?				Sober Do drugs and alcohol affect your work?
			Generous Do you share ideas and credit with others?				Thrifty Do you avoid wasting supplies and equipment?
			Honest Do you tell the truth?				Tolerant Do you associate with different types of people?
			Industrious Do you work hard and to the best of your ability?				

Job Values Inventory

Next let's find out which job qualities you value the most. Choose the qualities you want in a job. Select the first thing that comes to your mind as **V**ery important, **I**mportant, or **N**ot important.

V Very Important	I Important	N Not Important	Qualities
			Salary How much money you will earn?
			Benefits Insurance, retirement, etc.?
			Job Security Will you be able to keep your job?
			Work Hours How many hours will you have to work?
			Job Location Where will you work?
			Co-workers, Supervisors, Customers Will you like who you work with?
			Learning Opportunity Will you be able to learn?
			Satisfying Work Will it be rewarding or fun?
			Working Conditions Will it be safe?
			Like What the Company Does Will I be proud of my/the company?
			Chance for Promotion Will I be able to move up?
			Respect Will I be treated nice?

Aptitude Assessment

Now let's find out what abilities you naturally have. For each item, rate your ability as **H**igh, **M**edium, or **L**ow.

H High	M Medium	L Low	Abilities
			Finger Dexterity: The ability to move fingers rapidly and to accurately manipulate small objects. Used in playing guitar, doing puzzles and sewing on buttons. <i>Related occupations include: Jeweler, Photographer, and Tailor.</i>
			Motor Coordination: The ability to use eyes and arms/hands and legs/feet rapidly and accurately in precise movements. Used in playing sports, moving furniture and dancing. <i>Related occupations include: Hairdresser, Athlete, Machinist, and Carpenter.</i>
			Form Perception: The ability to see detail in objects, such as the shapes of figures and width/lengths of lines. Used in making sketches, sorting differently sized nails and measuring areas by sight. <i>Related occupations include: Architect, Artist, Surveyor and Mechanic.</i>
			Spatial Perception: The ability to understand forms in space and their relationships. Used in reading blueprints, solving geometric problems, and planning furniture placement in a room. <i>Related occupations include: Interior Designer, Drafter, Engineer, and Air Traffic Controller.</i>
			Clerical Perception: The ability to identify detail in written or verbal material containing words or numbers. Used in taking telephone messages, proofreading letters and checking bank statements. <i>Related occupations include: Bookkeeper, Editor, and Teller.</i>
			General Learning: The ability to "catch on" to understand, reason, and make judgments. Used in memorizing facts, making decisions, and reading instructions. <i>Related occupations include: Musician, Historian, and Teacher.</i>
			Numerical: The ability to perform arithmetic quickly and accurately. Used in balancing a checkbook, estimating food prices and figuring interest rates. <i>Related occupations include: Budget Analyst, Nuclear Engineer, Bookkeeper, and Loan Officer.</i>
			Verbal: The ability to understand meanings of words and associated ideas and use them effectively. Used in making speeches, giving messages and writing reports. <i>Related occupations include: Clergy, Counselor, Marketing Manager, and Sales Reps.</i>

Skills Assessment

Now let's find out what skills you have. There are two types of skills: Transferable and Technical skills. Transferable skills are sometimes called "workplace skills". They are skills that apply to a lot of jobs. Technical skills are skills that are more highly specialized, usually connected to a specific occupation. You can list transferable and technical skills that are not on these lists after each assessment. Rate yourself as **H**igh, **M**edium or **L**ow for each skill listed.

H High	M Medium	L Low	Transferable Skills These skills apply to a lot of jobs.	H High	M Medium	L Low	Technical Skills These are examples of skills that are more highly specialized.
			Communicating				Arranging flowers
			Comparing				Painting
			Creating				Caring for a child
			Critical Thinking				Plastering walls
			Decision Making				Cooking
			Directing				Playing an instrument
			Doing Math				Cutting glass
			Figuring				Processing x-rays
			Fixing				Driving a backhoe
			Inspecting				Reading blueprints
			Interpreting				Driving a truck
			Leading				Recording sounds
			Lifting				Farming
			Listening				Roofing
			Managing				Fitting eyeglasses
			Mediating				Testing water purity
			Observing				Helping patients
			Organizing				Trimming trees
			Persuading				Installing carpets
			Planning				Welding
			Predicting				
			Problem Solving				
			Proofing				
			Public Speaking				
			Remembering				
			Researching				
			Selling				
			Sorting				
			Taking Direction				
			Teaching				
			Typing				
			Writing				

STEP 2: PREPARE YOURSELF

In Step One, you identified what skills and experience you can offer. Now it's time to prepare for the job search. That means getting yourself organized, supported and interview-ready. This section will help you get organized by showing some of the things employers will expect you to have or to know. If an employer called you today for an interview would you be ready? It's time to get prepared! Let's begin by getting organized.

Upon completion of this section you will be able to:

1. Prepare for the job hunt.
2. Pick out appropriate work attire and supplies.
3. Create a support system.

Your Portfolio

A portfolio collects examples of your work and training that you can show employers. Preparing a portfolio helps you assess your past achievements and experience. It also helps prepare you for job interviews.

Stand out from the competition

Employers will:

- Be impressed that you prepared
- See you really want the job
- Believe you can do the work
- Remember you

Keep it simple

- Use a new three-ring binder
- Keep the cover clean
- Put pages in sheet protectors
- Have a table of contents (see Sample Portfolio)
- Divide sections with tabs — you'll find pages easily

Sample Portfolio

Table of Contents

Résumé	p. 1
Reference list	p. 2

Achievements

Customer evaluations/comments	p. 3
Job evaluations	p. 5
Awards	p. 7
Letters of recommendation	p. 8

Education

Copies of degrees	p. 11
Training certificates	p. 12

Sample of Work

Before/after repair photos	p. 15
Work schedule	p. 21
Writing sample	p. 17
Spreadsheet (math ability)	p. 19

Using your portfolio

Never send with your résumé

- During the interview, show examples related to the discussion
- Put away if interviewer seems uninterested
- Never leave your portfolio with the employer

When creating your portfolio, be sure to fill it in with the items listed below:

1. *Work-related items.*
2. *Items that bring a résumé to life.*
3. *Items related to the job.*
4. *Copies of a few significant items for the interviewer to keep.*
5. *Relevant volunteer activities.*
6. **DO NOT** include personal information.

Résumé Achievement Statements

A résumé is a list of your achievements. It will help you review your strengths and also prepare you for interviews. To help list your achievements answer the questions below concerning your past jobs, extracurricular activities and volunteer work. After you have your list of achievements, turn the list into statements.

Make sure each sentence contains three components:

1. A **Challenge** such as a problem or opportunity.
2. An **Action** such as what steps you took to meet the challenge.
3. The **Results** such as what happened (using dollars, time, percentages or amounts).

Skip the questions that do not apply to you:

What can I do better than anyone else?

When did I take the initiative?

Was I promoted?

Did I win awards like Employee of the Month?

Did I get good performance reviews?

Have I received complimentary letters from customers or co-workers?

Have I produced anything like a publication or product?

Did I finish a major project on time and under budget?

Did I start some system that improved efficiency?

Did I participate in my company's employee suggestion program?

Have I saved the company time or money?

Did I work with someone important like the Vice President of the company?

What are the greatest work accomplishments of my life and what skills did I use to achieve them?

Was I recognized for excellent attendance?

Did I file all the forms daily so that there was no backlog?

Did I complete tasks in less time than expected?

Sample Achievement Statements

Here are some examples of achievement statements. Using numbers gives them more impact.

Developed a new employee orientation program that 100% of the company adopted.

Responded to over 85 customer calls daily and solved 90% of their concerns.

Served customers in a positive way, receiving two customer service awards in the past year.

Assisted credit manager in account collection by phone and mail, increasing accounts receivables by 20%.

Co-chaired a series of blood drives in the local area, netting over 1,200 units of usable blood.

Created a multi-media campaign that increased enrollment by 45% in one year.

The Résumé

Your résumé is usually the first and only impression an employer will have of you. An interview invitation will be based on the employer's impression. Be sure to reflect your qualities and experiences that are most relevant to the position for which you are applying.

The Winning Résumé

- Emphasize skills needed for the position you seek.
- Write it yourself; it's a sample of your work.
- Only include current information about your work history.
- Have two versions of each résumé: one to read and one to scan. The scanable version should have **no bolding, italics** or other formatting — just plain black text on white paper.
- Utilizes white space for a format that is consistent and visually attractive.
- Is brief, concise, and easy to read.
- Avoids the use of personal pronouns, or speak in the third person (such as I, We, He, Jane Valdez etc.).
- Is free of errors (grammatical and spelling).
- Is limited to one page for entry level, and two pages for a highly experienced applicant.
- Is honest.

The Words

- A résumé should be customized for each employer. Use words the interviewer is likely to understand. Your goal is to use words that communicate your competence without confusing the reader.
- Don't use pronouns such as "I," "me" or "my."
- Rather than use generic phrases like 'responsible for' or 'duties include', use descriptive verbs, such as 'developed' 'managed' or 'created'.
- Include "buzz words," e.g., point of sale for Retail Sales or HTML for Web Programming.
- Avoid slang, texting acronyms, or common jargon.

Be Honest

- It's the right thing to do.
- It shows your integrity as a person.
- Don't lie. Most employers check what you say.
- You won't get hired if employers think that you inflated your achievements and abilities.
- You set yourself up to fail if you get hired based on qualifications and experiences that you don't have.

The Look

- *Professional* – on white or very light colored bond paper.
- *Clean* – no smudges or stains.
- *Uncluttered* – an even blank frame around the content.
- *Serious* – Use plain fonts, such as Times New Roman.
- *Unique* – not the typical computer résumé template.
- *Easy to read* – with bullet points, not paragraphs.
- *Well organized* – with main points at the top of the page.
- *Flat* – no staples and, if possible, no creases.
- *Brief* – one page if under ten years' experience.

How to Use It

- Once your résumé is complete, submit it properly.
- Always include a cover letter with it.
- Attach it to application forms you submit.
- Send it only to targeted employers and contacts.
- Send it only for jobs for which you are at least 70% qualified.
- Don't attach transcripts, recommendation or photos.
- Bring extra copies to each interview.
- Always follow up with a phone call a day or two after they receive it.
- Before you send it out:

Mistakes or sloppiness on your résumé can cost you jobs so read it out loud – every word and/or ask a friend to read it carefully.

Three Résumé Types

Depending on your work experience and the type of job you are applying for, you will want to determine the type of résumé to submit.

Functional: A functional résumé focuses on skill groupings. This is a good résumé for first-time workers and career changers (see example 1).

Chronological: A chronological résumé focuses on the progression of jobs and assignments over time. This is a good résumé for most workers, especially those with some work experience in the field they are applying to (see example 2).

Combination: A combination résumé combines characteristics of the functional and chronological résumé by organizing your most relevant experiences into skill areas and a brief chronology of jobs you have held. This is a good résumé for career changers, those with gaps in employment, or those with little work experience.

Example 1: Sample Functional Résumé

Jane Doe
1111 First Street
Sacramento, CA 12345
(123) 456-7890 • JaneDoe@yahoo.com

Objective:

Seeking a position as a Sales Associate with a wireless company using my education and experience in customer relations.

Education:

High School Diploma
Sacramento High School, Sacramento CA

Expected May 2017

Qualifications:

Knowledgeable in sales
Knowledgeable in customer service

Language Skills:

Fluent in Spanish

Extracurricular Activities:

Business Club
Choir

September 2015–Present
October 2014–May 2015

Relevant Skills and Knowledge

Sales

- Assist Sales Team of 25 to achieve monthly and quarterly target sales.
- Perform inventory counts and verification in 12,000 square foot store.
- Ensure customer satisfaction throughout the sales process.

Communication

- Establish open and honest communication with a diverse team of 18 Sales Supervisors, Retail Consultants, Service Technicians, and Customers to create a positive environment.
- Listen to customers in order to assist them in the purchase of merchandise.

Customer Service

- Provide customers (20-25 per day) with attentive service in order to meet their requests and ensure a positive experience while shopping.
- Greet customers as they enter and exit the store.

Work History

Floor and Sales Associate Electronics Company, Sacramento CA October 2015–Present

Example 2: Chronological Sample Résumé

John Doe

1111 First Street
Sacramento, CA 95814
(123) 456-7890 • JaneDoe@yahoo.com

Objective:

Seeking a position as a District Sales Manager with a wireless company using my education and experience to motivate associates and exceed company goals.

Education:

Associate of Arts, Business Administration May 2016
Sacramento City College, Sacramento CA

Qualifications:

Knowledgeable in Operations Management
Knowledgeable in Organizational Behavior
Cost Accountancy
Marketing, Public Relations, and Sales Management
Finance and Risk Management
Language Skills: Fluent in Spanish

Work History

Store Manager

Company Wire Free, Sacramento, CA August 2014 - Present

- Established open and honest communication with a diverse team of Sales Supervisors, Retail Wireless Consultants, Service Technicians, and Cashier/Greeters to create a positive environment.
- Oversee all store operations including opening, closing, compliance, cash, & inventory, the hiring process, interviewing, training, and various associate lifecycle activities for store associates.
- Encourage, support and facilitate the growth and development of all associates in retail stores.
- Create an environment that motivates and inspires associates to exceed expectations and goals.

Retail Wireless Consultant

Wireless Company XYZ, Sacramento CA May 2012 - August 2014

- Achieved and surpassed individual sales targets for new customer acquisitions, sale of essentials, and vertical features on a weekly/monthly basis while striving for the highest level of customer satisfaction.
- Performed cash/inventory counts and verification, opened, closed and operated the retail facility including receiving, processing and depositing all payments received, according to standard procedures.

Ski Instructor

Kirkland Ski Resort, Kirkland, CA December 2011 – March 2012

- Provided feedback to beginning and intermediate students on skiing skills.
- Taught groups of 5-12 students proper skiing techniques related to safety and skill development.

Professional Development

Situational Leadership– Identified associate performance in relation to skill vs. will gap management.
Sacramento, CA July 2015

Manager Development Forum– Strategies for leading a group through organizational and industry changes.
Sacramento, CA November 2015

Awards

Awarded “Rookie of the Year” 2015
Presidential Scholar

There are many things to include in your résumé.

Include:

Objective: Should be brief and concise stated at the top of the résumé and in the cover letter.

Education: Include degree, major, minor, concentration, institution, city, state, and graduation date (or expected graduation date). Also include scholarships, honors, awards, special training, relevant courses, internships, and extracurricular activities.

Work Experience: Include both paid and unpaid experience. State your job title, company name, city, state, and dates of employment. Use action verbs to describe your responsibilities and accomplishments that are most relevant to the position you are seeking.

Activities and Interests: Include anything that is related to your objective or shows something unique about yourself such as memberships, clubs or organizations, and/or community involvement.

Additional Information: Include specific qualifications on equipment, licenses, certificates, language abilities (reading, writing, speaking), travel, publications, awards and achievements.

References: These should be listed on a separate page and provided on request. List three to five employers or faculty members (with their permission) with their name, title, professional address, telephone number, and email.

Try to follow these simple rules.

Do's

- List months and years of employment and city and state for each employer.
- List jobs starting with current or most recent.
- List your participation in activities that involve teamwork.
- Always tailor your résumé based on your research of the company and the job you seek.

Don'ts

- Repeat information.
- Include personal information such as age, height, weight.
- Mention high school unless you just graduated.
- Mention skills that you don't want to use.

Supplies for the Job Search

Prepare yourself by having office supplies and information at your finger tips. This information will be especially useful if you have to fill out an application at the employer's work site.

Basic Supplies

- Pens and highlighter
- Stationary paper, envelopes, and stamps
- Paper clips and stapler
- Calendar and notebook
- Three ring binder and sheet protectors for portfolio

Equipment

- Answering machine/voice mail
- Access to a computer and printer
- Access to a fax machine
- Internet access

Official Documents

- Copies of certifications, diplomas, licenses
- Social Security card (or immigration papers)
- Driver's license or ID card

Education List

- The school's name, city and state
- Date of attendance
- Any degree or certification you obtained
- List of achievements (academic or other)
- Name of classes related directly to work skills

Work/Volunteer List

- Position title
- Organization name, address, and phone numbers
- Supervisor's name, title, and phone number
- Start and end date
- Number of hours worked per week
- Number of people you supervised, if any
- List of duties
- List of achievements
- Reason for leaving (application forms request it)

Housing List

- The address and phone number for each place you have lived for the past 10 years.
- Move-in and move-out dates.

Wardrobe

Job searching is a business. You need to look the part. If you don't have clothes that are appropriate for an interview, borrow or buy one good interviewing suit. A well-groomed look suggests a sense of success. (More on what to wear to an interview in Step 5).

References

References are like customer referrals. Employers want to talk to people who know your work and character. Eventually you'll be asked for a reference list on an application form or during an interview.

Identify Potential References

- Make a list of three to five people who:
 - Are respectable and trustworthy.
 - Are not related to you by blood or marriage.
 - Have positive words to say about your skills and character.
- Get Permission
- Ask potential references for permission to be listed.
- Explain that employers may contact them, send them a job description of the jobs you are interviewing for.
- Give them an idea of the qualities and abilities you want employers to know about you.
- Thank them for serving as a reference.

Prepare Your List

- Reference name
- How you know them (avoid relatives, if possible)
- Job title
- Employer
- Address
- Daytime phone number
- Email address if available

Ask for a Letter

- Ask for a letter if your reference person:
 - Lives out of town.
 - Has excellent writing skills.
 - Is too busy to receive calls from employers.

Keep it Simple

- Job searching requires multi-tasking, so keep it simple.
- Break tasks into small chunks.
- Congratulate yourself for each task you do.

Support System

Job search can be as tough as starting your own business. Make sure you have the emotional and social support you need to get you through any rough times you encounter.

Ask for Help

- Identify supporters and then ask for their active assistance.
- Let them congratulate you when you deserve it.
- Call a friend before and after each interview: "book ending" reminds you that you're not alone.
- Share your hopes and fears about job hunting.
- Check in regularly with someone to stay on track.

Deal with Your Feelings

Job hunting can generate a lot of emotions. Control them so that they don't control you.

Here's how:

- Identify how you feel.
- Express your feelings constructively by writing or sharing them with a friend.
- Let go of negative feelings you might have about former employers. No one wants to hire a bitter person.

Care for Yourself Physically

A great way to have a support system is to start by caring for yourself.

- Sleep at least 7.5 hours a night.
- Eat healthy.
- Get regular exercise.
- Avoid drugs and alcohol.
- Take time to have fun.

Identify Your Support System

Identify which of your friends can provide the different types of support you'll need while job hunting. Try to list as many people per type as you can.

- Classmate or friend - Knows and likes me.
- Mentor - Gives directions, knows I'll succeed.
- Information Broker - Shares information about job and employers.
- Public Relations Rep - Willing and able to make contacts with employers.
- Caretaker - Willing to baby-sit, provide transportation.

***Focus on today, not the future or the past.
Don't expect to find a job immediately. Be realistic.***

STEP 3: JOB SEARCH

It's time to find the employers who might hire you. For many people, job hunting means reviewing and answering the want ads. There are several reasons to look beyond ads. Don't limit your research to just the classified ads. There are many other ways to find job openings. The Internet has changed the way many employers look for workers. But, the best way to find a job is still through your "network" of friends and family. Include the people who you have conducted informational interviews with and as many other people you can think of.

Upon Completion of this section you will be able to:

1. Analyze successful job search methods.
2. Connect/network with people.
3. Track your job search.

Labor Market Realities

Keep the following trends in mind as you search for your next job. They will give you perspective and help you make realistic decisions about your future.

Lifelong Employability: Strive to be employable – to have the skills that employers value so you can find work easily even if you get laid off.

Diversity: Appreciate cultural differences.

Computer Skills: Develop strong computer skills and update them regularly.

English, Math, and Science: Develop strong math, science and communication skills.

Customer Service/Be Personable: Always demonstrate a positive, helpful attitude toward customers, supervisors, and co-worker. Being personable is one of the key soft skills employers are looking for.

Economy Awareness: Pay attention to the local, national and global market and how it affects certain jobs.

Lifelong Learning: *Never stop learning!* Your education does not end in High School. Employers desire employees that take advantage of training and educational opportunities. Constantly strive to upgrade your skills.

Target Education: Get training in high demand fields that suit your interests.

Education Costs: Find employers who will help train you.

Flattened Wages: Wages become flat because organizations replace long-term employees with cheaper workers.

Do What you Love: Focus on work that fulfills and interests you.

Not just 9-5: Flex time, shift work, and cell phones have blurred the lines between work and home.

Employer as Client: Resembles a professional athlete's free agency: "Provide knowledge, skills and abilities in exchange for wages and benefits."

High Turnover: Expect to have many jobs in several different occupations over a lifetime of work.

Contingency Workforce: Realize that you may become part of the temporary and contract workforce.

Global Competition: Prepare yourself to compete with people worldwide for certain job.

Job Search Methods:

There are many different ways to search for a job, and you should use them all. Here are some of the main methods.

Company Websites: Find out where your skills may be needed and research who to contact at that company. Even if there are no job openings, be sure to follow up on your phone call by sending your electronic résumé and filling out an application on-line at the specific company website.

Connecting with People: Network with your friends, former co-workers, or other people you know. Let them know you're looking for a job. One of the best ways for an employer to get a good hire is by referral from existing employees.

General Internet Job Boards: Increasingly, employers are posting jobs through a variety of general purpose websites. There is a lot of competition for these jobs, but at least you can find them!

Recruiting: Get professional help from government employment agencies or not-for-profit organizations. If you are in a profession that has a professional association, find out if they allow members to post résumés online.

Newspaper Ads or Help Wanted Advertising: Answering an ad is easy and still pays off. But there is lots of competition and most jobs are never listed in the want ads.

Job Search Methods Success Rates

Here is the breakdown of which job search methods are most effective based on a survey from Booz Allen Hamilton 2006:

Company Websites: 21%

Connecting with people: 19%

General Internet Job Boards: 15%

Recruiting: 10%

Newspaper Ads: 6%

Informational Interviews

Informational interviews are to get information about an occupation, not a specific job. You have two goals during this kind of interview. First, learn about the occupation to see if it might suit you. Second, establish a connection with the person you're interviewing. A fun place to view informational interviews is www.roadtripnation.com.

Benefits

- Make a contact – a connection with someone.
- Learn more about the company, industry, and job.
- Gain confidence as you practice your interviewing skills.
- Possibly learn about “hidden” (unadvertised) jobs.

Who to Ask

- Friends, family, neighbors, supervisors, co-workers, and anyone else these people might know.
- People listed in the yellow pages or association directories.

Guidelines

- Interview three people for each occupation of interest.
- When you call, say how you got that person's name.
- Explain that you're seeking advice based on their experiences.
- Ask to meet for 20 minutes and stick to it!
- Bring paper and pen with you and take notes.
- Research beforehand as you would for a job interview.
- Dress and act as you would at a job interview.
- DON'T ask the person for a job in any way!

Questions to Ask

- How did you get into this type of work? This job?
- What type of preparation/education/training did you have?
- What is required?
- What do you enjoy the most? The least?
- What skills do you use most often?
- Describe a typical day or week.
- What are the advancement opportunities and limits?
- What must a person know to stay competitive?
- Work-life balance strategies?
- What are typical entry-level job titles and duties?
- How do you suggest I learn more about this field?

Afterwards

- Tell the person that you would like to be of service any time he or she needs it.
- Ask for referrals to others who might be available for an informational interview.
- Get his/her business card.
- Immediately send a thank you card.
- Decide how to weigh what the interviewee said. Take what you heard with a grain of salt and trust your own judgment.

Resources

The following resources can help you find programs or individuals who can assist in your job search. Your local America's Job Center of California is part of the national network created with public funds to provide career and job search resources. The National Career Development Association and National Board Certified Counselors can help you find private certified career counselors.

Connecting

Most people get jobs because they “have connections”. Getting a connection is easy once you know where to look. Talk to these people and let them know you are interested in finding a job. Ask if they have any information that could help you or if they know someone who does. Thank each person and follow up on any leads.

► **Inner Circle**

- Family
- Friends
- Neighbors

► **Services**

- Hairstylist
- Postal Carrier
- Dry Cleaner
- Mechanic
- Accountant
- Travel Agent

► **Work**

- Supervisors
- Co-workers
- Association members

► **School**

- Teachers
- Fellow students
- Students' parents

► **Community**

- Volunteer members
- Self-help group members
- Religious member

► **Recreation**

- Sports team members
- Gym staff
- Hobby partners

Tracking

Job searching can take days, weeks, or months. You need to keep track of all the information and interactions you gain as you search.

► **Track Everything**

- Names of contacts
- Deadlines
- Actions taken and their result
- Information about prospective employers
- Copies of applications you have submitted
- Copies of cover letters you have sent
- Copies of job listings/descriptions/ads

► **Use a Notebook**

- Write the date you contacted the employer
- Use one page per job
- Tape the ad or listing or write the job description
- Write the name and title of each contact person
- Describe each phone, email, fax, or face-to-face interaction
- Note the main points of each conversation

► **Use a Calendar**

- Follow-up on each job
- Use your calendar to keep a daily to-do list
- List calls to make and actions to take
- Plan your traveling to be most time efficient

Non-traditional Work

Non-traditional work means temporary jobs, volunteering or being self-employed.

Temp Work

- Temping means that you work in a position temporarily-from one day to one year.
You actually are employed by an agency that sends you to other companies to work.

<u>Benefits</u>	<u>Downside</u>
Variety of jobs types and activities. Opportunity and challenge of learning in a new setting. Flexible schedule/choice about whether to work. Wages while job searching. Opportunities to make more connections. The "inside line" on obtaining a full-time job.	Meager, if any, benefits (e.g., insurance). No security - temps are the first to be let go, often with little warning. Little real flexibility since turning down assignments may limit the work you're offered. Possibility of a boring assignment.

Volunteering

- Like temping, volunteering is a way to try out a job or type of work before you commit yourself to it "permanently".
It also provides a way to make connections outside the employment arena.

<u>Benefits</u>	<u>Downside</u>
To maximize the benefits, devote at least 100 hours to each volunteer position to show that you're committed and not just dabbling.	There is no pay involved.

Self-Employment

- Free agents are temp workers who skip the "middle man".
Instead of going through a temp agency, you approach a company directly and offer to work on a temporary or contract basis.

<u>Benefits</u>	<u>Downside</u>
You get to be in control. You may earn more than you would with a temp agency.	You have to file as self-employed, withholding your own taxes. Must be very motivated. If you don't work then you don't get paid.

STEP 4: CONTACT EMPLOYERS

Once you've identified job possibilities, it's time to contact potential employers.

Upon completion of this section you will be able to:

1. Contact Employers effectively.
2. Prepare a Cover Letter.
3. Carry out phone interviews/screenings.

There are four ways to contact employers:

- ▶ **Phone calls**
- ▶ **Letters**
- ▶ **Application forms**
- ▶ **Email**

▶ **Basic Phone Guidelines**

The telephone is an essential tool for job searching. Phone manners can help you get – or keep you from getting – a job.

▶ **Do**

- Be brief – show consideration for people's time.
- Call during regular hours.
- Call sparingly – don't harass anyone.
- If someone calls you, let him or her end the call.
- Initiate call whenever possible – it puts you in control.
- Have a brief and business-like message on your answering machine.
- Listen closely.
- Return calls as quickly as possible.
- Speak clearly.
- Stand-up while speaking – it helps you sound more professional.
- When you call someone, end promptly, saying, "*I'll let you get back to your work*" or similar phrase.
- When you call, say who you are immediately and explain why you are calling.

Don't

- Call while driving or doing something else.
- Chew gum, drink, or eat while on the phone.
- Keep talking to fill every silence.

▶ **Phone Interviews and Screenings**

Phone interviews give employers the chance to see if you are:

- Qualified
- Articulate
- Truly interested
- Worth interviewing face-to-face

▶ **Be Prepared**

- Screen calls – Don't pick up unless you're prepared.
 - Keep a notebook, calendar, and résumé by the phone.
 - Write a script of questions to ask and phrases to use.
 - Read over your notes about the company.
 - Send a thank you note afterward.
-

Cover Letter

A cover letter is an introduction, a sales pitch, and a proposal for further action. It is one of your most valuable tools for contacting employers. The cover letter lets you explain your career objective, why you want to work for the specific company, and how you would be an asset. This is an opportunity to expand on the experiences and skills you have included in your résumé.

Goal

Cover letters, which “cover” your résumé, should:

- Clearly state how your skills and experiences will help the employer.
- Convince the employer to grant you an interview.

Types of Cover Letters

There are essentially three types of cover letters but the basic format for each is the same. The types are:

1. Response to an ad (e.g., newspaper).
2. Cold-call letter (asking about upcoming or unadvertised openings).
3. Referral letter (mentioning a person known to both you and the employer).

Prep Work

- Before you begin writing, do a little research.
- Find someone who works at the company whose name you can drop (with their permission).
- Find out to whom you should send the letter. (Human Resources, Committee Members, Hiring Manager etc.)
- Research the company

Guidelines to Make Your Cover Letter a Success

► Do

- Be neat, concise, professional, and courteous.
- Focus on how you can help the employer.
- If someone referred you, mention person's name and title in the first sentence.
- Include a résumé and cover letter tailored for the particular job.
- Show that you know about the company with the research you have done.
- Sign the letter in blue ink to show it's an original.
- Use direct, simple language, with action verbs.
- Write your letter yourself; it's a work sample.

► Don't

- Address the letter to a generic title, such as Dear Sir/Madam.
- Have any typos or errors.
- Make the letter more than a page.
- Repeat your résumé
- Write anything negative.
- Diminish your experiences with statements such as although, but, or etc.



Sample Cover Letter

J.J. Jean
1122 12th Street
Sacramento CA 99999
(000) 111-2222 jjjean@net.com

Date of Writing

Contact Name
Title of Contact
Name of Organization
Street Address
City, State Zip Code

Dear Mr. or Mrs. _____ And/or Committee Members,

State the purpose for writing and the name of the position you are applying for. Say who referred you or how you heard of the position. Be as specific as possible. Write with enthusiasm.

Summarize your qualifications which you think would be of the greatest interest to the employer. Look at the job announcement and use your résumé along with the results of your assessments to help you find the skills and experience that makes you an ideal candidate. Cite relevant education and experience, competencies and interests as they relate to the position. This may take two or three paragraphs.

Sincerely state your interest in their organization. Show them you have done your research by including information that you know about the company or the position. Explain why you want to work for them.

Thank them for taking time to review your enclosed résumé and/or application. Let them know you are looking forward to the next step in the process of the opportunity to meet with them in person. Tell them how they can reach you and thank them for their consideration.

Sincerely,

Your Signature

Your typed name

Problem Work History

Have gaps in your employment history? Know how to put a positive spin on your past.

Potential Barrier

Possible Solution

Job Hopping:

Use a functional résumé – group similar jobs on résumé, do not include every job you’ve ever had.

Long Time with One Employer:

List promotions as different positions; have a Professional Development section to highlight your ongoing education.

Recent Employment Gaps:

List volunteer, community work, projects, and education while unemployed.

Been Fired:

During the interview, take responsibility for your actions and explain how the experience has changed you, depending on the circumstances.

Been Laid Off:

Focus on the present to show that you’re moving on.
Do not speak disparagingly of your past employer.

Not Enough Experience:

Emphasize adaptable skills and non-work experience.

Overqualified:

Don’t include information as this may raise red flags.
Rather emphasize eagerness to work and genuine interest in the position.
Show that you will stay.

No College Degree:

If you have some college credits list the college without a graduation date.
Emphasize training, workshops, and work experience.

Criminal History:

Remember that only convictions matter. Avoid occupations related to any felony conviction (e.g. stealing = don’t try to work with money.)
Read more about this in the California Career Planning Guide.

Disability:

Address the issue head on and openly state that it will not hinder your job performance. And stress that you have the ability to overcome any challenges your condition may pose.

Poor Grades:

Focus on extracurricular activities or how you addressed your academic problem.

Job Hunting Online

The Internet has sped up the traditional job search process. Here are some tips for finding a job online.

Assessing Online:

- There are many sites that offer career assessments such as the California CareerZone at www.cacareerzone.org.

Searching Online:

- To learn about employers who are hiring, visit web pages of the employers that interest you.

Online Applications:

- Most employers have applications that are available online.

Contacting Employers Online:

- You can contact many employers online by emailing your résumé.

Email Résumé:

- Emailing résumés can be done as an attachment or embedded in the email itself. Some employers have a preference. Check with the company and see which they prefer.

Posting Your Résumé:

- Post your résumé online at any number of career sites, such as professional association sites or job hunting sites like monster.com.

Web Résumé and Portfolio:

- A web résumé (a webpage of your résumé) and portfolio (examples of your work online, such as photos or writing samples) can be helpful, especially if you specialize in website design, graphic arts, or related field. Once you create them, make sure you can keep them updated.

Waiting for Employers to Contact You:

- Passive job searching rarely succeeds, but your web résumé and portfolio can appeal to already interested employers if they have some way of finding it.

Interviewing Online:

- Online interviews are still rare but they may grow more popular as employers realize they can weed out unqualified applicants without having to speak to them directly.

If You Don't Have A Computer:

You can access a computer for free by visiting an America's Job Center of California office or your local public library. The staff at either location can help you search the Internet for jobs.

Tips for Completing an Online Application

BEFORE

- Before you begin completing an online application, have all your information with you in a text file. You can copy and paste it into the application.
- Before beginning, identify keywords that appear in the job description and incorporate them into your application.
- Allow yourself enough time to complete the application.
- Gather the e-documents you may want to send with your application.

DURING

- Follow directions.
- Fill in all the fields.
- Tailor your application and cover letter to each company.

- If the website lets you send a cover letter with your application, be sure to do so—tailor your letter to each application.
- If the website lets you attach files to your application and you can select the format, use the Portable Document Format (PDF).
- Make sure your responses are on target and *error free*.
- Review all information before hitting the “submit” button.

AFTER

- Be sure to keep track of your applications with a tracking spreadsheet that includes: company name, website address, contact person, phone, e-mail address, date submitted, job description/keywords, application status
- Clean up your social media profile; tech-savvy companies will check your social media profile postings.

STEP 5: APPLY FOR A JOB

The Application

Many companies use application forms, not résumés, to screen candidates so when filling out the application be sure to list as many special skills and qualifications as possible. Read the job description, determine the equipment and skills it requires and then show you have those qualifications and more. When stating why you left a previous job be as brief as possible, stay positive, and emphasize what you hoped to gain. List what you actually did, not just your official duties.

Create a Master Application with all the details that are common to all applications and save it in Dropbox or Google Docs so you can easily access when you need. Having a Master Application saves from having to search for necessary information when you need it and therefore saves you a lot of time when you want to submit an application.

Tips for Filling Out an Application Form

- Application forms are common for all positions so you likely will have to fill out several.
- Have all the information you need.
- Read all directions carefully.
- Be honest. Lying is not O.K.
- Be neat. A sloppy application implies you might be a lazy worker.
- Complete every section. Write 'N/A' (not applicable) when an area does not apply to you.
- List relevant experience and skills first.
- Put 'will discuss', 'open', or 'negotiable', in the space requesting salary requirements.
- Attach your résumé, but still fill in the application.
- Make sure everything on the application matches your résumé.
- Proofread it to make sure you made no mistakes.
- Keep a copy of the form, if possible.

Follow Up

- Follow up a week later to make sure your application was received.
 - Follow up shows interest, initiative, and a sense of responsibility.
 - Wait a few days to a week after applying or interviewing before calling.
 - Identify yourself and the position you've applied for.
 - Ask if the employer received everything you sent.
 - Ask when the decision might be made and if the employer needs anything else from you.
-

Applying for a Job Online

Many companies use online applications that require you to apply on an employer's website or on an online job board. Don't e-mail your resume to an employer unless the job announcement asks for it. You will need access to the Internet and an e-mail account to apply online.

If you don't have access to the Internet, you can get online for free at public libraries (many libraries have career centers with additional resources to help you with your job search) and at your local America's Job Center of California. Make sure you take a USB drive (sometimes called a flash drive or thumbnail drive). This will allow you to bring or save your resume information when working on a public computer. These drives are small and inexpensive. You can purchase one at many retail stores.

If you don't have an e-mail address, many sites offer free accounts. Use a simple e-mail address with your name or initials. Do not use e-mails like SuperHotGuy@hottie.com. This type of e-mail address is considered unprofessional.

Refer to the *Tips for Filling Out an Application Form* on the previous page before you complete an online application.

Pre-Employment Testing

Many employers test job applicants before hiring. Tests help employers screen out undesirable or inappropriately skilled candidates. The tests may be online or at a testing site. Some tests are used for screening before an interview, while some come as a final step before employment.

Test Types

- Background Check: May review your criminal record, driving record and credit history.
- Drug: Provide a urine sample to test for drugs in your system.
- Honesty and Integrity: Take a written test that inquires about your trustworthiness and honesty.
- Knowledge/Proficiency: Complete an actual task (e.g. a typing test, sort files alphabetically).
- Literacy: Take a reading or math test.
- Mental Ability/Aptitude: Take an intelligence (I.Q.) test, which employers may use to predict your learning ability.
- Medical: See a doctor to assess your physical fitness.
- Personality: Ask about your personal preferences (e.g. the Myers-Briggs assessment).
- Physical Ability: Demonstrate strength and/or flexibility if the job demands it.

Tips for Taking Online Employment Tests

Before the test:

- Determine, if possible, what type and how many tests an employer uses.
- Take a practice test.
- Set aside enough time so you don't have to hurry to finish the test(s).
- Relax and approach test taking as just one more step in the hiring process.

During the test:

- Read all the instructions carefully.
 - Read questions more than once to make sure you understand what is being asked.
 - For personality tests, answer honestly and don't try to guess the "right" answer because you want a job that matches you.
-

STEP 6: INTERVIEW

Now that you've got the interview set up, step six is to provide you with tips to convince the employer to hire you. An interview is an opportunity to demonstrate that you will make a good fit for the company.

Upon completion of this section you will be able to:

1. Carry out effective job interviews.
2. Describe the actions to take before, during and after the interview.
3. Assess job offers and negotiate employment conditions.

Preparation

Prepare for an interview by effectively knowing your goal and the employer's goal.

Your Goal

- Your goal is to answer these questions:
 - Do you want this job?
 - Will I fit into this work environment?
 - Can I prove that I'm what the employer wants?

The Employer's Goal

- Fill the position so that work can continue.
- Hire someone competent, trustworthy, enthusiastic, and socially skilled.

Interview Types

There are many types of interviews; be prepared for them all!

- **Screening:** You are interviewed (often on the phone) to check for initial qualifications.
- **Traditional:** You sit and talk with the interviewer(s), usually at the employer's location.
- **Behavioral:** You perform tasks or take tests for the job or answer questions on how you would handle a situation.
- **Technical:** Specific questions related to the job requirements or equipment or technology mastery.
- **Phone or Computer:** You answer questions via phone, email or online form.
- **One-on-One:** You are interviewed by an individual.
- **Team or Committee:** You are interviewed by a number of people at the same time.
- **Group:** You are interviewed at the same time as other candidates.
- **Multiple Level:** you are interviewed individually by different people in a planned series of interviews.

First Questions

As soon as you're invited for an interview, get the details.

- Ask for location and directions to the interview site. Take a test drive to be sure you know where it is and how long it should take to get there.
 - Ask for the start time and expected duration of the interview.
 - Ask for each interviewer's name and title.
 - Ask if there will be tests or tasks involved.
 - Ask if you will need a writing sample or portfolio.
-

Answering Behavioral Interview Questions Using STAR

Telling success stories about your work experience make you memorable and believable to the interviewer. Many employers will give you an opportunity to give examples of success stories using behavioral questions. Samples of behavioral questions are given in the 'Super Seven Questions' section.

Prior to the interview, write out an answer to each of the questions using the STAR system explained below.

Make half the stories about accomplishments and the other half negative ones that you turned around or coped well in. Use the STAR method to detail how the situations were dealt with.



Describe a **S**ituation where an issue or a problem came up (or)

Describe a **T**ask that was causing problems

Describe the **A**ction you took to address the problem stemming from the situation or task

Describe the **R**esult of the action you took, be sure to indicate what you learned from the whole process.

NEVER disparage a
co-worker, supervisor,
or customer when telling
your story.

Provide specific, measurable details when discussing your accomplishments.

Quantify your results if possible using dollars, time, percentages or amounts.

Practice telling the stories until you feel comfortable and natural.

Why Employers Ask Questions

One thing you can count on is employers asking you many questions. *But why?*

Employers want to lower their risk and make sure they are making a good decision.

Employers face huge costs when they hire the wrong person, these costs include:

Hiring: Expenses for ads, sign-on fees.

Time: Spent interviewing the bad hire and checking references.

Training: Time spent training the bad hire.

Damage: Damage done if the bad hire injures people or property.

Repairs: Time spent repairing the poorly done work of the bad hire.

Replacing: Cost of the time spent replacing the bad hire.

Productivity: Productivity and profit lost while the position is vacant.

Super Seven Characteristics

There are really just seven characteristics an employer wants to know you possess during an interview. If you can answer the questions designed to help them discover if you have these characteristics, you can handle anything that an employer asks you. Remember to be honest as you answer these questions. If you get the job, you want to be able to live up to your answers!

1. *Are you trustworthy?*

Concern: The employer doesn't want to hire someone he/she can't depend on or who will steal from the company.

Key words: Personal qualities "Who are you"

Response: Respond honestly. Make good eye contact. Be genuine and your appearance, words, tone, body language will match and you'll be trusted.

2. *Can you do the job?*

Concern: The employer doesn't want to hire someone who is incompetent or unprepared.

Key words: Skills, abilities, strengths and situation

Response: Focus on your skills and how you can help the organization and employer immediately and in the future.

3. *Will you really work hard at the job?*

Concern: The employer doesn't want to hire anyone who is lazy, has a bad attitude, or won't work hard.

Key words: Initiative, attitude

Response: Show your enthusiasm and eagerness to work. Tell stories about your good work ethic.

4. *Will you fit?*

Concern: The employer doesn't want to hire someone who will become unhappy or who will antagonize others.

Key words: Relations, co-workers, boss, customers

Response: Describe positive interactions you have had with supervisors, co-workers, and customers in the past. Get along well with the interviewer!

5. *Will you leave soon?*

Concern: The employer doesn't want to invest time and money in someone who'll soon quit.

Key words: Future, plans, goals, objectives.

Response: Say that you want to build a career at the company and plan to be there for the foreseeable future.

6. *Are you safe?*

Concern: The employer doesn't want to hire someone who may harm any person or property.

Key words: Conflict, stress

Response: Few questions directly address this concern. Always be friendly. Don't try to intimidate. Keep your appearance neat, professional, and relaxed.

7. *Can I afford you?*

Concern: The employer doesn't want to waste time if he/she can't afford you.

In addition, he/she may want to pay you the minimum possible and wants to see if you will accept that.

Key words: Benefits, salary, over-time, compensation

Response: Answer such questions with "Are you offering me the job?" If "Yes", begin negotiating. If "no", say you want to continue talking about whether you're a good fit for the job before discussing compensation.

Possible Interview Questions

The following questions may come up in your interview. Write down your answers to each question, and be sure to use the STAR method on the behavioral questions. Can you identify which “Super Seven” characteristic is being asked in each of the questions below?

- 1. *Tell me about yourself.***
 - 2. *What are your strengths and weaknesses?***
 - 3. *How do you define “being on time”?***
 - 4. *How would you describe yourself?***
 - 5. *Describe a time when you handled a stressful situation successfully. (Behavioral question)***
 - 6. *Tell me about a time when you solved a problem. (Behavioral question)***
 - 7. *Give an example where you set and achieved a goal. (Behavioral question)***
 - 8. *How do you resolve conflict? (Behavioral question)***
 - 9. *Describe a time when you had to follow a policy you didn’t agree with. (Behavioral question)***
 - 10. *Describe a situation where your job required you to go “above and beyond the call of duty”. (Behavioral question)***
 - 11. *Describe a recent situation where you dealt with an upset customer or co-worker. (Behavioral question)***
 - 12. *Why did you leave your last position?***
 - 13. *Why do you want to work for our company?***
 - 14. *Where do you want to be in five years?***
-

Questions for you to ask the interviewers

During an interview you will have the opportunity to ask questions of the employer. When you ask questions it shows you are interested in the job and that you are prepared. Be sure to limit yourself to a few questions, and also make sure to ask any questions that you may have come up with during the interview.

Some questions you might want to ask:

What are your expectations of the person coming into this position?

If I were selected for this position, which training courses would I attend?

How does this company retain employees?

Please describe an ideal employee.

What skills are needed to perform this job?

How do you measure and review performance?

Please describe a typical day/week on this job.

What are the best and worst aspects of this job?

How long do people usually stay in this position?

Why did the last person leave this position?

How does this position fit in the organization?

How many employees are in this department?

How long have you worked here?

Can you describe the company culture?

What are the next steps after our meeting?

When will you make your decision?

When can I expect to hear from you?

Questions Not to Ask

Some questions you should not ask at all during an interview.

- ✓ Salary or Stock Options
 - ✓ Items already answered in the interview.
 - ✓ Information you should already know from basic research.
 - ✓ Benefits: holidays
Sick leave
Vacation time
-

Research

Research is crucial before you go to an interview. Have facts about the employer.

Facts about the job in general.

What to Know:

- Average salary, nationally, and locally in the occupation for which you are applying.
- Economic outlook: is this field growing or declining.
- Typical advancement opportunities.

Where to Find the Information:

- Career-oriented websites:
www.cacareerzone.org;
<http://salary.com/>; <http://www.payscale.com>)
- Professional associations
- People employed in the position

Facts about the employer.

What to Know:

- Products they make
- Organizational structure
- Services they provide
- Financial status, e.g. stocks prices
- Competitors
- Reputation
- Recent major changes in employment, product mix or competitive position
- Upcoming major changes
- Company mission statement

Where to get the Information:

- Public library
- Company's newsletter and PR publications
- Company website
- Company annual reports
- Internet search engines
- People you know and their friends.

Where to get the Information, continued

- Company customers
- Human resources and public relations departments
- Competitors and former employees

The Interview

Before an Interview

- Be on time, clean, and prepared!

How to Know What to Wear

- Visit the company and observe what other people are wearing, then dress one step more formally.
- Ask the human resources department (not the hiring manager!) what would be appropriate.
- For office jobs, wear a dark suit if you are a male, wear a dark pant or skirt suit if you are a female.

Where to get the Clothes

- If you don't have something in your closet and are on a tight budget you might:
 - Borrow from a friend.
 - Purchase something from a thrift shop.
 - Check local not-for-profit organizations to see if they provide business clothes for workers in need.

What to Bring

- A neat and clean briefcase or portfolio.
 - An umbrella or coat depending on the weather.
 - ***Never bring another person!*** If someone accompanies you, he or she should wait out of the employer's view.
-

► **Grooming Basics for Women**

- Clean and styled hair.
- Wear discrete, sparing makeup.
- Do not wear perfume.
- Wear conservative and small jewelry items (if any).
- Wear skin toned hosiery-not white or shiny.
- Carry a clean, not over stuffed handbag.

► **Grooming Basics for Men**

- Be clean shaven or at least neatly trimmed.
- Have fresh washed trimmed hair.
- Wear a conservative tie.
- Wear a white or blue button-down long sleeved shirt.
- Wear no jewelry except watch, wedding ring or class ring.

► **Interview Grooming Checklist**

The interview grooming checklist can help you prepare your wardrobe and appearance.

- Neat clothes without patches, tears, stains etc.
- Clean teeth and fresh breath.
- Cleaned and trimmed fingernails.
- Avoid perfume and cologne.
- Clean dress shoes.
- No hats.
- No clothes with words on them.

► **Psych Yourself Mentally**

- Make sure that you prepare a positive mental attitude.
- Remind yourself that you have a great deal to offer.
- Remember a successful moment in your life.
- Remember that interviewers are ordinary people like you.
- Tell yourself that you deserve the job, you just need to prove it!

► **Rehearse**

- A little practice beforehand helps calm your anxiety.
- Review your unique skills and qualities.
- Study your résumé and application form.
- Practice answering questions with a friend or a video camera.
- Identify your interviewing strengths and areas to develop.
- Don't over rehearse or memorize your answers.
- Make sure your interview clothes fit.

► **A Few Days Before**

- Drive to the interview location to determine travel time.
- Clean your car, the interviewer might walk you to it.
- Put gas in your car.
- Re-confirm with the person who will take you.
- Have a back-up plan in case all else fails.

► **The Night Before**

- Make sure your nails look good. Clean.
- Take a warm bath
- Get your support network ready for the next day
- Check the weather forecast for the next day
- Set aside everything that you need to bring
- Get plenty of sleep

► **What to Bring**

Set all your materials by the door so you don't forget:

- Notepad and pen
- Your career portfolio
- Extra résumés
- Copies of your references list
- Your questions and answers
- Extra pair of hose if you're a woman

► **The Morning of**

When you rise for the day, review this list:

- Avoid a lot of jewelry, make-up and cologne
- Avoid too much caffeine
- Brush your teeth
- Leave early in order to arrive 10 minutes before the interview

► **Just Before Walking in**

When you arrive at the interview site:

- Freshen up in the bathroom
- Remove any gum or candy from your mouth
- Turn off your cell phone or pager
- Wait patiently for the interviewer
- Look around and notice your surroundings
- Breathe slowly and deeply

During an Interview

Now that you've got your foot in the door, start the interview right with these suggestions.

When You Enter

- The interview begins when you arrive at the building
- Be pleasant to the receptionist/secretary
- Introduce yourself to the interviewer
- Make eye contact and shake hands firmly
- Say you are pleased to be there
- Sit down only after you're invited to do so
- Take out your notebook and pen
- Wait for the interviewer to talk first
- Address the interviewer(s) by name
- Comment on the office environment

Make Your Case

- Explain why you're the best person for the job
- Don't expect your application or résumé to do your selling for you
- Focus on what you can do for the company
- Explain how your skills will help
- Speak firmly and loudly enough to be heard, but not too loud
- Never answer with just a "yes" or "no"
- Show off the research you've done on the company
- Show items from your career portfolio.
- Show an interest in the organization, not just the specific job duties you may be assigned.

Assess the Situation

- You're an equal partner in this discussion!
- Treat the interview as a conversation, not an interrogation.
- Stick to any questions you planned.
- Think of yourself in problem solving mode.
- Listen, respond and ask questions.

The Right Attitude

- Show that you want the job!
- Show an eagerness to work.
- Be positive – don't say anything negative and do not act desperate.
- Be energetic – don't slump, yawn, smoke, chew, or look bored.
- Stay cool headed – keep your temper.
- Stay calm – don't fidget or be overly loud.
- Be real – don't be fake or overly flattering.
- Be serious – don't tell jokes.
- Be professional – use your best manners.

How to Answer Interview Questions

- Take your time answering questions, they are important.
- Keep answers short.
- Be honest, never lie.
- Say, "*I don't know*" when you don't.
- Don't discuss your personal life.
- Don't flirt.
- Tell stories when possible, using the STAR method, which demonstrates your abilities.
- When you're stumped, ask the interviewer to rephrase the question.
- Allow there to be silence sometimes.
- If you need time to think about how to answer a question, say "*Let me think how I want to answer that.*"
- Avoid slang and "pause" words like "*um, uh*"
- Listen more than you speak

Why You Should Listen

- It helps you answer naturally and effectively.
- It tells you when to speak.
- It helps you catch trick questions designed to see if you're really paying attention or are a "yes person".

How to Listen

- Listening requires you to focus all your energy on the other person, not on what you'll say next.
- Pay attention to what the interviewers say and don't say.
- Maintain eye contact.
- Nod, smile and let your face show interest.
- Take occasional notes if you need to.

Before You Leave

When the interview ends, leave gracefully by taking some action before you go:

- Ask for a business card.
- If you want the job, look the interviewers in the eye and say you want to work with them.
- Ask them to describe the next steps in the process.
- Thank them for their time and interest.
- Shake hands.
- Smile at and thank the receptionist when you go.

After the Interview

► **Immediately After the Interview:**

- Take notes about names, personal information, and what you learned about the company.
- Congratulate yourself for doing your best.
- Send thank you letters to each interviewer.
- Evaluate your strengths and weaknesses during the interview and identify how you can improve.

Thank you notes are another great follow-up tool.

Send a thank you note within 24 hours after an interview.

Make your note hand written, typed or emailed depending on what the company prefers.

Mail it, fax it, or hand-deliver it depending on when the employer will make a decision.

Repeat your interest in the job

Emphasize or correct a point that you made during the interview.

Add information you forgot to say in the interview.

A Few Days Later

- Call the lead interviewer to express your interest and check on the decision's status.
- If you have other offers, let the interviewer know – it may help prod a decision.
- Ask a few more questions about the job – it shows your enthusiasm and thoughtfulness.
- Be patient.

To Accept an Offer

- ✓ Call the employer immediately and arrange to meet to discuss terms.
- ✓ After the negotiations, send a follow-up letter to express your enthusiasm and confirm the terms.

To Decline an Offer

- ✓ Notify the employer immediately.
- ✓ Keep the doors open, e.g. *"this position doesn't seem like the best fit, but please consider me for other openings."*

If you Don't Get an Offer

- ✓ Ask why you were turned down; it might help you improve your interview skills or change directions.
- ✓ Ask if the employer knows of other opportunities.
- ✓ Ask the employer to keep you in mind for future positions.
- ✓ Send another follow-up letter, thanking the interviewers for their time.
- ✓ Assess what you might do differently next time.
- ✓ Remember that being the most qualified doesn't mean you'll always get the job.

Negotiations

Reasons to Negotiate

- You'll feel better about your job.
- Your supervisor may respect you for it.
- You'll demonstrate how you'll negotiate future assignments and other issues at work.

Wages may be Fixed but you can Negotiate Other Benefits

- Hours (numbers, shifts, flexibility of overtime)
- Leave (number of days)
- Tools, supplies and equipment
- Work space/office
- Insurance (when eligible for..)
- Ongoing education/training (type, frequency)
- Tuition reimbursement
- Job title
- Parking
- Dependent care
- Stock options

How to Negotiate Effectively

- Focus on the employer's needs, not yours!
 - Research beforehand so you know what the position is worth for that industry and size of company and how the company is doing.
 - Have a positive attitude.
 - Be ready to show why you're worth what you want.
 - Let the employer make the first offer.
 - Don't accept the first offer or show that you think it's good.
 - Counter-offer, asking for a reasonable percentage more depending on your qualifications, then BE QUIET.
 - Don't make another offer until the employer responds to your first request!
 - Get the final offer in writing and signed.
-

STEP 7: START YOUR JOB!

Congratulations! You got the job. But your work doesn't end here. You should thank those that helped along the way. You should think about what you learned about yourself during the job search process and try to improve areas of weakness. Above all, start learning about your new job and keep improving your skills. Someday you might be looking for a job again. To excel at your new job and prepare you for the next job you need to be S-T-R-A-T-E-G-I-C!

- S** **Seek Advice**
Continue to connect with people. Ask those you know or meet for career advice. Read career management books. Go to a career counselor. Visit a California Career One-Stop center and ask for assistance. Learn what works and then do it!
- T** **Take Risks**
Step outside your routine. Ask for new assignments that will stretch your skills and raise your profile. Research and request equipment that will help you do your job better. Do work that may earn you a promotion. Consider changing fields.
- R** **Research**
Assess yourself: identify and study your interests in depth. Read about other companies and occupations, the economy and trends in your field. Research gives you an edge; if your circumstances change or you change, you'll be ready.
- A** **Alliances**
Develop relationships with people in your organization, profession, industry, and community. They may bring you opportunities and information. Volunteer and share your time and talents with others. Give back the help you received when you were job searching.
- T** **Training**
Your success depends on lifelong learning. Increasing your knowledge and skills makes you more flexible, able to take on different types of work when your first choice isn't available. Read about your field, attend conferences and workshops. Take courses at your local college. Go back to school. Your employer might pay for some of this training, so investigate it!
- E** **Energetic**
Take care of yourself. Eat well and exercise regularly. Surround yourself with upbeat, supportive people. Stay positive; it's the best energizer of all. It helps you attract healthy people and get more done.
- G** **Goals**
Establish goals that reflect your purpose or mission in life. Visualize yourself in your ideal job. What do you do? Who's with you? What's the environment? Develop and implement the steps needed to achieve your vision.
- I** **Innovative**
Try something new so you can do your work better, faster, cheaper. Innovation combines creativity with common sense and requires you to turn your ideas into reality. Suggest ways to improve operations.
- C** **Commitment**
Commit to guiding your career's future. Plan your life – don't just react to events. Then implement your ideas. Invest in yourself and your future the way an entrepreneur would.
-

Summary and Online Resources

Job search is a process that requires time and energy. Knowing about yourself, your skills and abilities, and the kind of job you want is very important. It is a bit like detective work to find the right fit, but worth the effort in the end.

Pulling all your resources together is necessary to accomplish the goal of finding the right job. Your portfolio, résumé, and cover letters are all samples of your work. Do the best job possible.

Use all the resources you can to make your job search successful. Networking and the Internet are important. Equally important is the use of Job Centers, EDD, and online resources.

Associations and agencies are there to help so use them.

Having a support system to lean on can be crucial when the search gets difficult.

The interview is a time for you to find out more about the employer as well as them about you. Take this as an opportunity to shine by using the **S-T-A-R** method (see page 26).

Career development does not stop once you get the position.

As you learn new skills and acquire new knowledge, there will be new opportunities in your career as well.

Online Resources

California Career Resource Network
www.californiacareers.info

California CareerZone
www.cacareerzone.org

California Career Center
www.calcareercenter.org

California Employment Development (EDD)
Find a Job
http://www.edd.ca.gov/Find_a_Job.htm

EDD Labor Market Information for Job Seekers and Students
<http://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/customers/job-seekers.html>

America's Job Center of California locator
<http://www.americasjobcenter.ca.gov/>

Job Seekers Guide for Northern California
nca.jobseekersguide.org

Job Seekers Guide for Southern California
sca.jobseekersguide.org
