

# Job Searches, Cover Letters, Resumes, and Interviews



**Niagara County Community College**  
Student Development  
Call 716-614-6490  
Stop by A-131

# HOW TO CONDUCT AN EFFECTIVE JOB SEARCH

Three important factors for a successful job search are awareness of your goals and skills, an understanding of the labor market, and a well-planned job search campaign. Experts recommend that you begin an active job search six to nine months in advance of your target employment date. You can begin the process by visiting Student Development early (for students, nine months to a year before graduation). The following six steps are used to conduct an effective job search:

## STEP 1: Begin with Self-Assessment

The job search process begins with an identification of your values, interests, skills, accomplishments, experience, and goals. How can you look for a position if you don't know what you want from a job and what you have to offer prospective employers? Self-assessment, though a time-consuming process, provides invaluable information to facilitate career decisions and to prepare you to market your background effectively.

**Values** An awareness of what you value (qualities that are important and desirable) in a career will aid you in exploring career goals and attaining greater satisfaction in your work. Review the following list of values and check those most important to you. Then rank your top five values in order of priority.

- Job security
- Working as part of a team
- Working independently with little supervision
- Making a contribution
- Professional status
- Mental challenge
- Pleasant surroundings
- Challenging stimulating co-workers
- Different tasks to accomplish daily
- Financial rewards
- Creating something
- Ability to advance

**Interests** Interests (areas that arouse your attention or enthusiasm) are closely related to values and frequently trigger skill development. You can identify interests by looking at enduring themes in your life-activities that persist over time, consistent choices, recurring dreams, or the way you spend your time. Try keeping a time-log or examining your most enjoyable times in-depth. After doing so, if you are still not clear about your interests or cannot rank them, consider meeting with a member of Student Development to take an interest inventory.

**Skills** A skill refers to something you do well, including handling problems or tasks. The key to your successful job search is recognizing these skills and communicating their usefulness verbally and in writing to a prospective employer. Use statements of accomplishment. They should:

- Describe your skills in concise, unambiguous terms.
- Refer to actual experiences to demonstrate your skill level.
- Connect your skills to the needs of a prospective employer.

Understanding the following skill sets might help you to identify your own unique skills:

**Self-management skills:** Self-management skills are your basic personality traits and attributes that assist you in your ability to manage yourself in a new environment (e.g., ambitious, creative), and are some of the most important skills to discuss in an interview.

**Transferable skills:** Transferable skills are a combination of self-management skills and technical job skills that transfer from one job to another (e.g., follow instructions, meet deadlines, communicate, manage others, etc.). Your success depends upon your finding a position that will utilize these skills. These are some of the most marketable skills because they are useful in a wide variety of work environments.

Work-content skills: Work-content skills are the technical skills needed for a specific job (e.g., medical terminology, Microsoft Word).

### **STEP 2: Research and Explore Career Options**

The next step in the job search process is to explore the “matches” between your identified skills, interests, and values and the demands of career fields and organizations. Resource materials on occupations and employers, as well as informational interviews, are excellent tools for this search. Perhaps the best way to explore career options is to try out intended jobs through internships, cooperative education positions, part-time or summer jobs, or volunteer opportunities. Contact Student Development to discuss your options.

### **STEP 3: Choose a Career Field, then Target Employers**

After thoroughly researching possible careers/jobs, several field options will emerge as most realistic and attractive. These options should become your career or job search goals. It is probable that no single career will have the potential to utilize all your skills, allow you to develop all your interests, and incorporate a value system completely compatible with yours. Therefore, try to target a career field that will satisfy some of your high-priority needs. Other needs of less importance can perhaps be satisfied in your leisure time activities. At this point, it is useful to get realistic feedback from experts in the field to determine if your assessment is realistic. Contacting Student Development to set up an appointment is strongly encouraged to discuss your analysis and decisions as part of career planning. During this or any other part of your job search, take advantage of the resources Student Development has available. Good research on employers will not only give you the competitive edge, but also help you decide which employers you want to reach and which strategies you will use to contact them.

### **STEP 4: Prepare Job Search Materials and Develop Job Search Skills**

Once your job goals have been targeted, resumes and application letters can be tailored to reflect your qualifications as they relate to the interests of prospective employers. While most job applicants are well aware of the need for well prepared resumes and cover letters, many do not realize the need to spend an equal amount of time mastering the job search skills necessary to be effective in today’s market. Learning which job search strategies are productive, how to interview effectively, how to market yourself well, and how to handle salary issues once an offer is made are very important parts of the process as well.

### **STEP 5: Plan and Conduct Your Job Search Campaign**

Next, establish a target date for getting a job and decide how much time you can devote to your search. Some individuals believe they cannot afford to take time from their studies or a demanding job. Others procrastinate. Whatever the reasons, the results are the same: your search will languish and you may miss out on industry hiring cycles and job opportunities if you do not act immediately. Organize early by setting aside a certain amount of time each week to work on your search. Use a calendar and weekly planner and work backward from your target date. The greater number of contacts and interviews a job seeker has, the greater the number of job offers. Therefore, it makes sense to use multiple strategies. Try the following:

**Pursue Advertised Vacancies** The most commonly use job search technique is to respond to advertised vacancies, both in print and electronically. Sources include:

- Employment websites: [www.americasjobexchange.com](http://www.americasjobexchange.com), [www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov), [www.wnyjobs.com](http://www.wnyjobs.com)
- Your college employment services office (At NCCC, Student Development)
- Newsletters from trade or professional associations
- Newspaper classified ads (most major cities are online: [www.buffalojobfinder.com](http://www.buffalojobfinder.com)  
[www.niagara-gazette.com](http://www.niagara-gazette.com); [www.lockportjournal.com](http://www.lockportjournal.com))
- The Department of Labor, Civil Service, community employment services, and agencies run by government and for-profit businesses. For example, The Niagara County WorkSourceOne (1001 Eleventh Street, Niagara Falls) is one resource.
- Personnel department postings

**UNFORTUNATELY, THE MOST POPULAR METHOD FOR LOCATING POSITIONS, RESPONDING TO ADVERTISED VACANCIES, IS NOT THE MOST EFFECTIVE. ACCORDING TO AN ARTICLE IN THE HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW, NEARLY 80% OF THE OPENINGS AVAILABLE AT ANY ONE TIME ARE NEVER ADVERTISED. JOB-SEEKERS SHOULD RESPOND TO EMPLOYMENT ADS, BUT THE MAIN THRUST OF YOUR EFFORTS SHOULD BE TOWARD ESTABLISHING NETWORKS AND IDENTIFYING THE HIDDEN JOB MARKET.**

To increase the odds of your success in responding to advertised vacancies, by telephone or letter, keep these tips in mind:

- Do not waste time responding to long shots.
- Use your cover letter to answer every requirement in the advertisement.
- Personalize your response as much as possible. Direct your materials to specific individuals, not “To Whom It May Concern,” or “Dear Sir/Madam,” unless the advertisements are blind newspaper ads (name of organization withheld). A quick phone call can provide appropriate names. In a blind ad, address your letter to a specific position title, (e.g., Dear “Marketing Manger”).
- Try to contact or write to the manager who will make the final hiring decision as well as the personnel representative named in the advertisements.

**Develop a Contact Network** Once you have targeted a career or specific position, you should acquaint yourself with professionals in that field or organization. These professionals offer you an insider’s view and can constitute your contact network, which can open doors that might otherwise remain closed. Your network can also consist of family members, friends, classmates, professors, and electronic discussion groups.

**Contact Employers Directly** There are several methods and combinations that can be utilized to contact employers directly.

- Send a letter of application and your resume to the Human Resources Department or specific managers. This direct contact method is most successful for candidates in high-demand fields (e.g., engineering and computer science). The success of this method is greatly increased when letters are followed up by phone calls, which may result in an invitation to visit the employer.
- Contact managers in organizations by phone or letter to request an appointment to discuss the information you have obtained by reading annual reports, trade literature, etc. For example: “I understand XYZ is planning to expand its foreign market. I am completing a retail business degree with courses in international business and am very interested in this type of position. May I have 20 minutes of your time to discuss it?” Indicate your desire to meet with them even if they have no positions currently available in their department. Some job seekers find it useful to state that they will be looking for jobs in the near future, but are now just gathering information about organizations. Do not expect to be interviewed at this juncture but bring a resume in the event the situation presents itself.
- During your appointments with department managers, emphasize your knowledge and interest in their organizations.
- Even if managers have no positions available, once they have had a personal interaction with you, they may think of you the next time they have, or hear of, an appropriate opening. It is critical to stay in touch with these managers, at least on a bi-monthly basis. Maintain your network!
- Many job seekers have used informational interviewing to create new positions by identifying organizational needs (through the interview, research, etc.) and proposing these needs be filled with their own skills.

**Make use of electronic media by uploading your resume online.** There are a variety of websites that allow you to do this. Some are free and some charge a fee. A simple web search should provide current information.

**Follow-Up and Record Keeping** No matter what job search strategies you choose, follow-up and record keeping are important to your success. Maintain a careful record of all interviews, thank-you notes sent, referrals made and follow-up actions. Job seekers who fail to maintain this information often lose valuable contacts as well as credibility with prospective employers. A simple journal or spiral notebook as well as a folder to keep correspondence should be sufficient.

**Be Persistent** Job searching is hard work and there are times when you will get discouraged. But if you keep up with it, you can avoid feeling anxious and will actually have more energy. If your search is not producing the results that you would like, avoid blaming yourself and try a new strategy. Do not be reluctant to submit your credentials on more than one occasion to an organization for which you would like to work. This attitude demonstrates your enthusiasm and interest. Your job search is subject to many factors, some which you can control and some (like economic conditions and market forces, etc.) which you cannot. Be organized and persistent and maintain a positive attitude. It will pay off, literally!

**STEP 6: Obtain the Offer and Continue to Develop Your Career Action Plan**

Congratulations! Your job search campaign has been successful. You have been offered a chance to interview for a position you wish to accept. Send a note to all the people who helped you, thanking them and relaying the good news.

# WRITING COVER LETTERS AND RESUMES

A universal format, style, and etiquette is accepted by nearly all organizations. Job candidates can alienate potential employers simply because they do not use standard business writing style. Professional communication ability remains a significant factor that employers use in evaluating and comparing applicants.

The documents you submit tell a lot about you. Are you attentive to detail? Organized? Are you a Professional? If your documents don't imply that you possess these qualities, and if they look like they were thrown together without thorough thought and care, you can be sure you will not be called to interview. For every poorly written cover letter and resume a potential employer receives, there are at least five that are well-executed - from candidates who are just as qualified and who appear extremely appealing.

Think about it like this: the cover letter and resume speak for you when you are not there. What do you want the employer to know about you? What do you want them to think about you upon seeing documents you prepared? The following guidelines are helpful:

- PAPER:** Cover letter and resumé paper should match. Light colored papers are preferred. Be conservative: white, light gray, or ivory.
- LENGTH:** One typed page is your goal. If you have too much experience for one page, do not eliminate experience. Space your resumé to fit onto two whole pages instead of one and a half.
- APPEARANCE:** Use bold lettering, bullets, underlining and indentations to enhance the appearance. No part of the resumé should be hand-written.
- Stay with the same font. Do not use less than a 10 pt.; it is difficult to read and fax. Keep it simple!
- Descriptions should not be too wordy. Wordy descriptions are inappropriate in a resumé. Be clear and concise. Descriptive language belongs in the cover letter.
- PARALLEL STRUCTURE:** Be sure all your descriptions have parallel structure.  
Example: Dates 2004 to Present = Use present tense verb(s)  
2000 to 2004 = Use past tense verb(s)
- EMAIL:** Email addresses must be professional and checked daily.
- TECHNICAL LANGUAGE:** Avoid excessive use of technical jargon that is only used in a particular work setting.
- PROOFREADING HINT:** Start at the end of your documents and read backwards to catch spelling errors, after you use your spell check function.
- INTERVIEW RESUMÉS:** Always carry extra copies of your resumé and reference sheet to an interview in case additional personnel are invited into the interview.

# THE EFFECTIVE COVER LETTER

Always accompany your resume with a well-written cover letter.

## **YOUR STREET ADDRESS**

**CITY, STATE, ZIP**

**CURRENT DATE**

(Then 3 – 4 Spaces)

## **EMPLOYER'S NAME**

**TITLE**

**COMPANY**

**STREET ADDRESS**

**CITY, STATE, ZIP**

(1 Space)

**Dear** \_\_\_\_\_ : (Avoid Sir/Madam or Gentlemen. Use exact name. If unavailable, use Dear Human Resource Director, Dear Marketing Manager, etc. In response to a Post Office Box number, use “Dear Human Resource Director”).

(Then 1 Space)

## **OPENING PARAGRAPH:**

How you heard about this job:

I am enclosing my resumé in response to your advertisement in The Buffalo News (always underline newspaper or journal names) on June 29, 20XX. (Add another sentence expressing your interest in the position.)

OR

An unsolicited letter:

I am submitting my resumé on the recommendation of Jane Jones (request permission to use your contact's name; use contact's name in the first sentence.) of your Marketing Department, who informed me of a possible opening for a management trainee in your company.

OR

I completed my Business Management Degree in May and am submitting my resumé to your company for review. (Add another sentence explaining your interest in their organization.)

(Then 1 Space)

## **MIDDLE PARAGRAPHS:**

These paragraphs should create the desire on the part of the employer to interview you. Describe why you would be an asset to their organization by using your experiences, skills and accomplishments. Avoid repeating information that is on your resumé. *Now is the time to highlight* something about yourself that will interest the prospective employer.

(Then 1 Space)

## **FINAL PARAGRAPH:**

Use this paragraph to issue an invitation for action. Request an appointment for an interview. Thank the reader for reviewing your resumé.

(Then 1 Space)

Sincerely,

(Then 2 Spaces)

Sign Your Name

**YOUR NAME TYPED**

# SAMPLE COVER LETTER

1234 Broad Street  
Buffalo, NY 12345  
July 1, 20XX

Alice Alphabet  
Personnel Director  
A. B. Apple Company  
123 Your Avenue  
Any City, New York 12345

Dear Ms. Alphabet:

I am enclosing my resume in response to your posting on Monster.com on June 30, 20XX for an Accounting Manager. The A. B. Apple Company has an excellent reputation in this community and I have the qualifications necessary to fulfill the requirements of this position.

I have managed the accounting functions in a small local retail business. This practical hands-on experience has been invaluable to me. This company has been purchased by an out-of-town firm and will be moving; however, I am committed to this area.

During my tenure, I spearheaded the complete transition of Accounts Payable and Accounts Receivable to a computerized system. The results reflected a 20% increase in efficiency in my department.

I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss my background in more detail. I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you for reviewing my resume.

Yours truly,

James A. Doe

## DIFFERENT TYPES OF RESUMES

There are three primary types of resumes: the chronological resume, the functional resume, and the targeted resume. Each of these types also has variations. Which type of resume you create depends on how much experience you have in the occupation and industry you want to work in.

**Chronological Resumes:** A chronological resume typically lists each job you have held in order, beginning with the most recent. This type works well for the person with several years of relevant experience, especially when the job titles you've held show an ever increasing amount of responsibility. The modified chronological resume allows for changing the order in which jobs are presented to highlight those most relevant to the position being sought.

**Functional Resumes:** Functional resumes are good for people with too little or too much experience. If you do not have years of experience in the hospitality industry, but you have abilities and skills you have learned as a student, volunteer, or through a hobby or sport, the functional resume lets you highlight these strengths and downplay your lack of industry experience. If covering your years of experience in a chronological resume would require more than two pages, or if the description of your responsibility in several jobs would be repeating the same information, a functional resume gives you more latitude in how to organize information.

**Combination Resumes:** Professional resume writers often recommend combining the best qualities of the chronological and functional resume. Your work history is presented in chronological order, but may come after a review of your functional skills and achievements. Another combination variation lists your jobs in chronological order, but in place of a description of responsibilities and duties, you list achievements and demonstrated skills used or learned.

### **Targeted Resumes:**

A targeted resume may be any of the three types above, but it is written for a specific company or a specific position. Use a this format when you find out about a job opening through someone in your network or through a formal posting of the position in a classified ad or job board. A targeted resume can also be used when you are contacting a specific company for which you would like to work and where you know jobs for your occupation exist, but you are not responding to a specific announcement of an opening. If you have skills for more than one occupation, you need to create separate, targeted resumes for each occupation.

# EFFECTIVE RESUME WRITING

- OBJECTIVES:** This written statement expresses your interest and employment goal.
- Never use pronouns (i.e.: I, me).
  - Be concise and clear about the position you are seeking (i.e.: full time, part-time, seasonal, and title).
  - Use the descriptive language in the advertisement in order to match your skills to the position being offered.
  - Revise your objective – and entire resume, if appropriate - when applying for each position.
- SUMMARY or QUALIFICATIONS:** A summary is appropriate for people who have been in the work force for a period of time and have accumulated *varied* experience.
- List your experience in short phrases, (no more than 4), using bullets before each phrase. EXAMPLE:
- Recruited, staffed and supervised large Quality Control Department
  - Managed fast food restaurant; 5 years experience
  - Owned and operated small electrical business
- EDUCATION:** The EDUCATION section precedes the EXPERIENCE section if you have recently attended school. This is reversed if your work experience is more recent. Include:
- School, City and State
  - Major (Associate in Applied Science in (\_\_\_\_))
  - Honors (GPA, only if 3.0+ and/or Dean's List)
  - Graduation date or anticipated graduation date
- ADDITIONAL EDUCATION:** Co-Ops or Internships: Name the company and duties.  
List courses, seminars or workshops you have completed and the dates, especially if they pertain to your job objective.  
Seminars/Workshops pertaining to your job objective.
- EXPERIENCE:** Company, City and State (street addresses are not important.)  
Dates of Employment  
Your Job Title
- Use bullets and briefly describe duties.
  - Descriptions should NEVER INCLUDE NEGATIVES.
  - Do not include routine job operations (ie: filing, typing, answering phones) unless they are the only duties you were assigned.
- MILITARY EXPERIENCE:** List Branch, Unit & Location. List rank and duties, if relevant.  
Honorable Discharge: (date)
- VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE:** List organization, city, state and dates.  
Include title and a short job description.
- LICENSES/** Use the exact title on your license or certificate and the date.

- CERTIFICATES:** EXAMPLE: American Red Cross, CPR, June 20XX
- COMPUTER SKILLS:** List software with which you're familiar; list the most important first.
- LANGUAGES:** If you are not fluent, then don't include this.
- ORGANIZATIONS:** List professional organizations and offices you hold/held.
- INTERESTS/**  
**RESUME**  
**SUBMISSIONS:** Do not include these if they are not relevant to the position you're applying for. You might want more guidance on this.
- PUBLICATIONS:** Underline publication title and include date.
- ELECTRONIC**  
**RESUME**  
**SUBMISSIONS:** If you plan on sending a resumé electronically, use a simple format. Bullets, italics and bold do not always convert well when you transmit, depending on what software the recipient is using. Another option is to scan it and email it as a PDF so your formatting is preserved.
- Electronic Scanner: Electronic submissions are scanned for certain descriptive words. This method omits unacceptable resúés from the search.
- REFERENCES:** These are optional, unless the posting specifically asks for references. If you do not include references, you need to state References Available Upon Request at the bottom of the resumé page. NOTE: References are not included on your resumé. They are listed on a separate sheet, which should be formatted similarly to the resume and designated for references only.

# SAMPLE RESUME

## JOHN A. SMITH

1234 Broad Street  
Your Town, New York 12345  
(716) 000-0000  
dmann@yahoo.com

### OBJECTIVE

To acquire a full-time, entry-level position in business/industry in the area of Computer Information Systems.

### EDUCATION

**Niagara County Community College**, Sanborn, NY  
A.A.S. in Computer Information Systems - May 20XX  
HONORS: Dean's List all Semesters, GPA: 3.60

### EXPERIENCE

**HSBC**, Buffalo, New York

Adjustments Clerk, 20XX - Present

- Report to Adjustments Manager with full responsibility for managing a specific list of delinquent MasterCard/Visa charge customers. The
- scope of responsibility
- includes contacting delinquent accounts; investigating
- reasons for non-payment; realigning credit payment arrangements; counseling
- customers in effective budgeting and making them aware of other available
- resources.

**United Skates of America**, Amherst, New York

Assistant Manager, 19XX - 20XX

- Completely responsible for managing roller rink's second shift (staff of 7)
- Performed opening and closing procedures

**A.B. Industries**, Olean, New York

Assistant Manager, 19XX - 19XX

- Assist Manager in store operation
- Performed opening and closing procedures
- Supervised salesperson in absence of Manager
- Responsible for customer relations
- Developed and implemented new in-store sales promotions

**Nickel City Café**, Amherst, New York

Assistant Kitchen Manager/Cook, 19XX - 19XX

- Supervised kitchen staff of 4 on evening shift
- Prepared work schedules for personnel
- Trained new employees
- Maintained inventory and supervised complete preparation operations.

### ACTIVITIES

NCCC Student Council Arbitration Board, 20XX - Present

# SAMPLE RESUME

## JANE A. SMITH

12 Any Street  
Somewhere, New York 12345  
(716) 123-4567  
janesmith@email.com

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**OBJECTIVE** Obtain a (part-time, full-time) job in physical therapy in an acute care hospital or outpatient clinic with flexible hours while in college.

**EDUCATION** **NIAGARA COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE**, Sanborn, NY  
Associate in Applied Science: Physical Therapy  
Anticipated Graduation: 20XX, GPA: 3.0/4.00 (A=4.0)

Related Course work: (optional)  
Human Anatomy & Physiology I & II  
Developmental Psychology  
PTA Practices I, II, III

Phi Theta Kappa - International Honor Society  
Dean's List: 20XX-20XX

**ERIE COMMUNITY COLLEGE**, Amherst, NY  
Emergency Medical Technology curriculum, 20XX-20XX

**CERTIFICATION** NEW YORK STATE EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIAN

## EXPERIENCE

### *WORK EXPERIENCE*

#### **ALCOHOL SERVICES OF NIAGARA COUNTY**

Senior Medical Technician, 20XX-20XX

- Supervised shift
- Provided medical assessment, orientation and initial counseling of clients

### *CLINICAL AFFILIATIONS*

#### **NIAGARA FALLS MEMORIAL HOSPITAL**

##### **WHEATFIELD NURSING HOME**

Physical Therapist Assistant, 20XX-20XX

- Responsible for basic evaluation, treatment and education of patients

### *VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE*

#### **NORTH TONAWANDA FIRE DEPARTMENT**

Volunteer Fireman and Emergency Medical Technician, 20XX-Present

**SKILLS** Computer Operation Systems, Excel, dBase and WordPerfect

**LANGUAGES** Fluent in Spanish

**ASSOCIATIONS:** NYS Physical Therapy Association

*References available Upon Request*

## POWER WORDS

Accelerated	Controlled	Founded	Modernized	Repaired
Accepted	Converted	Free-lanced	Modified	Replaced
Accomplished	Coordinated	Gathered	Monitored	Reported
Acquired	Correlated	Generated	Motivated	Represented
Acted	Corresponded	Guided	Multiplied	Reproduced
Adopted	Counseled	Headed	Narrated	Researched
Addressed	Created	Helped	Negotiated	Restated
Adjusted	Customized	Hired	Observed	Resolved
Administered	Declared	Identified	Obtained	Revamped
Adapted	Decreased	Illustrated	Operated	Revised
Advanced	Deferred	Implemented	Ordered	Reviewed
Advertised	Defined	Improved	Organized	Revitalized
Advised	Delegated	Improvised	Originated	Rewrote
Affected	Deleted	Inaugurated	Oversaw	Rotated
Aided	Delivered	Incorporated	Partook	Saved
Aligned	Demonstrated	Increased	Participated	Scheduled
Allotted	Designed	Indexed	perceived	Secured
Amended	Determined	Indicated	Perfected	Selected
Analyzed	Developed	Individualized	performed	Served
Anticipated	Devised	Influenced	Perpetuated	Shaped
Applied	Diagnosed	Informed	Persuaded	Signaled
Appraised	Diagrammed	Initiated	Photographed	Simplified
Approved	Directed	Inspected	Piloted	Sketched
Arranged	Discovered	Installed	Planned	Sold
Assembled	Displayed	Instituted	Practiced	Solved
Assessed	Distributed	Instructed	Prepared	Sorted
Assisted	Diverted	Instigated	Prescribed	Specialized
Attained	Documented	Integrated	Presented	Specified
Audited	Donated	Interpreted	Processed	Spoke
Budgeted	Drafted	Interviewed	Produced	Spotlighted
Built	Edited	Introduced	Programmed	Standardized
Calculated	Eliminated	Invented	Projected	Streamlined
Campaigned	Employed	Inventoried	Promoted	Structured
Cancelled	Enforced	Investigated	Proposed	Studied
Catalogued	Engineered	Itemized	Proved	Suggested
Categorized	Enlarged	Judged	Provided	Summarized
Chaired	Established	Justified	Publicized	Supervised
Changed	Estimated	Labeled	Purchased	Supplied
Channeled	Evaluated	Lead	Pursued	Surveyed
Charted	Examined	Learned	Quoted	Systematized
Checked	Exchanged	Leased	Raised	Tallied
Circulated	Excluded	Lectured	Rallied	Tabulated
Classified	Executed	Legislated	Readied	Talked
Combined	Exercised	Lobbied	Rebuilt	Taught
Commenced	Exhibited	Located	Recommended	Tested
Communicated	Expanded	Logged	Reconciled	Totaled
Compared	Expedited	Maintained	Recorded	Trained
Compiled	Explained	Mechanized	Recruited	Transcribed
Completed	Explored	Managed	Rectified	Transferred
Composed	Expressed	Manufactured	Reduced	Treated
Computed	Fabricated	Mapped	Reestablished	Tutored
Conceived	Familiarized	Maximized	Referred	Unified
Conducted	Figured	Measured	Refined	Upgraded
Conferred	Filed	Mechanized	Regained	Updated
Continued	Finalized	Mediated	Regulated	Vitalized
Contracted	Finished	Merged	Rehabilitated	Welcomed
Contributed	Fortified	Moderated	Reorganized	Wrote

# THE EFFECTIVE INTERVIEW

It is common for the interview stage of the job search to bring out feelings of both excitement and apprehension. Therefore, *preparation* is the key to a successful interview. In an interview setting, your representation of yourself involves both *verbal* and *non-verbal* behavior. Appearance, self-expression, self-confidence, enthusiasm and your ability to relate to the interviewer all exert influence.

## FIRST 10 SECONDS

What you do and say during the first 10 seconds of an interview may determine whether you are hired. If the first impression an interviewer has of a job candidate's attitude, personality, or appearance is negative or unprofessional, that person runs the risk of being eliminated from any further consideration for the position. The fact is that interviewers, like the rest of us, are very likely to judge a book by its cover. Job seekers must make that cover as attractive as possible. Serious job candidates take the job search seriously. They know that the first impression they make on an interviewer is almost always going to be the lasting impression.

## THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

The following suggestions will help you avoid frequently-made errors that reduce the effectiveness of your job interview. Remember, an interview is an adult-to-adult exchange of information and that you are interviewing as well as being interviewed.

## BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

- Arrive 15 minutes early. Know where you are going, how to get there, and how to get into the building.
- Turn off your cell phone! In fact, don't even bring it in with you.
- Do not bring anyone to the interview with you.
- Avoid perfumes and aftershave. Be sure that your clothes are fresh and free of any smoking odors as well as body odors.
- Do not wear dangling earrings or body-piercing jewelry, it is very distracting.
- Research the company. Employers are interested in candidates who ask intelligent questions and are able to engage in conversation based on what they know about the organization.
- Have some questions prepared. You may ask what the salary scale is at the end of your interview, if you don't know already.

## DURING THE INTERVIEW

- The interview begins when you are in the parking lot. Maintain a professional appearance as you approach the building. (People may be watching from the office.)
- Use a strong, firm handshake and maintain good eye contact. Be friendly, positive, honest.
- Do not place anything on the interviewer's desk.
- Act professionally!
- Do not chew gum, smoke, or accept a cup of coffee.
- Answer the interviewer's questions thoroughly but ask questions intermittently throughout the process. Show you're interested, but don't take over the interview.
- Use the interviewer's name during the interview.
- If questioned about your weaknesses, remember that employers do not want to know about your negatives. Be prepared for this question: Turn the weakness into a strength, if possible. Or after explaining the weakness, explain briefly how you are overcoming or compensate for this.
- Be prepared for personal questions - even some inappropriate ones.
- If you do not understand the interviewer's question, ask for clarification. Answer all questions fully. Try to be as specific as possible but do not ramble.
- Be enthusiastic: A positive attitude goes a long way. Let the interviewer know you are excited about the possibility of working for the company. Emphasize what you can do for the company. But remember: There's a fine line between sounding confident and sounding arrogant. Be careful.
- Never slight a former employer, colleague, teacher, institution or friend. EVER.

## **AFTER THE INTERVIEW**

- Be sure to thank the interviewer; ask for his/her card and write a thank you note within 24 hours
- Keep a good record of the interview with dates, interviewer's name, contacts you have made with the company and date you sent a thank you note.
- Evaluate: Determine if the job is right for you. Did the job description match your interests and abilities? Did this seem like a good place to work? A good fit will lead to a more successful and fulfilling career for you!

## **SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

You might want to do a practice interview with a friend. Practice answering the types of questions you might be asked during an interview. Being prepared is the key to avoiding excessive nervousness and awkward silences during the interview and will give you more confidence. In addition, you may set up a mock interview with a professional in Student Development, by appointment.

Use these questions, categorized by type:

### **Employment History**

If you had to evaluate your performance in your present job on a scale of 1 to 10, how would you grade yourself and why?

What skills have you acquired in your present job that makes you the right candidate for this job?

Why do you want to leave your present job?

What have you heard about our company that leads you to believe you would like to work here?

### **Communications**

Are you more comfortable working on team or on your own?

What types of people do you find difficult to work with?

How often do you like to meet with your supervisor?

If you had an idea for a new project, how would you communicate it to your co-workers and supervisors and try get it approved?

### **Organization**

How do you go about planning your schedule for the day?

How do you relieve stress at work?

What tasks in your present job do you consider to be a waste of time?

Do you consider yourself efficient? Why?

If you were given a long-term project, how would you approach the work?

### **Motivation**

What motivates you to do your best?

Think of a major accomplishment you had in your present job. What aspect did you find most satisfying?

### **Managerial**

What qualities do you possess that would make you a good manager?

Tell me about the best manager you ever had and what you learned from that person.

Tell me about your worst manager and what you learned from that person.

How do you create an environment that fosters teamwork?

How would you handle a conflict between your employees?

### **Personal Skills**

Tell me about yourself. (very common question; don't make your answer too personal)

What is your weakness? Give me an example of a situation where this worked against you.

What is your strength? Give me an example of a situation where this worked in your favor.

NOTES: