

The Workplace

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A Fact Sheet

Highlights

Tips and suggestions to help you become more successful in finding the right job:

- *Get prepared.*
 - ◇ *Make a list of potential companies, including all pertinent information.*
 - ◇ *Learning about specific job requirements.*
 - ◇ *Gather all the information necessary for selling yourself to a potential employer.*
- *Evaluate your skills.*

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Job Search 101: Doing Your Homework

Looking for a job, but don't know where to begin? You are not alone. The inability to get started on a job search is a common problem among job seekers, especially first time job hunters or those who have not changed jobs in several years. Knowing where to begin is the first step in what can be a long process. This fact sheet is the first in a series designed to help job hunters find the perfect job.

The general steps to finding a job are:

1. Writing (or updating) your resume
2. Writing a cover letter to attach to your resume
3. Sending your resume to prospective employers
4. Interviewing
5. Negotiating the deal
6. Landing the Job

The most overlooked step in the overall process is "doing your homework" before mounting a serious job search. Whether you are a high school student looking for a part-time job, a college graduate looking for that first job, a displaced executive, or a high school dropout, the tips and suggestions that follow will help you become more successful in finding the right job.

First, get prepared. Knowledge is power; the more you know about the type of job you are looking for and the types of jobs available, the better your chances of finding one that fits your skills, your personality, and your employment expectations. To do this, establishing clear occupational goals and objectives are essential to maintaining your focus during your job search. Determining the type of job that fits you best helps ensure both you and your new employer will be happy.

Before making initial contact with prospective employers—resumes, face-to-face, electronically, or friends—there are a few things that you need to do:

- 1) Make a list of potential companies, including all pertinent information. Knowing the basic facts about the employer(s) to which you plan to apply helps expedite the job search. The types and amount of information necessary will vary depending on the job level desired. For service or technical jobs, the exact name of the company or business, the name of the person with hiring authority, the product(s) sold or produced, current employee expectations, and current working conditions are critical pieces of information. For higher level positions, in-



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formation related to profits, market share, and expansions might be desirable.

Employer information can be found through a variety of sources. For example, local newspapers can provide a wealth of basic information about current happenings within the business, i.e., company contests and who won, donations to local charities, and community involvement. More advanced information may be found in national newspapers such as *New York Times* or national business journals such as *The Wall Street Journal*. Professional and trade journals and the Internet are also valuable sources of information. While these sources can provide information about a specific company under consideration, they can also provide job leads, such as companies planning to locate within a particular area or current position openings.

- 2) If you are looking for your first job, a part-time job, or are thinking about switching job types, learning about specific job requirements will help in making a career decision. No one literally looks for any job available. As a job seeker, you have requirements for employment; however, the employer may have specific qualifications and/or limitations. Understanding your requirements and the prospective employer's limitations keep both individuals from being disappointed. For example, if you love the outdoors, you might not be happy working in a warehouse with no windows. The local parks and recreation facility might be place to look for a position.
- 3) Gather all the information necessary for selling yourself to a potential employer. Organize the information into a data sheet. Information needed are your educational history, i.e., name of school, address, phone number, years attended, degree or diploma, and contact person; and history of employment, i.e., name of employer, address, phone number, beginning

and ending dates of employment, and job title. This information should be organized with the most recent first and will be valuable when filling out applications or developing resumes.

Second, evaluate your skills. Everyone has skills—some better than others. To determine yours, do some soul searching. Make a list of all the skills you have. To make sure that you include all of your skills, go back to the data sheet you prepared. For each diploma or degree earned, for each extra course taken or training received, and for each job held, list every skill you performed. Then, divide the skills into two columns—one for the skills you are best at doing and one for the skills you enjoy performing. In addition to evaluating your skills, examine your values and interests. Enjoying your work and feeling good about what you do are key ingredients to job satisfaction.

The most overlooked step in [conducting a job search] is “doing your homework” before mounting a serious job search.

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