



Onward

Career search planning guide

Resources *for* Living®

Contents

Dealing with change and loss 3

How to budget 4

Sample budget 5-6

Sample letter to creditors 7

Your job search 8

Personal review 9

Power verbs 10

Networking 11

Informational interview 12

Resumes 13

Tips for writing effective resumes 14

Styles of resumes 15-17

Resume critique worksheet 18

Cover letters 19-20

Interviews 21-23

Post interview 24





Dealing with change and loss

Step 1: Recognize your feelings

Regular *reactions* to the loss of a job

- **Acceptance:** "I thought this would be my turn."
- **Shock and disbelief:** "I can't believe this has happened to me."
- **Escape:** "I need to get out of here."
- **Hostility:** "I'm furious that this happened."

Regular *emotions* after a job loss

- Embarrassment
- Sadness
- Anger
- Self-pity
- Fear

Feelings self-assessment:

- Where are you in your reaction to this loss?
- What emotions are you having trouble with right now?
- In past difficult times, what coping skills helped the most?
- What coping skills to deal with loss and emotions can you apply to your current situation?

Step 2: Assess your personal situation

- Most people go through a process that begins with one or more of the emotions listed above. Then they tend to go through bargaining or resistance and end with acceptance.
- Avoid getting stuck in your first reactions to the news. Vent feelings in an appropriate manner. Avoid saying or doing things to co-workers, spouse, family, or yourself that you might later regret. Don't ignore or bury these feelings hoping they'll go away.
- Tell someone about your job loss. You may be tempted to keep it a secret. But people in your life can offer you emotional support. And they may know about open jobs that could be a good fit for you. If you don't know what to say, just be honest. For example, you might say: "I've been laid off. I'm kind of in shock and to be honest with you, I'm scared. My plan is to pull together information to start my job search this afternoon. I've appreciated your friendship and would like your emotional support. Also, if you know of any open positions, do you think you could let me know?"
- Keep yourself healthy by continuing to eat properly, exercise and allow time for fun. Being unemployed doesn't mean that you don't deserve to have fun or take care of your needs. Staying fit will help boost your spirits and energy while you search for a new job. (And this can make you more attractive to employers!)

- Plan a bare-bones budget to help as you go through your job search. If you tend to deal with your feelings by shopping, find other ways of coping. Try journaling or talking to a trusted friend.
- Avoid "taking a break" before beginning your job search. You may want to treat your search like it's your new job. Get up and get dressed like you're going to work each day. Spend regular business hours searching for your next position.
- Avoid dipping into your 401K or other retirement plans during this time. The tax and long-term consequences to this decision can be very detrimental.
- Contact any creditors you are worried about. Explain your current job status and see if they're willing to adjust your payments until you find a new job.
- Avoid jumping into bankruptcy. The National Foundation for Credit Counseling® (NFCC®) is a non-profit agency that has helped thousands of people to avoid bankruptcy while climbing out of debt. You can reach them at **(800) 338-2277** and [nfcc.org](https://www.nfcc.org).





How to budget

If you're often out of money by payday, you might not know how to budget well. Putting a budget together is even more important when you're between jobs. Learn strategies to plan a realistic budget and put you in control of your spending.

Keep track of your spending

Before starting the formal budget process, buy a small notebook and use it to keep track of how you spend your cash. At the end of a month, look over your notes. You may be surprised at how much you spend each day. Small things like lunches, snacks, newspapers and magazines can add up. When you see where you're spending your money, it will be easier to decide where you can cut back.

Be reasonable

Most of us can probably live within a very strict budget for a short period of time. But after a while, this can feel more like a burden than a blessing. It's important to start out with a budget you can live with, especially if you've never used a budget before. If you're overly strict, you might decide you can't live with a budget and abandon the plan entirely. Try to plan a budget that's realistic. And find cheap and free ways to reward yourself and have fun.

List main concerns

When you make your budget, have a financial goal. This can help keep you on track. Make a list of things you need and a list of things you want. Knowing why you're keeping a budget can help you be realistic. Set your priorities and save each month for major expenses.

Be flexible

If you find your budget is too tight (or not tight enough), feel free to change it. In fact, it might take you a few months to find a budget that fits. In the meantime, you're making a step toward controlling your spending and reaching your financial goals.

Having a financial plan can help you find a new job. You'll show up calm, confident and ready to get that next job.



Sample budget



For the month of _____	Budget	Actual	Difference
Income			
Spouse's income			
Alimony/child support			
Social Security/disability			
Savings/interest			
Reimbursements			
Other			





Expenses	Budget	Actual	Difference
Rent/ mortgage			
Home insurance			
Utilities/ telephone			
Cable			
Groceries			
Laundry/dry cleaning			
Personal care			
Car payments			
Car insurance			
Gas			
Daycare/baby sitting			
Spousal/child support			
Dining out			
Recreation/vacation			
Charity			
Credit cards			
Other			
Other			
Total expenses			
Total income			



Sample letter to creditors

Date:

Company name

Company address

Re: Account #_____

Dear _____,

Due to _____, I am experiencing financial difficulties. Because of this, I am unable to continue making payments at the current monthly amount.

I have prepared a monthly budget for my basic, necessary living expenses, and am allocating as much as possible to paying off my debt.

I am willing to commit to a monthly payment to you of \$____, until such time as the balance is paid off. Please let me know if this is acceptable to you. If I do not hear from you within 10 working days of the date of this letter, I will take that as an acceptance of my offer.

Sincerely,

(Your Name Signed)

Your name typed

Suggestions for using this sample letter:

- Be sure to include your account or reference number.
- Keep the explanation of your problem short and to the point. Examples: "my layoff and unemployment," "the serious illness of my spouse," or "a significant drop in my income."
- Keep a copy of each letter you send.

Your job search



The first step in starting a job hunt is to make a plan. This will help you understand your abilities and needs, which can pay off as you search for a job. It can assist you as you choose which positions to pursue and prepare your interviews.

Know yourself

You're about to sell an important product — Yourself! Successful salespeople know their products inside and out. So, you want to be able to communicate your skills, what makes you stand out and why an employer should hire you.

Ask yourself:

- What are my important characteristics?
- What am I known for?
- If I were to describe myself in three words, what would they be?

Your brand

Your brand is the way you present yourself to others. It leaves people with a feeling (either positive or negative) after they've worked with you. Your brand is made up of your:

- **Roles** — Your relationships and how you see yourself (parent, hard worker, friend, etc.). What are your roles?
- **Standards** — How you do things (client-focused, prepared, flexible, collaborative, creative, detail-oriented, etc.). What are your standards?
- **Style** — How your personality goes into your work (positive, energetic, compassionate, professional, funny, etc.). What's your style?





Personal review

Taking stock of past workplace and personal successes can help you understand your skills. You can use this knowledge to help you decide what roles are appropriate for you.

Try to prepare at least 20 specific accomplishments you've achieved. To develop these, answer the following questions (writing your answers can help you develop your thoughts). If you have trouble thinking of 20 things, take the perspective of your coworkers, supervisors, friends and others. Ask yourself what you've done that they would appreciate. You'll find you have many more accomplishments than you originally realized.

- What was the problem or situation before you took action? Be specific.
- How did the problem come to your attention? How did you identify the possible solutions?
- What did you do? Describe the actions you took and how you created a solution.
- What were the results of your actions?





Power verbs

When you describe your successes, try to include:

Actions: Verbs showing strong personal involvement

Results: Specific description that relates to the job you want

Quantifiers: Clear examples using measurable figures

Examples:

- **Reduced** inventory losses by ___% after IMPLEMENTING a tracking program that I designed.
- **Saved** \$_____ by CONSOLIDATING purchasing into a centralized function and LEVERAGING the corporate purchasing dollars.
- **Managed** the relocation and consolidation of a data center to improve user satisfaction, SAVING \$_____ annually.
- **Decreased** delivery time by __ days by having the suppliers stock our standard order items.

Other “action verbs”:

- Advised
- Analyzed
- Balanced
- Conducted
- Converted
- Coordinated
- Designed
- Developed
- Directed
- Evaluated
- Expanded
- Expedited
- Facilitated
- Generated
- Hired
- Initiated
- Introduced
- Investigated
- Lead
- Managed
- Marketed
- Negotiated
- Operated
- Oversaw
- Presented
- Recruited
- Reorganized
- Researched
- Simplified
- Supervised
- Summarized
- Strengthened
- Trained



Networking



You may have heard the phrase, “It’s now what you know, it’s who you know.” This can be true when you’re looking for a job. Having a connection to those who are hiring can help set you apart in a stack of resumes.

In fact, the US. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates about 70% of all jobs are found through networking.¹ Which means, you only have a 30% chance of being hired if you don’t know anyone at the company. And if there’re a lot of applicants with high qualifications, your chances of getting hired may be even lower.

What is networking?

Networking is building relationships with people in your industry. Networking involves sharing information about job opportunities. Networking can help you:

- Achieve your goals
- Build and maintain relationships
- Find jobs that work for you

Ways to network

Want to create a network but don’t know where to start? Here’s good news — you already have a network.

- **Think about who you know in your daily life.** These could be family, friends, coworkers, classmates, teachers, former employers and so on. Each of these people may be able to connect you with others to help you meet your goals.
- **Sign up for LinkedIn.** LinkedIn’s corporate talent solutions allow companies to recruit employees through the site. And you can apply for jobs using your LinkedIn profile.
- **Meet people.** Go to industry events and activities where you can meet others. Look up networking events, volunteer for local charities, join toastmasters or attend a Meetup. The more people you know, the bigger your network will be.
- **Ask for help.** People often like to help others and share their expertise. Can you think of people who have your dream job? Do you know people who are well-connected? Invite them to coffee and pick their brains (and then pick up the tab, too).

What to do when you’re networking

- Have a 30 second pitch. Be able to say who you are, what your skills are and what your goals are in just a few sentences. You never know when you’ll be on an elevator with a CEO.
- Carry updated resumes, business cards and cover letters to share with others. The more materials you can spread around your professional community, the more success you will have.
- Maintain and update a contact record of your personal network. Include notes on past conversations. Attempt to contact your contacts regularly. Establish and maintain relationships.

What not to do when you’re networking

- Do not focus only on those that have the power to hire. Networking is often very successful if you target all levels of your field.
- Do not consider networking to be strictly a job-finding technique. Networking is about getting to know the field and the relevant actors in the field.

Networking resources

- [Networking is Not Working: Stop Collecting Business Cards and Start Making Meaningful Connections](#) by Derek Coburn
- [The Power of Who: You Already Know Everyone You Need to Know](#) by Bob Beaudine
- [**Key Career Networking Resources for Jobseekers**](#)



¹Harden, Paige. [How to land a job by networking](#). The Washington Post. Accessed March 2020.



Informational interview

Informational interviews are a job search technique used to obtain information about an occupation, firm or industry. They can be set up by phone, mail or through a personal contact.

When selecting whom to target, be careful not to focus exclusively on people who hire. Often these people are busy and not able to spend time with you. Instead, look for professionals who can help you find and qualify for a job. Don't try to use your informational interview as a way to get a job interview or offer. Informational interviews are about sharing information.

Where to look for contacts

- Colleagues in your field with whom you have or have not worked.
- Professional associations
- Consulting agencies
- Friends
- Family
- Public service groups and private clubs
- Colleges and universities
- Professional magazines, journals and other publications
- Newspapers, web-based articles and television reports
- LinkedIn and employee directories
- Volunteer organizations where you can volunteer your time and develop new contacts while expanding knowledge of your field

Remember, as the individual hoping to gain information, you control the informational interview. Be prepared with a list of questions, such as:

- How did you get your job?
- What is your educational background?
- What are the good things about your job?
- What are the problems of the job?
- What are the most common problems of this job, firm, or industry?
- What would a salary range for this position be?
- Can you tell me about promotional opportunities in this field?
- What are your services, products, etc.?
- What is the future of this industry?
- How does your firm compare with others?
- Ask them if they'd be willing to review your resume. Ask what other experiences would be helpful for you.

Most important: At the end of the interview, ask for 3 other contacts for informational interviews.

After the informational interview, be sure to debrief and write down your impressions. Ask yourself:

- What did I learn?
- What was that individual's career path?
- What special characteristics did he/she have that I might imitate?
- Why is he/she successful in this job?
- Is this a job that I want?
- Is this industry the one I want to work in?
- Do I need to see others to get more information?
- Was he/she objective?
- Did I remember to get other contacts?
- Based on what I learned, what can I start doing now to increase my probability of finding a job?

Other facts about informational interviews:

- These interviews should not exceed one hour. And be prepared to meet for as little as 15 minutes.
- Send a thank you note after the conversation.
- This technique has been somewhat overdone and busy individuals are more reluctant to give you anything other than telephone time. So be prepared when you make your first call with your list of questions.



Resumes



Your resume and LinkedIn profile function as an introduction to you. They present an image of you by showing your basic talents, strengths, education and experiences. They should make the reader want to talk to you. A good resume and LinkedIn profile will help you effectively highlight your positive qualities in an interview.

Most people make two mistakes on their resume. First, they try to tell too much. Second, they focus on titles and positions instead of their talents and strengths.

It is important to keep in mind that your resume and LinkedIn profile are:

- **Sales brochures for you.** These are sales tools. So they should focus on your skills and accomplishments. And they should convince the reader that you're worth exploring further.
- **A first impression of you.** Most employers are looking for a person who fits specific traits which will help them be successful. Your resume and LinkedIn profiles should provide them with a reflection of your personal style and strengths. A long list of your past duties doesn't let them know about your personal strengths. This is why it's important to complete the previous exercises on identifying accomplishments before starting the rest of your job campaign
- **A positive, lasting reminder of you.** Your resume and LinkedIn profiles should be an introduction to what you'll say in an interview. They must reflect your personal traits and accomplishments.

The key elements of a good resume and LinkedIn profile:

- **Heading:** Resumes should start with your name, phone number and email address. Your LinkedIn profile should feature a professional-looking headshot and an attention-getting headline.
- **Summary:** A short and concise statement that describes your qualifications and skills.
- **Employment history:** A summary of work experiences that shows your accomplishments and demonstrates your ability to get results in that position. These should only be a few sentences long on your resume. But they can be up to 2000 characters long on LinkedIn. Not sure what to put? Ask yourself: "What kind of work do I do?" "Who do I help?" "What problem do I solve?" "What am I best at?" and "What kind of job am I looking for?"
- **Education:** A listing of your educational background including highest degree and technical training.
- **Professional memberships:** Memberships and offices held in organizations that support your continuing development and networking.
- **Publications:** A listing of publications which lend support to your qualifications as an expert in the field.



Tips for writing an effective resume



Like everything, résumés go through trends. If it's been awhile since you submitted a resume, things may have changed. For example, not long ago it was "fashionable" to end your resume with the phrase "references available upon request." This is no longer true. Here are some do's and don'ts of resume writing:

Do

- Keep your font classic and easy to read
- Make it easy to contact you by including your phone number and email. Check that your voicemail system is set up
- Avoid using "aol" and "yahoo" email addresses as they may open you up to age discrimination
- Limit your resume to text only. Avoid putting a picture on it.
- Have a resume that's machine readable
- Make it look nice - Use a clean layout and matching fonts throughout
- Be honest about your experience
- List your most important points first. Many employers scan a resume before deciding to read it
- Have someone proofread your resume for you
- Name your document
"FirstNameLastNameResumeMonthYear.pdf" so it's easy for employers to find

Don't

- Use more than five bullets per section
 - Include acronyms or jargon
 - Have any spelling or grammatical errors
 - Include high school experience if you have any college experience
 - Say "references available upon request." You can bring a list of references with you when you interview
 - Use an "objective" statement. Your objective is to get the job
 - Use a word template. It's forgettable and boring. Instead, find a template on sites like Pinterest or Canva
 - Include personal information such as marital status, religion, number of children or general physical condition
- Keep in mind, many employers use applicant tracking systems (ATS) to narrow down job applicants. These computerized systems look for keywords in your resume to see if you're a good fit.

So how do you get past the ATS and in front of a person? Include keywords from a job posting in your resume. You can use a site like [jobscan.com](https://www.jobscan.com) to check your resume and LinkedIn profile for the right keywords.



Resume style



Most resume styles described in books and computer programs are based on variations and combinations of two formats: reverse chronological and functional.

Choose the right style for you — one that highlights your strengths and de-emphasizes your weaknesses. Whichever resume style you choose, make sure to include examples of results that you produced that benefited your previous employer(s). Employers want to see measurable achievements. They want to know that they're going to hire someone who can contribute to their organization's bottom line.

The reverse chronological resume

This format lists the jobs you've had by dates of employment, starting with your most recent job. The usual arrangement is: dates of employment, job title, name and address of company, a brief description of the duties performed, skills used, and major ways you have benefited the company. Make sure you include all transferable skills. This format stresses what you accomplished in each of the positions you held.

Use if

- You've progressed up a clearly defined career ladder and are looking for career advancement
- You have recent experience in the field you're seeking
- You have a continuous work history in your field

Do not use if

- You've had many different types of jobs
- You've changed jobs frequently
- You are trying to switch fields
- You are just starting out in your field

The functional resume

This format emphasizes your skills and accomplishments as they relate to the job for which you are applying. Like other resume formats, you should include all transferable skills. A functional resume presents a profile of your experience based on professional strengths or skills groupings. Your employment history usually follows, but in less detail than in a chronological resume.

Use if

- You have worked for only one employer, but performed a wide variety of jobs
- You are applying for a job that's different from your present or most recent job
- You have little or no job experience. Emphasize activities that show your skills (like leading a local club)
- You have gaps in your work history
- You're re-entering the job market after several years of freelancing, consulting, homemaking or unemployment.

Do not use if

- Your work history is stable and continuous, because employers sometimes assume that a functional resume hides a spotty, unstable work history





Sample: reverse chronological resume

First name Last name

Street address

City, State, Zip

Email address, if applicable

(999) 999 – 9999

Summary: Sales and marketing professional with 12 years progressively responsible experience with multi-outlet retailers. Demonstrated ability to motivate sales force and increase sales. Skilled in developing advertising campaigns and sales promotions.

Experience:

2017 — present

Assistant to the Marketing Director,
Colonial Kitchens, Inc., Columbus, OH

Supervised a staff of 10, covering operations in three states

- Introduced new marketing techniques and set-up training program for key staff to implement new procedures
- Developed promotional campaign, including yearly contest for naming new product styles
- Developed successful advertising campaign using radio and print media
- Increased sales an average of 30% in all market territories

2012 — 2017 Sales Director,

Pots and Pans, Inc., Memphis, TN

Supervised sales staff in 15 outlets statewide

- Increased sales by 22%, profits by 9%
- Developed training programs and yearly goals for outlet managers
- Promoted good will by representing firm at community events, Chamber of Commerce, and charitable associations

2009 — 2012 Sales Manager

Nickel and Dime's Department Store, Kile, OH

Managed Hardware and Kitchenware Departments, Supervised 13 sales personnel

- Ensured suitable display of merchandise on selling floor
- Analyzed trends and ensured availability of best selling items
- Controlled inventory for two departments
- Directed changeover from manual to computer billing and inventory control

Education: Bachelor of Arts, Marketing, Ohio State University, OH



Sample: Functional resume

First name Last name

Street address

City, State, Zip

Email address, if applicable

(999) 999 – 9999

PROFESSIONAL PROFILE: First name Last name is an amazing employee with a proven track record of creating sustainable change and outcomes.

EXPERIENCE:

Sales:

- Increased sales by 22% using innovative techniques
- Developed training programs and yearly goals for sales managers in 15 outlet operations
- Promoted good will by representing firm at community events, Chamber of Commerce, and charitable associations
- Ensured suitable display of merchandise on selling floor
- Directed changeover from manual to computer billing and inventory control

Marketing:

- Increased sales an average of 30% in market territory
- Supervised a staff of 10, covering operations in three states
- Introduced new marketing techniques and set-up training program for key staff to implement new procedures
- Developed promotional campaign, including yearly contest for naming new product styles
- Developed successful advertising campaign using radio and print media

WORK HISTORY:

2017 — Present	Assistant to the Marketing Director, Colonial Kitchens, Inc., Columbus, OH
2012 — 2017	Sales Director, Pots and Pans, Inc., Memphis, TN
2009 — 2012	Sales Manager, Nickel and Dime's Department Store, Kile, OH

EDUCATION:

Bachelor of Arts, Marketing, Ohio State University, OH

Resume critique worksheet



Once you've completed your resume, ask yourself the following questions to ensure that it is ready to submit to prospective employers. Ask relatives, friends and other professionals to review your resume with these questions in mind. An uninvolved individual's feedback is often more honest than we allow our own to be.

Appearance and format

- What is the basic format of this resume?
- Is this resume pleasing to the eye?
- Does it make good use of white space? (To test this, try holding the paper upside-down and on its sides – the printed area of the page should appear relatively balanced from all perspectives).
- What does the appearance or format say about the person submitting it?
- Is the paper an appropriately heavy stock and color? Does it match the envelope and other letterhead used?
- Are there any misspelled words or grammatical errors?
- Is formatting and punctuation consistent throughout the resume?

Content

- Is the resume easy to scan? Can you get a quick impression by scanning the content?
- Does this resume entice you to read more or know more about this individual?
- Does this resume give you a good first impression?
- Is the writing style such that it sounds alive and action oriented?
- Does this resume simply list the job functions or do you get the sense that this individual can get results?
- Are there terms or abbreviations that you do not understand?
- Is this resume interesting or do you have to force yourself to read the entire text?

Resume critique worksheet

- Are there large blocks of text that your eye tends to skip over?
- Does this resume focus on results as opposed to education?
- What does this resume say about the person submitting it?
- What would you do to improve this resume?



Cover letters



Every time you send a copy of your resume to a prospective employer, it should come with a cover letter expressing your interest in working for that organization. The cover letter is read by the employer before the résumé, thus it forms the employer's first impression of you.

Each letter should be original and individually typed. It should not duplicate information included in your resume. Rather, it should briefly highlight the skills or positions you previously held and connect them to the position you currently seek. It can also be used to add additional information you think is important to the employer.

- To complete a professional image, you should use the same paper for your cover letter and resume. Your cover letter should include three sections, usually formatted as three separate paragraphs.
- Address your letter to an individual, correctly spelling the name, title, and business address. State clearly the specific position or type of work you are seeking and how you heard of the position opening.
- Succinctly tie your qualifications to what you know about the position and organization. Refer to the resume. Employer research is essential in this step. Highlight and expand on information presented in your resume that is especially relevant to this job.
- Request an interview. Specify a date that you will follow up with a phone call. It is your responsibility to take control of your job search and inquire about the next step in the process.





Sample: cover letter

Street address
City, State, Zip

Date

Mr. Alfred Newman, President
Alnew Consolidated Stores, Inc.
1 Newman Place
New City, OK 03033

Dear Mr. Newman:

I am interested in the position of national sales director which you recently advertised in the Retail Sales and Marketing newsletter.

I am very familiar with your company's innovative marketing techniques, as well as your enlightened policy in promoting and selling environmentally sound merchandise nationwide. I have been active for some time now in environmental protection projects, both as a representative of my current employer and on my own. I recently successfully introduced a new line of kitchen products that exceeds federal standards, is environmentally safe, and is selling well.

The enclosed resume outlines my experience and skills in both sales and marketing in the retail field. I would like to meet with you to discuss how my skills would benefit Alnew Consolidated Stores. I may be reached at (513) 987 – 6543. If I do not hear from you sooner, I will plan to contact you on January 7 to arrange a time when we can get together.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Firstname Lastname

Interviews



Did you get invited for an interview? That's great! Whether your interview is over the phone, video conference or in-person, take time to prepare.

Research the company. The more you know about the company and the job for which you're applying, the better you will appear in the interview. Your interest and motivation will impress an interviewer. And your knowledge about the company will make you better able to explain what you can do for it.

Find out as much information as you can about the company, its products and its customers. If possible, talk to people who work at the company. There may be other sources of information on the web, especially if the company is publicly traded.

Practice answers to the common interview questions included. Rehearse these with a friend. Your answers should sound comfortable and confident, but be careful not to sound too well rehearsed. Also, be aware that the interviewer might not ask these questions in the same way, or they might include some questions that are not included here. So get more comfortable with the answers than the questions listed here.

Prepare questions to ask the interviewer. Asking questions shows interest. Your questions can be combined from our list and your own research.

Prepare interview materials. Bring copies of your resume with you (even if you have already submitted one), a list of references, a pen and paper and samples of your previous work, if appropriate.

Dress comfortably and professionally. If you're in doubt about how to dress, dress conservatively. The following can guide you:

For women:

- A straightforward business suit is best
- Wear sensible pumps
- Be moderate with make-up and perfume
- Wear simple jewelry
- Hair and fingernails should be well groomed

For men:

- A clean, ironed shirt and conservative tie
- A simple jacket or business suit
- Polished shoes
- Clean-shaven face or neatly trimmed facial hair
- Hair and fingernails should be well groomed





Interview do's and don'ts

Do:

- Get a good night's rest the night before
- Sit up straight
- Make good eye contact
- Sell yourself and your skills
- Match your needs to those of the company
- Try to relax
- Show a sense of humor
- Be yourself
- Listen
- Have a strong handshake
- Ask questions
- Express focused goals
- Be specific
- Polish your facts
- Use notes
- Keep the ball rolling
- Say, "That's a good question" when thinking about your answer
- Ask for a business card
- Show respect
- Smile
- Thank the interviewer for his/her time

Don't:

- Be late
- Play with your hair and fidget
- Cross your arms or slump
- Be dishonest
- Dominate the conversation
- Complain about present or past employers
- Ramble
- Argue with the interviewer
- Drink too much caffeine beforehand
- Play "hard to get"
- Undersell yourself
- Check your phone during the interview
- Interrupt
- Mention other offers
- Talk about money
- Ask how you did

Common interview questions

- Tell me about yourself.
- Why do you want to work here?
- What are your best skills?
- What is your major weakness?
- Do you prefer to work by yourself or with others?
- What are your career goals?
- What are your hobbies?
- What do you do for fun?
- How do you handle stress?
- What salary are you looking for?
- What can you do for us that someone else can't do?
- What did you like best about your previous employer? Least?
- What qualifications do you have that relate to the position?
- Tell me about the worst boss you've ever had.
- What new skills or capabilities have you developed recently?
- Give me an example from a previous job where you've shown initiative.
- What have been your greatest accomplishments recently?
- What is important to you in a job?
- What motivates you in your work?
- What have you been doing since your last job?
- What qualities do you find important in a coworker?
- What would you like to be doing five years from now?
- How will you judge yourself as successful?
- How will you achieve success?
- What type of position are you interested in?
- How will this job fit in your career plans?
- What do you expect from this job?
- Rate yourself on a scale from one to ten.
- Do you have a location preference?
- Can you travel?
- What hours can you work?
- When could you start?
- What have you learned from your past jobs?
- What were your biggest responsibilities?



- What specific skills acquired or used in previous jobs relate to this position?
- How does your previous experience relate to this position?
- Who may we contact for references?
- How do you think your education has prepared you for this position?
- What were your favorite classes/activities at school?
- Why did you choose your major?
- Do you plan to continue your education?
- Tell me about a time when you showed leadership
- Tell me about a time when you made a mistake.
- Tell me about a time when you showed innovation.

Questions to ask an interviewer

- What are the responsibilities of this position?
- To whom would I be directly responsible?
- Can you tell me about the management style of that individual?
- How does your company stand apart from its competition?
- What standards are used to measure success?
- How did the position come to be open?
- What is the retention rate at this company?
- What are you looking for in a candidate?
- Ask the interviewer why he/she joined the company, what he/she likes about the company, and how long he/she has worked there.
- What career path can I expect with this company / position?
- If I work hard and prove my value to this company, where can I expect to be five years from now?
- How will I be trained to perform the duties of this position?
- I read in _____ that a major competitor of yours is increasing its market share in your main market. What plans does your firm have to regain its lost market share?
- What is a work week like for an individual with this position at your company?
- What would a typical day look like for me if I were offered this position?
- How does this position contribute to the overall company mission and philosophy?
- What characteristics best describe an individual who is successful in this position?

- How much decision-making authority and autonomy would be given to me as a new employee?
- What other departments / positions will I interact with most?
- How would you describe the organization's culture?

Checklist for a good interview

Before the interview

- Have written information about the company and interviewer's name, location and time of interview
- Have directions to the interview site and know how long it will take you to travel there
- Be ready for "surprise" questions the employer is likely to ask
- Know how to express your qualifications as they relate to the open position
- Be prepared to describe your weaknesses and strengths
- Fill out the application, carefully, completely and neatly
- Dress appropriately for the interview

During the interview

- Be ready to discuss the company's products or services with enthusiasm
- Know how to state why you want to work for the organization and what you can contribute to it
- Know salary ranges, but letting the employer bring up the subject and make an offer before discussing pay
- Have references listed, whom you have already contacted
- Appear enthusiastic with a positive attitude
- Tell the employer your future plans (1 – 5 years)
- Speak well about previous employers
- Let the employer know you WANT the job — and ASK FOR IT
- Keep the conversation confined to job-related information
- Close the interview by asking, "when do you plan to make a decision?"
- Say thank you and provide a firm handshake

After the interview

- Review your answers and note any changes you should make for future interviews
- Write and send thank you note
- Follow-up to learn of the employer's decision

Post interview



It's appropriate to send a thank-you note after an interview, indicating your respect and appreciation to your prospective employer. This helps you express your continued interest in the position. And it portrays you as professional. Thank you notes should:

- Be hand-written only if you have very good handwriting. Most people type the thank you note
- Be on good quality, white or cream colored paper
- Be simple and brief
- Express your appreciation for the interviewer's time
- Show enthusiasm for the job
- Get across that you want and can do the job
- Include an offer to supply the interviewer with any additional information, if required

Sample thank you letter

Date

Dear Mr. Newman:

I really appreciated your taking the time to meet with me this afternoon. I believe my experience in dealing with new products would fit right in with your marketing plan. I am very interested in working for your company.

As we agreed, you will hear from me next Thursday.

Sincerely,

Firstname Lastname



The following internet websites offer job postings and further resources on finding a job:

- [monster.com](#)
- [rileyguide.com](#)
- [quintcareers.com](#)
- [careeronestop.com](#)
- [jobs.livecareer.com](#)
- [indeed.com](#)
- [headhunter.net](#)
- [careerbuilder.com](#)
- [jobbankusa.com](#)
- [careerlab.com](#)
- [jobing.com](#)
- [Us.jobs](#)
- [net-temps.com](#)
- [collegerecruiter.com](#)
- [linkup.com](#)
- [mnwfc.org](#)
- [truecareers.com](#)
- [jobstar.org](#)
- [hoovers.com](#)
- [salary.com](#)

Careers often change over your lifetime. This is a chance to start a new chapter.

The EAP is administered by Resources For Living, LLC.

All EAP calls are confidential, except as required by law. EAP instructors, educators and participating providers are independent contractors and are not agents of Aetna. Provider participation may change without notice.

Resources *for* Living®