

# **Job Search Skills**



**Applications**  
***Resumes***  
**Cover Letters**  
**Interviews**

## **Introduction**

The goal of this booklet is to assist students in making decisions regarding CAREER CHOICES and to create tools that will assist them in securing employment. The Transfer & Placement Office, in collaboration with The Learning Center at Northcentral Technical College (NTC), has developed this booklet to identify necessary components of a positive job search.

It is important to consider many things when looking for a job. Selecting a specific CAREER PATH involves examining one's values, interests, and abilities. Career classes at NTC are available to help one select a career direction, along with classes to help build the skills necessary for the job search. Employment websites are identified in the booklet to help in the search.

Individual assistance for CAREER PLANNING is given in the Learning Center, the Transfer & Placement Office, and in the outreach campuses. This publication is designed to advise individuals on how to complete applications, develop resumes, and create cover letters. Interviewing tips are also given. It is your guide to a successful job search.

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## Where To Go For Help

### **NTC's Learning Center**

At NTC's Learning Center, you can pursue a variety of goals. Classes and instructional opportunities provided at no cost to you include the following:

- Employability skills instruction that will assist you with your job search.
- Receive one-on-one counseling about careers.
- Receive instruction in basic reading, writing and math skills.
- Study for tests such as the GED/HSED.
- Work on job skills.
- Prepare to go back to college.
- Learn English as a second language.
- Take GED/HSED, placement and employment tests.

### **NTC's Transfer & Placement Office**

The Transfer & Placement Office provides many services to students including the following:

- Assistance using career planning websites, including WISCareers and employment sites like TechConnect.
- Career advising for your job search.
- Assistance in completing applications, developing resumes, writing cover letters and thank-you notes, and preparing for interviews (in cooperation with the Learning Center).
- Assistance with locating opportunities for informational interviewing and job shadowing experiences.
- Opportunities to participate in mock interviews here on campus.
- Specific workshops on site, including job seeking skills, test taking skills, stress reduction skills, study skills, and time management skills.

## The Job Search Plan

### ***What do you need to do to prepare for the job search?***

- One of the best ways to find a job is to “network.” Networking involves the exchange of information from one person to another, or a group, or an institution. It essentially means to find out about job leads from people that you already know who might be helpful to you in your job search. That person could be a teacher, an employer, a relative, a neighbor, or someone else.
- Make “cold calls.” Call places of employment that might hire someone with your credentials. Use the employment log in this booklet to identify whom you called and what they stated.
- Use the services at the technical college. Contact the Placement Office or the Learning Center for assistance with a resume and cover letter. Think about participating in an informational interview or job shadow. An informational interview is when you go to the place of business and interview someone that has a position that you would like to have someday. A job shadow is following in the footsteps of someone at work, usually for a period of at least four hours.
- Use specific company websites to see what jobs have been posted. Use the websites listed below as well.
- Answer newspaper advertisements.
- Use the services of job centers and employment agencies.
- Ask yourself: Have I considered all possible avenues for contacting someone who might be interested in hiring me?

### ***You can access these sites for suggestions about the job search process.***

- What kind of job do I want? Match skills to a career at <http://www.iseek.org>
- For all aspects of the job search process, go to [www.quintcareers.com](http://www.quintcareers.com)
- Northcentral Technical College’s TechConnect site: [www.ntc.edu/ses](http://www.ntc.edu/ses)
- Wisconsin jobs can be found at [www.wiscareers.wisc.edu](http://www.wiscareers.wisc.edu) (call extension 1767 at NTC for the student registration code)
- More Wisconsin jobs are listed at <http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/JobNet/mapWI.htm>

## Job Applications

- Rule #1: Always take at least two application forms. It is easy to make mistakes, so have a second copy handy.
- Rule #2: If completing by hand, be VERY neat and legible. First impressions count, and your application may be the first impression.
- Rule #3: Fill in all required information. Don't lie, and try to state reasons for leaving a job in a positive manner.
- Rule #4: Don't forget to sign the application.
- Rule #5: More companies are requiring applications and resumes to be completed online. Be prepared to have someone look over your application before you send it online. If a resume is requested, it can be attached, cut and pasted, or put in a .pdf file for exact duplication.
- Rule #6: Keep names of references and phone numbers readily available. Avoid using friends as references. Instead, obtain permission to use instructors, work supervisors, or colleagues.

### ***Most Common Errors on an Application***

- Not following directions
- Misspelled words
- Crossed out writing (use an erasable pen)
- Using Cursive writing rather than printing
- Wrinkled or messy application forms
- Incomplete information or unanswered questions
- Not applying for a specific position
- Incomplete work history or large unexplained gaps in work history
- Overlapping or conflicting employment dates with no explanation
- Application not turned in by the deadline

### **Answering Questions on Applications**

At times, questions may appear on an application form that you may feel are improper. Almost any question can be asked as long as it does not pertain specifically to race, color, national origin, age, marital status, or religion. However, if the employer could prove that the answer to such a question has relevance to the job, then you should answer the question.

Questions asked of you, as an applicant, must only attempt to identify your ability to do the job required. If you feel any question on an application form could lead to discrimination against you, you have the right to refuse to answer it or, better yet, to inquire as to why it is being asked and the relevance to the position. It is wise to clarify any concerns you have before refusing to answer. Remember that you do not want to disqualify yourself because of a misunderstanding.

### ***Specific guidelines for completing applications***

1. Indicate your name, current address, and telephone number where you can be reached.
2. Find out as much as you can about the position for which you are applying, particularly the skills required. Describe your experience so that you emphasize the skills required for the position.

## Job Search Skills: Applications, Resumes, Cover Letters, Interviews

3. Briefly describe all of your work and volunteer experiences.
4. Choose reliable references that can evaluate your performance in work and educational areas. Do not use any relatives as your references, instead, use work supervisors and faculty references.
5. Have your application neatly and accurately typed or printed legibly. Bring a pencil or pen with you when completing an application form.
6. If you make a mistake, draw a single line through it and correct it. Preferably, start over.
7. Questions that do not apply should be marked "Not Applicable." Do not leave any questions unanswered on the application.
8. Bring your social security number and driver's license with you. Some applications require this information.
9. When you have to indicate the salary desired, be realistic. Provide a salary range instead of just one salary figure. Another approach to take is to insert the word "negotiable" in order to leave room open for discussion at an interview.
10. Do not fold or roll your application unless returning by mail.
11. Do not use slang expressions when completing an application.
12. Be neat and complete. Check for errors before handing in your application.
13. Bring a copy of your resume to hand in with your application.

### Job Application Worksheet

Social Security number \_\_\_\_\_

Driver's license number \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration date \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number of friend or relative in case of emergency \_\_\_\_\_

#### Places of Employment

Business Name	Address	Supervisor	Dates employed	Wage

#### References

Name	Address	Relationship	Telephone number

List your skills, honors, advancements, promotions, etc.

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## Parts of an Application Form

Although there are many different kinds of application forms, the rules for filling them out are usually pretty much the same. The following sample is typical of what you will find when you start applying for jobs. Note that many of these questions may not be considered “fair.”

PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE ALL INFORMATION. USE ADDITIONAL PAGES IF NECESSARY.

ABC is an equal opportunity employer, individuals are judged solely on the basis of the qualifications without regard to race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, or handicap.

PERSONAL DATA				
NAME LAST	FIRST	MIDDLE	SOCIAL SECURITY #	
PERMANENT ADDRESS STREET	CITY	STATE	ZIP	PHONE NUMBER
PROFESSIONAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIPS OR LICENSES				
ARE YOU RELATED TO ANY CURRENT ABC EMPLOYEE? IF SO, PLEASE LIST.				
NAME	RELATIONSHIP	PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT		
ARE YOU PREVENTED FROM LAWFULLY BECOMING EMPLOYED IN THIS COUNTRY BECAUSE OF VISA OR IMMIGRATION STATUS? <i>PROOF OF CITIZENSHIP OR IMMIGRATION STATUS WILL BE REQUIRED UPON EMPLOYMENT.</i>				
NO ___	YES ___	EXPLAIN		
HAVE YOU BEEN CONVICTED OF A FELONY WITHIN THE LAST 7 YEARS? <i>CONVICTION WILL NOT NECESSARILY DISQUALIFY AN APPLICANT FROM EMPLOYMENT.</i>				
NO ___	YES ___	EXPLAIN		
POSITION				
DESIRED POSITION OR TYPE OF WORK		DATE AVAILABLE		
FULL-TIME <input type="checkbox"/>	DAYS <input type="checkbox"/>	TEMPORARY <input type="checkbox"/>	WHO REFERRED YOU?	
PART-TIME <input type="checkbox"/>	NIGHTS <input type="checkbox"/>	SUMMER <input type="checkbox"/>	DESIRED SALARY	
WILL YOU RELOCATE?		LOCATION PREFERENCES	WILL YOU TRAVEL?	
YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>			YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	

Based on a UW-Stout publication.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

The employer is trying to get the necessary facts about you. If you choose, you may leave this blank; however, the employer may wonder if you have something to hide.

### PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

List only those that pertain to employment. Omit those indicating political, cultural, or social affiliations.

### RELATIVES OF ABC COMPANY

Many companies have policies that prohibit members of the same family from being employed in the same location. Be honest; a distant relative working for the company may be acceptable.

### POSITION APPLIED FOR

Be sure to list one or two job titles in which you are interested. Never state “anything” as employers may think you have no goals.

### AVAILABILITY

Make yourself as available as possible; show flexibility. Employers often start new employees on a part-time or temporary basis. Full-time, permanent positions are most often offered to those who have a “history” with the company.

### SALARY QUESTION

Never fill in a dollar amount. Instead, state “open” or “negotiable.”

**Practice Application for Employment**  
 (Pre-employment Questionnaire) (An Equal Opportunity Employer)

<b>PERSONAL INFORMATION</b>				
NAME:			SOCIAL SECURITY #:	
LAST	FIRST	MI		
PRESENT ADDRESS:				
STREET		CITY	STATE	ZIP
PERMANENT ADDRESS:				
STREET		CITY	STATE	ZIP
ARE YOU PREVENTED FROM LAWFULLY BECOMING EMPLOYED IN THIS COUNTRY BECAUSE OF VISA OR IMMIGRATION STATUS? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>				
<b>EMPLOYMENT DESIRED</b>				
Position:		Date available:	Salary desired:	
Are you employed now? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If so, may we contact your employer? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>				
Have you ever applied to this company before: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Where? _____ When? _____				
Referred by: _____				

EDUCATION	Name/location of school	No. of years attended	Did you graduate?	Subjects studied
HIGH SCHOOL				
COLLEGE				
TRADE/BUSINESS CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL				

**GENERAL**

Subjects of special study or research work:	
Special skills:	
Activities (civic, athletic, etc.):	
U.S. Military or Naval service:	Rank:
Present membership in National Guard or Reserves:	



## Cover Letters

### Goals of the Cover Letter

A cover letter allows you to target a specific job and employer. Every resume should be accompanied by a cover letter. A well written cover letter can spark the interest of an employer more successfully than a resume. The cover letter will provide information that the prospective employer will use to decide if you should move to the next stage of the hiring process: the interview. A good cover letter allows the prospective employer to “hear your voice.” It should reflect your personality, your enthusiasm, and your attention to detail as well as your communication skills and your specific reasons why you are a good match for the company.

### Strategies for Winning Cover Letters

- Make it easy for someone to understand “who” you are.
- Use a unique and professional format.
- Highlight your most relevant qualifications and achievements.
- Include information that you know about the company or the position for which you are applying.
- Explain why you want to work for *this* company in particular.
- Keep the letter short.
- Make sure the letter is neat and *free of errors*.
- Be sure to ask for an interview.

#### ***It's important to do the following:***

- a) Show that you know a little about the company.
- b) Set yourself apart.
- c) Express enthusiasm and interest.
- d) Project warmth and friendliness.

## A Sample Cover Letter

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**Heading Area.** The latest trend is to use your resume heading on your cover letter as well.

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Date

Individual's name to which you are sending the letter

That individual's title

Name of the business

Street address

City, state, and zip code

Dear Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_

(If you can not identify who the cover letter is going to, use this: To the attention of: Job Number or position)

### First Paragraph:

- Write an attention-getting first sentence, perhaps including a positive remark about the company.
- Name the specific position or type of work for which you are applying.
- Mention how you learned of the opening.
- Explain why you would be a good hire for this position.

### Second Paragraph:

- Explain why your education or work experience would benefit the employer.
- Identify what specific work skills you would add to this organization and how the organization would benefit.

### Third Paragraph:

- Elaborate on your interpersonal skills, your leadership skills, and your personal characteristics that the employer would value.

### Fourth Paragraph:

- Thank the employer for considering you. A positive comment about the business could be added. Show an interest in an interview – without being pushy. How to reach you and your availability should be mentioned also.

Sincerely,

(your signature in blue or black ink)

Your name typed.

Note: It is perfectly acceptable to have three rather than four paragraphs for a cover letter. The second and third paragraphs are sometimes combined. If you have little or no work experience three paragraphs would be acceptable.

## Resumes

### Purpose of the Resume

Resumes have one purpose: To get you an interview. Employers have very little time to read resumes, so a resume must do its work quickly. When you are gathering material for your resume, it is important to create a snapshot of your experience. Don't bog your resume down with details; but rather kindle the interest of the potential employer. The resume should convince the reader you are competent and capable for the job and worth interviewing. Resumes should highlight your education, experience, and skills that are relevant to the position.

### Three Kinds of Resumes

1. Functional
2. Chronological
3. Combination (functional and chronological)

### DO's of Resumes

- ✓ Make your statements short, using bullets where appropriate.
- ✓ Begin sentences or phrases with action words.
- ✓ Open with an *objective* statement that tells the position for which you are applying.
- ✓ Highlight headings in bold.
- ✓ Keep the resume to one page (two at most).
- ✓ Make it visually appealing.
- ✓ Use the present tense to describe your current job, and use past tense for former jobs.
- ✓ Use reverse chronological order. Start with the most recent current work experience and go back in time.
- ✓ *Proofread* the final product to make sure that there are no typos, grammatical, or punctuation errors. (Do not rely on a computer's spell check function.)
- ✓ Only you can be responsible for your resume. Have more than one person read it for errors.

### DON'Ts of Resumes

- Avoid using abbreviations.
- Don't use "I."
- Exclude extraneous information, such as personal information that does not support your objective or summary statement.
- Don't list references.
- Don't include personal data (age, health, etc.).
- Don't lie.
- Don't click "ignore." If red or green lines show up on resume when submitting online – fix it if possible.

### What Every Resume Might Include

Although every resume is different, the following items are usually included in a resume:

- **Heading:** Centered at the top of the page; includes your name, address, phone number and email address.
- **Objective:** Exactly what job you will be applying for and where.
- **Education:** Start with your most recent education (and then go back in time) and include the name of the school, location, date of graduation, and your program. Other types of training can be included. It is not necessary to include your high school education.
- **Work Experience:** Work can include internships, clinicals, full-time and part-time experiences. Again, start with your most recent experience and go back in time. A resume does not need to go

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back beyond 10 years unless the information is pertinent to your job position. Include your position, your place of work, and your dates of employment.

- **Related Skills:** If you have little work experience, highlight your specific skills as it relates to the job and your program.
- **Accomplishments/Achievements:** Honors and awards that are pertinent to the position.

### Action Words

Accomplish	Achieve	Act
Address	Adjust	Administer
Advertise	Advise	Analyze
Apply	Approve	Arrange
Assemble	Assess	Assign
Assist	Attain	Budget
Build	Calculate	Catalog
Chair	Charter	Coach
Collect	Communicate	Compare
Complete	Compute	Conduct
Consult	Contract	Control
Cooperate	Coordinate	Counsel
Create	Decide	Define
Delegate	Demonstrate	Design
Document	Determine	Develop
Devise	Direct	Distribute
Edit	Educate	Enforce
Enlarge	Enlist	Establish
Estimate	Evaluate	Evaluate
Examine	Expand	Facilitate
Familiarize	Forecast	Formulate
Gather	Generate	Govern
Guide	Handle	Hire
Identify	Implement	Improve
Increase	Inform	Initiate
Inspect	Install	Institute
Instruct	Interpret	Interview
Investigate	Judge	Lead
Maintain	Manage	Manipulate
Market	Mediate	Mentor
Observe	Moderate	Modify
Monitor	Negotiate	Obtain
Obtain operate	Operate	Organize
Originate	Participate	Perceive
Perform	Persuade	Plan
Prepare	Present	Preside
Process	Produce	Promote
Propose	Provide	Publicize
Publish	Purchase	Recommend
Reconcile	Record	Recruit
Redesign	Reduce	Renew
Report	Represent	Research
Resolve	Review	Revise
Scan	Schedule	Screen
Select	Serve	Solve
Speak	Summarize	Supervise
Survey	Teach	Train
Update	Utilize	Volunteer
Write	Wrote	

**Choose adjectives and nouns that describe you positively and accurately:**

Able to	Dedicated	Innovative
Administrative	Diversified	Integrated
Analytical	Effective	Able to listen
Bilingual	Experienced	Motivated
Broad scope	Efficient	Multilingual

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Capable	Extensive	A negotiator
Communication skills	Exceptional	Other cultures
Collaboration	Flexible	Reliable
Collaborative	Global	Responsible
Consistent	Handle stress	A supervisor
Competent	Imaginative	Teamwork
Complete	Intensive	Well traveled
Creative	In-depth	Work well with...

### Resume Statements Relating to Programs

Start your statements with action verbs. Below are some examples that are relevant to some of the programs.

#### Accounting

- Verified details of business transactions
- Sorted documents, such as invoices and checks
- Calculated financial data for use in maintaining accounting records
- Typed vouchers, invoices, checks, and account statements

#### Administrative Professional

- Coordinated office services
- Completed reports including time/attendance records, new hires, and budget expenditures
- Analyzed record-keeping systems, personnel, and budgetary requirements

#### Applied Engineering Technology

- Assist industrial engineers with problems involving the production of goods and services
- Knowledge of production, quality control, manufacturing, material handling and costing processes
- Focus on Industrial, Environment, or Safety

#### Architectural/Residential Design

- Ability to produce drawings for single family and multifamily units
- Estimate costs for building homes
- Specify building systems for residential and commercial use

#### Automotive Technology

- Work effectively on automotive maintenance and diagnostic and repair jobs
- Diagnose problems and complete repairs on vehicles
- Perform preventive maintenance on equipment and machines

#### Business Management

- Collaborate with company executives to find ways to save money and increase profits
- Plan strategies to accomplish goals of businesses
- Communicate directly to first-line supervisors who direct workers
- Help supervisors organize work so that it can be done more efficiently

#### Clinical Lab Technician

- Provides clinical information for disease prevention, medical diagnosis and treatment of the patient by processing specimens and performing laboratory tests
- Perform tests manually, with automated equipment or both
- Responsible for information processing, raining, and quality control monitoring

**Criminal Justice**

- Ability to meet, talk with, and understand people
- Apply problem-solving techniques
- Able to react calmly in an emergency

**Dairy Science**

- Assist with planning and facilitating activities that support agriculture
- Have awareness of sound environmental practices
- Able to start up own dairy production business

**Dental Hygienist**

- Meet the dental health needs of individuals
- Recognize symptoms of medical/dental emergencies
- Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior

**Early Childhood Education**

- Implement appropriate curriculum for different age groups
- Provide a respectful, diverse, and inclusive program
- Integrate safe, healthy, and nutritional practices within the program

**Educational Interpreter Technician / Sign Language Interpreting in Education**

- Acts as a communication link between the deaf or hard-of-hearing student and the classroom teacher
- Skill to work in schools or with support service providers
- Understand deafness and work as part of a deaf education team

**Electromechanical Technology**

- Analyze and fabricate electromechanical systems
- Troubleshoot electromechanical systems
- Possess good problem-solving skills

**Electronics – Computer Systems Technician**

- Understanding of basic electronic and computer skills
- Able to analyze, test, fabricate, and troubleshoot electronic/computer systems
- Use electronic test equipment and computer application software

**Graphic Communication Technologies**

- Design and lay out basic print jobs
- Produce a wide range of printed products on printing presses and bindery equipment
- Able to work well with others

**Health Care Business Services**

- Prepare and analyze health insurance claims
- Provide appropriate customer service in person, in writing, or on the phone
- Protect the confidentiality of health-related information

### **Human Services Associate**

- Prepared to work for entry-level position in a variety of human service agencies
- Acquired skills needed to work with individuals, groups, and communities
- Able to work with people of diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds

### **Instructional Assistant**

- Help teachers in classroom and study halls
- Monitor student behavior in hallways, lunchroom, libraries, and playgrounds
- Take attendance and help students with their assignments

### **IT- Computer Support Specialist**

- Able to provide technical support, assistance, advice, troubleshooting, training and documentation to computer users for hardware, software and systems
- Have a working knowledge of computer hardware and software
- Familiar with the Internet, designing, developing, and publishing web sites

### **IT – Microcomputer Applications Specialist**

- Perform set up, maintenance, and troubleshooting on microcomputer hardware
- Create web pages and design web sites
- Perform basic network administration functions

### **IT – Network Specialist Unified Communications**

- Able to install, maintain, manage, and enhance local area networks (LAN) and wide area networks (WAN)
- Familiar with wireless technologies, voice-over-IP, the Internet, web server management, network routers and standard network troubleshooting procedures
- Able to manage network operating systems such as Windows Server 2003 and Linux

### **IT – Programmer/Analyst**

- Converted data from statements of problems in order to create and modify computer programs
- Wrote descriptions of user needs and modified computer programs
- Wrote, designed, and produced programs

### **IT – Web and Digital Media Development**

- Provide basic set up, maintenance, and troubleshooting on microcomputer hardware
- Create programs and scripts using a variety of web-oriented programming and scripting languages
- Create web pages and design web sites

### **Machine Tool Technicians**

- Set up and operate manual machine tools
- Inspect parts to ensure that parts meet specifications
- Able to work independently with precision, accuracy, and craftsmanship

### **Marketing**

- Good understanding of customer service
- Able to develop a marketing research plan
- Can create designs for advertising and promotional materials

**Marketing – Business to Business**

- Generate marketing information for decision making
- Design promotional, marketing, and strategic plans
- Able to work well with people

**Mechanical Design Technology**

- Work with engineers in the design and preparation of engineering drawings
- Draw and design machinery parts and products using conventional methods and computer-assisted design and drafting systems
- Able to use computer application software

**Medical Assistant**

- Able to perform clerical functions including bookkeeping and data entry
- Understand concepts of insurance when processing claims
- Work with the patient to prepare for the doctor

**Medical Coding Specialist**

- Knowledge and use of HCPCS/CPT coding system
- Use ICD coding system to assign diagnostic and procedure codes
- Familiar with laws relating to confidentiality

**Medical Transcription**

- Able to transcribe medical dictation
- Understand the importance of confidential information while working with patient and institution records
- Can operate word processing equipment utilizing digital dictation software

**Nursing**

- Assist individuals, families and communities reach the optimal level of health
- Understanding of normal and pathological physiology
- Assist individuals who experience health alterations move toward optimal health

**Office Professional**

- Can perform data entry tasks using Microsoft Word and Excel
- Provide excellent customer service skills
- Able to multi-task to meet the needs of the demands of the office

**Paramedic Technician**

- Able to provide immediate rescue services to sick or injured people
- Skilled in procedures for handling advanced cardiac life support equipment
- Able to assess the needs of patients and provide patient care while on route to the hospital

**Radiography**

- Able to perform basic routine radiographic examinations as well as more complex procedures involving the heart, brain, and spinal cord
- Administer non-radioactive materials into patient's blood stream for diagnostic purposes
- Operate radiological and magnetic imaging equipment to produce images of the patients' body to determine the presence of cancer

### **Supervisory Management**

- Have understanding of needed skills in human relations, motivation, leadership, delegation, labor relations, problem solving, decision-making and communication
- Trained in techniques for stress management and time management
- Proficient in computer skills including Microsoft Office

### **The Functional Resume**

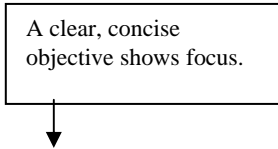
- A functional resume categorizes your skills.
- Sections might include administrative skills, project development, client relations, computer skills, etc.
- Action verbs are used to indicate examples of your performance/accomplishments for each skill.
- Job titles, employers, and dates of employment are listed in a separate employment history section.

#### ***A functional resume is most commonly used if the following are true:***

- ✓ Your work experience is not directly related to your objective. You have minimal experience and/or experience unrelated to your chosen field.
- ✓ You are making a career change.
- ✓ You've had several positions with the same job description.
- ✓ You have gaps in your work history.
- ✓ You have been out of the job market for some time.
- ✓ You have had a number of unrelated jobs.

## Functional Format

A clear, concise objective shows focus.



**John Doe**  
2232 Campus Drive  
Wausau, WI 54401  
715.360.5666  
[ido@charter.net](mailto:ido@charter.net)

**Objective:** Obtain a position in residential design at JBJ Manufacturing Company

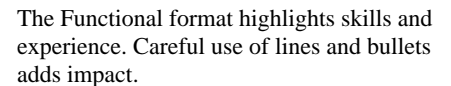
### Summary of Qualifications

- Leadership: Consistently surprised fundraising expectations as a member of the Multi-cultural
- Language: Bilingual Hmong, spoken and written: Seven years of fluency.
- Communication: Training and tutoring experience in youth and education settings.
- Received positive evaluations from supervisors and parents.

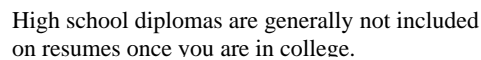
### Education

Northcentral Technical College: Wausau, WI  
Associate Degree: Residential Building Systems  
Expected date of graduation: May 2011

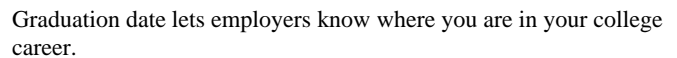
The Functional format highlights skills and experience. Careful use of lines and bullets adds impact.



High school diplomas are generally not included on resumes once you are in college.



Graduation date lets employers know where you are in your college career.



### Skills

- Software: AutoCAD, C++, Advanced Microsoft Word and Excel
- Accurately read and understand blueprints
- Designed 3 bedroom home with comfortable living space, effective use of lighting, improved functionality

### Training and Tutoring Experience

Coffee Café, Wausau, WI Sept. 2008 – present

- Supervise and train new employees on cashier and customer service protocol, safety standards, and company mission
- Promoted from cashier to trainee supervisor with 3 months employment

Volunteer Tutor, Boys and Girls Club, Wausau WI

Feb. – Dec. 2008

- Provided one-on-one and small group tutoring to students in math, computers, and writing
- Developed study tips guide for students

**Sample Functional Resume**

**Jose Alvarez**  
2297 Campus Place  
Wausau, WI 54401  
715.212.0000  
[alvaj@ntc.edu](mailto:alvaj@ntc.edu)

**OBJECTIVE**

Obtain a full time position as a Mechanical Designer at Barkley's

**EDUCATION**

Mechanical Design Technology, expected graduation May 2010  
Northcentral Technical College: Wausau, WI 54401  
G.P.A. = 3.6  
*Coursework:* Technical Drafting, CAD, 2D AutoCAD Applications, Manufacturing Process - Fabrication

**Computer and Language Skills**

- Software, AutoCAD, Advanced Microsoft Word
- Languages: Proficient in Spanish Language conversation

Choose skills and areas to highlight based on what's listed in job descriptions.

**SKILLS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

**Design, Problem Solving, and Creativity**

- Improved accuracy of monthly inventory counts at a window manufacturing company 72% to 83%
- Designed a more stable ironing board for a group project
- Took initiative to organize my work area at a restaurant resulting in greater efficiency
- Designed and maintained personal website (alvarezgroup.net)

**Manufacturing**

- Maintained appropriate inventory levels for hundreds of parts used in the manufacture of windows
- Distributed parts to busy production line to prevent work stoppages
- Developed knowledge of production protocols in a manufacturing environment

**Teamwork and Interpersonal Skills**

- Provided excellent customer service to diverse clientele in busy retail environments while accurately making quick transactions
- Demonstrated real-time adaptability and intuitive sense of group dynamics in working environment

**Work History**

Line Supervisor, Smith Windows Inc., Mosinee, WI	1/07-5/10
Sales Associate, Fashion Palace, Wausau, WI	4/06-12/06
Customer Service Representative, Ice Cream Shoppe, Wausau, WI	5/05-10/06

**Sample Functional Resume**

**John Doe**  
**1234 Western Avenue**  
**Wausau, WI 54401**  
**(715) 343-9990**  
**jodoe@ntc.edu**

**OBJECTIVE** To obtain a position as an administrative assistant at (company).

**EDUCATION** Northcentral Technical College: Wausau, WI  
Associate Degree: Administrative Assistant, GPA 3.6 May 2010

**RELATED SKILLS**

***Communication Skills***

- Answer telephone and greet visitors
- Adept at fielding scores of questions, both in person and on the phone
- Work well in a team atmosphere or independently
- Scheduled appointments for all staff and clients
- Committed to providing highest level of customer service

***Office Skills***

- Prepare budgets and verify calculations for accuracy
- Maintain databases to track information
- Possess the ability to multitask, with attention to detail and accuracy
- Perform a variety of high-priority, time-critical, confidential activities
- Able to perform all bookkeeping and accounting functions
- Prepare quarterly and year-end payroll tax reports

***Technical Skills***

- Familiar with Microsoft Office: Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access
- Type 55 words per minute
- Proficient with QuickBooks and the Internet

**WORK EXPERIENCE**

Food service line worker, Taco Bell, Wausau, WI	2004-Present
Cashier, Burger King, Wausau, WI	2002-2004
Waiter, Pizza Hut, Wausau, WI	2001-2002

**ACHIEVEMENTS**

- John Smith Scholarship, NTC Foundation
- Volunteer United Way, Wausau, WI

## The Chronological Resume

- Lists each position with the company name, city and state, job title, dates of employment, and a point-by-point description of job experience.
- Lists jobs in reverse chronological order, beginning with the most recent position.

***A chronological resume is used when the following occur:***

- ✓ The entire work history shows progress with skills directly related to the job objective.
- ✓ Your work history shows a variety of different skills or duties for each position held.
- ✓ You have a stable work history.
- ✓ Your most important accomplishments have been achieved in your most recent positions.

## Sample Chronological Resume

**Jose Alvarez**  
**2297 Campus Place**  
**Wausau, WI 54401**  
**715.212.0000**  
**alvaj@ntc.edu**

**OBJECTIVE**

Full time position as a Mechanical Designer at Barkley's

Show your GPA if requested or if it will show achievement.

**EDUCATION**

Mechanical Design Technology, expected graduation May 2010 (GPA 3.6)

Northcentral Technical College

*Coursework:* Technical Drafting, CAD, 2D AutoCAD Applications, Manufacturing Process

- Fabrication

Include a "Projects" section to show applied knowledge and experience

**PROJECTS**

Designed a more stable ironing board for a group project

Designed and maintained person website (alvarezgroup.net)

**Skills**

Software, AutoCAD, Advanced Microsoft Word

Languages: Proficient in Spanish conversation

**EXPERIENCE**

**Line Supervisor, Smith Windows Inc., Mosinee, WI**

1/07 – 5/10

- Maintained appropriate inventory for hundreds of parts used manufacturing of windows
- Improved accuracy of monthly inventory counts from 72% to 83%
- Distributed parts to busy production line to avoid work stoppages
- Developed knowledge of production protocols and technical manufacturing environment

**Sales Associate, Fashion Palace, Wausau, WI**

4/06 – 11/06

- Worked cooperatively with a group of fifteen individuals to effectively execute end of summer clearance
- Interacted with over 100 men, women, and children while giving away items for a state wide event to build brand awareness

**Customer Service Representative, Ice Cream Shoppe**

5/05 – 10/06

- Addressed the needs of hundreds of consumers from a variety of backgrounds
- Efficiently attended to customer complaints and handled employee conflict resolution

**Sample Chronological Resume**

**JOHN DOE**  
**2223 Campus Drive**  
**Wausau, WI 54401**  
**(715) 360-5666**  
[jdoe@charter.net](mailto:jdoe@charter.net)

**Objective:**

To obtain a position in the printing industry as a press operator at (company).

**Education:**

Northcentral Technical College: Wausau, WI  
Associate Degree: Graphic Design Technologies, May 2010

**Skills:**

Computer: Proficient with Word, Photoshop, QuarkXpress,  
Adobe GoLive, HTML, Illustrator, Microsoft Excel, PowerPoint

**Related Work Experience:**

- Printing Assistant** Lincoln Journal and Star, Lincoln, NE 2004 – 2010
- Worked on design layouts and websites
  - Estimated the cost of product and shipping
  - Ability to work on a number of projects at one time
- Prepress/Office Assistant** Dial Printing, Madison, WI 2002 – 2004
- Assisted customers with printing orders
  - Shot and stripped film for plate-making
  - Worked on a one and two color press, flexographic press, pad binder, and booklet binder
- Print Operator** Office Max, Wausau, WI 2000 – 2001
- Designed and laid out basic print jobs
  - Performed preventive maintenance on presses and equipment
  - Demonstrated use of design principles and color theory

**Special Projects**

- Designed the marketing brochure for the Graphic Design program
- Created wedding invitations and thank you notes for brother's wedding
- Develop business cards for fellow students at NTC

**Awards:**

- President's List, 2006-2010
- Member of the Central Wisconsin Chapter IAPHC, 201

## The Combination Resume

A combination resume combines the functional and chronological formats.

- This type of resume may start with a summary section.
- Relevant skills, accomplishments, and abilities are presented first and then followed by job titles (in reverse chronological order) that support the skills and accomplishments.

***A combination resume is most commonly used if the following occur:***

- ✓ You have had several different types of jobs, and none of them displays all the skills required for the position sought.
- ✓ You have a solid and progressive work history.
- ✓ You want to highlight marketable skills and impressive accomplishments from several previous positions, and a chronological format is expected.
- ✓ You need to condense many years of professional experience.

### **Sample Combination Chronological/Functional Resume**

The combination chronological/functional resume uses elements of both styles. The qualifications (areas of effectiveness) of the functional resume remain within specific job/experience descriptions. The jobs/experiences are then grouped and categorized to show the strengths in two to four categories. This resume format is effective if at least some of your experience is related to the job objective, and also when the job objective has more than one component and you have experience in these different components (e.g., technical and management; sales and organization).

**Sample Chronological Resume**

**Jessica Lynn Smith**  
**4589 Walnut Grove Avenue**  
**Wausau, Wisconsin 54401**  
**(715) 432 6111**  
**jlsmith@ntc.edu**

**Objective:**

To obtain a position as a medical assistant in a hospital setting

**Summary of Qualifications:**

- More than 5 years of experience as a certified nursing assistant and four years experience as a long-term/Acute Care Provider in home setting.
- Work and communicate effectively with other health care professionals.
- Experienced in working with people of all ages, from children to adults.
- Proficient in Microsoft Word, Excel, and Lotus Notes.

**Education:**

Northcentral Technical College, Wausau, WI  
Medical Assistant Diploma, May 2010

**Medical Assistant Skills:**

- Understand medical terminology
- Able to do patient intake, patient scheduling, and chart updating
- Do data entry, including insurance claims
- Capable of running blood tests
- Trained in procedures such as injections and EKGs

**Communication Skills:**

- Able to speak fluently in English and Hmong
- Excellent written and oral communication skills
- Collaborate with staff and families regarding needs of patients

**Work Experience:**

**Certified Nursing Assistant** Aspirus Hospital, Wausau, WI 2005 – present

- Perform daily care of patients
- Work with nurses to provide daily care
- Answer patient calls for care and feeding
- Take and record vital signs

**Long-term/Acute Care Provider** Jake North, Wausau, WI 2000 – 2005

- Cared for in-home patient with bone cancer for four years
- Administered medications as needed
- Ability to troubleshoot emergency situations

## Revising Your Resume for an Online Job Search

A traditional resume that is printed and read on paper may need to be changed for an online job search because it will not easily be moved to a job application or to a resume bank, or be scanned into the company's resume-scanning system.

Things to remember –

- When e-mailing your resume, send the traditional resume or a .pdf file version of your resume as a file attachment.

To create a .pdf file version:

1. Open the resume in Word,
  2. Go to file print,
  3. Change the printer name to adobe PDF,
  4. Then hit O.K.
  5. Choose a name for the file,
  6. Save it.
  7. If you want to save it to your thumb drive, insert
  8. Save it.
  9. Go to file print again and print the .pdf as usual
- When filing online applications or posting your resume to online resume banks, use a text version. The text version contains no bolding, italic type, no bullets and has a 12 font. Basically, it means, no formatting or graphics.

To create a text format:

1. Use the "Save As" feature on your word document
2. Choose "Plain Text" as the file format and rename your document
3. Close the file, open the newly renamed document, and the transformation should have taken place

## The Scannable Resume

Businesses can quickly search a number of applicants' files by looking for key words associated with the position. Like the text format, this resume is simple but the scanning device is looking for KEY WORDS.

### ***Hints for writing a scannable resume:***

- Avoid using bullets or lines, bolding, italics, graphics, shading or underlining in your resume.
- Use a 12 font.
- Save this resume under a different file name.
- Keep the resume in simple text (if it goes over one page, place your name at the top of each additional page).
- Use only one column of information from left to right rather than using two columns (type everything on the left side of the paper and do not center heading).
- Research **specific keywords** that relate to your profession – use key phrases that relate to that job, and avoid using "fluff" words.

## Job Search Skills: Applications, Resumes, Cover Letters, Interviews

Examples of Dental Assistant Keywords: Dental Assistant, Oral Examination, Patient Education, Pre and Post Operative Care, Oral Hygiene and Plaque Control, Sealant Application

Examples of Administrative Assistant Keywords: Computer Skills, Word Processing, Spreadsheets, Call Screening, Appointment Management

- Try to mail or deliver resume with a personal note attached.
- Do not staple your resume.
- Topics to cover are the same as a regular resume:
  1. A header that has your name, address, phone number, and email address
  2. An objective
  3. Education, including your degree, honors, plus specialized training and certifications
  4. Work experience or skills
  5. Any other activities

### Email Resume Cover Message

Dear Mr. Jones,

Thank you for meeting with me yesterday following the Job Fair at Northcentral Technical College. I am very interested in the Medical Assistant position we discussed. I have attached my resume.

I believe my strong medical assistant skills and work experience in the health care field make me an ideal candidate. I am available to begin work after graduation May 12, 2010.

I look forward to hearing from your human resources representative and will follow up on your suggestions. Thank you for your time and your referral.

Jessica Lynn Smith

Jessica Lynn Smith  
4589 Walnut Grove Avenue  
Wausau, Wisconsin 54401  
(715) 432 6111  
jlsmith@ntc.edu

Text is simple and easy to read with no bold, underlining, or tabs. All text is justified left.

### Scannable Resume Sample

Keywords that might be used in a scannable resume for a Dental Hygienist position: Oral Examinations, Digital X-Ray Development, Anesthetic Application, Dental Charting, Calculus, Stains and Plaque Removal, Sealants Application Appointment Scheduling, Instrument Sterilization, Patient Education, Insurance Form Processing, Cavity-Preventive Agents, Root Debridement, Ultrasonic Scaling, Zoom Whitening Procedures, Prevention of Oral Disease

Jessica Smith  
6565 Maple Leaf Road  
Wausau, WI 54401  
(715) 112 7777

#### OBJECTIVE

Dental hygienist position utilizing my education and skills with a growing business.

#### QUALIFICATIONS SUMMARY

Five years of experience and education in dental hygienist field with proven demonstrated technical skills; certified in local anesthesia and CPR; excellent interpersonal communication skills.

#### EDUCATION

Associate Degree as a Dental Hygienist from Northcentral Technical College, May 2010.

#### WORK RELATED SKILLS

Scheduled appointments for both hygienist and dentist  
Implemented a soft tissue management program  
Experienced in digital ex-ray  
Completed dental charting, assessment recording, and sealant placement  
Sterilized instruments and disinfected operatories

#### COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Called insurance companies regarding patient benefits  
Focused on a positive attitude and the ability to listen  
Caring worker who focuses on motivating patients to improve overall health  
Able to work alone or as a team

#### TECHNICAL SKILLS

Proficient in: Windows, MS Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint), Internet, and email.

#### WORK EXPERIENCE

Dental Hygienist. Dr. John Smith, DDS, Wausau, WI 2001 – 2010

## Internet Job-Hunting

Job-hunting on the internet is tricky. To make sure you're considered you need to: **Follow the company's instructions.** If an employer says that, to apply for a given job, you must go to their web site and enter a certain code number, then do that; otherwise your resume will never be seen.

**Spell out your qualifications clearly.** Pay very close attention to the specific qualifications an employer lists for a particular job, and make sure your resume contains those exact words.

For instance, if a job description includes the words "three years of credit accounting experience," put "three years of credit accounting experience" on your resume. "Don't just list a credit-accounting position with the dates you had it and assume someone will figure it out. **This may mean you have to rewrite your resume for each job opening you apply for.**

**Keep your resume up-to-the-minute current.** Companies often pick a random pool of applicants by searching the job boards for 'most recent' qualified applicants. In those cases, no one will even look at a resume that is more than two or three weeks old.

**Target specific companies and visit their web sites often.** The first announcement of a job opening very often appears on a company's own site before it is posted anywhere else. If enough applicants turn up on the site, the employer is unlikely to look any further.

**If someone is referring you for a job, make sure you -- and they -- understand how to do it.** About one-third of all new hires now come through employee-referral programs, and companies are still permitted to run these however they like, as long as they follow a consistent policy. So if your friend at Wausau Corporation wants to refer you for a job, know what Wausau's policy is (whether via the company web site, having your friend submit your resume for you in a particular way, etc.) and follow it to the letter.

# Interviews

## The Interview

The interview is a two-way discussion between you and a prospective employer. The most important part of the interview is to always ask yourself, before you go into an interview: what do you want this person to know about you? The interview will usually consist of three parts:

1. The introductory stage will cover introductions, small talk, an overview of the rest of the company, and areas to be discussed during the interview.
2. The second stage will be a question and answer period with the employer asking questions that you will answer. Your answers should reflect who you are: your ambition, motivation, and integrity. Personalization is important and will help you to stand out from other interviewees.
3. The third stage is your opportunity to ask any questions you might have and to get information about the next phase of the hiring process.

After the interview, make a list of pros and cons about the job and company, and any other information you received during the interview. Always send a thank-you letter, thanking the interviewer for his or her time and consideration.

## Precautions for a Safe Interview

Personal safety is something we always think about, but seldom do we think about safety in a job search.

Plan ahead:

- Arrange interviews during the day and on weekdays.
- Learn about the neighborhood where the interview is being held.
- Arrange the interview in a public place.
- Avoid situations that could potentially send inappropriate signals – meeting in a car, bar, private home, or hotel room.

During the interview:

- Ask for the interviewer's business card.
- Make sure you know the exact relationship to the business that he/she claims to represent.
- Drop hints that others know where you are and when you will finish.

An interviewer should never put you in a situation that would take advantage of you, put you in a sexual situation, or suggest an activity that is unprofessional. Don't hesitate to inform an interviewer that you are uncomfortable meeting at the location. Suggest a different one, such as the library, coffee shop, or the hotel lobby. Remember to follow your instincts.

## Interview Preparation

- ✓ Come prepared with a resume and a cover letter.
- ✓ Have someone else critique your resume and cover letter, and how you look.
- ✓ Have a basic understanding of yourself: values, skills, interests, job targets, and what you hope to accomplish in the interview.
- ✓ Be prepared to give specific examples of how you could contribute to a business.
- ✓ Be prepared for the fundamental personal dynamics of the interview process: how to handle the give-and-take, and the question and answer routine.
- ✓ Be reasonably knowledgeable about the company and the industry.
- ✓ Practice interviewing as much as possible, with emphasis on personalizing your answers.

**Get off to a Good Start.**

- ✓ Dress appropriately and professionally. Take a good look at the clothes you are wearing to the interview... would it be appropriate attire for the position that you would like to have? Should you be wearing a suit? Is your outfit too revealing? Are your clothes clean and pressed?
- ✓ Make sure you appear fresh – have you taken a bath or shower, combed, hair, brushed teeth, used deodorant?
- ✓ Arrive 10 minutes early for the mock interview.
- ✓ Practice a solid handshake that is sincere – let the interviewer take the lead.
- ✓ Have your cell phone turned off, and don't chew gum.
- ✓ Cover up any tattoos
- ✓ Take out any body piercings that might be considered inappropriate by anyone

**Body Language.**

- ✓ Use natural gestures. Smile. Sit up straight, and lean slightly forward.
- ✓ Don't cross your arms.
- ✓ Establish eye contact.
- ✓ Show interest and demonstrate a positive attitude by nodding.
- ✓ Try to relax. Exhibit patience.

**General Information.**

- Listen carefully to the questions before you give your answer
- When an interviewer is asking questions that are open-ended, such as "Tell me a little about yourself," make sure that your background information relates to the job itself and when and why you developed an interest in a specific field.
- If asked, "Why did you leave your last job," try and be positive rather than dwelling on issues.
- Prepare for the interview by thinking of several strengths you have that relate to the job you are seeking.
- Weaknesses should be turned around and presented in a positive manner by describing how you have overcome them.
- Research the company before you interview to show your motivation.
- Always have a plan for furthering your professional growth by education or work experiences.
- Stay away from the topic of salary and time off when first interviewing for the job.
- In conclusion, make sure that you have thanked the interviewers for their time, and ask when you will be hearing from them on their decision.
- It is appropriate to ask how the follow-up is done by the company.
- If you do not hear from the company during the stated time, it is appropriate to call and check the status of the position – many companies prefer email inquiries.
- If you did not get the position, it is O.K. to ask how you could better prepare for the next interview.

**Tweaking your Resume**

- Your resume is a living document – one that changes with new jobs, more education, skills, and accomplishments.
- Keep a copy of your resume in an electronic file and update it periodically.
- A resume is just a snapshot of your life that pertains to the job that you want.
- The resume should focus on the skills that relate to that specific job.
- Make the resume objective specific to the position and the company.
- Keep it short – one page is usually long enough.

### Employment Search Log

Business contacted and date	Company's services and/or products	Individual contacted and phone number	Information sent (application, resume, cover letter)	Interview notes	Follow-up response

## Common Interview Questions

1. Tell me a little about yourself. Emphasize your passion for the career. Relate this question to what skills you have to offer and how the skills have been developed over the years.
2. Why do you want to work here? Bring up positive examples about the company.
3. Why should I hire you? What skills do you have that make you stand out?
4. Why did you leave your last job? Be positive, never, ever, dwell on negatives of the last job.
5. What are your strengths?
6. What are your weaknesses?
7. Do you prefer to work alone or with a team?
8. What are your goals? Mention ways that you will continually improve including education.
9. What specific skills do you bring to our business?
10. What can you do for the company or me? Be prepared, practice what skill sets you have.
11. What motivates you?
12. What has been your biggest challenge/failure? Mention what you learned from it and how it made you better.
13. What has been your biggest accomplishment?
14. Do you have reason to believe that you would have difficulty performing any of the essential job duties?
15. Do you have reason to believe that you would have difficulty meeting the company work schedule?
16. How did your education prepare you for this position?
17. What do you know about our company? Research the company, check online, and know more than the basics.
18. What is most important to you, money or the type of job?
19. What would you like to do in your future, 5 years down the road? Always look to improve yourself.
20. Do you have plans for continued education? Be honest, continuing on in school for some programs is an expectation.
21. What made you decide to enter this field? Talk about your passion.
22. What qualities do you feel that you would need to have to be hired for this position?
23. What would your current supervisor say about you?
24. How do you like to spend your spare time? If possible, relate it to the job itself.
25. Give an example of when you multi-tasked to complete a project. Give specific examples that relate to the job you are trying to get.
26. Give an example of how well you can work under pressure or stress.
27. Do you have any questions that you would like to ask me? Always have questions.
28. What were favorite subject in school and your least favorite subject? Make sure any negative is turned into a positive.
29. Describe your dream job.

## Questions to ask in an interview

Try to ask questions that show you are interested in a good “fit” rather than in simply getting a job.

- What would a typical day be like for me at this position?
- Who would be my supervisor, and tell me about his/her job?
- What challenges does this business face today, and how are you planning to meet those challenges?
- Do you provide incentives for continual training and development?
- How will my performance be evaluated?
- Is there opportunity for growth in your company?

- Where does the company hope to be in a few years?
- What type of person is likely to be successful in this company?
- What is the industry outlook?
- What is your history with the company?
- What advice do you have for people new to the company?
- What is the next step in the interview process?

## **Behavior-Based Interview Questions**

### ***Interpersonal Skills***

1. How important is it for you to be liked, and why?
2. Explain five interpersonal skills that best describe you.
3. How do you go about building relationships based upon trust and respect?
4. What have you done in the past to contribute toward a teamwork environment?
5. Give me an example of a time when you went above and beyond the call of duty.

### ***Time Management***

1. Describe your current projects and how you keep them scheduled for on-time delivery.
2. Describe a time when a project under your direction was late and how you dealt with the issue.

### ***Risk Taking/Decision Making***

1. Describe a time when you weighed the pros and cons of a risk and why you decided to take it.
2. What factors must be present for you to make a decision?
3. Describe a decision you made and came to regret, and why.

### ***Problem Solving***

1. Give an example of a time when you helped solve a problem at work or school. What exactly did you do to solve the problem and how did it improve the business?
2. What did you do to logically solve the problem?
3. Did you initiate the problem solving on your own, or did you enlist others to help you?

## **Illegal Questions**

Federal and state laws prohibit prospective employers from asking certain questions that are not related to the job they are hiring for. Questions should be job-related and not used to find out personal information.

In a nutshell, employers should not be asking about your race, gender, religion, marital status, age, disabilities, medical issues, ethnic background, country of origin, sexual preferences, or age.

### ***Your options when asked an illegal question:***

1. Answer the question. Answer the “intent” of the question. For example, if you are asked whether you are a United State’s citizen (not legal to ask), reply that you are authorized to work in the United States.
2. Try to change the topic of conversation and avoid the question.
3. Refuse to answer the question. To refuse to answer might cost you the job, especially if you are very uncomfortable with the question. However, consider whether you really want to work somewhere where you are asked questions that are not appropriate.

## Suggestions for Finding a Job if You Are Disabled

Three major factors contribute to a tremendous opportunity for people with disabilities to become permanently involved in the workforce:

1. First, the likely possibility that the shrinking labor pool of employment-ready personnel may create worker shortages during this decade. This will cause employers to effectively recruit and retain qualified employees. Since Americans with disabilities represent the largest single block of potential employees, wise employers will need to take another look at this underemployed community.
2. A new wave of young Americans educated under the Handicapped Children Act of 1975 is graduating. This new generation will have improved educations and high expectations for themselves after graduating from high school and college.
3. Many graduating students who do not have disabilities have attended school with disabled classmates. Therefore, with that exposure, much of the discrimination in the workforce will naturally dissolve.

### ***When to disclose your disability:***

The decision to disclose your disability, and when to do so, may be the single most important consideration in your job search. This is a personal decision that has to be made for each job lead you pursue, and will be based on the nature of your disability and your knowledge of the prospective employer.

When reviewing this issue, ask yourself this question: If I disclose my disability, will I be hired? If the answer is no, don't do it – you probably wouldn't want to work for this employer anyway.

If, however, you feel the employer will hire you and make a fair and reasonable accommodation, then you may wish to consider how and when to inform the employer of your disability. Even though the law states you do not have to reveal your disability to a prospective employer unless it relates to the completion of essential job functions, you may want to be open on this subject. If you are open and honest, you may set the stage for a solid and long lasting relationship with your employer. This disclosure may be viewed as a sign of character, strength, and confidence.

### ***Your options for disclosure:***

- **Disclosure at referral**

If you are one of the lucky job seekers to get a foot in the employment door through a referral, you don't have to worry about disclosing your disability. The employer probably knows about your specific limitations. It is likely that the individual who made the referral has bridged that gap before your interview. This is ideal because during the interview both you and the employer will likely be more comfortable.

Most people with disabilities do not have the advantage of being in a referral situation. How to tell your potential employer can be very distressing. We know there is discrimination in the job market. Employers have biases and prejudices they might not even be aware of. These may be carried over into the job screening process. The following are suggestions for other situations.

- **Disclosure on your resume**

Often your disability is reflected in your work history, education, and life experiences. Rather than trying to hide your disability, phrase it with proactive words. Emphasize your adaptability, flexibility, and talents in the light of your disability. Use words that showcase your abilities. Keep in mind that you may lose a few job opportunities or offers if you run into the employer who is biased.

If you decide to disclose your disability in your resume, do not place it in the opening paragraph. Weave the information into your resume in a subtle manner.

- **Disclosure in your cover letter**

Sometimes it is to your advantage to discuss your disability openly in a cover letter. For example, some employers specifically recruit the disabled to meet affirmative action goals or because they have a state or federal contract that requires hiring the disabled. At the end of your second paragraph, describe your strengths and your limitations. Then continue describing how you will perform the essential functions of the job.

- **Disclosure on the application**

Most application forms have a section for disability disclosure, but this is not mandatory. You do not have to disclose your disability. You have the option but are not required by law to discuss any aspects of your limitation. If you decide to fill out this disclosure, describe the accommodations or how you overcome your limitations. Think through the advantages of disclosing this information. Some corporations or employers are very supportive of disabled employees, and this would be an appropriate time to disclose.

- **Disclosure during the interview**

Shock is a common reaction if a visually impaired person walks into an interview and hasn't adequately prepared the prospective employer. This shock factor can lead to mistrust and nervousness on the part of the interviewer. If your disability is highly visible (for example, wheelchair bound or blind), you may wish to prepare the employer beforehand.

A wise time to inform the interviewer of a visible disability could be the time when the interviewer personally calls to set up an appointment.

## **Dealing with Job Loss and How to Handle your Job Search**

When one loses a job, how you handle it can affect the rest of your life. Your emotional reaction may cause you as much grief as the process for looking for a job.

Tips for success:

- Try not to dwell on the past; figure out what you need to be marketable in the work place.
- Often times the first step is to set goals for yourself. Make sure your goals include long-term and short-term goals. As you write your goals, make sure you put down what action you plan to take with each goal. Also include a start date and an end date.
- Things to consider:
  1. Do I need a job right now to survive?
  2. Will I settle for any job, or can I afford to wait for something better?
  3. What kinds of work do I enjoy doing? Are those jobs available where I am currently living? If not, can I relocate to where my skills are in demand?
  4. Are my skills marketable or do I need to get more training? By going to school to acquire some type of training, your chances of getting a job may improve.
- If older, emphasize what skills sets you have because of your experience. Look at your age as an asset rather than a disadvantage.
- Keep your family in the loop about your job search and seek their advice.
- Make a connection to friends, co-workers, previous supervisors, and other who might be able to provide leads.

## Job Search Skills: Applications, Resumes, Cover Letters, Interviews

- Don't put off until tomorrow what you could do today. Get started, organize, and prioritize your search.
- If searching for funds to assist with daily living expenses or schooling, check with the local job center, libraries and schools, and social service agencies for further information.
- Don't give up. Stay positive.

## Follow-up Letters

### The Thank-You Letter

Right after the interview, you should send a thank-you letter to the interviewer. You may type the letter, compose a handwritten message, or send an email. A handwritten letter is always a good first choice.

If you type the letter, here is a format that you can use. Emails or handwritten letters would be similar to this.

Your Street Address  
City, State, Zip  
Date

Interviewer's Name and Title  
Name of Company  
City, State, Zip  
Date

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

The first paragraph should thank the person for the interview. Include the date of the interview. Tell the person what you learned about the company/job that impressed you the most.

The second paragraph should indicate your feelings about how you perceive your capabilities to perform the job description discussed. Relate to some previous education and/or work experience that will again emphasize your worth to the company. State that you really want the job and that you can excel at all responsibilities included. (This second paragraph is optional. It is basically reselling you.)

The final paragraph should include your telephone number and the best times to contact you. State that you hope the person selected is you because you know that you will be an asset to the company.

Sincerely,

Sign your name here

## The Keys to Success

- Know yourself.
- Apply for jobs related to your skills and interests.
- Prepare a great resume.
- Write a cover letter that reveals who you are.
- Hone your interpersonal skills.
- Be prepared for the interview.
- Use the areas of the college that can help you succeed in your job search.

***You are ready to enter the workforce. We wish you the best.***