

# CAREER GUIDE

Be prepared...  
Be professional...  
Be employed!



BEFORE  
*vs*  
AFTER

**ROWAN COLLEGE  
AT BURLINGTON COUNTY**

*Career Services*

[bcc.edu/careers](http://bcc.edu/careers)



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**Visit Us in The Career Services Center!  
Be Prepared, Be Professional, Be Employed!**



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# ROWAN COLLEGE AT BURLINGTON COUNTY CAREER SERVICES

The Career Services Center provides various career resources for all stages of your academic and professional career.

## Locations

The Career Services Center has two locations. You can find one location at the Pemberton campus and one at the Mount Laurel campus.

## Services Available

- One-on-one career counseling appointments for students and alumni.
- An office space with computers for students and alumni to conduct online job searches.
- Assistance with creating a resume and cover letter.
- Explore career fields and majors by taking the free online career assessment. You can meet with a counselor to review the results and receive further resources.
- Coordination with the Experiential Learning course program, which allows students to earn college credit for academically related work experience.
- Assistance for students to obtain on-campus employment.

## Online Job Board

- The Career Services Center uses an online job board to manage on-campus and off-campus employment opportunities.
- Students, alumni, community residents and employers are given **FREE access** to the system.
- **Employers** must complete the registration and, pending approval, may post jobs or internships.

## Special Events

A number of free events are held during the year which are open to students, alumni and community residents. For exact locations, dates and times please visit [www.bcc.edu/careers](http://www.bcc.edu/careers) and view the **Events & Workshops** tab.

### Career Events:

- Dress for Success Event, Spring
- Career Fairs
- Road Trip to the Real World

### Career Services Workshops:

- **Career Assessment and Exploration:** Take the career assessment and learn how to research the labor market to explore potential careers.
- **Improve Your Job Search Strategies:** Learn how to research the labor market.
- **Your “Paper” Image:** Do’s and don’ts for writing a professional resume and cover letter.
- **Interview Success:** Do’s and don’ts of interviewing.
- **Cleaning up Your Digital Dirt:** Learn how potential employers see you through social media and how to clean up your online image.
- **Dress for Success:** Learn basic tips for what is and is not appropriate to wear on an interview and on the job.
- **Prepare for the Fair:** Discover what employers expect from students before, during and after the fair.
- **Making a Career Change:** How to showcase transferable skills and transition.
- **Networking 101:** Setting up and utilizing LinkedIn and how to network in person.
- **Salary Negotiations:** Learn skills and tips for negotiating a starting salary or a raise.
- **What Employers Want:** Learn about effective work habits, valuable skills, acceptable workplace communication, etc.
- **Internships 101:** Why doing an internship is important in today’s job market and learn how to find one.



## Career Services Center Contact Information

(609) 894-9311 x1034

609-894-0158 fax

[careerservices@bcc.edu](mailto:careerservices@bcc.edu)

[www.bcc.edu/careers](http://www.bcc.edu/careers)

# TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

If you're wondering what skills you have that would interest a potential employer, you are not alone. Many college students feel that their years of college haven't sufficiently prepared them to begin work after graduation. And like these students, you may have carefully reviewed your work history (along with your campus and civic involvement) and you may still have a difficult time seeing how the skills you learned in college will transfer to the workplace.

But keep in mind that you've been acquiring skills since childhood. Whether learning the value of teamwork by playing sports, developing editing skills working on your high school newspaper or developing countless skills while completing your coursework, each of your experiences has laid the groundwork for building additional skills.

## What Are Transferable Skills?

A *transferable* skill is a "portable skill" that you *deliberately* (or inadvertently, if you haven't identified them yet) take with you to other life experiences.

Your transferable skills are often:

- acquired through a class (e.g., an English major who is taught technical writing)
- acquired through experience (e.g., the student government representative who develops strong motivation and consensus building skills)

Transferable skills supplement your degree. They provide an employer concrete evidence of your readiness and qualifications for a position. Identifying your transferable skills and communicating them to potential employers will greatly increase your success during the job search.

Remember that it is impossible to complete college without acquiring transferable skills. Campus and community activities, class projects and assignments, athletic activities, internships and summer/part-time jobs have provided you with countless experiences where you've acquired a range of skills—many that you may take for granted.

## Identifying Transferable Skills

While very closely related (and with some overlap), transferable skills can be divided into three subsets:

- Working With People • Working With Things
- Working With Data/Information

For example, some transferable skills can be used in every workplace setting (e.g., organizing or public speaking) while some are more applicable to specific settings (e.g., drafting or accounting).

The following are examples of skills often acquired through the classroom, jobs, athletics and other activities. Use these examples to help you develop your own list of the transferable skills you've acquired.

### Working With People

- Selling • Training • Teaching • Supervising
- Organizing • Soliciting • Motivating • Mediating
- Advising • Delegating • Entertaining
- Representing • Negotiating • Translating

### Working With Things

- Repairing • Assembling parts • Designing
- Operating machinery • Driving
- Maintaining equipment • Constructing • Building
- Sketching • Working with CAD • Keyboarding
- Drafting • Surveying • Troubleshooting

### Working With Data/Information

- Calculating • Developing databases
- Working with spreadsheets • Accounting • Writing
- Researching • Computing • Testing • Filing • Sorting
- Editing • Gathering data • Analyzing • Budgeting

## Easy Steps to Identify Your Transferable Skills

Now that you know what transferable skills are, let's put together a list of your transferable skills. You may want to work with someone in your career services office to help you identify as many transferable skills as possible.

**Step 1.** Make a list of every job title you've held (part-time, full-time and internships), along with volunteer, sports and other affiliations since starting college. (Be sure to record officer positions and other leadership roles.)

**Step 2.** Using your transcript, list the classes in your major field of study along with foundation courses. Include electives that may be related to your employment interests.

**Step 3.** For each job title, campus activity and class you've just recorded, write a sentence and then underline the action taken. (Avoid stating that you *learned* or *gained experience* in any skill. Instead, present your skill more directly as a verifiable qualification.)

*"While working for Jones Engineering, I performed 3D modeling and drafting."*

**NOT** *"While working for Jones Engineering, I gained experience in 3D modeling and drafting."*

*"As a member of the Caribbean Students Association, I developed and coordinated the marketing of club events."*

**NOT** *"As a member of the Caribbean Students Association, I learned how to market events."*

**Step 4.** Make a list of the skills/experiences you've identified for future reference during your job search.

## Using Transferable Skills in the Job Search

Your success in finding the position right for you will depend on your ability to showcase your innate talents and skills. You will also need to demonstrate how you can apply these skills at an employer's place of business. Consult the staff at your career services office to help you further identify relevant transferable skills and incorporate them on your resume and during your interviews. During each interview, be sure to emphasize only those skills that would be of particular interest to a specific employer.

Transferable skills are the foundation upon which you will build additional, more complex skills as your career unfolds. Start making your list of skills and you'll discover that you have more to offer than you realized!

### Additional Tips to Help Identify Your Transferable Skills

1. Review your list of transferable skills with someone in your field(s) of interest to help you identify any additional skills that you may want to include.
2. Using a major job posting website, print out descriptions of jobs that interest you to help you identify skills being sought. (Also use these postings as guides for terminology on your resume.)
3. Attend career fairs and company information sessions to learn about the skills valued by specific companies and industries.

Written by Rosita Smith.

# WRITING A RESUME

## Why Write a Resume?

- Your resume is a personal pitch intended to persuade a potential employer that you are the best person to do the job. Think of it as a marketing tool that you use to sell yourself to a company.
- A resume helps you keep track of your professional experience and skills you have acquired. Keep it updated.
- “Resumes open doors to job interviews; interviews open doors to jobs.”

## First-Rate Resumes

The average resume is reviewed for less than a minute. First-rate resumes have a good *format*, *content*, and *winning words*. A resume targeted to a company’s needs or a specific job will get the attention of an employer faster than a general one. Remember to focus on accomplishments and not just tasks. In addition there are “do’s and don’ts” one should follow in writing a resume and the most important aspect is to **PROOFREAD**. Always proofread your resume before sending it to potential employers. Misspellings may cost you the interview.

## Always proofread your resume before sending it to potential employers.

## Format (Three Types)

**Chronological:** This is the most common type. It begins with the most recent job listed first in the Work Experience section. It is best for job seekers who have advanced through one field. It is also suitable for people who have not gone through many job changes or long gaps.

**Functional:** The attention is focused more on the skills developed at different jobs. The dates of employment play a minor role. This is suitable for entry level, career changers, and mature professionals with a various experiences.

**Combination:** Putting things in chronological order, but emphasizing skill like one would with a functional resume. Dates and process are both important.

## Appearance

Your resume should be attractive and easy to read. Use bullets, underlining, italicizing, and spacing to help sections stand out. Length is typically one page, so be concise. It should be free of spelling and grammatical errors. Don’t count on your computer’s spell check to catch every mistake. Times New Roman and Arial are good fonts to choose. Don’t make the font any smaller than 10 pt. Try to always use the default margins, but if you have to deviate don’t make the margins smaller than ½ inch on each side.

## Keywords

Keywords are nouns or short phrases that describe your education and experience and might be used in a resume database search. They represent the essential knowledge, skills and abilities required to do a job. They can be concrete descriptions, as well as well-known companies or universities. Develop a list of your own keywords and place them in your resume.

## Content of a Resume

The content of a resume consist of the following sections:

- **Heading**
  - This section of the resume includes your name (bolded and in a slightly larger font), your address, and contact information (phone and a professional email address).
  - Do not use Miss, Ms., Mrs., or Mr.
  - Example of a heading:

**Jane E. Smith**  
**601 Pemberton Browns Mills Road**  
**Pemberton, NJ 08068**  
**609-894-1234**  
**Jane\_Smith@gmail.com**

- **Objective**
  - An objective is one or two sentences about the specific job you want and what you can contribute to the employer in return for the job.
  - Use an objective when...
    - You are pursuing a specific job goal
    - You know the exact title of the position for which you are applying, make it your objective
    - You have a diverse career background that needs direction
    - You are a new graduate and need to formalize your goals
  - **Example of an objective:**  
Seeking a sales management position using expertise in motivating sales personnel in order to increase profit sharing.
- **Summary of Qualifications**
  - A Summary of Qualifications is a summary of your experience and qualifications that relate the most to the job for which you are applying.
  - It is a brief 3- or 4-line statement.
  - It may be used in place of OR following your objective.
  - **Example of a Summary of Qualifications:**  
12 years successful experience in direct sales of a range of products and services. Extensive practical hands-on experience as co-owner and manager of a small business. Motivated and enthusiastic about developing good relations with clients.
- **Education**
  - Include:
    - Name of institution (only if you are presently attending or have received a degree, diploma, or certification.)
    - Location (city and state)
    - Date of graduation, or potential graduation
    - Degree awarded
    - Field of study/concentration
    - Include your GPA if it is a 3.0 or higher

• **Work Experience**

- The order of jobs depends on the resume format
- **Chronological:** List your most recent job first. Generally, you would list the last 3 jobs or the last 10 years. Include a description of duties that relate to your objective and the position you seek.
- **Functional:** Focus on positions that relate closest to the job you seek, and list other work experience under a separate heading in less detail.
- What should I include?
  - The name of the company/institution
  - Title of your position
  - Location of the company (city and state; zip code and complete address is unnecessary)
  - Dates of employment (unabbreviated month and year)
  - Description of duties and responsibilities
  - Good descriptions:
    - Use action verbs. Examples include: accomplished, collaborated, developed, exceeded, improved, performed, solved, utilized, etc.
    - Are specific and measurable
    - Describe what you did and your successes
    - Are positive and sell your skills
    - Relate your past skills and experiences to the job you seek

• **Skills/Qualifications**

- Before writing your resume it is important to recognize valuable skills. Skills categories can include:
  - Specialized skills (ex: certifications, computer software)
  - Computer skills
  - Office skills
  - Communications skills
  - Leadership skills
- Be specific about what you know and relate it to the job you want



• **Activities/Organizations**

- Include activities if they are career related, non-controversial, and show skills and experience
- National affiliations/professional organizations
- Relevant positions held in clubs
- Honor/academic societies
- If you have done (or do) community service, it is a plus to include it.

• **Honors**

- Things that can be included:
  - Dean's List
  - Who's Who award
  - Scholarships
  - Awards

**Do's and Don'ts**

**You should (Do's):**

- ◆ Keep it brief; 1-2 pages
- ◆ Include your name and contact information at the top of the first page
- ◆ Open with a strong objective or summary
- ◆ Include a cover letter
- ◆ Use the right format for your skills and objective
- ◆ Be neat, organized and professional
- ◆ Use the same font and verb tense throughout each section
- ◆ Use a professional email address

**You should not (Don'ts):**

- ◆ Use a template
- ◆ Lie
- ◆ Misspell
- ◆ Use colored paper or fancy fonts
- ◆ Supply personal information like age, marital status, religion, or national origin
- ◆ Include salary information
- ◆ List discriminatory affiliations
- ◆ Include references or the phrase "references available upon request"
- ◆ Include hobbies or personal interests unless they directly relate to your objective
- ◆ Abbreviate degrees (Associate of Science in Business, not AS)
- ◆ Use graphics
- ◆ Start phrases in experience section with "Responsible for"
- ◆ Include a photograph

# EXPAND YOUR RESUME'S FOCUS

The traditional sections of resume writing—heading, objective, education and experience—are without question the foundation of your resume. As you focus on them, however, it is possible to get tunnel vision and think only about the skills you have developed through your day-to-day work.

Your actual experience has been much broader, and this list will help you explore your extended skills and experiences.

- Have you started an organization?
- Are you a member or officer in a professional association?
- Have you made a presentation at a conference?
- Have you been a panelist in a conference break out session?
- Are you a published author in your field?
- Have you served as a military officer, non-commissioned officer, or within an ROTC program?
- Do you hold any career-related certifications? How about any certifications with transferable skills?
- Have you won any competitions related to your field?
- Were you, or are you still, a Resident Assistant?
- Have you earned a promotion?
  - Did you complete a specific project to achieve the promotion?
  - Was it based on attaining a specific skill set?
  - Was it goal based?
- Have you studied abroad or traveled extensively?
- Have you conducted undergraduate research?
- Are you a mentor or tutor?

*Article adapted by Nancy J. Mellem from "Brainstorming for the Resume", written by Veronica Rahim, Career Services Consultant, Center for Career Opportunities, for Purdue University's 2011-2012 Career Planning Handbook.*

## QUALITIES DESIRED IN NEW COLLEGE GRADUATES By Businesses, Industries And Government Agencies

### Energy, Drive, Enthusiasm and Initiative

Hard-working, disciplined and dependable  
Eager, professional and positive attitude  
Strong self-motivation and high self-esteem  
Confident and assertive, yet diplomatic and flexible  
Sincere and preserves integrity  
Ambitious and takes risks  
Uses common sense

### Adapts Textbook Learning to the Working World

Quick learner  
Asks questions  
Analytical; independent thinker  
Willing to continue education and growth  
Committed to excellence

Open-minded, willing to try new things

### Knowledge of Computers

Established word processing, spreadsheet, database and presentation software skills  
Excellent computer literacy

### Communications Skills

Good writing skills  
Excellent oral communication skills  
Listens well; compassionate and empathetic  
Excellent problem-solving and analytical skills  
Creative and innovative

### Leadership Skills

Organizational skills and attention to detail

Accepts and handles responsibilities  
Action-oriented and results-driven  
Loyal to employers  
Customer-focused  
Team-spirited; understands group dynamics  
Always willing to help others  
Mature, poised and personable  
Diversity aware; treats others with respect and dignity

### Oriented to Growth

Acceptance of an entry-level position; doesn't view required tasks as "menial"  
Academic excellence in field of study  
Views the organization's total picture, not just one area of specialization  
Willing to accomplish more than required



# POWER VERBS FOR YOUR RESUME

accelerated	chaired	edited	indexed	persuaded	sanctioned
accommodated	charted	educated	indicated	pioneered	satisfied
accomplished	clarified	elevated	inferred	planned	scheduled
achieved	classified	elicited	influenced	polished	screened
acquired	coached	employed	informed	prepared	scrutinized
acted	collaborated	empowered	initiated	prescribed	secured
activated	collected	enabled	innovated	prioritized	served
adapted	commissioned	encouraged	inspected	processed	set goals
added	committed	engaged	inspired	procured	settled
addressed	communicated	engineered	instituted	produced	shaped
adjusted	compared	enhanced	instructed	programmed	smoothed
administered	compiled	enlarged	integrated	projected	solicited
admitted	composed	enlisted	interceded	promoted	solved
advanced	computed	enriched	interpreted	publicized	sought
advised	conceptualized	enumerated	interviewed	purchased	spearheaded
aided	concluded	envisioned	introduced		specified
alleviated	confirmed	established	invented	queried	spoke
allocated	consented	estimated	investigated	questioned	stimulated
allowed	consolidated	evaluated	involved		streamlined
altered	constructed	examined	issued	raised	strengthened
ameliorated	contracted	excelled		rated	studied
amended	contributed	executed	judged	realized	submitted
analyzed	converted	exercised	justified	recommended	substantiated
appointed	convinced	expanded		reconciled	suggested
apportioned	cooperated	expedited	launched	recorded	summarized
appraised	coordinated	explained	lectured	recruited	supervised
apprised	correlated	extended	led	rectified	supplemented
approved	corresponded	extracted	licensed	reduced (losses)	surveyed
approximated	counseled		lightened	refined	sustained
arbitrated	created	fabricated	linked	referred	synthesized
arranged	critiqued	facilitated	maintained	reformed	systematized
ascertained	customized	familiarized	marketed	regarded	
assembled		fashioned	measured	regulated	tabulated
assessed	debugged	figured	mediated	rehabilitated	tailored
assigned	deciphered	finalized	minimized	reinforced	traced
assisted	dedicated	forecasted	mobilized	rejuvenated	trained
attained	delegated	formulated	modeled	related	transacted
attested	deliberated	fostered	moderated	relieved	transformed
audited	demonstrated	founded	modernized	remedied	translated
augmented	designated	fulfilled	modified	remodeled	transmitted
authored	designed		monitored	repaired	
authorized	determined	generated	motivated	reported	updated
	devaluated	grew	multiplied	represented	upgraded
balanced	developed	guaranteed		researched	
bolstered	devised	guided	negotiated	reserved	validated
boosted	diagnosed			resolved (problems)	valued
brainstormed	directed	hired	officiated	restored	verified
budgeted	disbursed		operated	retrieved	visualized
built	dispatched	identified	orchestrated	revamped	
	displayed	illustrated	organized	reviewed	wrote
calculated	drafted	implemented	originated	revised	
catalogued		improved	overhauled	revitalized	
centralized	eased	improvised		revived	
certified	eclipsed	increased	performed		

*Adapted with permission from the Career Resource Manual of the University of California, Davis.*

# ENTRY-LEVEL SAMPLE CHRONOLOGICAL RESUME

## **Jane E. Smith**

601 Pemberton Browns Mills Road  
Pemberton, NJ 08068  
609-894-1234  
Jane\_Smith@gmail.com

### **Education**

**Rowan College at Burlington County**, Pemberton, NJ September 2014 - Present

*Associate of Arts in Psychology*

- Overall GPA 3.9

**Pemberton High School**, Pemberton, NJ June 2014

*Received High School Diploma*

- Honor Roll Student

### **Relevant Coursework**

- Introduction to Psychology
- Developmental Psychology
- Child and Adolescent Psychology
- Educational Psychology
- Human Sexuality
- Introduction to Sociology

### **Skills**

- Ability to interact well with diverse groups
- Strong team building and leadership skills
- Excellent organizational and customer service skills
- Able to multi-task with efficiency
- Quick learner and able to follow detailed directions
- Proficient in Microsoft Office - Word, Excel, PowerPoint

### **Honors and Activities**

**Rowan College at Burlington County**

- Human Services Club President
- Dean's List
- Phi Theta Kappa

**Big Brothers Big Sisters**

- Volunteer

### **Work Experience**

**ABC Pharmacy** Pemberton, NJ February 2013 - Present

Pharmacy Associate

- Process customer transactions with accuracy
- Stock shelves and complete inventory

# MID-CAREER SAMPLE CHRONOLOGICAL RESUME

## Jane E. Smith

601 Pemberton Browns Mills Road  
Pemberton, NJ 08068  
609-894-1234  
Jane\_Smith@gmail.com

**Summary of Qualifications:** Sales and marketing professional with 3 years experience. Proven leader in motivating staff. Able to manage large projects while evaluating effectiveness.

### Work Experience

*Sales Manager* June 2010 – Present  
Company Name Research Burlington, NJ

- Manage staff of 5 with volume of over \$2 million
- Negotiate large contracts; represent the company; corporate field contact for service and maintenance
- Set forecasts; coach sales staff and critique their abilities
- Oversee and write all performance evaluations, salary reviews and expense accounts

*Manager* August 2005 - June 2010  
The Jenkins Group Moorestown, NJ

- Led marketing effort in developing and selling new product for the Real Time processing market
- Developed product requirements and comprehensive business plan resulting in \$3 million being allocated for the project
- Managed overall market strategy, prospect identification and qualification

*Salesperson* February 2003 – August 2005  
Samson Problem Solvers, Inc. Moorestown, NJ

- Created and implemented sales plan to promote inventory control system for retailers
- Developed relationships with new and existing clients

### Education

Rowan College at Burlington County, Pemberton, NJ (May 2010)  
Associate of Science, Business Administration

### Skills/Qualifications

Bilingual - English and Spanish  
Microsoft Word, Excel, Access and PowerPoint  
Social Media Management

### Professional Affiliations

- National Association of Sales Professionals
- Business Marketing Association

# SAMPLE FUNCTIONAL RESUME

## Jane E. Smith

601 Pemberton Browns Mills Road  
Pemberton, NJ 08068  
609-894-1234  
Jane\_Smith@gmail.com

### Objective

Seeking an Account Executive position utilizing expertise in relationship building and relationship management to increase sales.

### Summary of Qualifications

12 years successful experience in direct sales of a range of products and services. Extensive practical hands-on experience as co-owner and manager of a small business. Motivated and enthusiastic about developing good relations with clients.

### Relevant Skills

#### *Sales and New Account Development*

- Increased a small publication's advertising revenue through market research and promotion.
- Developed new distribution outlets for a special-interest magazine in Northern California
  - Made cold calls and follow-up visits to retail outlets throughout the region.
  - Organized detailed route books and financial recordkeeping.
  - Successfully increased readership by more than 40 percent over a two-year period.

#### *Customer Relations*

- Served as vendor representative for Jana Imports:
  - Coordinated product information and distribution for 75 field representatives and major accounts.
  - Promoted giftware products at trade shows throughout the region.
  - Handled face-to-face contacts with new and established customers.
- Oversaw the production of advertising and its placement in major trade publications.

#### *Advertising, Marketing, Distributing*

- Organized and styled merchandise for effective presentation in a 20-page giftware catalog.
- Kept accurate, current computer records of inventory, international suppliers, brokers, shippers, etc.
- Handled all aspects of order taking and processing, both at Bill's Dairy and Jana Imports.

### Employment History

2011-present	<i>Sales Coordinator</i>	Jana Imports, Oakland, CA
2008-2011	<i>Distribution Coordinator</i>	Déjà vu Publishing Co., Baltimore, MD
2003-2008	<i>Co-Owner/Manager</i>	Bill's Dairy Products, Charleston, WV

### Education

Rowan College at Burlington County, Pemberton, NJ (May 2010)  
Associate of Science, Business Administration

# SAMPLE FUNCTIONAL RESUME FOR A CAREER CHANGER

**Jane E. Smith**  
601 Pemberton Browns Mills Road  
Pemberton, NJ 08068  
(609) 894-1234  
Jane\_Smith@gmail.com

## OBJECTIVE

Seeking a position in human services where strong communication, analytical and problem solving abilities can be applied towards the goals and success of an organization and clients served.

## EDUCATION

**Rowan College at Burlington County**, Mt. Laurel, NJ September 2014 - Present  
*Associate of Applied Science in Human Services*

- Overall GPA - 3.5
- Dean's List

**Rutgers University**, Camden, NJ 2010  
*Bachelor of Science in Finance*

## RELEVANT COURSEWORK

- Human Services I
- Introduction to Group Dynamics
- Interviewing Techniques
- Social Problems
- Introduction to Counseling
- Ethics
- Marriage and the Family
- Addiction Dynamics and Intervention

## SKILLS

- Active listening and interpersonal skills
- Critical thinking and decision making abilities
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Able to demonstrate empathy, honesty, ethics and integrity
- Proficient in Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint

## VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

**YMCA of Burlington**, Burlington, NJ 2014  

- Organized and distributed donations for sheltered families
- Assisted with planning and implementing annual holiday event

**Big Brothers Big Sisters**, Mt. Laurel, NJ November 2009 - June 2012  

- Mentored school age children from diverse background
- Planned weekly activities and provided supervision
- Communicated with teachers, school counselors and parents to help support mentee

## WORK EXPERIENCE

**ABC Company**, Pemberton, NJ April 2010 - Present  
Financial Analyst

**USA Bank**, Mt. Laurel, NJ December 2007 - April 2010  
Teller

# SAMPLE COMBINATION RESUME

## Jane E. Smith

601 Pemberton Browns Mills Road  
Pemberton, NJ 08068  
609-894-1234  
Jane\_Smith@gmail.com

### Summary of Qualifications

- Excellent oral and written communication skills
- Verifiable track record of consistently meeting sales quotas
- Skilled negotiator with a strong understanding of the industry

### Education

*Rutgers University*, Camden, NJ (September 2014 - Present)  
Bachelor of Science, Marketing

*Rowan College at Burlington County*, Pemberton, NJ (May 2012)  
Associate of Science, Business Administration

### Relevant Courses

Internet Marketing	Marketing Management
Selling Strategies	International Marketing
Customer Relationship Management	Marketing Research

### Academic Projects

- Developed a promotional plan (objectives, brand positioning, strategies and tactics) for three different types of businesses (tourism, food/beverage and entertainment)
- Developed, implemented, and analyzed through SPSS a questionnaire to answer why a department had decreasing sales

### Related Experience

Account Executive June 2007-Present  
Comcast Philadelphia, PA

- Solicit orders from local businesses and advertising agencies
- Increase sales volume from established accounts

Sales Associate September 2005-May 2007  
Express Moorestown, NJ

- Maintained customer service, product knowledge and product placement to help sell clothing
- Increased sales by creating new visual displays through product placement and innovative style

### Computer Skills

Microsoft Office  
LinkedIn  
Constant Contact  
Customer service management software

### Professional Organizations

The Young Entrepreneur's Network  
South Jersey Rotary Club Member

# COVER LETTERS

Every resume you send needs an accompanying cover letter, which can be used to inquire about possible job openings in your field or to apply for known vacancies. The main function of a cover letter is to spark an employer's interest in you so he or she will want to read your resume.

## Cover Letters

A well-crafted cover letter can help "sell" you to an employer. It should accomplish three main things:

1. **Introduce yourself to the employer.** If you are a recent college graduate, mention your major and how it would apply to the job you are seeking. Discuss the organizations/extracurricular activities you were involved in and the part-time jobs you held while a student, even if they might seem trivial to you. Chances are, you probably picked up some transferable skills that you will be able to use in the work world.
2. **Sell yourself.** Briefly state your education and the skills that will benefit the employer. Don't go into a lot of detail here—that's what your resume is for—but give the employer a sense of your strengths and talents.
3. **Request further action.** This is where you request the next step, such as an appointment or a phone conversation. Be polite but sincere in your desire for further action.

The letter should be concise; limit your cover letter to one page. (You can go into details in the interview, should you get one.)

**Develop one basic letter that can be changed slightly for each different position for which you apply. It is essential, however, that you type each letter individually. Mass-produced letters are usually recognized as such and connote a lack of sincere interest in the organization to which you have written.**

While your letter should follow a standard business format, try to make it as personal as possible. Identify the individual who will be in a position to say, "You're hired," and direct your correspondence to him/her.

In order to personalize your letters, obtain information about the business, industry, agency or school in which you are interested and refer to this knowledge in your letter. Your letter is often the first contact between you and a prospective employer, and your research will leave a good impression.

There are several types of letters that one may use in a job campaign. These may be divided into two broad categories: (1) letters of application, and (2) follow-up letters of various kinds. Observe the following basic rules regardless of the type of letter:

- The letter should be neat in appearance. Proofread carefully for form, spelling, punctuation and English usage.

- Keep the letter brief and to the point. Employers will lose interest if they are required to read through irrelevant information.
- Showcase what you have to offer an employer and in the position, not what you hope to gain from the job.

## Letter of Application

Identify the position for which you are applying and the way you learned about it. (If the letter is unsolicited, identifying the position for which you are applying is all that is necessary.)

- Indicate why you are applying for this particular position.
- Describe your main qualifications. Keep the letter sales-oriented. Remember this is your chance to sell your skills to the company.
- Refer the reader to your enclosed resume.
- Request action! Under no circumstances should you adopt a subservient attitude.

### Jane E. Smith

601 Pemberton Browns Mills Road  
Pemberton, NJ 08068  
609-894-1234  
Jane\_Smith@gmail.com

[Company Name]  
[Company Address]

[Date of Letter]

Dear Hiring Manager,

Please accept this letter and attached resume as application for the [Position Title] position posted on the [Company Name] website. I am confident that my ability to provide [List relevant skills here] paired with my strong [List relevant skills here] will be a perfect fit for your organization and the position.

I am excited about the potential to apply my education and skills to benefit [Company Name]. I welcome an opportunity for an interview to discuss your needs and how I can be an asset to your organization.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

*Jane E. Smith*

Jane E. Smith

Sample Cover Letter

# EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE

For most of us, sending and receiving email is simple and fun. We use it to communicate with friends and family and to converse with our contemporaries in an informal manner. But while we may be unguarded in our tone when we email friends, a professional tone should be maintained when communicating with prospective employers.

Email is a powerful tool in the hands of a knowledgeable job-seeker. Use it wisely and you will shine. Use it improperly, however, and you'll brand yourself as immature and unprofessional. It's irritating when a professional email doesn't stay on topic, or the writer just rambles. Try to succinctly get your point across—then end the email.

Be aware that email is often the preferred method of communication between job-seeker and employer. There are general guidelines that should be followed when emailing cover letters, thank-you notes and replies to various requests for information. Apply the following advice to every email you write:

- Use a meaningful subject header for your email—one that is appropriate to the topic.
- Always be professional and businesslike in your correspondence. Address the recipient as Mr., Ms. or Mrs., and always verify the correct spelling of the recipient's name.
- Be brief in your communications. Don't overload the employer with lots of questions in your email.
- Ditch the emoticons. While a ☺ or an LOL (laughing out loud) may go over well with friends and family, do not use such symbols in your email communications with business people.
- Do not use strange fonts, wallpapers or multicolored backgrounds.
- Sign your email with your full name.
- Avoid using slang.
- Be sure to proofread and spell-check your email before sending it.

Neal Murray, former director of the career services center at the University of California, San Diego, sees a lot of email from job-seekers. "You'd be amazed at the number of emails I receive that have spelling errors, grammatical errors, formatting errors—emails that are too informal in tone or just poorly written," says Murray. Such emails can send the message that you are unprofessional or unqualified.

When you're dealing with employers, there is no such thing as an inconsequential communication. Your emails say far more about you than you might realize, and it is important to always present a polished, professional image—even if you are just emailing your phone number and a time when you can be contacted. If you are sloppy and careless, a seemingly trivial communication will stick out like a sore thumb.

## Thank-You Notes

If you've had an interview with a prospective employer, a thank-you note is a good way to express your appreciation. The note can be emailed a day or two after your interview and only needs to be a few sentences long, as in the following:

Dear Ms. Jones:

I just wanted to send a quick note to thank you for yesterday's interview. The position we discussed is exactly what I've been looking for, and I feel that I will be able to make a positive contribution to your organization. I appreciate the opportunity to be considered for employment at XYZ Corporation. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you need further information.

Sincerely,

John Doe

Remember, a thank-you note is just that—a simple way to say thank you. In the business world, even these brief notes need to be handled with care.

## Tips

In addition to the guidelines stated above, here are a few tips to keep in mind:

- Make sure you spell the recipient's name correctly. If the person uses initials such as J.A. Smith and you are not certain of the individual's gender, then begin the email: "Dear J.A. Smith."
- Stick to a standard font like Times New Roman, 12-point.
- Keep your email brief and businesslike.
- Proofread everything you write before sending it.

While a well-crafted email may not be solely responsible for getting you your dream job, rest assured that an email full of errors will result in your being overlooked. Use these email guidelines and you will give yourself an advantage over other job-seekers who are unaware of how to professionally converse through email.

*Written by John Martalo, a freelance writer based in San Diego.*



# 10 BEST WAYS TO GO OFFLINE... AND GET THE JOB

**R**ichard Bolles, author of the legendary job search book, *What Color Is Your Parachute?*, warns that the biggest mistake he sees job hunters make is spending too long looking online and getting nowhere. Experts estimate that only 4% to 10% of online job seekers have any success using that method. What's a better option? Ask for leads and info from family, friends, professors, and any other folks you run into. That's how most people find a job.

## 1. Get From Online to F2F

If you've been spending time searching online, you may have developed virtual friendships with members of industry, special interest or alumni groups. See if you can take those relationships offline. "Maintaining contacts made online is time consuming," says Vicky Oliver author of *201 Smart Answers to Business Etiquette Questions*. "Then I realized that this LinkedIn group I belong to, for the alums of Ivies, was actually meeting in my area, so I attended an event. What a great way to network!"

If there isn't a group already meeting, set up one yourself (maybe through MeetUps.com) or invite one person for coffee. Face time can take a relationship to a whole new level.

## 2. Job Fairs, Conferences and Classes

Go anywhere groups of people in your field assemble. Because everyone has a common interest, and often their intention is to make connections—conversation will flow naturally. While job fairs catering to your major and career interests are best, it may be worth casting a bigger net. "Say you hear about a medical clinical professional job fair, and maybe you're looking for a staff accountant job. Pay your money and show up anyway," says Kathleen Downs, recruiting manager at Robert Half International in Orlando, Fla. "There will be HR folks there, so bring your resume, dress in interview clothes, and talk to them." Downs especially recommends this tactic of networking for people who are extroverted and present well.

## 3. Set Up Informational Interviews

Spending 20 minutes with someone in the trenches is the best way to research a position, industry or company you've targeted. It's a good way to add contacts to your network too. You can have interesting, meaningful conversations. They'll also be more likely to want to help you—possibly put in a good word on your behalf or hand-deliver your resume.

Tap your network of friends and family and keep your request simple. Try some variation of this script: "Do you know anyone who works in sports marketing?" Or, "Do you know anyone who works at Nike?" Or, "Do you know anyone who might know someone who knows such a person?" and finally, "Is it okay for me to contact them and mention you suggested I get in touch?"

At the end of each informational interview, ask for more leads so you get passed on to others.

## 4. Be the Total Package

Tattoos, body piercings, or hipster attire may be your personal image statement, but don't let your appearance scream so loudly that people can't hear what you're saying. "Some girls will come in with a small nose ring, and while I don't think there's anything wrong with that—it doesn't help," says Downs. "Look as conservative as you can and remove all distractions."

## 5. Tell a Story About Yourself

In addition to discussing general topics of interest, learn how to slip in a bit about your job search: "I'm looking for a staff accountant job." Later, practice relaying more detailed, career-related information about yourself. "You need to be specific about your skills and talents," said Peggy Klaus, author of *BRAG! The Art of Tooting Your Own Horn Without Blowing It*, "so you're able to explain what it is that you do. Prepare and rehearse little stories so it comes off conversationally."

## 6. Be a Giver

Now is a great time to volunteer for a nonprofit or industry group. You'll get out of the house, feel a sense of accomplishment and pick up some new skills. Maybe best of all: "Nonprofits have people serving on their boards that may be able to help you, and you'd never make their acquaintance otherwise," says Downs.

## 7. Put on a Happy Face

A job search can be stressful, especially if it's protracted, but "don't bring your emotional baggage with you," when you're out and about, says Klaus. "You may have just had a fight with your girlfriend, but you still you have to act as if you're delighted to be there."

## 8. Gyms, Coffee Shops and Bike Paths

Develop the ability to strike up a casual conversation about things that interest you, such as karaoke, city bikes or house-roasted coffee. (Geeky is good.) The low-risk first step prepares you to engage in step two, which is an information-gathering career-related conversation, and finally, the actual job interview.

Plus, by meeting people everywhere you go, you can engage innumerable pairs of eyes and ears helping you look for a job, which is what often leads to success. "The best way to find a job is still friends of friends," says Oliver. "Build a network of connections so that you hear about a job *before* it's posted."

## 9. Network From Within

Taking a not-perfect-fit job at a dream company is a great way to network and develop relationships from the inside. "Say you want to be a software developer at Apple, but you're offered a junior quality control position. Take it and in a few years you may be right where you want to be," says Tim Sanders, author of *Love is the Killer App: How to Win Business and Influence Friends*. Don't worry about getting stuck in your first role. If you're a talented person who makes a good fit with the corporate culture, a smart company will find a way to train and promote you.

## 10. Rinse and Repeat

Even after you're hired, don't stop adding to your network and nurturing your contacts. In an uncertain world, no job is permanent; we're all temporary employees.

*Written by Jebra Turner, a former human resources manager, who writes about career issues, and other business topics. She lives in Portland, Ore., and can be reached at [www.jebra.com](http://www.jebra.com).*

# 10 BEST WAYS TO GO ONLINE... AND GET THE JOB

**A**lmost 40% of HR managers predict resumes will soon be replaced by social-networking profiles. Even today, to get the attention of recruiters, grads have to establish a highly visible online presence. Most students are comfortable using technology to connect with family and friends, but unsure about how to use it in a professional context.

## 1. Check Out Major Job Boards

Technology is great, so as a job seeker it might seem like a no-brainer to go job hunting on the internet. “Digital job search is attractive to young people because they’re tech savvy,” said J.T. O’Donnell of CareerHMO.com. But after months of trolling job boards with no response, they wonder “What’s wrong with me?”

Nothing, according to O’Donnell. Estimates are that only 4% to 10% of the people who look for jobs online ever find one. It’s a long-shot. The “underbelly of the job posting world,” she says, “is that many listings are already filled, were just fishing expeditions, or are outright scams.”

## 2. Online Job Search Engines

A better bet is a search engine that delivers job listings directly to you. O’Donnell recommends linkup.com. “They focus on company websites so there are fewer duplicate, stale or fishy listings. You can also set up alerts to contact you if one of their 22,000+ companies posts a new opening.”

TweetAJob.com, where recruiters tweet jobs, is another engine O’Donnell likes because, “job search success is often just a matter of timing and this is immediate. You can respond quite quickly and be one of the first people in their inbox.”

It may be that Google is now becoming the #1 (unofficial) job search engine. Job hunters can search (or set up automatic alerts) for job titles, companies, cities, states, and get lists of postings that match their terms.

## 3. Compare Company Cultures Online

Want to get the real scoop on what’s like to work at your own dream company? Check out Glassdoor.com, which rates companies similar to how Yelp rates consumer services. “They accept anonymous information on companies,” says O’Donnell, “They post salary ranges for jobs, feedback ratings on leadership and information on the interview process.”

## 4. Write Your Resume in Digital Format

“Eighty percent of all companies are using ATS [applicant-tracking system that scans and digitizes], so keywords are key,” says O’Donnell. “As recent grads don’t have a lot of professional experience, they probably won’t get selected for an interview.”

There’s a way to get around that. Reverse-engineer several job descriptions, first highlight the repeating keywords (“Microsoft Office Suite,” not “Motivated, self-starter”), then plug them into your resume. Presto...an ATS software-friendly, search-engine-optimized resume!

## 5. Embrace LinkedIn

Think of LinkedIn as your resume...*on steroids*. Fill out your profile completely, but don’t stop there. Use LinkedIn to reach specific individuals—the people most likely to hire you or help you get hired. “Search the database just like recruiters do, by job titles, companies and professions. Search for people who are in jobs one, two, or three levels above your target job,” says Martin Yate, author of *Knock ‘em Dead, the Ultimate Job Search Guide*.

## 6. Tweet, Tweet

Twitter is a favorite method for recruiters to get a quick look at who you are and how you think. It’s fairly easy to micro-blog, too. Share your career-related news or retweet nuggets of interest to people in your field.

O’Donnell says Twitter is one of her favorite ways to contact hard-to-meet people. “Username, I’d really like to connect with you on Twitter,” she’ll ask. “And they’re likely to do it because it’s only a 140-character commitment. Later, you can tweet, ‘would you mind if I connect with you on LinkedIn?’ It’s low-risk for them so you’ll see a high rate of return.”

## 7. Email Etiquette

Most job seekers go through two to six exchanges with recruiters between the time they email “We got your resume” and when they sit in the interview chair, according to Tim Sanders, author of *Love is the Killer App: How to Win Business and Influence Friends*. Stalking a recruiter with too frequent emails should be avoided. Don’t text a recruiter either, he warns. Texting a stranger might come across as overly familiar or even creepy.

## 8. Broadcast on Facebook

Even though Facebook is usually thought of as a purely social platform, it can be useful during a job search. “I’d do a post to my network of friends, family and other contacts,” says Sanders, rather than contacting strangers.” For instance: *I am on the hunt to find a job at [company] because of X. Does anyone know anybody at [company]? That X has to be believable, such as, I think they make the best products in the industry.*

It’s good to repost a variation of that request every few days. (You’re reaching only about 10% of your friends’ feeds at any time, Sanders says.)

## 9. A Picture Is Worth a Thousand Words

Your digital footprint often precedes you, so it’s a good idea to periodically review your online identity. Enlist another set of eyes, too, for another perspective.

“I helped my niece with her profile,” says Peggy Klaus, author of *BRAG! The Art of Tooting Your Own Horn Without Blowing It*. “I opened up her Facebook page and see her in a picture with a hookah. She said, ‘Aunt Peg, it’s only tobacco!’ And I said, ‘I don’t care! To people of my generation, a hookah means pot.’” Klaus recommends a professional pose, conservative attire, possibly taken by a studio photographer.

## 10. Polish Your Online Image

“Don’t show or say anything online that you wouldn’t want your mother or boss to see,” she warns. “Clean up your email address and privacy settings. Even then be careful what you share. You don’t know who’s standing around looking over who’s shoulder, or what will be forwarded and sent around.”

Watch your grammar and spelling, don’t be silly or edgy, and stay away from political commentary (unless that’s appropriate for the job or industry), Klaus advises. Employers value good written communication skills.

*Written by Jebra Turner, a former human resources manager, who writes about career issues, and other business topics. She lives in Portland, Ore., and can be reached at [www.jebra.com](http://www.jebra.com).*

# JOB SEARCH STRATEGIES: PROS AND CONS

There are many ways to look for a job, some of which are better than others. Presented below are some of the most popular ways, as well as helpful hints and pros and cons of each.

Strategies	Tools, Pros, Cons and Helpful Hints
<b>INTERNET</b> Search online job banks and company websites. Submit resume online/post on job boards.	<b>Tools:</b> Access to the web and an electronic resume <b>Pros:</b> Actual job openings. Many employers use a wide variety of job listing services. Many listings have free to low-cost access. Worldwide geographic reach. <b>Cons:</b> Competition is growing as use of the internet increases. Pay attention to multiple listings—one position posted on a few sites—to avoid applying multiple times. <b>Hints:</b> Use the web frequently as information and sites change quickly.
<b>NETWORKING</b> Talk to everyone you know to develop a list of possible contacts; ask for information on job/ companies and to circulate your resume.	<b>Tools:</b> List of contacts, resumes and business attire <b>Pros:</b> May learn of unadvertised openings. May result in a courtesy interview. Often results in a closer match of your interests to a job. <b>Cons:</b> A contact in itself is not enough to get you a job. You may exhaust all leads without landing a job. Quite time-consuming. <b>Hints:</b> Follow through on all leads. Keep broadening your network of contacts.
<b>SOCIAL MEDIA</b> LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter	<b>Tools:</b> Access to the internet, social media accounts and an electronic resume <b>Pros:</b> Access to wide variety of employers, contacts and current job openings. <b>Cons:</b> Employers can view your information and/or pictures. Be sure your profile is professional, or use a separate account for connecting to employers. <b>Hints:</b> Follow your favorite companies. Show off your education and skills. Display an appropriate photo. Perform a search on your name to review your internet presence, and clean up the results if necessary.
<b>ON-CAMPUS RECRUITING</b> Follow specific procedures to secure on-campus interviews.	<b>Tools:</b> Scheduling interviews, employer literature, resumes and business attire <b>Pros:</b> One of the primary ways in which companies recruit for technical and business positions. <b>Cons:</b> May be less effective for nontechnical/nonbusiness candidates. <b>Hints:</b> Use the interview schedule as a way to identify possible employers, even if you don't get to interview on campus with those employers.
<b>TARGETED MAILING</b> Develop a good cover letter tailored to a specific type of job and the needs of the company. Send letter with resume to selected companies.	<b>Tools:</b> List of well-researched companies, tailored cover letters and resumes <b>Pros:</b> Better approach than the mass-mailing method. Investment of time and effort should merit stronger response from employers. <b>Cons:</b> Requires a significant investment of time in researching companies and writing cover letters as well as following up with contacts. <b>Hints:</b> Try to find out who is in charge of the area in which you want to work; send your materials to that person. Great method when used in conjunction with networking.
<b>IN-PERSON VISIT</b> Visit many companies. Ask to see person in specific department. Submit resume and application, if possible.	<b>Tools:</b> Business attire, company address list and resumes <b>Pros:</b> Resume and application are on file with the company. <b>Cons:</b> Requires a great deal of time to make a relatively small number of contacts. <b>Hints:</b> Research the companies prior to your visit. Ask for a specific person or ask about a specific type of job.
<b>RESUME REFERRAL</b> Register with one of the many national referral services. As jobs are listed by employers, the data bank of registrants is searched for matches. If your materials match, they are sent to the employers.	<b>Tools:</b> Registration form supplied by service <b>Pros:</b> Another way to monitor the job market and get your qualifications to the attention of employers. <b>Cons:</b> May involve a fee. Often more helpful to those in technical or specialized fields. May not learn of the status of your materials. <b>Hints:</b> Use only in conjunction with other job search strategies.
<b>EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES</b> Respond to employment agency ads in newspapers; check phone book for names of agencies to contact.	<b>Tools:</b> Resumes and business attire <b>Pros:</b> Fee-paid jobs for graduates in technical fields or those with marketable experience. <b>Cons:</b> May be less help to non-technical/inexperienced graduates. Be wary if you, instead of the employer, have to pay a fee. <b>Hints:</b> Identify agencies that specialize in your field. Make frequent contact with your counselor to obtain better service.
<b>WANT ADS</b> Scan want ads. Mail resume with cover letter tailored to specific job qualifications.	<b>Tools:</b> Newspapers, journals, newsletters, trade magazines, cover letters and resumes <b>Pros:</b> Involves minimal investment of time in identifying companies. Resume and cover letter are sent for actual job opening. <b>Cons:</b> Resume and cover letter will compete with large number of others. Ads follow job market; least effective in times of economic downturn. <b>Hints:</b> Use as a meter on the job market in a certain career field. Try to get your materials in as early as possible.

*Adapted and reprinted with permission from Career Services, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA.*

# GETTING THE MOST OUT OF A CAREER FAIR

**M**any employers use career fairs—both on and off campus—to promote their opportunities and to pre-screen applicants. Career fairs come in all shapes and sizes, from small community-sponsored events to giant regional career expositions held at major convention centers.

Most career fairs consist of booths and/or tables manned by recruiters and other representatives from each organization. For on-campus events, some employers also send alumni representatives. Large corporations and some government agencies have staffs who work the career fair “circuit” nationwide.

An employer’s display area is also subject to wide variance. It could be a simple table with a stack of brochures and business cards and a lone representative or an elaborate multimedia extravaganza with interactive displays, videos, posters and a team of recruiters.

## Fashions and Accessories

Generally, the appropriate attire for career fair attendees is more relaxed than what you’d wear to an actual job interview. In most cases, “business casual” is the norm. If you’re unsure of the dress code (particularly for off-campus events), it would be wise to err on the overdressed side—you’ll make a better impression if you appear professional. Think of it as a dress rehearsal for your real interviews!

Remember to bring copies of your resume (or resumes, if you have several versions tailored to different career choices), a few pens and pencils (have backups—they have a way of disappearing), a folder or portfolio and some sort of note-taking device (paper or electronic pad). Keep track of the recruiters with whom you speak and send follow-up notes to the ones who interest you. Don’t bring your backpack; it’s cumbersome for you, it gets in the way of others and it screams “student!” instead of “candidate!”

## Stop, Look and Listen

Keep your eyes and ears open—there’s nothing wrong with subtly eavesdropping on the questions asked and answers received by your fellow career fair attendees. You might pick up some valuable information, in addition to witnessing some real-life career search “do’s and don’ts.”

In order to maximize your career fair experience, you must be an active participant and not just a browser. If all you do is stroll around, take company literature and load up on the ubiquitous freebies, you really haven’t accomplished anything worthwhile (unless you’re a collector of key chains, mousepads and pocket flashlights). It is essential to chat with the company representatives and ask meaningful questions.

Here’s a great bit of career fair advice from Stanford University’s *Career Fair* guide:

“Create a one-minute ‘commercial’ as a way to sell yourself to an employer. This is a great way to introduce yourself. The goal is to connect your background to the organization’s need. In one minute or less, you need to introduce yourself, demonstrate your knowledge of the company, express enthusiasm and interest and relate your background to the company’s need.”

## You’re a Prospector—Start Digging

The questions you ask at a career fair depend upon your goals. Are you interested in finding out about a particular career field? Then ask generalized questions about working within the industry. If you’re seeking career opportunities with a specific employer, focus your questions on the application and interview process, and ask for specific information about that employer.

## Fair Thee Well

By all means, try to attend at least one career fair before beginning your formal job interviewing process. For new entrants into the professional career marketplace, this is a good way to make the transition into “self-marketing mode” without the formality and possible intimidation of a one-on-one job interview. It’s an opportunity that’s too valuable to miss.

## A Few Words About Career Fair Etiquette

1. Don’t interrupt the employer reps or your fellow job-seekers. If someone else is monopolizing the employer’s time, try to make eye contact with the rep to let him or her know that you’re interested in speaking. You may be doing a favor by giving the recruiter an out. If all else fails, move to the next exhibit and plan to come back later.
2. If you have a real interest in an employer, find out the procedures required to secure an interview. At some career fairs, initial screening interviews may be done on the spot. Other times, the career fair is used to pre-screen applicants for interviews to be conducted later (either on campus or at the employer’s site).
3. Sincerity always wins. Don’t lay it on too thick, but don’t be too blasé either. Virtually all employers are looking for candidates with good communication skills.
4. Don’t just drop your resume on employers’ display tables. Try to get it into a person’s hands and at least say a few words. If the scene is too busy and you can’t get a word in edgewise, jot a note on your resume to the effect of, “You were so busy that we didn’t get a chance to meet. I’m very interested in talking to you.” Look around the display for the recruiter’s business card (or at the very least, write down his or her name and get some literature with the company’s address) and send a follow-up note and another copy of your resume.
5. If you know ahead of time that one of your “dream companies” is a career fair participant, do some prior research (at minimum, visit their website). A little advance preparation goes a long way and can make you stand out among the masses of other attendees.

# GUIDE TO APPROPRIATE PRE-EMPLOYMENT INQUIRIES

ACCEPTABLE	SUBJECT	UNACCEPTABLE
<p>“Have you worked for this company under a different name?” “Have you ever been convicted of a crime under another name?”</p>	NAME	Former name of applicant whose name has been changed by court order or otherwise
<p>Applicant’s place of residence How long applicant has been a resident of this state or city</p>	ADDRESS OR DURATION OF RESIDENCE	
	BIRTHPLACE	Birthplace of applicant Birthplace of applicant’s parents, spouse or other relatives Requirement that applicant submit a birth certificate, naturalization or baptismal record
<p>“Can you, after employment, submit a work permit if under 18?” “Are you over 18 years of age?” “If hired, can you furnish proof of age?” or Statement that hire is subject to verification that applicant’s age meets legal requirements</p>	AGE	Questions that tend to identify applicants 40 to 64 years of age
	RELIGION	Applicant’s religious denomination or affiliation, church, parish, pastor or religious holidays observed “Do you attend religious services or a house of worship?” Applicant may not be told “This is a Catholic/Protestant/Jewish/atheist organization.”
<p>Statement by employer of regular days, hours or shift to be worked</p>	WORK DAYS AND SHIFTS	
	RACE OR ETHNICITY	Complexion, color of skin or other questions directly or indirectly indicating race or ethnicity
<p>Statement that photograph may be required after employment</p>	PHOTOGRAPH	Requirement that applicant affix a photograph to the application form Request applicant, at his/her option, to submit photograph Requirement of photograph after interview but before hiring
<p>Statement by employer that if hired, applicant may be required to submit proof of authorization to work in the United States</p>	CITIZENSHIP	Whether applicant, parents or spouse are naturalized or native-born U.S. citizens Date when applicant, parents or spouse acquired U.S. citizenship Requirement that applicant produce naturalization papers or first papers Whether applicant’s parents or spouse are citizens of the United States
<p>Languages applicant reads, speaks or writes fluently</p>	NATIONAL ORIGIN OR ANCESTRY	Applicant’s nationality, lineage, ancestry, national origin, descent or parentage Date of arrival in United States or port of entry; how long a resident Nationality of applicant’s parents or spouse; maiden name of applicant’s wife or mother Language commonly used by applicant. “What is your mother tongue?” How applicant acquired ability to read, write or speak a foreign language
<p>Applicant’s academic, vocational or professional education; schools attended</p>	EDUCATION	Date last attended high school
<p>Applicant’s work experience Applicant’s military experience in armed forces of United States, in a state militia (U.S.) or in a particular branch of U.S. armed forces</p>	EXPERIENCE	Applicant’s military experience (general) Type of military discharge
<p>“Have you ever been convicted of any crime? If so, when, where and what was the disposition of case?”</p>	CHARACTER	“Have you ever been arrested?”
<p>Names of applicant’s relatives already employed by this company Name and address of parent or guardian if applicant is a minor</p>	RELATIVES	Marital status or number of dependents Name or address of relative, spouse or children of adult applicant “With whom do you reside?” “Do you live with your parents?”
<p>Name and address of person to be notified in case of accident or emergency</p>	NOTICE IN CASE OF EMERGENCY	Name and address of relative to be notified in case of emergency
<p>Organizations, clubs, professional societies or other associations of which applicant is a member, excluding any names the character of which indicate the race, religious creed, color, national origin or ancestry of its members</p>	ORGANIZATIONS	List all organizations, clubs, societies and lodges to which you belong
<p>“By whom were you referred for a position here?”</p>	REFERENCES	Requirement of submission of a religious reference
<p>“Can you perform all of the duties outlined in the job description?” Statement by employer that all job offers are contingent on passing a physical examination</p>	PHYSICAL CONDITION	“Do you have any physical disabilities?” Questions on general medical condition Inquiries as to receipt of workers’ compensation

# TURNING YOUR INTERNSHIP INTO A FULL-TIME POSITION

One of the best benefits of an internship or cooperative education experience is that it can serve as your passport to future employment opportunities. Getting your foot in the door by landing the internship or co-op is only half of the challenge in turning your career dreams into a reality. The more vital half is to build a reputation during this career experience that will culminate in receiving a full-time job offer.

A growing number of employers are using internships as a way to gain a first in-depth look at prospective employees. In this respect, both you and your employer have a common goal—namely, to determine if there is a good fit between you.

Here are ten tips to becoming a savvy intern and making powerful career moves:

## 1. Exhibit a Can-Do Attitude

Pass the attitude test and you will be well on your way to success. Attitude speaks loud and clear and makes a lasting impression, so make sure that yours is one of your greatest assets. Take on any task assigned—no matter how small—with enthusiasm. Take the initiative to acquire new skills. Accept criticism graciously and maintain a sense of humor.

## 2. Learn the Unwritten Rules

Get to know your co-workers early in your internship. They will help you figure out quickly the culture in which you will be working. Being the “new kid” is like being a freshman all over again. You will need to adapt, observe, learn and process a large volume of information. Watch closely how things get done. Ask questions and pay attention to how people interact with each other.

## 3. Take Your Assignments Seriously

Build a reputation for being dependable. Be diligent and accurate in your work. You may encounter a great deal of ambiguity in the work environment, so seek direction when in doubt and do whatever it takes to get the job done. As an intern, you will generally start out by performing small tasks, asking a lot of questions and learning the systems. Your internship supervisor knows that there will be an initial learning curve and will make allowances for mistakes. Learn from your errors and move on to your next task. From there, your responsibilities and the expectations of others are likely to grow.

## 4. Meet Deadlines

Always assume the responsibility to ask when an assignment is due. This will help you to understand your supervisor’s priorities and to manage your time accordingly. Alert your boss in advance if you will be unable to meet expectations. This will show respect and professional maturity.

## 5. Set Realistic Goals and Expectations

Invest actively in the most critical element of your internship—that is, the learning agenda which you set up with your supervisor at the beginning of the assignment. Your learning

agenda should target specific skills and competencies that you wish to acquire and demonstrate. After all, the learning agenda is what distinguishes a short-term job from an internship. It is up to you to establish a correlation between your learning goals and the daily work you are asked to perform. Maintain a journal of your activities and accomplishments in order to monitor your progress. Seek regular reviews from your supervisor to assess your performance and reinforce the fact that you mean business.

## 6. Communicate Respectfully

Assume that everyone else knows more than you do. However, don’t be afraid to present useful ideas that may save time or money or solve problems. Make sure, however, that your style does not come across as cocky. Employers value assertiveness but not aggressiveness. Find out the proper way to address individuals, including customers. Maintain a pleasant and respectful demeanor with every person, regardless of his or her rank.

## 7. Be Flexible

Accept a wide variety of tasks, even those that may not relate directly to your assignments or those that may seem like grunt work. Your willingness to go the extra mile, especially during “crunch time,” will help you carve the way to assuming greater responsibilities.

## 8. Be a Team Player

Learn how your assignment fits into the grand scheme of things and keep a keen eye on getting the job done. In today’s work environment, success is often defined along the lines of your ability to get along with and interact with others. You’re a winner only if your team wins.

## 9. Get a Mentor

Identify at least one individual to serve as your mentor or professional guardian. It should be someone who is willing to take a personal interest in your career development and success. Once you know your way around, begin to network wisely and get “plugged in” by associating with seasoned employees who may share their knowledge, perspectives and insights. Get noticed, because many more people will have a role in determining your future than you might at first realize.

## 10. Have Fun!

Last but not least, enjoy learning, sharpening your skills and developing professionally and personally. Participate in work-related social functions and become an active member in your work community.

Make your internship or co-op experience work for you. It can be the first link in the chain of your career.

*Written by Lina Melkonian, Executive Director of Development at San José State University, College of Engineering.*

# CLEAN UP YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA IDENTITY

The social media profiles of job candidates are an area of scrutiny for recruiters. In fact, there are now even online research analysts who will comb the Internet for damaging information on a firm's applicants. (On the flip side, there are "scrub services" that will clean up a job hunter's digital footprint.) Here are some simple ways to take a DIY approach to scrubbing your online presence.

## Google Your Name

Search for your name online occasionally to see what comes up, or set up automatic name alerts at [Google.com/alerts](http://Google.com/alerts). You may discover results for many people with your same name, possibly with embarrassing or outrageous content. To find the real "you," try tweaking your name (e.g., Sam versus Samuel) or add some additional identifying modifiers (perhaps your city or school).

Search for your name on all the networks to which you've ever belonged, including Instagram and YouTube. (Recruiters check everywhere.) After a thorough review, ask yourself: *Will this the social media profile foster callbacks, interviews and job offers?* If not, keep reading.

## Keep Some Mystery

"Most new grads grew up texting, Skyping, Tweeting, Facebooking and reading or creating blogs," says Jenny Foss, who operates Ladder Recruiting Group in Portland, Ore. "Older, more experienced competitors aren't 'native social media people.'" That's the plus; the minus is you have to shift your mindset from "impressing the guys" to "promoting myself as a polished professional."

Foss recommends you adjust the privacy settings on your accounts. But you're not safe even then since companies can change privacy policies. When possible, it is better to remove negative or overly private content than hide it.

## There's No Swimsuit Competition

Recruiters will judge you by your profile photos. Do they tell the right story? "Don't post sexy photographs of yourself online. Don't even be too glamorous. That's a really big turnoff to employers," says Vicky Oliver, author of *201 Smart Answers to Business Etiquette Questions*. "Dress in photos as you would in an interview."

Remove unflattering pictures, videos, and unfavorable comments you've posted on social networks. Post a high-quality headshot, the same one across all platforms. **Important:** Don't forget to check out photos where friends have tagged you on Facebook. If you're pictured at a party with a drink in hand, delete the tag. Adjust privacy settings to prevent that from happening again.

## Blot Out the Bitter

Have you ever gone online while under the influence or in a foul mood? Bad idea. "What ever you wouldn't do at networking event, don't do online," says Oliver. Some examples of social media gaffes: Posting about parties, dates, getting into posting wars with your friends, or using obscenities, faulty grammar, typos, or cryptic texting shortcuts.

"I personally would never put a thumbs-down sign on someone's comment," Oliver says. "I would not write anything negative, no snippy commentary at all."

## Get LinkedIn

This is the single best social media platform for job seekers because of its professional focus. Some savvy employers are now even requesting LinkedIn profile info as part of the job application

## Content You Should NEVER Share

*These may seem really obvious, but people lose jobs (and job offers) every day because of them:*

- Don't refer to a company by name; they may get alerts when mentioned online.
- Don't complain about your job or boss.
- Refrain from making snarky comments about co-workers or customers.
- Don't reveal your drug/alcohol habits.
- Never make discriminatory or inflammatory remarks.
- Don't share intimate relationship details.
- Don't brag about skipping work, playing games or sleeping on the job.
- Do not broadcast an employer's confidential information.

process. One of the most powerful aspects of this profile is the recommendations from previous bosses and co-workers. Testimony from others is proof positive of your professionalism.

Make good use of keywords and set up cross-links between all your social media profiles. LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and Blogspot all rank high in Google searches.

## Witness Protection Program

Some job seekers are so concerned about privacy they've gone into lockdown mode and blocked all of their profiles. Unfortunately, that makes recruiters wonder what they're trying to hide. Plus, many of them seek employees with social media skills, so cleaning up what's out there is usually better than shutting it down.

## What Would Your Mother Say?

Many career coaches and recruiters say that the rule of thumb for social media content is: Would you want your mother or employer to see it? No? Then don't post it.

"Self-censorship is the main key," says Alexandra Levit, author of *Blind Spots: The 10 Business Myths You Can't Afford to Believe on Your New Path to Success*. "Always think before you post, because if there is a single person out there who you don't want to see your content, I guarantee it will get back to them."

You may be too close to the situation to judge what's appropriate or not, so it can be helpful to have a second pair of eyes to look over your profiles. Select someone who's about the same age as your target employers, experienced in your field, or at least in the hiring process.

## Netiquette Tips

Dan Schwabel, a personal branding expert and author of *Me 2.0*, offers these tips to keep your digital reputation clean:

- Don't over-promote yourself or people will get turned off.
- Do share industry insights, useful resources, quotes and facts with your audience.
- Don't send your resume to employers on Facebook.
- Do build a relationship through tweeting before you email blindly.
- Don't come to an interview without researching the company and the hiring manager online, using LinkedIn first.

*Written by Jebra Turner, a former human resources manager, who writes about career issues, and other business topics. She lives in Portland, Ore., and can be reached at [www.jebra.com](http://www.jebra.com).*

# BUSINESS ETIQUETTE BLUNDERS and How to Fix Them

Getting a handle on business etiquette is even more important in this digital age, when the HR process is in flux and the “rules” aren’t always clear. Here are some of the top etiquette complaints from recruiters, and ways you can avoid those mistakes so that even old-school interviewers will be impressed with your good manners and social graces.

## No Show = No Job

This should go without saying, but actually showing up to an interview is necessary to lock down a job offer. Yet too many candidates casually blow off interviews. One of the easiest ways to make a good impression is to arrive for interviews 10-15 minutes early, so you have plenty of time to get settled and perhaps check your appearance one last time.

If something pressing does come up, immediately call to cancel or reschedule. Decided you don’t want the job after all? Don’t just disappear. It’s not only rude, but every industry has a grapevine, and word of flakiness gets around. Failing to show for an on-campus interview can have even more severe consequences, so make sure you know the cancellation and no-show policy.

## Too Negative

“Keep your emotional baggage outside the interview door,” says Peggy Klaus, author of *BRAG! The Art of Tooting Your Own Horn Without Blowing It*. We all have days when the alarm doesn’t go off, the weather is a mess, and there’s no parking spot. Don’t whine. Be enthusiastic, eager, flexible, and most of all—likeable. “Do not expect the interviewer to entertain you, or do your job for you by drawing you out,” she adds.

## Thankless

Sending a thank-you note is an important way to demonstrate good manners. It doesn’t have to be handwritten, but it should be considered and specific. “An email is fine, but make sure it shows thought and effort,” says Klaus. “Don’t do it in the elevator on the way down. Do it with forethought, so you can translate what you got out of the interview.”

If you do a round of interviews with three people, say, then send three slightly different thank-you notes that day, or the next. (Get business cards so you have everyone’s coordinates close at hand.)

## Too Familiar

When emailing someone you don’t know well, be a bit formal: Capitalize words, don’t use texting shorthand, and start with a salutation. “You don’t send an email to a *New York Times* bestselling writer and say ‘Hey, I need to know...,’” complains Martin Yate, author of [NYT bestseller] *Knock ‘em Dead, the Ultimate Job Search Guide*. “No, you start with ‘Dear Martin...’ and finish with ‘Thank you for your time. Sincerely, your name.’”

“Similarly, if everyone in the office calls your interviewer ‘Sam,’ adjust that to ‘Ms. or Mr. Jones,’” says Yate. “Be respectful of the people who can put food on your table.”

## What Dress Code?

Dressing appropriately for an interview is a balancing act. One level in formality above what people normally wear on the job is just right. For men, if you’d wear khakis and a polo shirt on the job, wear dress slacks and a blazer to the interview. Women should follow a similar “step up” plan. (Scope out company dress codes during informational interviews.)

“On an interview, you’re dressing to get hired, not dated,” says Yate. “Your dress must be conservative and clean cut. It shows

respect for the occasion, job, company, interviewer, and most of all—for yourself.”

## Dining Disaster

You may have an opportunity to interview at lunch or dinner. It can be doubly nerve wracking to think about what you’ll say, as well as how to keep the spaghetti on your fork. “If you eat like a cave man with a mastodon on your plate, you won’t be invited to dine with the chairman of the board, or important clients,” Yate says. Don’t drink, even if your interviewer does, so that you can keep your wits about you, and be courteous to the wait staff. Consider ordering an easy-to-manage entrée.

## Clueless About the Employer

It’s so easy to do online research, that there’s no reason for you not to know about a prospective employer. (The company and the individual.) How much will employers care if you don’t do your due diligence? One applicant at IBM was asked if he knew what those three letters stood for. He did not. Next! (In case you ever interview at IBM, the answer is International Business Machines.)

## Annoying Devices

“We get complaints about candidates taking a cell phone call, or checking email, or texting in a meeting,” says Kathleen Downs, recruiting manager at Robert Half International in Orlando, Fla. “It’s a mistake to not silence a phone during a meeting. Even in the waiting room, we’ve had phones go off and it’s an inappropriate ring tone, like a hip-hop song with swear words.”

Make sure you have a greeting on your voice mail—some employers won’t leave a message if they aren’t sure they’ve reached the right party. And if your phone number is blocked, they can’t call you back if you don’t leave a message. “I’ve called candidates and gotten obnoxious voice mail messages, ‘You know who this is. You know what to do,’” she says. That’s not the way to win over a recruiter.

## Poor Profile

Employers often complain of inappropriate photos or comments on an applicant’s social media profile. “You can try to make that info private, but somehow, somehow, there’s a way to get to it,” Downs says. She has her Facebook profile set to private, and directs business contacts to her LinkedIn profile. “Don’t ever post anything racy. For example, don’t post a picture of yourself in a bikini—even if you look good!”

## Tattoos and Piercings

Tribal tattoos, hair dyed colors not seen in nature, or dreadlocks may turn off conservative employers. If your personal style doesn’t go over well in interviews, cover up (easy with some tattoos) or get a makeover ASAP.

“A guy with a piercing came to an interview with a tongue ring in,” says Downs. “I told him to go to the restroom and take it out. It was stuck. He had to go to the tattoo parlor a few miles away and have it cut out.”

If your personal style is more important to you than a position with a company, spend a little more time researching the corporate culture of a company before you apply, so you can find the right fit.

*Written by Jebra Turner, a former human resources manager, who writes about career issues, and other business topics. She lives in Portland, Ore., and can be reached at [www.jebra.com](http://www.jebra.com).*



# DRESSING FOR THE INTERVIEW

Depending upon your fashion style, whether it is the latest trends for the club scene or merely college casual, a job interview may be cause for some drastic wardrobe augmentation.

For your interviews, some of your individualism might have to be shelved or kept in the closet. In most business and technical job interviews, when it comes to your appearance, conservatism and conformity are in order.

While many companies have adopted the “office casual” dress code, don’t try to set new standards in the interview. When in doubt, it is better to be too conservative than to be too flashy. For men and women, a suit is the best bet.

Here are some guidelines:

## MEN

- A two-piece suit will suffice in most instances.
- Solid colors and tighter-woven fabrics are safer than bold prints or patterns.
- Bright ties bring focus to the face, but a simple pattern is best for an interview. (A tip for larger men: Use a double Windsor knot to minimize a bulky appearance.)
- Wear polished shoes with socks high enough so no skin is visible when you sit down and cross your legs.

## WOMEN

- A suit with a knee-length skirt and a tailored blouse is most appropriate.
- Although even the most conservative organizations allow more feminine looks these days, accessories should be kept simple. Basic pumps and modest jewelry and makeup help to present a professional look.
- Pants are more acceptable now but are not recommended for interviews.

## Staying Within a Budget

For recent graduates just entering professional life, additions to wardrobes, or complete overhauls, are likely needed. Limited funds, however, can be an obstacle. Image consultant Christine Lazzarini suggests “capsule wardrobing.” For example, by mixing and matching, she says, an eight-piece capsule wardrobe can generate up to 28 ensembles.

Before shopping, Lazzarini advises establishing a budget, 50% of which should be targeted for accessories. For women, “even a brightly colored jacket could be considered an accessory when it makes an outfit you already have look entirely different.”

The most important piece in any wardrobe is a jacket that is versatile and can work with a number of other pieces, according to one fashion expert. This applies to men and women. “If you focus on a suit, buy one with a jacket which may be used with other skirts or trousers,” says a women’s fashion director for a major national retailer. “Then add a black turtleneck or a white shirt. These are the fashion basics that you can build on.”

A navy or black blazer for men can work well with a few different gabardine pants. Although this kind of ensemble would be just as expensive as a single suit, it offers more versatility.

One accessory recommended by company representatives is a briefcase. “When I see one,” says one recruiter, “it definitely adds to the candidate’s stature. It is a symbol to me that the individual has done some research and that he or she is prepared.”

## A Final Check

And, of course, your appearance is only as good as your grooming. Create a final checklist to review before you go on an interview:

- Neatly trimmed hair
- Conservative makeup
- No runs in stockings
- Shoes polished (some suggest wearing your sneakers on the way to an interview and changing before you enter the interview site)
- No excessive jewelry; men should refrain from wearing earrings
- No missing buttons, crooked ties or lint

You want your experience and qualifications to shine. Your appearance should enhance your presentation, not overwhelm it.



## Taking a Casual Approach

“Office casual” is becoming the accepted mode of dress at more and more companies. The rules, however, for casual attire are subject to tremendous company-to-company variance. At some, “casual day” is a Friday-only observance, where the dress code is *slightly* relaxed—a sports coat and slacks for men and slacks and a sweater for women. At others, especially entrepreneurial computer companies, it’s shorts and sandals every day.

The safest fashion rule for new employees to follow is *dress about the same as your most conservatively attired co-worker*. As a new hire, don’t try to “push the boundaries” of casual attire.

**Fashion Arrests:** 1) Never wear denim jeans or shorts unless the vast majority of others do; 2) Don’t dress too provocatively—you’re at work, not at a dance club; 3) “Casual” doesn’t mean “sloppy”—your clothes should always be free of stains or holes; 4) Workout wear belongs at the gym.

**Play It Safe:** 1) Chinos or corduroy slacks are usually a safe bet for both sexes; 2) As for formal business attire, buy the best that your budget will allow; 3) If you will be seeing clients, dress appropriately for *their* workplace, not yours; 4) Go to the mall—most department and specialty stores have sections devoted to this style of office attire.

# 10 RULES OF INTERVIEWING

**B**efore stepping into an interview, be sure to practice, practice, practice. A job-seeker going to a job interview without preparing is like an actor performing on opening night without rehearsing.

To help with the interview process, keep the following ten rules in mind:

**1 Keep your answers brief and concise.**  
Unless asked to give more detail, limit your answers to two to three minutes per question. Tape yourself and see how long it takes you to fully answer a question.

**2 Include concrete, quantifiable data.**  
Interviewees tend to talk in generalities. Unfortunately, generalities often fail to convince interviewers that the applicant has assets. Include measurable information and provide details about specific accomplishments when discussing your strengths.

**3 Repeat your key strengths three times.**  
It's essential that you comfortably and confidently articulate your strengths. Explain how the strengths relate to the company's or department's goals and how they might benefit the potential employer. If you repeat your strengths then they will be remembered and—if supported with quantifiable accomplishments—they will more likely be believed.

**4 Prepare five or more success stories.**  
In preparing for interviews, make a list of your skills and key assets. Then reflect on past jobs and pick out one or two instances when you used those skills successfully.

**5 Put yourself on their team.**  
Ally yourself with the prospective employer by using the employer's name and products or services. For example, "As a member of \_\_\_\_\_, I would carefully analyze the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_." Show that you are thinking like a member of the team and will fit in with the existing environment. Be careful though not to say anything that would offend or be taken negatively. Your research will help you in this area.

**6 Image is often as important as content.**  
What you look like and how you say something are just as important as what you say. Studies have shown that 65 percent of the conveyed message is nonverbal; gestures, physical appearance and attire are highly influential during job interviews.

**7 Ask questions.**  
The types of questions you ask and the way you ask them can make a tremendous impression on the interviewer. Good questions require advance preparation. Just as you plan how you would answer an interviewer's questions, write out specific questions you want to ask. Then look for opportunities to ask them during the interview. Don't ask about benefits or salary. The interview process is a

two-way street whereby you and the interviewer assess each other to determine if there is an appropriate match.

**8 Maintain a conversational flow.**  
By consciously maintaining a conversational flow—a dialogue instead of a monologue—you will be perceived more positively. Use feedback questions at the end of your answers and use body language and voice intonation to create a conversational interchange between you and the interviewer.

**9 Research the company, product lines and competitors.**  
Research will provide information to help you decide whether you're interested in the company and important data to refer to during the interview.

**10 Keep an interview journal.**  
As soon as possible, write a brief summary of what happened. Note any follow-up action you should take and put it in your calendar. Review your presentation. Keep a journal of your attitude and the way you answered the questions. Did you ask questions to get the information you needed? What might you do differently next time? Prepare and send a brief thank-you letter. Restate your skills and stress what you can do for the company.

## In Summary

Because of its importance, interviewing requires advance preparation. Only you will be able to positively affect the outcome. You must be able to compete successfully with the competition for the job you want. In order to do that, be certain you have considered the kind of job you want, why you want it and how you qualify for it. You also must face reality: Is the job attainable?

In addition, recognize what it is employers want in their candidates. They want "can do" and "will do" employees. Recognize and use the following factors to your benefit as you develop your sales presentation. In evaluating candidates, employers consider the following factors:

- Ability
- Loyalty
- Personality
- Acceptance
- Recommendations
- Outside activities while in school
- Impressions made during the interview
- Character
- Initiative
- Communication skills
- Work record

*Written by Roseanne R. Bensley, Career Services, New Mexico State University.*

# QUESTIONS ASKED BY EMPLOYERS

## Personal

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. What are your hobbies?
3. Why did you choose to interview with our organization?
4. Describe your ideal job.
5. What can you offer us?
6. What do you consider to be your greatest strengths?
7. Can you name some weaknesses?
8. Define success. Failure.
9. Have you ever had any failures? What did you learn from them?
10. Of which three accomplishments are you most proud?
11. Who are your role models? Why?
12. How does your college education or work experience relate to this job?
13. What motivates you most in a job?
14. Have you had difficulty getting along with a former professor/supervisor/co-worker and how did you handle it?
15. Have you ever spoken before a group of people? How large?
16. Why should we hire you rather than another candidate?
17. What do you know about our organization (products or services)?
18. Where do you want to be in five years? Ten years?
19. Do you plan to return to school for further education?

## Education

20. Why did you choose your major?
21. Why did you choose to attend your college or university?
22. Do you think you received a good education? In what ways?
23. In which campus activities did you participate?
24. Which classes in your major did you like best? Least? Why?
25. Which elective classes did you like best? Least? Why?
26. If you were to start over, what would you change about your education?
27. Do your grades accurately reflect your ability? Why or why not?
28. Were you financially responsible for any portion of your college education?

## Experience

29. What job-related skills have you developed?
30. Did you work while going to school? In what positions?
31. What did you learn from these work experiences?
32. What did you enjoy most about your last employment? Least?
33. Have you ever quit a job? Why?
34. Give an example of a situation in which you provided a solution to an employer.
35. Give an example of a time in which you worked under deadline pressure.
36. Have you ever done any volunteer work? What kind?
37. How do you think a former supervisor would describe your work?
38. Give an example of a situation involving an irate customer or client.

## Career Goals

39. Do you prefer to work under supervision or on your own?
40. What kind of boss do you prefer?
41. Would you be successful working with a team?
42. Do you prefer large or small organizations? Why?
43. What other types of positions are you considering?
44. How do you feel about working in a structured environment?
45. Are you able to work on several assignments at once?
46. How do you feel about working overtime?
47. How do you feel about travel?
48. How do you feel about the possibility of relocating?
49. Are you willing to work flextime?
50. How would you deal with discovering you do not have enough expertise to deal with a problem or project?

Before you begin interviewing, think about these questions and possible responses and discuss them with a career advisor. Conduct mock interviews and be sure you are able to communicate clear, unrehearsed answers to interviewers.

# QUESTIONS TO ASK EMPLOYERS

1. Please describe the duties of the job for me.
2. What kinds of assignments might I expect the first six months on the job?
3. Does your company encourage further education?
4. How often are performance reviews given?
5. What products (or services) are in the development stage now?
6. Do you have plans for expansion?
7. What are your growth projections for next year?
8. How do you feel about creativity and individuality?
9. Is your company environmentally conscious? In what ways?
10. In what ways is a career with your company better than one with your competitors?
11. Is this a new position or am I replacing someone?
12. What is the largest single problem facing your staff (department) now?
13. Does your company offer either single or dual career-track programs?
14. What do you like best about your job/company?
15. Has there been much turnover in this job area?
16. Do you fill positions from the outside or promote from within first?
17. What qualities are you looking for in the candidate who fills this position?
18. What skills are especially important for someone in this position?
19. What characteristics do the achievers in this company seem to share?
20. Is there a lot of team/project work?
21. Will I have the opportunity to work on special projects?
22. Where does this position fit into the organizational structure?
23. How much travel, if any, is involved in this position?
24. Can you describe the work environment?
25. What is the typical dress code for this position?
26. What are the next steps in the hiring process?
27. How will I be trained? How long is the training period?
28. How has the company changed since you started?

## INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

One of the easiest and most effective ways to meet people in a professional field in which you are interested is to conduct informational interviews. Informational interviewing is a networking approach which allows you to meet key professionals, gather career information, investigate career options, get advice on job search techniques and get referrals to other professionals.

The art of informational interviewing is in knowing how to balance your hidden agenda (to locate a job) with the unique opportunity to learn firsthand about the demands of your field. Thus, never abuse your privilege by asking for a job, but execute your informational interviews skillfully, and a job may follow.

### What motivates professionals to grant informational interviews?

The reasons are varied. Generally, most people enjoy sharing information about themselves and their jobs and, particularly, love giving advice. Some may simply believe in encouraging newcomers to their profession and others may be scoping out prospects for anticipated vacancies. It is common for professionals to exchange favors and information, so don't hesitate to call upon people.

### How do you set up informational interviews?

One possible approach is to send a letter requesting a brief informational interview (clearly indicating the purpose of the meeting, and communicating the fact that there is no job expectation). Follow

this up with a phone call to schedule an appointment. Or, initiate a contact by making cold calls and set up an appointment. The best way to obtain an informational interview is by being referred from one professional to another, a process which becomes easier as your network expands.

### How do you prepare for informational interviews?

Prepare for your informational interviews just as you would for an actual job interview: polish your presentation and listening skills, and conduct preliminary research on the organization. You should outline an agenda that includes well-thought-out questions.

Begin your interview with questions that demonstrate your genuine interest in the other person such as, "Describe a typical day in your department." Then proceed with more general questions such as, "What are the employment prospects in this field?" or "Are you active in any professional organizations in our field and which would you recommend?" If appropriate, venture into a series of questions which place the employer in the advice-giving role, such as, "What should the most important consideration be in my first job?" The whole idea is for you to shine, to make an impression and to get referrals to other professionals.

Always remember to send a thank-you letter to every person who grants you time and to every individual who refers you to someone.

# STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: ACING THE INTERVIEW

The traditional face-to-face interview can be particularly stressful when you have a disability—especially a visible disability. Hiring managers and employers may have had little prior experience with persons with disabilities and may react with discomfort or even shock to the appearance of a wheelchair, cane or an unusual physical trait. When this happens, the interviewer is often so uncomfortable that he or she just wants to “get it over with” and conducts the interview in a hurried manner. But this scenario robs you of the opportunity to present your credentials and could prevent the employer from identifying a suitable, qualified candidate for employment.

It is essential that you understand that interviewing is not a passive process where the interviewer asks all the questions and you simply provide the answers. You, even more than applicants without disabilities, must be skilled in handling each interview in order to put the employer representative at ease. You must also be able to demonstrate your ability to manage your disability and be prepared to provide relevant information about your skills, experiences and educational background. In addition, you may have to inform the employer of the equipment, tools and related resources that you will need to perform the job tasks.

## To Disclose or Not to Disclose

To disclose or not to disclose, and when and how to disclose, are decisions that persons with disabilities must make for themselves during the job search process.

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), you are not legally obligated to disclose your disability unless it is likely to directly affect your job performance. On the other hand, if your disability is visible, it will be evident at the time of the interview so it may be more prudent to acknowledge your disability during the application process to avoid catching the employer representative off guard.

## Reasons for Disclosing

You take a risk when you decide to disclose your disability. Some employers may reject your application based on negative, preconceived ideas about persons with disabilities. In addition, you may feel that the issue is too personal to be publicized among strangers. On the other hand, if you provide false answers about your health or disability on an application and the truth is uncovered later, you risk losing your job. You may even be held legally responsible if you failed to inform your employer and an accident occurs that is related to your disability.

## Timing the Disclosure

The employer’s first contact with you will typically be through your cover letter and resume, especially if you initially contacted the organization. There are many differing opinions on whether one should mention the disability on the resume or in the cover letter. If you are comfortable revealing your disability early in the process, then give careful consideration to where the information is placed and how it is stated. The cover letter and resume should primarily outline relevant skills, experiences and education for the position for which you are applying. The reader should have a clear understanding of your suitability for the position. Therefore, if you choose to disclose your disability, the disclosure should be brief and placed near the end of the cover letter and resume. *It should never be the first piece of information that the employer sees about you.* The information should also reveal your ability to manage your disability while performing required job functions.

## When You Get the Interview

As stated earlier, it may not be wise to hide the disability (especially a visible disability) until the time of the interview. The employer representative may be surprised, uncomfortable or assume that you intentionally hid critical information. As a result, more time may be spent asking irrelevant and trivial questions because of nervousness, rather than focusing on your suitability for the position. Get assistance from contacts in human resources, your career center or workers with disabilities about the different ways to prepare the interviewer for your arrival. Take the time to rehearse what you will say before making initial contact. If oral communication is difficult for you, have a career services staff person (or another professional) place the call for you and explain how you plan to handle the interview. If you require support for your interview (such as a sign language interpreter), contact human resources in advance to arrange for this assistance. Advance preparation puts everyone at ease and shows that you can manage your affairs.

## Tips on Managing the Interview

### *Prior to the Interview*

1. Identify a career services staff person to help you prepare employers for their interview with you.
2. Arrange for several taped, mock interview sessions to become more confident in discussing your work-related skills and in putting the employer representative at ease; rehearse ahead of time to prepare how you will handle inappropriate, personal or possibly illegal questions.
3. If your disability makes oral communication difficult, create a written narrative to supplement your resume that details your abilities.
4. Determine any technical support, resources and costs that might be necessary for your employment so that you can respond to questions related to this topic.
5. Be sure that your career center has information for employers on interviewing persons with disabilities.
6. Seek advice from other workers with disabilities who have been successful in finding employment.
7. Review the general advice about interviewing outlined in this career guide.

### *During the Interview*

1. Put the interviewer at ease before starting the interview by addressing any visible disability (if you have not done so already).
2. Plan to participate fully in the discussion (not just answer questions); maintain the appropriate control of the interview by tactfully keeping the interview focused on your abilities—not the disability.
3. Inform the employer of any accommodations needed and how they can be achieved, thereby demonstrating your ability to manage your disability.
4. Conclude the interview by reiterating your qualifications and giving the interviewer the opportunity to ask any further questions.

*Written by Rosita Smith.*

# BACKPACK TO BRIEFCASE

## Tips for a Successful Transition from College to the “Real” World

The transition from college life to your professional career is one of the most difficult challenges you may face. This is a tough adjustment period, particularly if you have never spent any time working in an environment like the one in which you will be spending 40 or more hours a week.

You need to recognize that your first year on the job is a separate and unique career stage. You will be in a transition phase during this time. You’re not a college student anymore, but you haven’t earned all the rights and privileges of a professional either. The most important thing you will need to do is lose your college student attitudes and behaviors and begin to think and act like a professional.

You will quickly learn that the world of work is quite different from the college environment. When you show up for work on the first day, there will not be a syllabus waiting for you to explain what to do and how to do it. You have lost some of the freedom you enjoyed over your daily schedule as a college student. You will be viewed as “the new kid on the block,” and the quality of your work will become very important. Your performance will be a direct reflection on your boss or supervisor. If you can’t get the job done right, someone else surely can.

### Five Main Differences Between College and Work

1. In college you are used to frequent feedback, evaluation and direction. Ask for too much of this on the job and you will appear insecure and lacking in self-confidence.

2. As a student you have enjoyed frequent breaks and vacations from school usually totaling approximately 27 weeks spent in school. During your first year on the job you may have to work six months or more before you earn any time off. You will work on average more than 50 weeks that first year, maybe without a break at all.
3. In college you can choose your own performance level (A, B, C) by attending class, turning in assignments, and studying for exams. In your career, A-level work is required at all times.
4. College tends to focus on effort and growth. The real world cares only about results.
5. Students are encouraged to put forth an individual effort and think independently. Once you begin working, you will see that you will be required to work a lot with teams and in collaborating efforts.

Now that you have had a chance to see what some of the main differences are between college and work, you should take some time to consider how to make that transition as smooth as possible. Please take a look at some suggestions for your first year on the job.

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### 10 Steps to First-Year Success

1. Set goals that include gaining acceptance, respect and credibility. Learn to be a professional.
2. Take advantage of mentor and coaching relationships.
3. Own up to your mistakes and learn from them.
4. Admit what you don’t know; sometimes that is more important than showing off what you do know.
5. Build a good track record. You may have to go above and beyond the call of duty during your first year to make a lasting positive impression.
6. Be prepared to pay your dues. You have to earn your “pin stripes” before you can shed them. Be prepared to work long, hard hours.
7. Find your “niche” with the organization. Work on building relationships and fitting into the company culture.
8. Absorb information and spend your first year learning as much as possible. Master the tasks of your job and improve your knowledge, skills and abilities. LEARN, LEARN, LEARN!
9. Have a positive attitude. You will make a better impression being positive and likable. Leave your complaining at college!
10. Recognize that office politics exist. Learn the politics of your office, but don’t get involved. Watch out for complainers; they tend to gravitate to new hires in hopes of bringing you to their “side.”





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