

How to Get a Job

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I would like to share what I have learned. I wish I had known these tips earlier, so I wrote this report to prevent the applicant from having to discover all of these tips on your own.

What to do when you are laid off

As soon as you are laid off, do not forget to request a reference letter(s) if your boss was satisfied with your performance.

The next step is to produce a polished resume. Do not try to make one in fifteen minutes and start sending it out. The initial resume format may not be acceptable for upload or as a land mail copy. Consider using another person as a reviewing editor. Someone else will notice flaws that the applicant would never see.

Have a friend who's a writer, or in HR, look over the resume and polish it up.

Additional things to consider:

- Have a phone listed which you'll check often (cellphone preferred).
- Having an e-mail address listed.
- Separating your previous job description into "Duties" and "Accomplishments" sections
- Having separate resumes for each type of position.
- Keep the objective paragraph focused only on how you can benefit your employer, and not listing your personal goals here (which should be in the cover letter).
- Have a writer make a cover letter with a letterhead template.
- Have sections clearly separated. Remember, noone is going to spend fifteen minutes reading your resume. It'll get a 15 second scan for a first pass.

- Keep references out of your resume. If you decide to send your references, place them on a separate sheet of paper.
- Provide a small sampling of self-employment or volunteer/side work in your resume, as well as a bit of personal interests in your cover letter.

Where to look for a job

I can only guess at the number of people who think applying just online and just on one website will give them a job.

Of note are two of the largest websites, CareerBuilder and Monster. Let me state something here: Just applying to both of these websites will not result in a job. Quantity (which is abundant on both) is not the same as quality. Hundreds of people will apply for the same position. You will have to search daily to be the first to apply.

One website which is much better is www.Indeed.com. Subscribe to their email alerts for every keyword that are pertinent to the position desired, and you will have new jobs in your inbox every morning. Be sure to apply the same day as the job's listing.

State-specific or job type-specific job boards are also useful, and often used by smaller companies that do not have branches in many states.

Avoid Craig'sList as it does not imply professional commitment to offering you a job. Most listings there are not serious, will be *swamped* with applications, and are from individuals or very small companies. Also, they most often do not include even such basic contact information as a real email. Never attach your resume to a Craig'sList posting reply with a protected real email address.

Another false hope people have is thinking that a single employment agency is going to do all the work of job hunting.

It requires work to find someone a job. The following bullets represent a condensed outline:

- Have a polished resume
- Think of relevant positions and search for them

- Apply to those positions
- Followup with HR
- Send all the relevant documentation online and in the proper format
- etc, etc

If you think that all of the work for job hunting will be completed by someone other than you, you are sadly mistaken.

If there are no positions to be found within your designated commuting perimeter, seriously consider looking for jobs that will cause you to relocate. Look for work a population center of your state or a neighboring state. You may also consider employment retraining in a different field.

Don't limit yourself to the same position or type of work that you did before. Send to jobs that you think are out of your immediate reach. You might get lucky.

What to do for every application

An application for every position listed online does not complete your work for that listing, your work has only begun.

For every single online position:

- Don't bother to apply to positions that do not disclose the name of the company.
- Apply directly on companies' websites rather than thru any websites, if you can find that information. It is insane how many times I have found that a job listed on an obscure site either never existed (and they'll get that email address plus all the private info in your resume), or has been withdrawn months ago. It seems like all the obscure sites that do not disclose the name of company and posting date, are in there for either spam or traffic.
- Save the job description as an html file on your computer. Do not bookmark it because it'll be gone in a week.
- Call HR next day to find out if they received your application.
- Call HR of every company you applied to every week.

Remember, not all job websites exist to help you find employment. Many websites republish jobs from other job sites without including any contact details at all. Other websites republish jobs just for you to visit their website and for them to generate money from advertising. Still other websites are there to collect your e-mail, your profile, and your resume to either send you spam, resell that information to other companies – some exist to steal your identity.

Let me expand on the last point. Just think of how much information you reveal to a job company which you think is legit: your email address, your phone number, your mailing address, the fact that you are unemployed (for targeted spam), information to tie your online identity (email) to your real identity (name and address), and identity and email addresses of your references (to send them spam as well). This list is by no means complete.

On a related note, filling out an application for a federal organization or a large corporation can also ask for everything including your grandmother's favorite colour. Simply because a company is a large corporation does not mean that your data is safe. It can still be misused (sold, shared, hacked, etc). In general, I recommend avoiding filling out an application that runs to dozens of pages and an hour to complete. They have no business knowing this much information without first giving you an offer.

Experience will teach an applicant to recognize a third-party/agency job listing, from that of a direct company listing. It is my observation that third-party listings are mostly a waste of your time. Third parties add another layer between an applicant and a job. That layer robs an applicant of direct and indirect control over the application process.

Additionally, there are only two types of websites – aggregators, of which there are just a few that are worth your time (www.Indeed.com, state websites), company websites with a “careers” page listing. All other websites should be considered carefully, especially those whose name suggests something other than the work you desire. For example, don’t look for or respond to a construction job if the URL is "CoolComputerCareers.com".

By default, do not make the resume searchable (an option that websites have, usually by default, that makes your resume and all private information visible to anyone and everyone), and uncheck the option where they want you to be on their email list. If you (by default) make your resume searchable, you'll only get spam from completely unrelated positions and "get-rich-quick" schemes.

It is also important to apply for employment on a company's own website. Do not rely on general employment listings and professional career sites. It is not easy to find the original listing source, as a direct links are rarely given. The name of the listing company is usually mentioned somewhere, so look for it. It is also possible to bypass employment agencies if the city and state of the position is listed. With some work, the company and its listing can be found and the job applied for, directly.

What to do after you have applied

Even now your job is not done. After you have applied, whether on a general site or on an employer's direct website, it is a good idea to call the company same day, and verify that: a) the position is still open, b) they have received your application, c) extract a promise from them for an interview timetable/possibility.

If contacting the employer by e-mail, be sure to have a subject line that states your intent and job position -- don't expect HR to open and read every single email instead of just scanning list of subject lines. Provide a short paragraph for your summary, with a proper email signature block. The resume and cover letter must also be attached.

In general, leaving a voice message is a waste of your time and will give you false hopes of a response. A voicemail message is too easy to skip or delete. An email is a traceable correspondence, with you retaining the "sent message" as proof. A more recent phenomenon is where in larger companies you will get a faster response *following up* (not cold-calling) an HR person by emailing her rather than calling and leaving a voice message, as she could be running around and in meetings, with her phone getting your e-mails even during meetings, but her checking the desk phone only several times a day.

Interview

An interview is not something you can afford to blow, if you are not employed. The following bullets are important points to take care of:

- Start preparing three days in advance. If you prepare the night before, there is a high

probability that someone else will get the job.

- Formulate an answer to the question "What I can do for the company?"
- Research the person who will be interviewing you. In the age of company profiles and Facebook, an internet search by name can lead to personal information about your interviewer or human resource official.
- Be sure to print out your researched data, and review it along with the job description.
- Bring a nice folder or letter paunch with you that contains: the job description, personal identification, social security card, a voided check, resume, a cover letter, and a "business" card (just stating your name and contact information, not stating what you do/did for business). Business cards are easy to purchase and print, and a very easy and affordable way to stay out from the crowd.
- Dress properly
- Leave cellphone in your car
- You may expect an interview as soon as you arrive, but for most companies you will need to sign in, fill out paperwork, and wait for HR to become available. That might be 20 minutes after you run in the front door.
- For larger companies, research and retrieve the company's stock market, history, major products and services, and public information concerning the chief officers of the company.

Questions that interest an HR official:

- What is your company's growth outlook? Are you expanding?
- What are the position requirements?
- Do I meet all of the position requirements?
- Can I participate in your company's stock?
- Are you actively looking for this position, or is this position a future opportunity?
- What is the timeframe for a followup or a decision?
- What happens now and what do I expect?

Leave any questions about how much it pays, how many days of vacation there are, etc out of your first interview.

If your interview is with-the hiring manager or the department or the immediate supervisor, avoid common topics and unnecessary intimate conversation such as: how great the building is, how you like the company, etc. Their interest is technical, and you *must* be able to answer

every question relating to job tasks. It is better to give yourself a brief moment to think, rather than immediately spitting out a wrong or politically incorrect answer. Manufacturing and engineering staff, are not HR, and your politically incorrect, overly friendly and hasty responses will be received by your evaluators as an indication of an unqualified candidate.

Inquiries regarding your previous earnings can be insipid and become opportunities for employment rejection. Avoid answering that question, if at all possible. It is not a requirement for determining a proper candidate. If the candidate has been paid a higher wage than what will eventually be offered, he might be rejected – and the converse holds. If done professionally and courteously, the candidate can refuse a direct question about previous salary. However, HR may apply differing techniques in an effort to extract previous salary history.

You must have a good explanation for any gaps in your work history. If you have any, come prepared with a response.

Shake hands, give them a copy of your resume and cover letter, your name card, and indicate your eagerness for an answer or a followup.

After an interview

After an interview, send a thank-you followup letter the same day - prepared on letterhead, and include a copy of your resume. Place it in a large mailer, not a regular envelope.

Make weekly telephone inquiries into the HR office.

Good luck!

Some other related topics

To get hourly rates or salary for your position, some large jobs listings websites offer this information.

Distance to your place of employment is an important topic, especially when considering cost for fuel, traffic, and winter driving. However, the applicant might have to look beyond applicant's immediate area if you are having little luck with employment.

When an employment agency asks you if you are working with another agency, it is wise to say “No”. It is none of their business to know. If they ask you if you had interviews, or have offers/opportunities, say “No”. If you are honest and tell them you had an interview last week, you will be placed on a black list.

How to present yourself favorably to different interviewers

There is a big difference between how an HR person and how your future boss (“hiring manager”) will interview you. When being interviewed by an HR lady, your objective is not to stress how you are technically eligible for the position. She would be looking for other things like personality compatibility to the company, interest in the company, and your goals.

One sad fact is that if you match posted positions technically, but blow your interview with a “generalist” (i.e. non-technical) first interview, you will not be applied or considered to any other jobs with that agency. If you hear nothing after repeated phone calls to the employment agency or HR, move on and do not waste your time.

First-interview HR generalists have little in terms of experience in your industry. So, modify your conversation and topics discussed depending to whom you speak – an HR person, a hiring manager / your future boss, or a preliminary employment agency interview.

What to do if nothing works

If nothing works, try one of the following:

- 1) Have someone critique your resume. Consider rewriting it.

- 2) If you get no response from Monster and CareerBuilder, then stop trying.
- 3) If you had communication with an employment agency, but it stopped suddenly, then they no longer like you. Stop trying to apply to more positions with that agency.
- 4) If you get interviews, but never get hired, or if you never proceed to an interview (after you have confirmed the company has received your application), then you will lose nothing if you call HR and ask them directly why you were not chosen.
- 5) Consider taking out irrelevant, old, and unverifiable entries in your resume.
- 6) Switch your tactics. If applying online directly does not work, start applying in person. If you were only applying in person, try applying online.

About the Author

Michael LoneWolf is the administrator, designer, and writer for the www.MKRD.info information website, commenting on many different areas, and doing his best to document experience and knowledge he comes across.

Professionally, Michael works in the electronics engineering, and website services areas. He specializes in providing services for websites – converting old static html websites to a modern design, rescuing hacked websites, and website administration services.

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This document has been edited for style by Frank Verderber. He specializes in editing services for online and printed publications.