

## **Candidate Material**

The material presented here is for the use of the job candidate. It is available via the internet website for online review, for download from the website in PDF format, and as one or more printed pages obtained from the unit Employment Specialist.

The format is a series of one page references or handouts that can be selected by the candidate or by the Employment Specialist. An attempt has been made to arrange the material in a logical sequence from initial job tasks, through interviewing. Be aware that there are points in the job search where several activities will be undertaken simultaneously in parallel.

The first two pages that follow constitute an introduction to the various activities involved in the job search, these are also used in the website as the candidate Orientation Overview.

It is suggested that this candidate material be placed on the unit's computer for easy reference, access and printing of support materials as needed by the Welfare Committee or the Employment Specialist.

# Employment Big Picture - The Start

Top 10 Keys to a Successful Job Search from: [www.beyond.com](http://www.beyond.com) Aug 06, 2008

## Take stock

### *Know Yourself*

If you know your strengths and weaknesses and what you want in a career, then you have a much better chance of finding your perfect job. Finding that dream position starts with understanding your personality, values and what drives you. Taking a career and personality assessment is a huge first step towards optimizing your personal career path. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator assessment is the most widely used personality instrument. More than 2 million worldwide assessments are performed each year by job seekers, professionals, and organizations, including 89 of the Fortune 100. Take a [Free Personality Test](#) now to find out what motivates you and find your perfect job.

## Networking

### *Know others*

Many jobs are obtained through networking. It is a very important tool for job seekers and is an extremely fast and effective way to find your next job or career. While many employers advertise open positions on internet job boards like Beyond.com, you should find out about the hidden job market as well by talking to as many people as possible and letting them know you are looking for a job.

## Accomplishment oriented resume

### *Know how to write it well*

The purpose of a resume is not to get you a job, but to land an interview. An organized, industry-specific and accomplishment-oriented resume will get employers to take notice. In today's hyper-competitive job market, you simply cannot afford to send out a resume that is less than perfect.

### Two Common Yet Easily-Avoidable Resume Mistakes

- Always use a professional email address on your resume. While [footballfan@aol.com](mailto:footballfan@aol.com) may be fine with friends, it gives employers a negative perception of your level of professionalism.
- If your resume includes an objective statement, it should describe how you can add value to the company and show potential employers that your goal is to provide a long-term commitment.

## Job proposal

### *Know your value*

Get the attention of decision-makers at a company through a Job proposal. It's a one or two page 'mini business plan' that's intended to get you an interview with the decision-maker of a targeted prospective employer. While a resume tells someone what you have done in the past, a job proposal shows in some detail what you are going to do for the company down the road. Specifically, it lays out how you will help them achieve their vision of success. It generally explains the vision you have for a new product or service, how to enhance an existing program, or why to implement a new process. It may also outline your plan to increase company sales or improve accounts receivable. When you challenge the relevance of traditional job search strategies and begin utilizing tools and techniques that clearly distinguish you from the pack, most anything is possible, including winning a dream job with a great company during a down economy.

## Industry Knowledge

### *Know your market*

During your job search, it is imperative to show initiative and drive while continually looking to improve your industry knowledge. In today's competitive job market, staying up-to-date on your industry is crucial to your future success. To be a truly outstanding business professional, you must not only understand trends and developments in your own industry, but the trends and developments in an average consumer's industry.

# Employment Big Picture - The Stretch

Top 10 Keys to a Successful Job Search from: [www.beyond.com](http://www.beyond.com) Aug 06, 2008

## Research

*Know the players*

There is no substitute for hard work and research. Knowing which companies are hiring in your area is only half the battle. Take your search to another level by getting access to key contacts, decision makers, and hiring managers. Check out sites like Hoovers.com to gain access to these types of lists. You can visit [CareerConsultation.com](http://CareerConsultation.com) for more information regarding customized research to meet your needs.

## Interviewing

*Know how to communicate*

The biggest mistake in interviewing is not being fully prepared. It is crucial for job-seekers to use every conceivable means possible to prepare for an interview and to allow ample time to fully prepare. Understand that interviewing is a skill; as with all skills, preparation and practice enhance the quality of that skill. Preparation can make the difference between getting an offer and getting rejected.

Practice Answering These Commonly-Asked Interview Questions:

- Tell me about yourself.
- Where do you expect to be in five years?
- Describe a work-related problem you had to face recently. What did you do to deal with it?
- What are your strengths? Weaknesses?

## Marketing

*Know how to sell yourself*

An interactive marketing portfolio of yourself pulls together your accomplishments, education, experience and awards in one place. It is a highly-effective job-hunting tool that you develop that gives employers a complete picture of who you are - your experience, your education, your accomplishments, your skill sets, and what you have the potential to become - much more than just a cover letter and resume can provide. You can use your career portfolio in job interviews to showcase a point, to illustrate the depth of your skills and experience, or to use as a tool to get a second interview. Don't forget to setup your portfolio at Beyond.com. The best kinds of portfolios can be built and distributed to employers through the internet.

## Background Check

*Know your history*

With thousands of resumes to choose from, employers often select from pre-screened candidates first, as these job seekers appear more serious in their job quest and commitment. Pre-screening by the job seeker saves the employer valuable time and money, and places pre-screened candidates ahead of the competition.

## Learning never ends

*Know more*

The investment of time and money in continuing your education sends a powerful message to prospective employers that you are serious about improving your skills and abilities. Employers are more likely to hire candidates that show the desire and commitment for lifelong learning. Whether it's a certificate program, associates, bachelors, or masters degree, there is a program to fit your lifestyle, schedule and budget.

## 30 Second Summary

Your thirty-second summary is one of the most critical tools in the job search process. You will use this summary when making networking contacts, either in person or over the phone. You will also use it in an interview, when asked, “tell me something about yourself.”

The thirty-second summary must include those key points, strengths and accomplishments that make you valuable to the potential employer and/or identify for the networking contact the type of company or work you are looking for. You need to show how you are valuable to the company.

A value proposition is a clear statement of the tangible results an employer has benefited from through your efforts. It is outcome focused and stresses the business value of your experience. Simply speaking it describes what you bring to the party.

A strong Value Proposition is:

- Attractive to Decision Makers – it addresses an issue or need they face.
- Aligned with the Business Environment – ties to triggering events or strategic goals.
- Expresses Tangible Outcomes – decreased costs or processing time; increased revenues or collections; did something faster or with better quality than others; got more profitable business; found mistakes that saved money, etc

To start, list those challenges, accomplishments and results you would like to include in your summary.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Next, incorporate the above listed strengths into your thirty-second summary.

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Practice giving your thirty-second summary until you can present it comfortably and naturally, so that it does not appear to be memorized. Remember to smile and be at ease, use eye contact.

### EXAMPLE

Thirty-second summary for individual looking for Airport Manager position.

“I have a bachelor’s degree in accounting, a Masters in Business Administration and a second master’s degree in Management. I have 20 years experience managing aviation facilities, including two medium size airports with both fixed base and contract operations. In addition to my operational experience, I have twenty plus years experience as a professional pilot. This combined background of management and aviation allows me to envision operations from every perspective and to foresee potential hazards before they develop.”

# Selling Yourself

*Adapted from: Marty Nemko, Monster.com Contributing Writer*

Most of the best jobs go to people who will ask, "Do you know someone who can hire someone like me?" to virtually anyone: old friends, a new acquaintance, the person sitting next to you at a professional meeting, a decision maker at your dream employer, essentially anyone, anywhere.

Alas, many job seekers would rather have a root canal than ask people for job leads. The good news is you can get over the fear of selling yourself.

Are any of the following predicaments halting your ability to network? Try our solutions:

Cause 1: You're not sure what sort of job you're looking for.

Solution: One approach is to scan Monster's job profiles, the index of the Occupational Outlook Handbook or even the Yellow Pages to learn more about hundreds of the most popular careers.

Sometimes, however, despite using those resources, you're still not sure what job you're looking for. If this is the case, develop a one-sentence pitch that highlights your two or three best skills. For example: "I'm looking for a position that uses my ability to manage projects and my knowledge of horticulture."

Cause 2: You fear you're not worthy of being hired.

Solution: Sure, it could be a self-esteem issue and, in fact, you are a giant among giants, but you could be right. Maybe you don't deserve to be hired. Ask yourself whether you need more training, or even if you're in the wrong line of work.

Cause 3: You don't want to impose.

Solution: First, recognize that the person you're calling is a grown-up and can say no. Perhaps more important is the karma concept: All of us need help at some point. As long as we promise ourselves to be helpful when someone asks us for help, there's nothing wrong with asking for help. Besides, you're not asking for a handout. You're asking for a little advice about where you might find work. Who knows? You might even be the answer to that person's prayers. And remember, many people won't resent your query at all -- they feel good about being asked for advice.

Cause 4: You're afraid you might sound awkward or stupid.

Solution: Write a script pitching yourself. For example, "I'm an associate at a prestigious law firm, but I am tired of the contentiousness. I'd like to use my knowledge of employment law and ability to work well with people to find a place in an HR department. I know someone who works at your company and loves it, so I figured I'd give you a call."

You should also script answers to any questions you're afraid you might be asked. For example, "What were you doing during those two years of unemployment?" Practice your script until you can paraphrase it naturally. You might also ask a trusted friend to help you rehearse a cold call to a potential employer.

Cause 5: None of the above, just a vague anxiety about selling yourself.

Solution: Don't over hype yourself. Don't be stuffy. Be natural. Be revealing without sounding like a basket case. Tell the truth in a human way, and at least one employer -- a well-suited employer -- will resonate with you. Most employers are sick of dealing with candidates who exaggerate, kiss up or even lie to them.

# Lay Off Possibility

Excerpt from : The Wall Street Journal 22 Feb 2009  
By Anna Prior

## What's the worst that can happen?

We put that question to the expert -- Joshua Piven, author of the best-selling "Worst-Case Scenario Survival Handbook" series. His tongue-in-cheek answer is not pretty: "You lose your job, you run out of savings or a safety net, have to sell [your] home, it's a down market and you can't sell your house, you move, pull the kids out of school, it's not easy to get another job and your whole lifestyle has to change".

As jobless rates go up, duration of the job search usually follows

Conventional wisdom has long called for you to stash away up to six months of living expenses to carry you through a financial emergency or job loss. But with more job hunts lasting longer than half a year, backup funds can dwindle, and you will have to make more and more tough financial choices.

It may be painful to think about bad things happening, but you have to make sure you are budgeting appropriately and living *below* your means. Here are some things to keep in mind, starting now:

## While You're Working

Double that emergency fund. Begin living frugally with the savings applied to emergency savings. Consider downsizing your living quarters if you are renting, or consider taking in a roommate.

Since it's easier to get credit while you're employed, opening another credit card or a home-equity line of credit in case money becomes tight if you are unemployed. Use this credit only as a last resort.

## When the Word Comes Down

File for unemployment benefits immediately. A severance package from your employer could delay your eligibility, many of the unemployment offices are overwhelmed right now and are behind.

Call your landlord or lender if your layoff results in immediate financial instability. Ask about deferred-payment plans for rent or find out if your lender offers programs to restructure any loans, says Ms. Robertson. If you're financially stable, you may still want to alert your landlord or lender to your employment situation in case you have trouble making future payments.

Look into all your health-insurance options. The government made some modifications to the federal COBRA law, which allows people to extend their previous coverage, but know that this isn't always the most affordable plan. Young and healthy? A high-deductible plan might still be more affordable.

## The First Six Months

Develop a bare-bones budget, stick to it, so your severance or emergency funds last as long as possible.

Prioritize your debts. When the bills come, pay the big ones -- such as rent or mortgage, utilities and car payments -- before making minimum payments on your credit cards. If money gets tight, consider further downsizing your home or selling any nonessential cars, electronics, jewelry or other valuables.

## Six Months and Beyond

De-invest. Start by looking for securities you might liquidate in nonretirement accounts. Potential tax write-offs could help make the losses easier to stomach. If you have a capital loss, you can write that off against any gains.. Or you can write off up to \$3,000 of a capital loss against any other income."

Then tap your Roth IRA. This money grows tax-free, and you can usually withdraw contributions with no tax liability. This should be a measure of last resort, we want that money to remain in that tax shelter.

Keep your hands off your traditional IRA or 401(k) until the very last moment. You'll have to pay taxes on those withdrawals, and you'll also pay penalties. You'll lose all of the compounding interest and yield. The probability of you replacing those dollars is remote, the tendency for most is to spend, not replace."

# Managing Unemployment

Unemployment is one of life's most stressful situations, especially since the average job seeker can expect to spend 4-5 months beating the bushes for their own next permanent position. Unemployment experts advise the unemployed to stay on top of three vital aspects of your life: Your emotions, your money and your job search. Here are the first two ...

## Your Emotions

You may experience a number of different emotions during your period of unemployment:

Fear    Anger    Helplessness    Depression    Shame    Worthlessness

Whatever you may be feeling, the best antidotes are to recognize – not deny – your emotions, deal with them and take action. Be good to yourself by engaging in positive activities. For example:

Gain the support of family and friends. Pour out any anxieties you might be feeling. Get it off your chest.

Join a job-hunting support group. To find one in your area, check with your local community college, community action agency or employment service. A good support group can provide excellent networking opportunities and job leads.

Take a self-inventory and develop an action plan for how you are going to attack this new challenge. Setting short-term and long-term goals is the best remedy for depression.

Remain physically active. Go for a walk or jog every day or play outside with your children or pets.

Catch up on hobbies or chores around the house that you have been meaning to get to.

Keep regular hours. Get lots of sleep

Eat regular, healthy meals.

Most of all, remind yourself that you still have a job – a special job

only this job is to locate a satisfying, long-term position... and it's a difficult job. So do whatever it takes to keep your spirits and your energy level high. You will need to draw heavily on both.

## Your Money

But how will I pay my bills? This is the first lament of anyone who suddenly finds themselves without a job. Don't despair. Take immediate action to shore up your financial situation:

Apply for unemployment compensation as soon as possible, preferable the next day.

Figure out where you stand with your bills, write down everything and prioritize in terms of importance.

Take a tally of all incoming money:

Severance pay -Unemployment -Spouse income -Dividends and interest

List assets and determine their current value:

Home equity

Savings accounts

401(k)

Stocks and bonds

Life insurance cash value

Automobiles

Determine the gap between expenses and income and then develop a plan on how you are going to stay afloat.

Consider these options:

Temporary job -Savings account -Home equity loan -Retirement or Life insurance loan -Sell some assets –

Cut down on fixed and variable expenses

Decide which monthly bills can be met in their entirety. Do whatever is necessary to pay the mortgage or rent and the car payment.

Negotiate a drawn-out payment plan with creditors. Don't wait until you are in a financial crisis. Explain your situation immediately and find out what type of plan they will offer.

Put your spending on a diet, buy with cash, and phase out credit cards immediately.

Turn off the lights -End restaurant meals -Buy groceries in bulk -Question all purchases

# Managing Your Job Search

A third vital aspect is your job search. Make the most of your time, see unemployment as an opportunity – not a vacation. Get off to a good start.

## **Job-Search is like any other job**

Treat it as such, it should be a 40 hour a week effort.

Get up early every morning and plan your day

Keep a schedule. Earmark hours and days for research, sending out resumes and interviewing

Set goals. How many resumes do you intend to send out each week? How many cold calls?

Keep abreast of trends and news relative to your industry.

If you work at home, resist the temptation to watch television, nap or engage in unproductive activities.

Find a location (preferably other than home) for your base of operations such as church, library, community college, employment center ...

## **Assemble a team**

Work with the Welfare Committee. Consult with employment professionals, bend the ear of a career counselor or sign up with a community employment agency. Call regularly for updates and reports.

## **Get organized**

Develop a system for keeping track of the companies you have contacted, the date of resume sent and the response received.

Act. If they ask you to call back in a few weeks or to send a resume – even if no jobs are available – make a note of their request and do it.

Follow up. Drop a note or contact the company by phone every two weeks.

## **Stay on track**

Watch for distractions and detours that are sure to undermine your efforts and increase the time it takes to land a pertinent job.

Time management – if you don't schedule your time, you'll quickly become bored and depressed

Guard against these time thieves:

Television – save it for your off hours in the evening

Telephone – use it only for job-search communications, have friends call in off hours

Internet – if it is not productive for your job-search, go offline, break the solitaire habit

Discouragement – the longer the job hunt takes, the harder it will be to remain upbeat, if depression sets in:

Dig in and send additional resumes or make extra calls

Change your job-search strategy, seek outside help if necessary

Increase your physical activity even more than usual

Seek out more help from family, job coach or networking contacts

People – cut out any naysayer who casts doubt on your search efforts or your long term goals. Surround yourself only with positive people

## **Develop a winning attitude**

Take one day at a time. Keep your focus on what you are doing right now.

Take responsibility for your life. Don't blame others for your predicament. Focus on yourself, your actions and choices

Let go of the past. Don't hang on to anger over what is done and gone.

Stay positive. Don't talk yourself down. Try to see every event in the best light. Remember most job seekers get rejected as many as 50 times before they hear 'Yes'.

Remain enthusiastic. Employers are much more likely to hire someone who has retained their sense of humor and love of life.

## **Quit at the end of the day**

Once you have accomplished a day's work, leave it be. Don't worry all evening. Reward yourself kindly with a hot bath, a good book or time with the family. Balance is a key component in any successful job-search.



# Individual Job Seeker

The Church's Employment program does not provide you with a job. It provides you with guidance and skills to network, research leads, prepare resumes and be effective in interviews. If you participate in the Stake meetings you will receive additional training and support in obtaining or upgrading employment.

The following is an outline for the unemployed and under employed to effectively utilize the Church's employment program.

## Initial organizing and strategy

Meet with the employment specialist and the quorum leader or home/visiting teacher

- Discuss your job field, training, experience and employment options
- Identify possible ward member candidates to act as a Job Coach
- Obtain an Employment History form to create a one sheet database
- Obtain a model Resume from the Employment Specialist
- Draft your initial resume, attempt to provide enough material for about 2 pages
- Where possible create and save a computer file on floppy disk
- Attend the Stake Employment Night with disk, rework and edit the resume to 1 page

Review your financial situation

- Apply for unemployment assistance if eligible
- Complete a monthly income and expense budget
- Identify family resources and support you may be able to call upon
- Meet with the Priesthood or Relief Society leadership to review the above

## Ongoing weekly efforts

- Meet each Sunday with the employment specialist, quorum leader and/or home teacher for a status report of your efforts
- Meet with the Job Coach to review progress and brainstorm options and opportunities
- Complete the requirements for job searching and recording to comply with the state unemployment insurance program
- Review the week's seminar offerings at the Church Regional Employment Center.
- Check for new job listings at:
  - [www.providentliving.org](http://www.providentliving.org) - on the left, click Employment / Find Jobs ...
  - [www.indeed.com](http://www.indeed.com) - enter a keyword and a ZIP code
- Participate in the Stake Employment night, get resume suggestions and obtain networking leads and polish your interviewing skills
- Actively develop and record networking contacts and research leads
- Research companies and open job descriptions, tailor the resume to fit the position
- Interview as invited, dress well and follow up with a thank you letter the same day

## Budgeting Basics

By: Janice Stringham LeFevre, *Ensign*, Mar. 1998, p72

*If you find yourself unemployed one of the first tasks is to review your financial situation and assess the impact the loss of income will have on your ability to weather several months or more of ongoing expenses. Budgeting under such pressure is not pleasant if it is not part of your normal family routine but it is necessary. Your responsible leadership will serve as a sounding board. Consider the following article from the Ensign.*

As we set up our budget, one of our challenges was determining a figure for each item on our spreadsheet. This was because we each had differing views on how our income should be spent or saved. Budgeting required open and honest communication with one another to work out our differences. We quickly discovered that each of us had to stay within the parameters we had set or the budget was useless. Initially this seemed confining, but once we committed ourselves fully, we began to feel some of the freedom budgeting brings, including peace of mind. Budgeting helped us gain control over our money, eliminate impulse buying, and put aside money for future needs.

As part of our budget, we set up two savings accounts: our long-term and our short-term savings. Our long-term savings account consists of future reserves. Currently our goal is to have a six-month supply of money in the bank and to consistently save money for our children's missions, education, and marriages.

Our short-term savings account is divided into such categories as insurance, taxes, car maintenance, home improvements, gifts and Christmas, clothing, and food storage. We budget a specific amount each pay period for each category, allowing the balances to build up over time. Then when we need money for one of those expenses, it is already there. Another benefit that comes from having the money set aside is that we can buy items such as gifts, clothing, and food storage when they are on sale without compromising our budget or turning to credit cards.

Our short-term savings plan also enables us to save for large purchases. Saving for these purchases assists us to buy without going into debt and incurring large interest charges.

My husband and I frequently feel the guidance of the Spirit in planning our budget and in working through our financial challenges. Besides being a vehicle to help us manage our money, budgeting together has strengthened our marriage and opened the door to many other unforeseen blessings.

# Goals

*By: Dr. Nathaniel Brandon*

Want to get hired faster than up to 97% of other job seekers?

Do two simple things that almost nobody else is doing:

- Write down your job search goal; set deadlines.
- Read it out loud at least 10 times a day!

Sound silly? Well it's not. Think about people who have been wonderfully successful in their lives. Almost every one of them have/had written goals with deadlines. Every one of them had a plan and a focus on making that plan a reality! (Let me tell you about my son, Jim. The whole time he was growing up and into early adult-hood, he had a plan which he shared with anyone who would listen. "I'm going to work with computers and I'm going to be rich enough to retire by the time I'm 35." I heard that, I swear, a hundred times a month! Jim just turned 33 and early this year he "retired", moved to Costa Rica, and is starting other businesses there.)

Only 3 to 10% of the population have written, articulated goals and deadlines; less than 10% have taken the effort to decide exactly what they want in life and have written it in clear, specific goals. Those are the people who rise to the top of their professions while most of us simply go with the flow - wherever chance takes us.

So - start by developing a mini-blueprint for your job search success. (Would you have enough faith to hire an architect to build you a home without a blueprint?) Develop a clear, specific job goal and then burn it into your brain so you will get focused, get motivated, get hired quickly.

- Decide on the job you want and write it down. Write it on a 3/5 card. Make it look something like this: "It's July 7th(fill in the date you intend to be working). I am an outstanding (job title) who adds value to the company lucky enough to have me. I'm making \$XX,XXX, in a stimulating environment, doing work I love, surrounded by co-workers I enjoy." - writing a goal like this forces you to get clear on what you want (as opposed to "I'll take any job that pays the bills - maybe working in an office or something..." - writing a specific employment goal with a due date (so your subconscious knows you are serious), you will be ahead of the vast majority of job seekers.
- Reinforce your goal. In order to make sure your goal is crystal clear in your mind's eye, read your goal out loud 10 times every morning. Then put your 3x5 card in your pocket and refer to it during the day. This will help you organize your life around finding your ideal job. Your subconscious will go to work and help you keep focused on your goal. You will start to see employment leads where none appeared before. You will begin to see opportunities and possibilities throughout your daily activities - when an old friend calls, when your neighbor returns a tool he borrowed, when you are at the hairdressers or the bank. (When this happens to other job seekers, we call them "lucky", "being in the right place at the right time". In reality, it is being focused on a goal and finding opportunities to help us reach that goal.)

Try this simple two-step process for the next 30 days and see for yourself. The worst that can happen is that you will have a very clear idea of the job you seek. The best that can happen is that you will be working at that job, or something better.

What do you have to lose?

A goal without an action plan is a daydream.

# Networking

*From: Wall Street Journal, Smart Money by Stacey L. Bradford*

When it comes to finding a job, nothing beats good, old-fashioned networking- contacting friends, relatives and former colleagues, setting up face to face meeting in the hope of getting job referrals. Yes, it is awkward, but here's why it simply has to be done: At any given time, about 80% of all available jobs aren't posted in the classified or on job boards. Sixty percent of people surveyed by BH Careers International said they got their last job by networking.

Here are 10 tips from experts to make your networking fruitful:

1. Prepare a 30 second summary. Write a summary of what you want people to know about you that can be delivered in less than 30 seconds. Make it upbeat and succinct: who you are, what you do, what you are looking for. More than that, and you risk turning off the listener. Since you get only one chance to make a first impression, practice your message in front of a mirror, then on friends, before taking it to a networking event.
2. Use your existing ties. Start by tapping existing contacts, including friends, family and ex-colleagues. Spread the word that you are looking for a job and ask if anyone has a contact who might be able to offer advice. Then make sure to ask every person you meet for two or three more referrals. "...Do you know anyone else who might be helpful for me to meet?..."
3. Target trade groups. Don't waste time at big events catering to people in many industries. Join the dominant trade or industry group in your area. Preferably, it should have qualifications to entry. Volunteer on one of the groups committees to meet members.
4. Show interest in others. Career experts say the secret is to stop focusing on yourself and take an interest in the other person. Ask questions and get the contacts to talk about themselves and their business experience. This is easier than you may think.
5. Don't ask for a job. It may force the other person to say no to you. Instead seek advice. People are likelier to be generous with their time if you ask for their counsel. Don't worry. If you seem qualified for an opening, they will refer you to the right person to set up an interview.
6. Build relationships. Strangers won't put their reputations on the line for you. Build ties with a new contact before asking for help. Consider dropping a personal note to any new contact you make. Then follow up with a helpful article or introduction to someone you know.
7. Don't be selfish. No matter how desperate you are, remember networking is a two-way street. If you've met with a recruiter, you can always offer to introduce him to the smartest people you know in your industry. If you are a young job seeker with little experience, you may not be able to help a finance chief land his next position – but his daughter might be applying to colleges and want to hear your take on a school. Find a common ground.
8. Don't abuse relationships. There's no rule here for how many phone calls are too many. Just try to gage if you coming across as always looking for a favor.
9. Follow through. Nothing can kill a budding relationship faster than not writing a proper thank you note. In many cases, you can e-mail it, but don't assume the content is any less important than a postal letter. A three line message with a smiley face won't cut it. Keep the other person abreast of how your meeting went with someone they referred you to.
10. Maintain your network. Cultivate ties even when you aren't job hunting. Remember, the majority of jobs go unpublished, so you may hear of an exciting opportunity.

## Regional Employment Database

Networking is one of the most powerful tools available to the job seeker. To capitalize on the advantages of networking the Regional Employment Center has developed a database of members willing to assist job seekers in learning more about industries, careers and companies.

A great resource of talent, experience and connectivity is present in our individual church units; an even greater synergy exists in combining these resources at the Stake and Regional level. We are all encouraged to freely share our time and talents with those in need of employment or those seeking to improve their position.

*We need to care for one another more diligently. We need to make a little more effort to assist those who are down at the bottom of the ladder. We need to give encouragement and a lifting hand to men and women of faith and integrity and ability, who can climb that ladder with a little help.*

Gordon B. Hinckley, Ensign, Nov. 2001, page 54

The heart of Networking is to consult and communicate; to share information. Networking is NOT a process for asking for a job. It IS the ability to obtain an inside perspective and information from within a target industry or service which may ultimately lead to a job opportunity.

Networkers are seeking long term advice and thoughtful experience relative to the appropriateness of their current skills and background. An assessment of needed skills from someone within an industry orients the job seeker to the real world and gives them a further advantage in an interview. This ongoing relationship with current experienced job holders may lead to internal contacts or job leads either within the job holders company or with a competitor or a supplier.

In order to facilitate networking, ward members are invited to participate in an Employment Survey. The data collected on the survey form is then made available to the stakes in the region. This information essentially identifies members by name, phone number and job profile. The ward specialist or the job seeker can then request a search of the data base for networking resources in an industry, company or service to network with the job seeker."

Stakes which actively participate in building the database are provided with timely updates and a program to search on behalf of job seekers.

# Ward Employment Survey Form



## Employment Resource Survey

This survey is intended to help ward and stake leaders and employment specialists identify ways that members are willing to help one another with their employment needs.

### Unit Information

|                |                   |      |
|----------------|-------------------|------|
| Ward or branch | Stake or district | Date |
|----------------|-------------------|------|

### Personal Information

Name \_\_\_\_\_

I prefer to be contacted at (check one):  
 Phone (with area code): \_\_\_\_\_  E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| Job title              | Responsibilities  |
| Employer               | Work phone (with area code) _____ Employer location or city _____ |
| Type of industry _____ |   |

Languages

1. \_\_\_\_\_  Speak  Read  Translate  Write

2. \_\_\_\_\_  Speak  Read  Translate  Write

### Personal Contribution

Check all that apply. (Ward and stake leaders and employment specialists, please use discretion in the way you share this information with others.)

I am willing to help others with their employment needs in the following ways:

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Provide job referrals or leads | <input type="checkbox"/> Conduct practice interviews | <input type="checkbox"/> Help with résumés                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Provide clerical support       | <input type="checkbox"/> Teach computer skills       | <input type="checkbox"/> Give career counseling                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teach employment workshops     | <input type="checkbox"/> Be a career coach           | <input type="checkbox"/> Mentor a Perpetual Education Fund student |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Provide educational resources  | <input type="checkbox"/> Provide child care          | <input type="checkbox"/> Provide transportation                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                   |  |  |

I have access to job information that I am willing to share

My employer hires people in the following employment categories:

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accounting/Financial/Insurance           | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering/Architectural Services        | <input type="checkbox"/> Manufacturing/Production/Printing       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Administrative/Clerical/Customer Service | <input type="checkbox"/> Healthcare/Medical/Dental/Social Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Service/Government/Defense       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture/Animal Care/Forestry/Fishing | <input type="checkbox"/> Hospitality/Restaurant/Food Handling      | <input type="checkbox"/> Sales/Marketing/Retail/Public Relations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arts/Entertainment/Journalism/Media      | <input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources/Recruiting/Legal          | <input type="checkbox"/> Science/Research                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Childcare/Personal Care/Housekeeping     | <input type="checkbox"/> Information Technology/Telecommunications | <input type="checkbox"/> Self-Employment/Entrepreneurial         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Construction/Trades/General Labor        | <input type="checkbox"/> Installation/Maintenance/Repair           | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation/Warehouse/Delivery       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education/Training/Library               | <input type="checkbox"/> Management/Executive/Consulting           |  |

My employer frequently hires people for the following positions: \_\_\_\_\_

### Personal Career Needs

Check all that apply.

- I am looking for a job
- I need to increase my income
- I want to change my work environment
- I am not happy with my current job
- I need more education or skills training
- I would like training on job search skills such as writing a résumé, interviewing, networking, and so on
- I want help starting a business
- I want to improve my small business
- I would like assistance exploring my skills, talents, and career options
- I anticipate losing my job due to economic factors
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

# Regional Employment Database Search

The following is an introduction to the regional database; typically available through your Stake Employment Specialist. In general this access is not available at the Ward level through your Ward Specialist.

The regional database of LDS employees has been assembled from surveys taken at the Ward level and is available for searching. The database is a collection of approximately 3000 persons (as of 2008). They have provided information on their current employer company, position and mode of contact. Included is an indication of their willingness to network with others such as job seekers to discuss their industry in general and possibly the character and attributes of their company. Their position seldom has the capacity to provide you with a job, but they can point you to useful information within their company or industry to widen your awareness of opportunities.

Your objective in making contact through the database is to discuss your industry, obtain insights on the future trends and establish personal contacts within the realm of your employment opportunities. The Ideal contact is one who can provide additional contacts similar to themselves that can give you advice.

The database can be searched by a number of methods. The result of a search will be a members name and contact information. The following present a number of useful approaches:

- **Specific Industry** Note that the specific industry in the database has been provided by the member. As such there may be lack of uniformity in the description provided; it may not coincide with your terminology or understanding.
- **Specific Company** Searching for a company is straightforward. However the member you are referred to may be an inventory technician, staff employee, manager or vice president.
- **Geographic Location** Locations can be retrieved in two principal ways
- *By Stake* – the stake may be searched to identify members which may indicate the commuting area to employment
- *By Company* – the company city can be used to find members working in a location that is comfortable for your commute.
- **Job Title** Searching the members title will provide all members who used that title (or a subset) as part of their Ward survey response.

Use of the above approaches to querying the database is typically conducted in an interactive session with the Stake Employment specialist or through the Regional Employment Center. It is most effective when the job seeker can experience the retrievals and suggest additional or alternate fields or keywords for the search.

This document will be augmented to include the name of fields available and an indication of classifications and expected value or content

## Networking from the Regional Database

Here are guidelines for candidates accessing and using the regional database in their job search.

When you obtain a list of members in your field from the database, remember, these individuals are not hiring managers or human resources personnel. They CAN NOT provide you with a job. The objective of the database is to promote connections into an industry or company; to provide a contact who may share personal opinion and industry awareness that may benefit you as a job seeker.

These individuals are far more valuable than a call to the Human Resources Department. These contacts have inside information on the industry's culture and its direction that is useful in your job search.

Your objective is to develop a relationship that will support a return call in a week or two. This is intended to be a long term relationship to the extent possible.

If any of the member contacts are listed as retired, they are golden contacts. You should be able to get a mature and unbiased opinion relative to your search. Place retired persons first on your list to contact; they are more likely to have time to spend with you. They will probably provide a less pressured conversation and give you experience in making networking calls.

One of the key elements of the networking process is to expand your list of contacts. Before any call is finished you should have asked if the member knows of any others with a similar background that you may contact. Be sure to keep track of these referrals by name and confirm whether or not the new referral would recognize the name of the referrer. These most likely will not be members.

*Phone script for introducing yourself to a contact in the database. The following points are designed to avoid your sounding like a 'telemarketer'.*

To a member:

This is (Bro/Sis) \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ Ward may I speak to (Bro/Sis) \_\_\_\_\_?

To a contact:

This is \_\_\_\_\_ may I speak to (Mr/Ms) \_\_\_\_\_?

To a member:

I was referred to you from the Regional LDS Employment database.

To a contact:

I was referred to you by \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ (whom you may know).

Always start with:

Might you have time to talk about the \_\_\_\_\_ industry?  
or can a call back at better time?

Present your 30 second summary here to introduce yourself.

I am seeking advice from experienced \_\_\_\_\_ as part of my career plan.

Can I ask for where you see the \_\_\_\_\_ industry going in the next few years?

Do you have any advice for someone at my current career position?

Do you have any associates in \_\_\_\_\_ that might be willing to talk to me?

If I was to call them would they recognize your name?

May I send you a copy of my resume and call you in a week for any suggestions? (useE-Mail Address?)

Thank you, I appreciate the time you have spent ... I look forward to talking with you again.



# Resume Considerations

*Adapted from: Top 10 Questions About Writing a Resume by [Kim Isaacs](#)*

Here are the 10 most common uncertainties of resume writing and suggestions on how to handle each:

**What are the different resume styles?** The most common are reverse chronological, functional ("skills") and dynamic ("modified chronological"). Here's a definition of each style:

- **Reverse Chronological:** With a focus on work history, a reverse chronological resume leads with education or work history and provides comprehensive employment history information. Reverse chronological resumes best suit those with a steady work history who are not changing careers.
- **Functional:** Functional resumes often are used by job seekers with issues such as job-hopping, extended employment gaps and career changing.
- **Dynamic:** This style is a good choice for most job seekers, because a qualifications summary at the top of the page allows for a quick sell and entices hiring managers to continue reading.

**Should I keep my resume to one page?** Not necessarily. The one-page resume "rule" no longer applies. New graduates with limited experience might only require one page, but experienced professionals often need two pages or more. For a two-page resume, make sure your strongest credentials are presented at the top of the first page.

**Which font should I use?** For resumes in electronic format that will be emailed, select a font that's standard on most computer systems. Good choices: Arial, Book Antiqua, Century Schoolbook, Garamond, Tahoma, Times New Roman, Verdana.

**What tense should I write my resume in?** Write previous jobs in past tense. For your current job, write accomplishments in past tense and job responsibilities in present tense.

**Should I include salary information on my resume?** No, indicating your salary history or requirements could eliminate you from consideration. If the employer requests salary requirements, acknowledge the request in your cover letter with a line like: "I would be happy to discuss my salary requirements after mutual interest has been established." If you feel pressed to give a number, provide a wide range to give you room for future negotiations. You can also create a salary history sheet, a separate document that outlines your earnings history.

**Do I need to send a cover letter with my resume?** Yes. A well-written cover letter is a chance to market your credentials and professionalism.

**How do I include accomplishments when I don't have any?** Consider what makes your work performance valuable to a potential employer. Ask coworkers or supervisors about your performance, and review your written evaluations. You'll probably find strong accomplishments you can mention.

**Do I need an objective section?** Your resume must focus on a career goal so hiring managers immediately understand your job objective. However, you don't necessarily need to include a formal Objective section. Instead, incorporate your goal into a narrative qualifications summary.

**How can I hide gaps in my work history?** Most employers prefer applicants with no employment gaps, very few job seekers offer a perfectly steady work history. You can't change the past, so focus your resume on what you offer. If you participated in activities such as volunteer work, self-study or formal training while out of work, include them on your resume. If long-term gaps are an issue, consider a functional resume style, emphasizing relevant skills and downplaying chronology.

**How do I write a resume to change careers?** Your career-change resume should highlight your qualifications that are most relevant to your new career goal. You may have transferable skills, training, hobbies or other important credentials that will interest hiring managers. A good starting point is to research jobs and look for qualifications frequently mentioned in ads. Write down your matching qualifications, and work them into your resume.

# Dynamic Resumes

## Three kinds of resumes to consider:

- Chronological (inappropriate for older people because it easily displays your approximate age).
- Summary (good for projecting your expertise and career accomplishments).
- Combination of chronological and summary resumes, (format the Church frequently recommends).

## Resume format and content tips:

Include your name at the top of the resume, larger than normal: perhaps bold 28 pt. or more

Resumes get read in 8 seconds or less. That's why the top 1/3 of the first page has to be perfect in its layout and content. It has to be camera perfect layout with a dynamic statement of name, address, phone number, e-mail/web addresses. In addition, must have 9 to 12 specialized skills in a three-column format below the 3 to 5 line statement of what you do and who you are professionally

Three font sizes are the maximum: Name (28 pt or larger), Job title (14 pt) and content (12 or 11pt.)

Put Education last or on the next page

For the resumes that will be given personally, use underline for your hyperlink and it will print in black and not hazy. For the resume that gets posted on the Internet or e-mail, use hyperlink tools as usual.

Resumes designed for Internet use can be longer than one page because you want "key" words included because the resumes will be scanned for "key" job words. Hence, the more words the chances of scoring a higher score via the scan is possible.

Nobody likes to read across the page. Don't have too many lines of full width. Indent bullets. Try to have phrases rather than long sentences except for the career statement at the top of the resume.

Each job must have 3 to 5 bullet of specialized responsibilities or on-the-job achievements

Most important job listing is the job title which could be larger size type (14 pt.) and bold. Job company should be normal size type: 12 pt. Dates, if included, should be right justified.

Don't over bold the page.

Resume doesn't need to be only 1 page. Its layout is equally as important as the content.

Use only the last 10 or 15 years of employment history even if one has more professional employment

## Avoid common resume pitfalls

- Eliminate typographical or grammatical errors, have reviews by several different people
- Be sure to include sufficient information
- Avoid including too much information, provide enough for readers interest or curiosity
- List all important achievements, quantify successes with dollar amounts or percentages
- Work from a dynamic resume template

# Employment Records

An outline of employment history, skills and education. The starting point for a dynamic resume.

| <b>Personal Information</b>               |                 |                           |                 |                            |                       |               |                    |  |
|---|-----------------|---------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|--------------------|--|
| Last Name                                 |                 | First                     |                 |                            | Middle                |               |                    |  |
| Street Address                            |                 |                           |                 | Phone                      |                       | Message phone |                    |  |
| City, State Zip                           |                 |                           |                 | E-Mail                     |                       |               |                    |  |
| Age 16-18    Age 18+                      |                 |                           | Veteran?        |                            |                       |               |                    |  |
| <b>Employment Desired</b>                 |                 |                           |                 |                            |                       |               |                    |  |
| Job Title Preference                      |                 | Secondary                 |                 |                            | Full time – Part time |               | Salary range<br>\$ |  |
| <b>Employment Record</b>                  |                 |                           |                 |                            |                       |               |                    |  |
| Start date                                | Starting salary | Company                   |                 |                            | Title<br>Duties       |               | Reason for leaving |  |
| Ending date                               | Ending salary   | Location                  |                 |                            |                       |               |                    |  |
| Start date                                | Starting salary | Company                   |                 |                            | Title<br>Duties       |               | Reason for leaving |  |
| Ending date                               | Ending salary   | Location                  |                 |                            |                       |               |                    |  |
| Start date                                | Starting salary | Company                   |                 |                            | Title<br>Duties       |               | Reason for leaving |  |
| Ending date                               | Ending salary   | Location                  |                 |                            |                       |               |                    |  |
| Start date                                | Starting salary | Company                   |                 |                            | Title<br>Duties       |               | Reason for leaving |  |
| Ending date                               | Ending salary   | Location                  |                 |                            |                       |               |                    |  |
| <b>Skills and Qualifications</b>          |                 |                           |                 |                            |                       |               |                    |  |
|   |                 |                           |                 |                            |                       |               |                    |  |
|   |                 |                           |                 |                            |                       |               |                    |  |
|   |                 |                           |                 |                            |                       |               |                    |  |
| Typing<br>WPM:                            |                 | Ten-key<br>Sight    Touch |                 | Office and computer skills |                       |               |                    |  |
| Hobbies, interests and related activities |                 |                           |                 |                            |                       |               |                    |  |
| Other language(s)<br>1:                   |                 |                           |                 |                            | 2:                    |               |                    |  |
| <b>References</b>                         |                 |                           |                 |                            |                       |               |                    |  |
| Name                                      |                 | Title / Affiliation       |                 |                            |                       | Phone         |                    |  |
|   |                 |                           |                 |                            |                       |               |                    |  |
|   |                 |                           |                 |                            |                       |               |                    |  |
| <b>Education Information</b>              |                 |                           |                 |                            |                       |               |                    |  |
| Where                                     | Degree          | When                      | Course of study | Where                      | Degree                | When          | Course of study    |  |
| High School                               |                 |                           |                 | Col / Univ                 |                       |               |                    |  |
| Trade / Tech                              |                 |                           |                 |                            |                       |               |                    |  |

# Template...Your Name This Big

Your address, city, state and zip

Your phone number

Your e-mail address

## PROFILE

Two to three line introduction of your experience and capabilities; such as : A hard working, energetic, self-starter with a track record of exceptional performance in increasing levels of responsibility. Skilled in the following areas:

**Block of 9 – 12 Skills**  
**One line each if possible**  
**Bullets not required**

**Computer or Data Entry**  
**MS Office Suite**  
**Customer Service**

**Warehouse Inventory**  
**Cashiering**  
**Monetary Transactions**

## EXPERIENCE

### **Current Job Title or Position**

Company name, city and state                      optional dates worked to the right >                      9/04 - 8/06  
3-5 bulleted accomplishments for each position, suggested to not exceed two lines for any of these  
bulleted lines  
Another ....  
Another ....

### **Previous Job Title or Position**

Company name, city and state                      dates worked to the right >                      6/02-08/04  
3-5 bulleted accomplishments for each position, suggested to not exceed two lines for any of these  
bulleted lines  
Another ....  
Another ....

### **Older Job Title or Position**

Company name, city and state                      dates worked to the right >                      5/00-5/02  
3-5 bulleted accomplishments for each position, suggested to not exceed two lines for any of these  
bulleted lines  
Another ...

### **Oldest Job Title or Position – 4-5 Jobs or 10 years back is sufficient**

Company name, city and state                      dates worked to the right >                      5/98-4/00  
Put the oldest position last  
3-5 bulleted accomplishments for each position, as done above  
Another ...

## **EDUCATION**

High School or College attended (Put Highest Level Here)  
Graduated or degree(s) designation    Month    200X  
Include GPA if 3.59 or higher    Have the draft read by at least two other people for grammar

# Resume Action Words

## Personal Attributes

|             |            |              |            |                |            |
|-------------|------------|--------------|------------|----------------|------------|
| Adaptable   | Determined | Enthusiastic | Objective  | Punctual       | Successful |
| Assertive   | Diligent   | Expressive   | Open       | Receptive      | Tactful    |
| Astute      | Diplomatic | Firm         | Orderly    | Reliable       | Talented   |
| Calm        | Discrete   | Flexible     | Out-going  | Resourceful    | Tenacious  |
| Candid      | Dynamic    | Frank        | Patient    | Self-confident | Tidy       |
| Competent   | Easy going | Honest       | Perceptive | Self-starter   | Tolerant   |
| Cooperative | Effective  | Initiator    | Persistent | Sensitive      | Versatile  |
| Creative    | Efficient  | Innovating   | Precise    | Sincere        | Warm       |
| Democratic  | Empathetic | Loyal        | Punctual   | Sophisticated  |            |

## Action Verbs

|              |             |              |             |              |             |
|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| Achieved     | Composed    | Earned       | Founded     | Introduced   | Sold        |
| Administered | Conceived   | Effected     | Generated   | Invented     | Solved      |
| Affected     | Conducted   | Encouraged   | Governed    | Investigated | Stimulated  |
| Analyzed     | Constructed | Enforced     | Grouped     | Launched     | Structured  |
| Applied      | Contracted  | Enlarged     | Guided      | Maintained   | Succeeded   |
| Appraised    | Controlled  | Equipped     | Handled     | Mastered     | Summarized  |
| Approved     | Convinced   | Established  | Illustrated | Recorded     | Supported   |
| Arranged     | Correlated  | Estimated    | Implemented | Recruited    | Tailored    |
| Assessed     | Created     | Evaluated    | Improved    | Rectified    | Taught      |
| Attained     | Decided     | Examined     | Increased   | Researched   | Transformed |
| Awarded      | Defined     | Excelled     | Influenced  | Reviewed     | Translated  |
| Built        | Designed    | Executed     | Initiated   | Revised      | Unified     |
| Calculated   | Detailed    | Expanded     | Inspired    | Scheduled    | United      |
| Cataloged    | Developed   | Experimented | Installed   | Searched     | Validated   |
| Clarified    | Directed    | Facilitated  | Instituted  | Secured      | Verified    |
| Coached      | Distributed | Formed       | Integrated  | Selected     |             |
| Compared     | Delegated   | Formulated   | Interviewed | Simplified   |             |

## Occupational Keywords

|                     |                         |                     |                         |                           |                             |
|---------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Account Management  | Cash Flow               | Dental Management   | Harnessing              | Patient Advocate          | Spanish                     |
| Accounts Receivable | Cell Culture            | Die Casting         | Hiring / Firing         | Payroll                   | Spread Sheets               |
| Acquisitions        | Media                   | Dietitian           | Hotel                   | Personal Computer Process | Statistical Process Control |
| Bachelor's Degree   | Cement                  | Drywall             | ISO 9001                | Metallurgy                | Student Personnel           |
| Bank Card           | Child care              | Ecology             | Journalism              | Proposal Writing          | Supervisor                  |
| Bank Reconciliation | Claims                  | Electronics         | Journeyman              | Psychology                | Taxonomy                    |
| Batch Processing    | Adjudication            | Employee Assistance | Layout Design           | Public relations          | Teacher                     |
| Benchmarking        | Commercial              | Engineer            | Logic Analyzer          | Purchasing                | Technical Writing           |
| Blueprint Reading   | Leasing                 | Equipment Vendor    | Magnetic theory manager | Radio                     | Time Management             |
| Brochures           | Copy Editor             | Financial Planning  | Marketing               | Raw Materials             | Transportation              |
| Budget              | Management              | Food Preparation    | Master's Degree         | Receptionist              | Travel                      |
| Bulletins           | Cross-Cultural Training | Gas Pipeline        | Microprocessor          | Reporter                  | Wave Solder                 |
| CAD                 | Debugging               | Goal Setting        | Microsoft Word          | Research                  | WordPerfect                 |
| Calibrator          | Decision Making         | Graphic Design      | Nursing                 | Sales                     | Workflow                    |
| Carpentry           | Demographics            | Guest Services      | Oscillator              | Secretarial               | Writer                      |
|                     |                         |                     | Palletizing             | Software Modeling         |                             |

# Searchable Keywords

*Adapted from: Monster.com Keywords Recruiters Use to Find You by Thad Peterson*

## Automated Searching

Just as you use keywords to search for jobs on an employer web site, recruiters and hiring managers use them to identify qualified candidates who match their available positions searching the Web, databases such as Monster.com, emails and online applications.

Knowing which keywords appear most frequently in recruiters' searches can help you use the right words and terms in your resume. But remember: While it makes sense to use these keywords in your resume if they pertain to you, littering your resume with irrelevant words can backfire.

"For the astute recruiter, it's going to come across as spam," says Felix Heimberg, a Dallas-based recruiter. "We become very good at spotting something that looks contrived."

## One Hundred Most Popular Keywords

What are recruiters and hiring managers searching for? Here is a list of the top 100 resume keyword search phrases used by recruiters and hiring managers on Monster for the three months ending June 30, 2005: (use these to identify similar keywords within your career and skill set, use them in your resume)

|                             |                    |                   |                        |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Sales                       | Engineer           | Retail            | Accounts receivable    |
| Recruiter                   | Controller         | Legal secretary   | Senior accountant      |
| Entry Level                 | Financial analyst  | Customer service  | Manufacturing          |
| Accountant                  | Project manager    | Call center       | SQL                    |
| Receptionist                | Marketing          | Outside sales     | Unix                   |
| CPA                         | C#                 | Bookkeeper        | Architect              |
| Customer service            | .net               | Inside Sales      | HVAC                   |
| Accounting                  | Project manager    | Auditor           | Help desk              |
| Java                        | J2EE               | AutoCAD           | Oracle DBA             |
| Mortgage                    | Oracle             | Tax               | Clerical               |
| Manager                     | Construction       | Registered Nurse  | Purchasing             |
| Executive Assistant         | Warehouse          | Buyer             | Bilingual              |
| Human Resources             | Inside sales       | C                 | Help desk              |
| Pharmacist                  | Business analyst   | Spanish           | Analyst                |
| Accounts Payable            | Paralegal          | Japanese          | Accounts payable       |
| Insurance                   | RN                 | Underwriter       | Technical writer       |
| Payroll                     | Financial analyst  | Sales             | Pharmaceutical         |
| Staff accountant            | Data entry         | Account executive | Loan processor         |
| Audit                       | Nurse              | Technical writer  | Occupational therapist |
| Physical therapist          | People soft        | Medical           | QA                     |
| Outside sales               | Restaurant Manager | CNC               | Pharmaceutical sales   |
| SAP                         | Loan officer       | Finance           | Real Estate            |
| Business analyst            | Staffing           | Staff accountant  | Maintenance            |
| Collections                 | Telemarketing      | Civil engineer    | Human Resources        |
| Administrative<br>Assistant |                    |                   |                        |

# The Telephone Screening Interview

*From the book "60 Seconds and You're Hired!" - Robin Ryan*

Better know how to get past the telephone screening interview since it's growing in popularity among HR folks.

When an employer calls to say, "We'd like to discuss your qualifications a bit," what they are really saying is, "We want to know more about your exact skills and verify your resume, before we offer you an interview."

Human Resources professionals refer to this interview as the Screening Interview. In today's job market this kind of screening process has become very popular and is frequently used.

This initial employer contact is designed to narrow the pool of acceptable candidates, and you don't want to be one who is not scheduled for the in-person interview.

## Telephone Interview

The interviewer hopes they will catch you off guard with their initial call. Employers typically phone in the evenings or on weekends. I've personally conducted a lot of these for employers and I'm amazed at how many people say it is okay to talk when there is obviously TV, loud children, and other distracting events going on around them.

Preparation is the key to success. Remember that if you don't pass this screening, you're sunk.

When you get this type of call, tell the person you are just finishing something and ask if you can call them back in ten minutes. Then prepare yourself. Find a quiet spot, get your resume out and think about the questions the interviewer will ask. The employer's objective is to clarify experience and salary expectations. Mentally rehearse your answers. Have a pen and paper in front of you. Jot down the caller's name and take notes as they ask you questions. Smile, so your voice sounds friendly.

The interviewer's job is to validate an applicant's background (after all, too many people lie on the resume). Employers need to hear that you have the experience needed to do the job. Demonstrate that you do with answers that offer examples of your past performance, and that reiterate your top strengths and key selling points. Be concise -- keep answers less than 60 seconds and, above all, sound interested and enthusiastic about the job. The worst thing you can do is to sound monotonically robotic, uninterested, and dull. This can happen unconsciously if you get nervous, so actively work to sound self-assured and enthused.

The screening interview seeks to weed out the unqualified and overpriced. The disadvantage here is that the human resource person often is not specifically familiar with all the details of the job. They are generalists and seek to validate job experience, not job potential. Be sure to structure answers to demonstrate how you have done the work in the past and how you focus on self-improvement and making contributions to your employer. To move to the next level you must convince this person that you CAN do the job.

## One Major Caution

Be ready for any salary questions. These are tricky. Revealing your financial desires can be used as a measuring stick to screen you out because they can clue the interviewer to your "real" skill level. It's always best to avoid answering any questions on salary until you have been offered the job. If questioned, respond to the interviewer by inquiring, "What is the range this job pays?"

Keep this adage in mind: Whoever mentions money first loses. Don't let it be you.

# Interviewing *Guidelines*

*Adapted from: Post-Tribune, March 20, 2005 by Doris A. Black*

It's the interview that will make or break you. You need to separate yourself from other applicants in order to get noticed and be hired. These tips increase your chances.

1. Make an entrance. Arrive on time and dressed appropriately for the position. From the moment you walk through the door, everyone from the receptionist to potential fellow employees will size you up as you wait for the interview.
2. Know the name of the interviewer and pronounce it correctly. Call the receptionist and ask for the spelling and pronunciation of the interviewer. When introduced, repeat their name. Don't offer to shake hands unless the interviewer offers. Then shake with a firm grip.
3. Know what the company produces or what services they offer. Doing research on the company is crucial to having a good interview. Employers will ask why you want to work for them. Your knowledge of their position in the market or reputation will give a favorable impression. However, you should not flaunt your knowledge, keep it low key.
4. Get the interviewer interested in you. This is your chance to sell your personality. They already know from your resume what skills you have. What they want to find out is what kind of personality you have; will you fit into their company. Enthusiasm is the key no matter what the topic is. Display sincere enthusiasm, be genuine.
5. Answer each question thoughtfully. Every question is asked for a purpose. Don't assume you're having a casual conversation and let your guard down. Every remark you make can be meaningful. Remember, the interview started the moment you walked in the door.
6. Know when to stop talking. When answering a question, do so concisely but fully, then stop talking. When the interviewer says nothing, many interviewees make the mistake of assuming the answer was insufficient, so they ramble on to fill the void. What is said during this time period can play against you. Silence is used by interviewers to see how you handle stress. Just sit quietly, don't fidget and don't look around the room; look directly at the interviewer and wait. The silence won't last long. If you're prepared for the silence, it will pass quickly. Be patient and a warm satisfaction will fill you as you realize you passed the test.
7. Have intelligent questions prepared. Sometime near the end of the interview, you will most likely be asked if you have any questions. Don't say no, even if the interviewer thoroughly went over the position and answered the questions you had before arriving. Show interest in the interviewer by asking them how they like working for the company and what they don't like about it. Getting the interviewer to talk about themselves is a way to get to know their personality, so you can decide whether or not you'd like to work closely with them.
8. Negotiate a salary with care. More people lose the job here than any other place during the interview. Talking money is tricky. If you price yourself too low, they may think you're not as good as you claim to be; if too high, you'll come off as being "full of yourself." If the interviewer asks you how much money you want, you know they're at least interested in hiring you. Don't offer a figure without knowing the job salary range, or you may price yourself out of the job. If you state a minimum figure and their top dollar is less, you can't change your mind and say "I'll take it" or you'll appear to be without convictions. Instead of replying to the money question, answer with another question, "How much are you offering?" If what they offer is less than you want but you really want to work there, try to negotiate for a salary review in three months to your desired level. If you've done well, you'll get the raise.



## Interviewing *Questions & Answers*

1. ***Tell me something about yourself?*** This is your opportunity to set the tone for the interview and to share with the employer how you fit into his company and the strengths that make you a valuable asset. Good place to use your 30 second summary
2. ***Why did you leave your last position?*** Always have a positive answer. Keep it short. Don't change your answer in the middle of the interview. Examples: "The company downsized" or "I enjoyed my company, but I'd like to increase my experience and skills."
3. ***Who will give you a good reference?*** Prepare in advance a list of three personal and three business/professional references. Check with all references to be sure that they will give you a good reference. Suggest to your references some strengths or experiences you would like them to emphasize if they are called.
4. ***What do you know about this company or job?*** You must do your homework. Research the company prior to the interview, using the Internet, the public library, or people who have worked for the company. You should know as a minimum the company's products and stated objectives.
5. ***How would you evaluate your last supervisor?*** Always give a positive answer. Tell what you have learned from working there. Never "bad mouth" the company.
6. ***What do you hope to be doing in 5 years?*** Keep your stated expectations reasonable. Examples: "I'd like to be working for you in a position of responsibility." "What would be the normal career progression for this position?"
7. ***If we called your last employer what would they say about you?*** This is a great opportunity to list all of your achievements, even if your boss hates you. Example: "Well, I hope he would tell you about the time I did..." Most companies have a strict policy not to comment on negative performance by a present or past employee.
8. ***What are your strengths?*** This is the perfect opportunity to reiterate to the employer why he should hire you. List all of your strengths that would be valuable to him and the position you are applying for. Be sure to give specific examples of each strength.
9. ***What is your biggest weakness?*** Never admit a weakness! Turn a strength into a weakness and then reverse it into a strength. Example: "I am very meticulous in my work. I recognize that others are not. However, I have learned how to work effectively with people who are not so meticulous to insure that we have the best product possible." Another example would be: "Some people might think my age is a problem or that I'm over qualified, but I feel that I bring a lot of maturity and experience to the position and I'm anxious to learn new things."
10. ***I've seen several qualified people, why should I hire you?*** List your strengths and how it will benefit the company. Stress your desire to work for the company and that you will be able to make a serious positive impact to company operations.
11. ***What do you expect as a starting salary?*** Never talk salary until after you have received a job offer. Deflect the question by assuring the employer that the real issue is do you feel the company is a good fit for you and does he feel that you are the right person for the job. If the answer is yes, then fair compensation can be negotiated. If he insists on knowing your salary requirements, you can ask "What do you normally pay someone with my experience?" or "What did you pay the last person to fill this position?"
12. ***Do you have any questions for me?*** An interview is a time for you to evaluate the company. Look for opportunities to ask appropriate questions. *SEE 'Your Questions'*

## Interviewing *Their Questions*

The following are popular behavior based questions you may encounter in an interview. Don't rely on being fast on your feet, develop answers to these questions before the interview.

### ***Tell me about a time when you ...***

1. Worked effectively under pressure.
2. Handled a difficult situation with a co-worker
3. Were creative in solving a problem.
4. Missed an obvious solution to a problem.
5. Were unable to complete a project on time.
6. Persuaded team members to do things your way.
7. Wrote a report that was well received.
8. Anticipated potential problems and developed preventative measures.
9. Had to make an important decision with limited facts.
10. Were forced to make an unpopular decision.
11. Had to adapt to a difficult situation.
12. Were tolerant of an opinion that was different from yours.
13. Were disappointed in your behavior.
14. Used your political savvy to push a program through that you really believed in.
15. Had to deal with an irate customer.
16. Delegated a project effectively.
17. Surmounted a major obstacle.
18. Set your sights too high (or too low).
19. Prioritized the elements of a complicated project.
20. Got bogged down in the details of a project.
21. Lost (or won) an important contract.
22. Made a bad decision.
23. Hired (or fired) the wrong person.
24. Turned down a good job.

## Interviewing *Your Questions*

During the interview you may be given the opportunity to ask questions. You should have done sufficient research about the company to ask questions that demonstrate you are familiar with their products or services. This is your chance to have some control of the interview. It will let the interviewer respond rather than probe. Conclude with 'Thank you' or with a personal observation or a query for clarification on a point the interviewer raised.

**DO NOT ask how much does the job pay!**

Suggestions:

- What happened to the last person who had this job?
- What do you think will be your major areas of growth in the next five years?
- What has the role of marketing (planning, personnel) been in this firm?
- What would you like to do more of (less of) next year (ask this one of the boss)?
- What development task do you think I could lead the department in that would provide training or education beneficial to your objectives?
- What does our company (your department) pride itself in? What sets it off from other functions?
- How do you evaluate performance? What form of positive or corrective feedback do you employ?
- What sort of person do you have difficulty working with? What traits do you think interfere with good job performance? (A risky question but may give some insight; into the boss's style. Discuss this with your job coach or employment specialist.)
- How are promotions determined? What makes people successful in the company?
- How are decisions made here?
- What do you think is the company's most immediate opportunity to gain in the market?
- What do you think about immediate actions as compared to long-term measures?
- How would you summarize the public's view of your company?
- Can you tell me some of the company's short and long term objectives?
- What are the characteristics that the company considers attractive or unique about itself?
- What industries or outside influences affect the company's growth?
- In what areas does the company excel? What limitations would you like to overcome?
- What are the common denominators that exist in successful employees of the company?

**And for your closing question ...**

"Is there anything we have discussed that would preclude me from favorable consideration for this position? If so I would like to clarify the concern."

## Interviewing *Money Negotiations*

*Adapted from: How to Respond with Confidence by Kim Lankford*

It's the question many job applicants dread: What are your salary requirements? If you're responding to an ad that asks for this information up front, what should you do?

Job postings that ask for salary requirements use the information to weed out potential candidates. "If many people are applying for the job, they're looking for an excuse to filter the resumes," explains Christopher Elmes of human resources consulting firm DBM in New York City.

If you ask for too much, you'll take yourself out of the running. But ask for too little, and you could doom yourself to a salary that's too low. The key is to respond forthrightly to the question without being overly specific. Follow these tips.

### **Offer a Salary Range**

Instead of giving a specific number, provide a salary range, suggests Mike Worthington of ResumeDoctor.com. Remember it's impossible to give an accurate answer before you know the details of the job's duties and employee benefits. "A lot of factors have to be considered: healthcare coverage, the commute, 401k, child care and vacations," Worthington says. "There are so many factors involved that aren't going to be answered in a job description."

You can explain this to the prospective employer while still providing a general idea of what you're expecting in a simple sentence like this: "My salary requirement is in the \$xx to \$xx range, based on the job responsibilities and total compensation package." That way, you still have plenty of room for negotiation after you learn more about the job.

Instead of providing salary requirements in a separate document, Worthington recommends mentioning them in your cover letter. There, they will be next to key bullet points explaining how you can bring value to the company, which helps justify what you're asking.

### **Research Your Salary**

First, do your research to provide some realistic numbers. See how much similar jobs with your level of experience are paying in that city or town. "Don't respond to an ad without doing your homework and knowing roughly what the position pays and what you could reasonably expect in terms of compensation," says Elmes. "It's getting caught unaware that can get you into trouble."

Worthington says it can't hurt to call the company and ask for salary information. Talking with friends who work for that company also may help. "It's like detective work," he explains. "A lot of it is asking the right questions."

Your bottom end should be slightly higher than your absolute minimum. "That gives you negotiating power and flexibility," says Worthington. Be reasonable on your top end. "Some companies put that question in to see honest and reasoned responses," says Elmes.

### **Salary Requirements vs. Salary History**

If the employer specifically asks for your salary history rather than salary requirements, you can add that information to your resume at the end of each of your job listings. Be careful about providing these numbers if you're moving to a new city with a different cost of living. Explain this difference in your cover letter or mention you're moving to a more-expensive city and you prefer to discuss salary requirements at an interview.

If they don't ask about your salary at the beginning, don't bring it up. "The last thing you want to do is to talk salary," says Weitzman. "You want them to fall in love with you first. If they want you a lot, they'll be willing to pay you more."

# Interviewing *Job Fairs*

*From: Monster Technology, Job Fair Success by Kim Isaacs*

Attending job fairs is one way to network and find job leads. Job fairs allow you to meet hiring managers from various companies and industries — all housed under one roof for the day. These tips will help you make the best impression, but be aware; you may only get about one minute.

## **Research Job Fair Companies**

"When meeting candidates, I like to see that they've done their research," says Louis Dennis, a HR representative, who uses job fairs to recruit. "Folks who can sit down with me already knowing something about the company and what they're interested in are very impressive to me."

It's usually possible to obtain a list of employers participating in a job fair. The best-prepared candidates will have spent time researching corporate cultures, missions and open jobs posted on employer Web sites. "If someone can say to me, 'I'm interested in underwriting or claims' and can back up why they're a good fit, I'm immediately going to be impressed," Dennis says.

## **Develop Multiple Versions of Your Resume**

After you've done your homework, tailor your resume based on your job objective, and consider multiple versions for the job fair, says Christina MacGill, of Pennsylvania State University.

"Once candidates have done their research on participating companies, they can create a few different resumes targeting these," MacGill advises. "For example, someone ... can research typical job titles and types of responsibilities and then create different versions accordingly."

You should also prepare a general resume without a specific objective. "That way, candidates can be prepared for any situation at a job fair by keeping their options open." MacGill says.

## **Cut Through the Clutter**

Job Fair resumes must be short. "... at a job fair, where the line can get eight-to-10 deep of people waiting to talk to you, I cringe when I see a resume that's more than a page and a half long,"

"If the resume is cluttered and not easy to read, this is a problem," says MacGill, who coordinates career fairs at Penn State. "Employers get so many resumes at career fairs, and you've got to make sure your resume is easy on the eye, with the main information easy to pick up and quickly scan."

## **Bring Supporting Documents**

Additional documents that could help support your qualifications will depend on your industry and career goals, but they may include a cover letter, professional portfolio, transcripts (usually for new graduates), reference list, and letters of recommendation and job applications.

Use the information uncovered during your research to guide your cover letter development. You may have found names of HR managers, position openings and job requirements that will help you customize your letters. Write a cover letter to go along with each resume version. The letter should provide an overview of your qualifications that meet the goal the resume specifies.

Supporting documents aren't as important as your resume, and some hiring managers won't be interested in the extra paperwork. Dennis says cover letters aren't necessary at a job fair.

## **Follow Up**

Request a business card from each hiring manager, and jot down a few notes immediately after each conversation -- this will help refresh your memory when you follow up. Email or mail a thank-you note within 24 hours of the job fair. "When I've met someone promising, I'm looking for them to follow up," says Dennis. "If they do, that's a sign of serious interest." Emailing about once a month should suffice.

# Employment Background Checks

The Truth about Employment Background Checks

Adapted from: [09Careerfinderagent.com](http://09Careerfinderagent.com) 19 June 2009

The variations in the economy create an extremely competitive job market where employers are being extra careful of whom they hire into their organization. In fact, The Survey Group reported that more than 80 percent of employers do a background check on potential employees by performing some form of employee screening.

More than 80 percent of employers are turning to background screenings of job applicants as a way of minimizing legal and financial exposure. Concerns about workplace violence, negligent-hiring lawsuits, wrongful termination and other problems are leading many employers to be more careful about who is hired in the first place.

For applicants, however, background screening can create an uneasy feeling that they are mistrusted from the start or that Big Brother is watching. The fact is background screenings of job applicants benefit employers and employees alike. With the Federal Fair Credit Reporting Act, job applicants have a great deal of legal protection.

For applicants, the advantages of working for a company that requires screening is that efforts have been made to ensure that co-workers have the qualifications and credentials they say they have. For the employer, screening saves the time and money wasted in recruiting, hiring and training the wrong candidates

So, it's a good idea that you understand the truth and myths surrounding background checks and what employers may learn about you. The following will indicate what a potential employer can and cannot learn about you through a pre-employment background check.

A potential employer will be able to access:

- Arrest Records—*MYTH*. An employer cannot access your arrest record. Your arrest record will only be seen if you were convicted of a crime or are pending trial.
- Bankruptcy Filings—*TRUTH*. Bankruptcies are public record. However, employers cannot discriminate against applicants because they have filed for bankruptcy.
- Workers Compensation Claims—*TRUTH*. When an employee's claim goes through the state system or the Workers' Compensation Appeals Board (WCAB), the case becomes public record. An employer may only use this information if an injury might interfere with one's ability to perform required duties.
- Social Security Number—*TRUTH*. An employer will be able to verify your social security number.
- Educational Records—*TRUTH*. These records are only seen if there is consent from you, the student. However, a school can release what they call "directory information" which can include your name, address, dates of attendance, degrees earned, and activities you participated in, that is unless you have given written notice not to release that information.
- Military Service Records—*TRUTH*. The military can disclose your name, rank, salary, assignments and awards without your consent.
- Medical Records—*MYTH*. Employers do not have the authority to request your medical records and cannot use them when making a hiring decision. They can however inquire if you have any physical restrictions that may inhibit you from performing a certain job.
- Work History—*TRUTH*. Verification of dates of employment and positions held can be obtained.
- Driving Records—*TRUTH*. Your driving records are not confidential and can be released without consent. However, they are usually not included in the standard pre-employment background check unless you will be driving as part of your job.
- Credit Reports—*MYTH*. Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) employers must receive written consent before seeking an employee's or potential employee's credit report. However, if they run a credit check with your consent, its best to first check out what they may find. [Get a Free Credit Report](#) now.

# Background Checks *Protection or violation?*

*Adapted from: Mark Terry / Bankrate.com*

You're filling out the application for a new job and there it is in bold letters: You must agree to a background check as a prerequisite for employment. At the bottom of the application it says: Anyone who knowingly provides incorrect information, or incorrect information through omission of fact, can be subject to termination at any time.

During the interview you are asked, "If we check for criminal records, are we going to find anything?"

At the end of the interview, the prospective employer gives you a written form asking for your permission to run an extensive background check that will verify your Social Security number, driving record, criminal record, credit records and civil court records.

## **The reason for background checks**

More employers are performing criminal background checks on new hires. In some states and for some professions, it is a legal requirement. One of the primary reasons is an increase in negligent-hiring lawsuits. An employer says Lynn Peterson, president of PFC Information Services Inc. in Oakland, Calif., "can be sued for actions taken on the part of an employee."

An employer has a legal responsibility to hire someone who is safe, qualified and fit for the position. "If they fail to use reasonable care and they hire someone that they either knew or should have known presented a foreseeable risk of harm to a third party, then that employer is liable," says Lester Rosen, attorney and president of Employment Screening Services Inc. in Novato, Calif.

The size of financial settlements, awarded by juries, in these negligent hiring lawsuits is on the rise. "In 1999, employers lost 60 percent of all negligent hiring/supervision jury trials," according to "Practical Guide to Employment Law." And the average settlement is more than \$1.6 million dollars according to at least one study, says Jason B. Morris, president of Background Information Services Inc., of Cleveland.

Another reason employers are running background checks is, well, people lie. "We know, nationally, when you look across all industries that about 10 percent of all applicants have some sort of criminal record," says Rosen. "That doesn't mean it's a disqualifying criminal record. It's a form of discrimination to automatically reject an applicant with a criminal record without considering whether there's a good business reason, but at least an employer needs to know if there's a criminal record involved. We know that up to 40 percent of resumes contain material omissions or fraudulent statements about credentials, education or employment. Some studies suggest that up to 40 percent of resumes contain some piece of fiction that is beyond the bounds of good taste."

But what about you? You don't have a criminal record. You have good credit. Why should you have to agree to a background check?

Maybe the background checks protect you as well. "In the larger scheme of things, I think it's very important to ensure that you're hiring people who are safe, from the perspective of the people who are co-workers," says Peterson. "I think it's very important to know that the person working next to you is a safe person. Particularly if you're talking about sending people out into the home; you've got to do it."

# Background Checks *Types*

*Adapted from: Mark Terry / Bankrate.com*

## **Types of background checks**

So what's out there?

Exactly what pieces of your personal history can your employer delve into?

- Resume and employment verification.
- Social Security number verification. It is illegal for an employer or third-party consumer reporting agency (CRA) to access the Social Security Administration for this purpose. This is performed using public records and credit bureau data.
- Criminal record checks. This is not a database check, if done correctly. The National Crime Information Center's (NCIC) database is not currently available to private employers, though legislation is being considered. A criminal record check is performed at county courthouses and sometimes state records are checked. Says Peterson, "The records are not available online and we have to send what we call a 'court-runner' out to the courthouse just as a quick check of the files to see if there's any criminal information pertaining to that person."
- Department of Motor Vehicles. Your driving record may be checked whether the job requires driving or not. It's an easy way to verify date of birth and addresses. "A driving record," says Rosen, "is a true statewide criminal record of that particular state, and it might reveal some level of responsibility. It might not matter if someone made an illegal left turn, but if somebody didn't go to court to deal with it may be suggestive."
- Civil court records. This can reveal lawsuits in which the potential employee was either a plaintiff or defendant in a case concerning a former employer. "In many states," says Peterson, "restraining orders are regarded as civil records, and if somebody has had a restraining order filed against him, it may be a cause for concern."
- Worker's compensation. Accessibility varies from state to state.
- Credit report. "A credit history check is allowed under the Fair Credit Reporting Act for employment purposes," says Tena Friery, research director with the Privacy Rights Clearinghouse. "This means that employers can make these kinds of non-skills determinations and reach a conclusion that if somebody is reliable at paying their own bills, they'll be a reliable employee, which certainly overlooks that some people have a bad credit history for medical reasons or for things that are really beyond their control."
- Sexual offender's databases.



# Background Checks *Your Rights*

*Adapted from: Mark Terry / Bankrate.com*

Background checks are covered by the [Fair Credit Reporting Act](#), which in turn is covered by the [Federal Trade Commission](#). "There is a specific law that covers background checks by third parties, and that law is the FCRA," says Friery, research director with the Privacy Rights Clearinghouse. It's the same law that governs the credit reporting industry, but it also covers a number of other kinds of consumer reports, one of which is the employment report."

Among its many provisions, the FCRA gives the following rights to job seekers:

1. The request for background checks must be on a separate document. "The provision," says Friery, "must be on a document that's separate from a job application or any other document. So it must stand out, in other words."
2. Pre-adverse action letter. If the applicant is turned down for any reason, they must be given an explanation for the employer's decision. "This is before any action is taken not to hire them," says Friery, "or to fire them, because this also applies to current employers. And along with that comes a statement of rights and a copy of the report."
3. Consent required. The FCRA applies only to third-party credit reporting agencies. "In-house checks," says Friery, "are not covered by the FCRA. This issue varies by state."
4. The FCRA does not address the consequences of refusing consent. "That's because the FCRA imposes specific obligations on employer-users of consumer reports," says Friery, "but there's no room to read more into it than what's required by the words of the law. The FCRA is really more a law about certain types of consumer reports, the companies that prepare such reports and the companies that use them. Employer decision making and discretion are matters generally left to state employment laws" or Equal Employment Opportunity issues.

**Discrimination and obligation** Clearly the laws and regulations governing background checks are a delicate, and sometimes an awkward dance between the Federal Credit Reporting Act, Equal Employment Opportunity laws and nondiscriminatory hiring practices.

"There are some disturbing things about it," says Friery. "For one thing, this really overlaps with employment law and employer's discretion, which is really pretty much unlimited unless the employer runs afoul of discrimination laws. They really are in the position to be able to make job determinations. If they want to adopt a no-tolerance rule for criminal conviction no matter how far back it goes, there's nothing that really says they have to adopt more lenient practices."

And there's something unsettling about the notion that once you agree to allow these checks as a requirement for employment, your employer can follow up on them whenever it wants to. If you're a good employee, why should your employer have the right to check your credit history or driving record from time to time? How is that necessarily relevant to your work performance?

In addition, if a consumer reporting agency makes a mistake and you are not hired as a result, or you are fired as a result, there is not much you can do about it. "Once there is a mistake made," says Friery, "the employer does not have to reinstate a job offer or even take that person back if it resulted in a firing. So the subject really has very little recourse except to try to deal with the consumer reporting agency, the background screener that reported faulty information." You, as a consumer, however, do have a right to have the information corrected.

There many examples of why background checks are important. In any case, knowing what's actually in your own credit report can be the first step in understanding what is at stake during a background check. You can get a free copy of our credit report once a year from each of the three consumer reporting companies -- Equifax, Experian and TransUnion.

# Older Workers

*By: Harvey Mackay, author of Outswimming the Sharks*

In my experience, the older the worker, particularly the really older worker, tends to be the best on the floor. Why? Generally, most people who work beyond retirement are motivated because so many of them are working when they don't have to. And when you do something you don't have to, it means you want to and most likely, you're good at it.

It's crazy that we don't do a better job of harnessing the energy and abilities of older workers.

What about you? Want to prove that just because there's snow on the roof, it doesn't mean the furnace is out.

Here are some thoughts:

- Use what you've got. Your contact management networking system can be worth more to you than your company retirement plan. Before you leave your present position, make sure those IOU's are not only current but built up as much as possible.
- Surprise! You need a plan. This time, it should be built around your natural advantages: your contacts, your experience, the capital you have built up.
- Don't try to do it on the cheap. Perhaps you may want to start a business. Remember it's not a hobby. If you're going out on your own, give yourself a payroll to meet, even if you are the only one on it.
- Spend at least 10 percent of your budget on the best professional advice available before you spend a nickel on anything else.
- Build an escape hatch. It's not your failures you've got to worry about; it's the other person's. Make sure any sales contact sets forth the seller's representations and can be revoked if any of them are false.
- Don't expect your old customers to keep you afloat. Even though you can do the work better than someone half your age, you'll find that the hard part is getting it. Every business needs new customers.
- Step up your networking. Keep up whatever clubs or professional associations you belong to. And join some new ones. Be more, not less, active in them.
- Take some college level courses. It's your best single opportunity not only to stretch yourself but to get in touch with people one-third your age.
- Get in an exercise program. You feel better about yourself when you feel better physically.
- Have some fun at it.

Web sites for new ventures:

[www.entrepreneur.com](http://www.entrepreneur.com)

[www.sbs.gov](http://www.sbs.gov)

To avoid old age, keep overachieving.

# Best Employers for Workers Over 50

*From: AARP - American Association of Retired Persons*

## Honorees for years 2002 – 2007 with bases in Colorado:

- **Adecco Employment Services** – (3 time winner) a staffing and human resource solutions company that places temporary and full-time employees at client locations.
- **The Aerospace Corporation** – Colorado Springs. An independent, nonprofit applying science and technology to solve critical issues in the nation's space program.
- **CALIBRE – Broomfield, CO.** A management and technical services company.
- **DaVita Inc.** – various Denver metro. Medical provider of dialysis and kidney disease equipment and services.
- **Deere & Company** – Parts Distribution Center in Denver. Manufactures, distributes and finances range of agricultural, construction, commercial and consumer equipment.
- **Delaware North Companies, Inc.** – Hospitality and food service provider of visitor services at national parks, resorts sporting venues and 30 airports in the United States.
- **Farmer's Insurance Group of Companies** – Third largest writer of both private passenger automobile and homeowners insurance.
- **First Horizon National Corporation** – Longmont, Englewood (all types of jobs) Nationwide financial services institution providing services to individuals and businesses.
- **Hartford Financial Services Group, Inc.** - financial
- **Hofmann-LaRoche, Inc.** - Boulder; Colorado Springs; Denver; Grand Junction. An innovating healthcare company with core businesses in pharmaceuticals and diagnostics.
- **Kelly Services, Inc.** – a staffing and human resources company.
- **Lincoln Financial Group** – Colorado. Financial investments company.
- **Minnesota Life** – Colorado. Provides insurance, pension and investment products to more than 6,000,000 clients in all 50 states and Puerto Rico.
- **MITRE Corporation** – Colorado Springs. A private, not-for-profit corporation working in the public interest for agencies of the federal government.
- **Mitretek Systems** – Greenwood Village, CO. Research and Engineering Non-profit.
- **New York Life Insurance Company** – life insurance, annuities and investments.
- **Pitney Bowes, Inc.** – Provider of integrated mail and document management systems, services and solutions.
- **Prudential Financial** – investments, insurance and real estate.
- **QUALCOMM, Inc.** – Boulder (2 locations). Technology, Internet and wireless and government focus.
- **Stanley Consultants, Inc.** – Denver. Multidisciplinary consulting firm that provides engineering, environmental and construction services worldwide.
- **The Stanley Group** – Denver, Englewood. Consulting on planning studies, design, environmental and construction management.
- **The University of Colorado Hospital** – Denver and Aurora. Healthcare provider.
- **Volkswagen of America, Inc.** – Denver. Manufacturer of passenger cars and trucks.
- **Zurich North America** – Colorado Springs, Denver, Englewood. A commercial property-casualty insurance provider serving business sectors in the US and Canada

# Presentation Skills for Techies

*Adapted: Allan Hoffman, Monster Tech Jobs Expert*

Just because your technical or engineering program didn't teach you presentation skills doesn't mean they don't have value in the workplace. CIOs, recruiters and hiring managers routinely emphasize the importance of communication skills in hiring and promotion decisions. The ability to make a polished presentation under pressure -- to a client or another department -- is a valuable skill that sets you apart from those with just tech expertise.

And if you think you're just not the presentation type, think again. "Everybody can improve," says Steve Bennett, a communications trainer for science and technology executives. "Very little of this has to do with looks, charisma and charm. That's all nice, but you don't have to have that."

## **Presentation Skills Are Crucial**

Tech pros use presentation skills in many different situations: sales calls, client meetings and reports to other departments. Even a simple staff meeting is a chance to demonstrate your ability to present. And if you assume your work won't include the need to give presentations, remember that presentation skills come in handy during a job interview.

"These skills come into play first and foremost when they are presenting themselves for employment," says Jack Wilson, an independent career coach who serves as an advisor to the Association for Computer Machinery on career issues. "Unfortunately, a lot of technology programs don't include practice in presentation or communication skills. One of the most prevalent complaints of CIOs and CTOs is the inability of some of their most technically proficient employees to communicate."

## **Presentation Training and Practice**

Bennett, Wilson and other presentation experts advise techies to seek out books, courses, and one-on-one communication and presentation training to develop skills and get some practice. IT organizations sometimes offer training as a member benefit. Books to consider include [Maximize Your Presentation Skills](#) by Ellen Kaye and [Presenting to Win: The Art of Telling Your Story](#) by Jerry Weissman.

## **Presentation Pointers**

The pros offer these tips for a great presentation:

Avoid just reading your slides. Instead, think of your visuals as a table of contents your audience can follow.

While practicing, read just the headlines of your slides to make sure the presentation hangs together.

These suggestions are increasingly important in an environment where techies have to move beyond technical skills. "Less and less are companies valuing the geek who sits in a back room," says Bennett. "Everyone has to communicate."

## Individual Progress Chart

| Sunday - Saturday Dates |  | EARLY IN WEEK          |                            |                                |                     | WEEKLY EFFORTS                 |                                |                                 |                             |                            |                                  |                                      |                      | PLAN AND DO                     |                                |                                   |                          | Comments |                            |  |  |
|-------------------------|--|------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|----------|----------------------------|--|--|
|                         |  | Meet with Home Teacher | Meet with Bishop/President | Meet with Presidency or Leader | Meet with Job Coach | Employment Center Registration | Attend Weekly Training Meeting | Develop Master Application Data | Draft Master Dynamic Resume | Tailored, Targeted Resumes | Applications - Resumes Submitted | Develop – Practice 30 Second Summary | Interviews Completed | Attend Regional Career Workshop | Networking Leads from DataBase | Networking Notebook Record/Review | Initial Networking Calls |          | Follow up Networking Calls |  |  |
| 01                      |  |                        |                            |                                |                     |                                |                                |                                 |                             |                            |                                  |                                      |                      |                                 |                                |                                   |                          |          |                            |  |  |
| 02                      |  |                        |                            |                                |                     |                                |                                |                                 |                             |                            |                                  |                                      |                      |                                 |                                |                                   |                          |          |                            |  |  |
| 03                      |  |                        |                            |                                |                     |                                |                                |                                 |                             |                            |                                  |                                      |                      |                                 |                                |                                   |                          |          |                            |  |  |
| 04                      |  |                        |                            |                                |                     |                                |                                |                                 |                             |                            |                                  |                                      |                      |                                 |                                |                                   |                          |          |                            |  |  |
| 05                      |  |                        |                            |                                |                     |                                |                                |                                 |                             |                            |                                  |                                      |                      |                                 |                                |                                   |                          |          |                            |  |  |
| 06                      |  |                        |                            |                                |                     |                                |                                |                                 |                             |                            |                                  |                                      |                      |                                 |                                |                                   |                          |          |                            |  |  |
| 07                      |  |                        |                            |                                |                     |                                |                                |                                 |                             |                            |                                  |                                      |                      |                                 |                                |                                   |                          |          |                            |  |  |
| 08                      |  |                        |                            |                                |                     |                                |                                |                                 |                             |                            |                                  |                                      |                      |                                 |                                |                                   |                          |          |                            |  |  |
| 09                      |  |                        |                            |                                |                     |                                |                                |                                 |                             |                            |                                  |                                      |                      |                                 |                                |                                   |                          |          |                            |  |  |
| 10                      |  |                        |                            |                                |                     |                                |                                |                                 |                             |                            |                                  |                                      |                      |                                 |                                |                                   |                          |          |                            |  |  |
| 11                      |  |                        |                            |                                |                     |                                |                                |                                 |                             |                            |                                  |                                      |                      |                                 |                                |                                   |                          |          |                            |  |  |
| 12                      |  |                        |                            |                                |                     |                                |                                |                                 |                             |                            |                                  |                                      |                      |                                 |                                |                                   |                          |          |                            |  |  |
| 13                      |  |                        |                            |                                |                     |                                |                                |                                 |                             |                            |                                  |                                      |                      |                                 |                                |                                   |                          |          |                            |  |  |
| 14                      |  |                        |                            |                                |                     |                                |                                |                                 |                             |                            |                                  |                                      |                      |                                 |                                |                                   |                          |          |                            |  |  |
| 15                      |  |                        |                            |                                |                     |                                |                                |                                 |                             |                            |                                  |                                      |                      |                                 |                                |                                   |                          |          |                            |  |  |
| TOTALS:                 |  |                        |                            |                                |                     |                                |                                |                                 |                             |                            |                                  |                                      |                      |                                 |                                |                                   |                          |          |                            |  |  |