

Getting a Good Job in Less Time

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The following topics are covered in this article:

Resume Writing

Job Hunting

Interviewing

Here is the most important lesson in this article: If you are unable to get a job, there may be valid reasons such as the condition of the economy or your lack of experience, but mainly you are responsible for it. Most people who take longer to find a job simply do not know how to create an effective resume, how to prepare for an interview, and most importantly, how to use the most effective methods to search for a job.

Resume Writing

Summary

Most people list their qualifications (job-related skills and experience) in their resumes but do not include anything about their personality and transferable skills. Most employers select resumes to call for the job interview based on personality and transferable skills because most resumes have similar qualifications (job-related skills and experience.) Personality (including attitude) and transferable skills have much more weight on hiring decisions than qualifications (job-related skills and experience.)

Guidelines to Resume Writing

Create a one-page resume if possible. A two or three-page resume is still acceptable if you have extensive employment history/experience.

The most important part of your resume is **Objective** or **Summary** that should include your personality and transferable skills (see samples from below). You must work very hard to write this part. This part should include:

- 1- Summary of job-related skills and experience you gained from your previous employment, education, and training.**
- 2- Your personality and transferable skills.**

Use the list of adjectives given below or use your own words to describe your personality and transferable skills. Be honest when describing yourself and in emphasizing your strengths. Ask

your friends and family members and your previous employers, if possible, how they would describe you to write this part.

List of Adjectives

Please check each adjective/phrase that describes you accurately to use in your resume:

Accept responsibility	Enthusiastic	Manage people	Reliable
Accurate	Expressive	Mature	Resolute
Adaptable	Fast paced	Meet deadlines	Resourceful
Ambitious	Flexible	Motivated	Responsible
Analytical	Focused	Multi-specialist	Responsive
Approachable	Follow instructions	Multi-tasker	Results-oriented
Assertive	Friendly	Negotiator	Self-motivated
Attentive	Future-thinking	Open-minded	Sense of humor
Bottom-line oriented	Get along well with others	Optimistic	Service-oriented
Business-minded	Get things done	Organize or manage projects	Sincere
Career-minded	Goal-oriented	Organized	Speak well in public
Careful	Hands-on	Outgoing	Spontaneous
Caring	Hard-working	Patient	Steady
Cheerful	Helpful	Persistent	Supervise others
Communicator	Honest	Persuasive	Systematic
Compassionate	Inquisitive	Plan activities or events	Tactful
Confident	Inventive	Planner	Team player
Consistent	Leader	Positive	Technically-minded
Cool under pressure	Loyal	Practical	Tenacious
Courteous	Manage money or budgets	Prevents problems	Thorough
Creative		Pride in doing a good job	Thrifty
Deadline-oriented		Problem solver	Trustworthy
Decisive		Productive	Versatile
Dedicated		Project-oriented	Well-organized
Dependable		Punctual	Willing to learn new things
Detail-oriented		Quick learner	Write well
Determined		Reasonable	
Direct			
Efficient			
Energetic			

Choose 6 adjectives/phrases which best describe you and write them here.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Examples of Personality and Transferable Skills

1. Very hardworking, dedicated and results-oriented person who is a quick learner.

2. Excellent at developing ideas and thinking ahead by building upon theories. Good team-player but can also perform independently.
3. Creative problem-solver who thrives on challenges, excels under pressure and gets the job done.
4. Exceptional organizational and time management skills. I enjoy solving problems for others.
5. Accustomed to a fast pace and multiple projects, fulfilling priorities and meeting deadlines.
6. Ability to quickly comprehend concepts and then apply this knowledge to troubleshooting.
7. An excellent negotiator and communicator.
8. A friendly and compassionate person who can provide excellent support.

Examples of Objective/Summary (for people with little or no experience)

Summary

Have working knowledge (*OR training OR experience*) in _____.

A very organized, careful and thorough individual with extensive experience in providing customer service in a fast paced environment.

A results oriented person who can manage people and understands needs of customers.

Keep up-to-date with changes in technology through continuing education and training.

Can offer a unique blend of business management, information technology, and computer hardware skills.

Dedicated worker and quick problem solver with over three years of customer service experience.

Problems/Actions/Results (PAR)

Include PAR in the Experience section of your resume. Think about the jobs you have had and about the problems (challenges) you encountered there. What did you do to help solve a particular problem and how did your solution help the company? (saved dollars, increased productivity, improved retention of personnel, reduced waste, etc.)

1. PROBLEM: _____
 ACTION: _____
 RESULT: _____

2. PROBLEM: _____
 ACTION: _____
 RESULT: _____

3. PROBLEM: _____

ACTION: _____
RESULT: _____

Sample of PAR

Front Office Assistant Manager

HOLIDAY INN, Somewhere, NJ.

For 600 room hotel, responsible for all cashiering, reservations, concierge and reception and all lobby management. Reported to the Resident Manager.

- Regularly audited front office cashiering and currency exchange services.
- To strengthen guest services during peak periods, conceived and implemented the cross training of front office staff. Personally conducted individualized on-the-job site training.
Result: greatly reduced complaints and generated positive written letters of commendation.
- To grow banquet and group sales, introduced sales tours during off-hour times. Trained Front Office Assistant Managers and Supervisors in sales techniques.
Result: achieved 19% increase first year.
- To improve margins, introduced tighter controls on the types of rooms sold and special promotional rates on higher margin suites and longer durations-either weekly or monthly.
Result: average room rates increased by 25% and long stay guests by 30%.

Job Hunting

There are only two burdens in life. The burden of **discipline** that weighs in ounces, and the burden of **regret** that weighs in tons.

Summary

Over 65% jobs are never advertised. They are filled by using methods other than advertising such as hiring through referrals of current employees and unsolicited resumes. Most job hunters only focus on searching for a job looking through jobs advertised. The best method to find a job is to identify companies that attract you most and that can be benefited with your knowledge, skills, and experience and that have cultures where you will fit best. Once you have identified 10 to 20 of these companies, do anything to get connections in those companies.

Send your resumes to all companies that have positions you can fill even if they do not have openings at this time. Don't just stop here. Call them, get more information about the company, requirements of the job, and about the person with hiring authority. Join different professional organizations and attend their meetings to get connections. Remember most jobs are filled through referrals.

Why Does it Take Longer to Find a Job than Needed

There are three main reasons for this:

- 1- Most people are not very clear about what they want. They do not identify their most important transferable skills and organizations they really want to work with.
- 2- Most job seekers don't spend enough time looking.
- 3- Job seekers don't use Most Effective methods for job hunting.

Most people start job hunting by answering help wanted ads, posting resumes online, and sending out resumes randomly. It takes about 12 weeks and 24 interviews to land a job in normal circumstances. The average job seeker only spends about 15 hours per week looking for a job. Following data shows how people actually find jobs. These figures are approximate.

- Heard about opening from someone they know (including friends, relatives, and acquaintances): 35%
- Contacted employer directly: 30%
- Answered a help wanted ad: 14%
- Referred by private employment agency: 6%
- Referred by public employment service: 5%
- Other methods (referred by school, took civil service test, referred by union, placed ads in journals, and so on): 10%

You can see that most jobs are filled before they are advertised. The fact is that about 65% of jobs are never advertised. To get a job sooner, you need to find it before it is advertised. Here is the first thing you need to do:

Plan to spend at least 25 hours to 30 hours per week looking for a job.

The more interviews you can get in a week, the sooner you will get a job offer. It is that simple. You should be answering help wanted ads but need to focus more on better methods to find a job. Here is how you should be spending your time every week and the best methods to find a job:

1. Getting job leads from people you know including family members, friends, people in the community, and staff at institutes from which you graduated.
2. Directly contacting employers that interest you, whether or not you know they have a vacancy. (Call them, don't just send your resume.)
3. Using the phone book's Yellow Pages to identify subjects or fields of interest in the area where you live, then calling up the employers in that field to ask if they are hiring for a job you can do well.
4. Using the same method outlined in 3, but in a group with other job hunters.

The best approach to get a job you really like in less time than you would expect is as follows:

1. You must decide exactly what you have to offer the world. Identify your personality and favorite transferable skills in order of priority or importance to you.
2. You must decide where you want to use your skills. This includes identifying your favorite subjects or fields of interest and your geographical preferences, which you then explore through research and personal information interviewing.
3. You must spend time on the organizations that interest you the most, whether or not they are known to have positions open.

Focusing on Small Companies

Small-sized companies are too important to ignore. The U.S. Small Business Administration found that very small businesses, those with twenty or fewer workers, created about half of all jobs. Almost two-thirds (62%) of all non-government workers are employed by small organizations (0 to 499 employees).

Interviewing

Summary

Preparation is the key word for this topic. Do all the research to find out as much as possible about the company, its values and culture. Be ready to talk about yourself (your personality, experience, and achievements) and how you can help the company to achieve its goals. Make sure you are ready to answer the interview questions. You were getting ready to answer these questions when you were writing your resume. It is now time to expand upon what you wrote in your resume. The interviewer's goal is to hire the best candidate for the position and it does not mean the most qualified. To be hired, your personality, attitude, and qualifications must match the company's needs and culture. Many times the most suitable candidates are just not prepared to tell about themselves during the job interviews and both the candidate and the company lose.

First Impression

Your first impression is very important because you may not get a second chance to change it. Employers in one survey said that more than 40% of the people they interviewed were not dressed or groomed in a way that impressed the interviewer. To create a good first impression:

- Dress and Groom very carefully and look your best.
- Get there early.
- Be very nice to the receptionist/executive assistant and friendly to all people you meet in the company. Interviewers usually ask receptionist/executive assistant's opinion about the prospective employees.

The Interview

Most people are not prepared to explain their personality and skills. You should practice to talk about your achievements in life, what made you a good employee at other jobs, what you have done previously, what problems you identified and helped solve, how your solutions helped the company, the new skills you have acquired through training, your technical skills for the job, and why they should hire you.

Some important points to remember about the job interview:

1. In a hiring-interview, you're still doing research. You have to use the hiring-interview as a chance to gather more information about the company and the boss to see if this is the right place for you. By using the hiring-interview to screen the organization before you go to work there, you can save yourself time, money, grief and guilt.
2. Hiring-interviews are not a science. The person who has the power to hire you is nervous too. The hiring-interview is not a very reliable way to choose an employee, so the interviewer is worried about making the right choice.
3. Employers are often as scared as you are because they are trying to figure out whether they should hire you.

Common interview questions

- 1- Tell me about yourself. Make sure you are prepared to tell the interviewer what are your best qualities and what made you a good employee at your previous jobs, your achievements in schools and life.

- 2- What are your three best qualities and three major weaknesses?
- 3- How would your friends and coworkers, and your supervisors describe you?
- 4- Why did you leave your previous jobs or why were you fired?
- 5- What you liked and did not like about your previous bosses?
- 6- What you liked and did not like about your previous jobs?
- 7- Why should we hire you?
- 8- How does your previous experience or training relate to the job we have here?
- 9- What would your current or former employers say about you?
- 10- Why are you looking for this sort of position?
- 11- Why do you want to join our company?
- 12- What are your salary expectations?

You don't have to memorize a lot of answers to different interview questions. There are really only five basic questions that underlie all the rest:

1. Why are you here? (Why do you want to join this company?)
2. What can you do for us? (What are your skills? What do you know about the field?)
3. What kind of person are you? (Are you dependable and will you stay with the company for some time? Is it easy to work with you? Do you share the company's values?)
4. What distinguishes you from all the other people who have the same skills you have?
5. Can I afford you?

During this time you should also ask yourself:

1. What does this job involve? (You can ask the interviewer this as well.)
2. Do my skills truly match this job?
3. Are these people I would like to work with?
4. If we like each other, and both want to work together, can I persuade them there is something unique about me?
5. Can I persuade them to hire me at the salary I need or want?

Good Luck!

References

Getting the Job You Really Want by Michael Farr

What Color is Your Parachute? by Richard Nelson Bolles