

GE Foundation Workplace Skills Program

Module Three Presenting Yourself

Participant Booklet

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Introduction to Module Three

Presenting Yourself

Employers make decisions about potential employees based on how they present themselves during the job search process, on social media, in resumes, and during interviews. Sometimes employers make fast decisions based on partial information about an applicant. You will often have a very small window to make a lasting impression. Your writing, your manners, your verbal skills, your thinking, and your attire all send messages about both your skills and your values. First impressions, and how you present yourself in varied ways, will make the difference between you being hired for the job or passed over.

The purpose of the module is help you gain knowledge and skills to organize a successful job search strategy, and in the end, be successful finding work in your chosen field. In this module we will focus on four important topics on how to present yourself to potential employers: organizing a job search, managing social media, designing resumes, and developing interview skills.

A successful job search involves four fundamental strategies: networking, researching and contacting employers, reviewing job leads, and preparing impressive resumes and cover letters. You will learn the fundamentals about a job search strategy, and develop a job search action plan.

In today's world, social media is such a critical component of your job search strategy. While you are researching employers, they are also researching you. Social media has become an excellent source for employers to find employees, and for job seekers to make themselves more visible. Social media guidelines and alerts will be reviewed and discussed so your social media presence will become an advantage and not a liability.

A resume is still your primary way of introducing yourself professionally. It is a document that tells a story about your collective work experience and qualifications. You will learn how to tailor resumes for specific jobs, and how to align your resume with employer needs and priorities. You will critique resumes and cover letters, as well as receive feedback on the resumes and cover letters you develop.

All of these job search strategies are systematically building your case for getting an interview for a specific job. The interview will be the final job search challenge because we know most college age candidates have very weak interview skills. The good news is you can learn and get better at these skills over time. In this module, you will learn: how to prepare for an interview, what interviewers want, typical questions interviewers will ask, the difference between traditional vs. behavioral interviews, and how to conduct yourself during an interview.

During this module you will also create an online profile, develop an elevator pitch, write two resumes and cover letters, and practice interviewing skills.

My Past Job Search Strategies

What are five to seven job search strategies you have used in the **past** when searching for work?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

Job Search Fundamentals

An effective job search approach requires that job seekers engage in all four of the fundamental job search activities:

1. Networking with a range of individuals and groups
2. Researching and contacting employers about possible opportunities
3. Reviewing job leads
4. Preparing impressive resumes and cover letters, and distributing them to various places of work

As you develop your job search strategies, one of the key messages career counseling experts will tell you, is that 80% of the jobs available within an industry are not advertised. So, if you are responding to job advertisements, as your only method of job searching, you are missing out on the vast majority of employment opportunities out there.

A second important point to remember is that we know the main reason why some people are more successful than others in their job searches. They find the work they are looking for, not because they are more qualified than others, but because they are more successful at organizing their job search process.

In his recently published N.Y. Times best seller, *Knock 'em Dead - Secrets and Strategies for First-Time Job Seekers*, Martin Yates writes that in a world of constant change, your job search and career management skills are the most important skills you need to develop. This is must have knowledge that you will use throughout your working life, as you change and direct your career or careers.

Now let's explore the range of strategies that successful job seekers use, and career development experts recommend, under each of the four fundamental job search activities.

Online and Off-line Job Search Strategies

1. Networking Activity

Off-line

- attend work related association meetings within your area of expertise
- attend community events and talk to people about work and work opportunities
- get people to introduce you to good contacts
- attend job fairs
- volunteer in a related field
- stay informed about the job market in your field
- keep your eyes and ears open for job opportunities in your conversations
- reach out to former employers and community leaders for leads

Online

- participate in relevant mailing lists and chat forums
- maintain a presence on popular sites such as LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, and Google+
- keep information about yourself relevant and current
- arrange to meet at local events
- follow people who are influential and active

2. Research and Contact Target Employers

Off-line

- use telephone books and business directories to identify potential employers
- make cold calls to introduce yourself and to show interest in their company
- visit places of work in person to introduce yourself
- revisit places of work where there are possible opportunities

Online

- use business directories, association links, industry sites, and employer websites
- examine the “job listing / hiring sections” of the company’s website
- follow-up your off-line visits by initiating contact via email or telephone

3. Reviewing Job Leads

Off-line

- search through advertisements and job postings
- use newspapers and search local ads
- contact recruiters who may be searching for potential employees in your field
- study association newsletters for potential opportunities
- look for job postings on bulletin boards

Online

- use online job banks
- tap into recruiter websites
- read association journals
- examine potential employer websites

4. Distribute Resumes and Cover Letters

Off-line

- mail copies of your resume and cover letter to employers
- mail copies of your resume and cover letter to networking contacts
- visit a place of work in person and deliver your resume and a cover letter
- customize your resume and cover letter (avoid sending general resumes and cover letters when applying for jobs)

Online

- email copies of your resume and cover letter to employers
- email copies of your resume and cover letter to networking contacts
- post your resume and cover letter in online databases
- use LinkedIn to create a professional portfolio where employers seek out employees

Schawbel, D (2013). *Promote Yourself: The New Rules for Career Success*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

My New Job Search Strategies

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>1. Networking</p> <p>Off-line</p> <p>Online</p> | <p>2. Researching and Contacting Employers</p> <p>Off-line</p> <p>Online</p> |
| <p>3. Reviewing Job Leads</p> <p>Off-line</p> <p>Online</p> | <p>4. Distributing Resumes and Cover Letters</p> <p>Off-line</p> <p>Online</p> |

Online Job Search Mistakes

Many people who are in the process of a job search will make typical online mistakes by:

- Posting your resume without considering privacy. (Protect your identity by limiting access to your contact information.)
- Using only big name websites. (The overwhelming majority of employers use both their own website and less expensive “niche” job websites to advertise.)
- Limiting your job search efforts to the Internet only.
- Applying for jobs without meeting the minimum requirements. (This will not only waste your time, but it will also paint a negative picture for potential future employers and recruiters. And, they will begin to ignore your applications.)
- Using a non-professional email name. (Avoid funny, cute names and keep your email professional. This mistake can undermine your credibility.)
- Forgetting that a personal resume webpage is a job search document.
- Not focusing your resume on skills and accomplishments relevant to the job you want.
- Not communicating your skills in a short and concise fashion.

Adapted from Susan Joyce – Webmaster at Job-Hunt.org and Dikel and Rohem

Professional Online Social Networking

Employers and recruiters are now, more than ever, actively seeking out potential employees by searching online professional networks. Social media sites have given employers an excellent source for finding employees, and job seekers a very effective way to make themselves visible.

The leading professional network on the web, where professional profiles are stored, is LinkedIn. Its primary purpose is to allow individuals to grow professional networks and to access employment opportunities.

LinkedIn provides:

- an opportunity to present a professional profile that employers can seek out when searching the database for candidates
- an opportunity to connect with other people in the field in order to ask questions, set up times to meet, find referrals, and to join LinkedIn groups for your industry, where you can exchange information and ideas
- job listings that you can check out during your job search.

Tips for Creating Your LinkedIn Profile

1. Use a professional photograph, ideally a headshot to represent yourself.
2. Fill out the summary section. This is intended to be a strong and brief introduction that will hook employers and generate interest in you.
3. Use key words in your write-up. Identify transferable skills, soft skills, hard skills, and professional values.
4. Use a learning narrative when describing your accomplishments. That is, write about what you learned from taking action and solving problems. Also, describe the results that were achieved.
5. Make your work experience section visually accessible, easy to read, and attractive.

It is about “branding yourself” by creating a social media profile that helps people know who you are, where you are, and what you are doing. Remember, belonging to a group and consistently connecting with members of the group, is one of the most efficient and effective ways to build a job search network.

My LinkedIn Profile

Summary – Write a brief introduction that will hook employers.

Key Words – Identify your skill sets and professional values.

Learning Narrative – Describe your accomplishments by writing about actions you have taken and the results that evolved from these actions

Education and Experience – Describe your formal education and highlight important work and life experiences.

Developing an Elevator Pitch

1. Identify a list of your qualities that you want to highlight. Keep it honest so you can be confident when delivering the pitch.
2. List your qualifications and practice describing your qualifications by using familiar words and keeping it brief, clear, and fluid.
3. Focus your pitch on the needs in your industry, and how you can help or make a contribution.
4. Pose a question toward the end of your pitch that will open-up room for dialogue.
5. Ask for something that will help you follow-up. A business card or an address where you can reach them or send a resume.
6. Be energetic, show enthusiasm for the content, practice your pitch and get feedback from a trusted individual in your network.
7. Remember to limit your pitch to 30 seconds.

My Elevator Pitch

Notes (important points you want to include in your pitch)

Your pitch in 30 seconds.

My Job Search Action Plan

| |
|------------------------------|
| Targeted Work Goal |
| Networking Strategies |
| Online Strategies |
| Challenges |

Introduction to Social Media

We live in a social media saturated world with many outlets or platforms where we project images of ourselves, our opinions, and our ideas. As social beings, we are continually putting these images or personas out to the world in our off-line and online lives. This personal branding is about spreading our messages, and everyone's brand is unique because it includes our values, the experiences that shape us, our strengths and talents, and the opinions others have of us.

As the many forms of social media platforms continue to grow and evolve, one important reality remains the same. That is, the actions you take online do not just exist in an online bubble. They influence real world relationships and how you are branding yourself. Items that you like, share, post and comment on, are all woven into your identity that communicates your stance on issues, your values and integrity, and your sense of professionalism, politeness, and concern for others.

More than ever, employers are looking to the social media presence of potential employees to guide their hiring decisions. Some recent studies conclude that over 90% of recruiters and HR managers use social media to screen candidates, and 35% of managers self-reported checking current employees' social media accounts in order to understand how these employees are representing themselves to the world at large.

Whether or not your purpose of being involved with social media is only for social reasons, your profile and online activity will inevitably be used to screen you in the professional world. Employers are searching your social media postings to get an "unfiltered view" of how you behave online, to determine if you show acceptable, thoughtful, and respectful behavior.

Research and Views About Social Media

There are conflicting views about the value and effects of social media. One view sees it in a very optimistic way, as opening many possibilities for powerful ways of connecting people throughout the world. It allows people to create, share, exchange, and debate information and ideas within virtual communities or networks. Social media can open so many possibilities for expanding our knowledge, collaborative problem solving, and connecting with people across borders.

The other view is more pessimistic, where people see the virtual world as overloading our minds and emotions, and creating an artificial connection between people. Skeptics believe this artificial connection is actually pulling us away from genuine relationships with one another.

Research on the effects of social media is in the very early stages. It is premature to generalize or reach firm conclusions that take into account both of these views about the impact of social media. Important questions being asked in this research are:

- Will these new ways of connecting enhance or hurt our wellbeing?
- Will social media lead to a more productive work life?
- Will social media strengthen or weaken our relationships?

Findings from this early research suggest:

- Connecting individuals is mostly a positive development and it enhances the quality of people's lives.
- Individuals feel more connected to other humans, because they can easily communicate what they care about to others who are important to them.

- Females appear to be more willing to make their stresses visible, while men are less willing to be this vulnerable.
- People are experiencing technological overload, where their brains are being overstimulated, and in turn, this is causing higher stress and signs of poor health over time.

This early research seems to support both the optimistic and pessimistic view of the growth of social media. Over the next five to ten years, we will learn much more from the research about the possibilities and pitfalls of social media.

Keys to Professional Branding Success

1. **Take time to really consider your brand.** What is truly important to you? What messages do you want to convey to others concerning you as a professional? How do you behave differently online than off-line? The answers to these questions will keep you focused and clear in your purpose and communication.
2. **Have a consistent message across all mediums.** With many social media platforms available to you, it is even more important to keep consistent messages across all. This will avoid you putting out messages that are filled with contradictions and inconsistencies. Continue to be mindful of the content you put out there, for the public to see, and whether your messages reflect what you want others to hear about you.
3. **Use professional email contacts.** Since 90% of companies now only accept job applications online, email addresses provide your first impression and have become a first-stage screening tool. Avoid using current work or novelty email addresses. Think and behave professionally.
4. **Your profile picture matters.** Always have a profile picture. If it is missing, individuals are left wondering why. Use a recent photo, smile, and keep it to upright head and shoulder shots. Recruiters and employers, who screen job candidates on social media, often make snap judgments based on your profile picture.
5. **Use privacy settings.** If you are concerned about keeping your personal life very personal, increase your privacy settings, instead of removing yourself from these platforms. An absence of profiles can cause employers concern. They will think you are not tech savvy, or you have something to hide.
6. **Post wisely.** Keep posts smart and interesting. The accuracy of what you say online matters, because it can be interpreted in a number of different ways. Facebook, in particular, is viewed as an unfiltered look at individuals, who often aren't aware that they are being observed.
7. **Most importantly, be yourself.** Ensure the brand you are putting out there is you, your unique self. This is an opportunity for you to allow yourself to shine, and to separate yourself from others in a positive way. Let your unique personality emerge, and always be smart about what you post. When in doubt, use restraint. Don't post it.

E-Personality

It appears that one of the reasons why people get themselves in trouble with social media in the workplace is that they often take on a “virtual you” or an “e-personality.” This transformation allows them to act in different ways online. They may take more risks and show behaviors that contradict their off-line personality.

In his book *Virtual You: The Dangerous Powers of the E-Personality*, Stanford University psychiatrist and researcher Elias Aboujaoude presents groundbreaking research on the impact of the virtual world on humans. Obviously, the research suggests that there are countless benefits to the technology revolution we are experiencing. Nonetheless, with any significant change, there is a downside. One of these is the creation of virtual world personalities where people begin to have an inflated sense of their abilities, where they begin to feel superior to others and create new moral codes, and where they act in more impulsive and childlike ways. These e-identities are not as concerned about old rules of behaving, nor are they as concerned about etiquette or netiquette. They often ignore typical ways of doing social interactions. These E-personalities are often more assertive, less cautious, and can be more unpredictable.

These E-personality changes can be liberating for people when they are online, but they can also create unanticipated problems for individuals, in their personal lives and in their careers. People can become very different when they take on a new E-personality. The caution is that these personality changes can be happening and people may not see, understand, or acknowledge it.

So, whether you are excited about the possibilities of social media, or concerned about the negative consequences of this evolving technology, it is a 21st century reality. In the end, people need to learn how to use it well to enhance their lives, rather than use it in ways that handicap themselves in the short-term or long-term. One of the greatest challenges for people is to avoid having their personal lives flow over into their professional lives. Personal information shared online can seriously hurt your reputation and future career opportunities. Unfortunately, many people are often not aware that this is the case.

Getting Positive Attention and Avoiding Trouble

In order to promote yourself and open career opportunities, there is important information that you should post online. On the other hand, there is information that you should absolutely never post, because it will come back and hurt you in the workplace. It can also negatively affect your prospects when you are looking for work.

According to Dan Schawbel in his recent book, *The New Rules for Career Success*, he advises that appropriate posts can advance your career, and people need to be continually proactive in using the Internet to promote themselves. Unfortunately, people are posting information that can be career stoppers. Schawbel suggests the following do and don't lists when it comes to posting what will promote and protect you:

Do post:

- a description of your skills
- relevant work experience
- your major achievements
- references and recommendations
- links to your website, blog, and videos
- links to content you uploaded

Do not post:

- personal status updates
- personal photos or videos
- personal stories that may bring your judgment into question
- anything that doesn't strengthen your professional image

Schawbel, D (2013). *Promote Yourself: The New Rules for Career Success*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Social Media Tips While Job Seeking

Many employers do online searches to determine whether or not they should hire potential employees. During the process of looking for work, it is very important not to make mistakes related to social media. Following are suggestions for your consideration:

1. Stop posting information that can be interpreted as unprofessional.
2. Make sure access to your personal information is limited to friends.
3. Ensure there are no questionable pictures of you online that employers can find.
4. Avoid posting information that communicates in anyway your bad work habits.
5. Do not bad mouth previous employers, bosses, or co-workers.
6. Clean up your sloppy writing by editing the material carefully.
7. Be aware of proper etiquette, or what is acceptable behavior, before you connect on any social media site.
8. Think about creative ways that you can draw positive attention to your profile information.

Five Basic Networking Strategies

One of the most effective ways to create employment or promotion opportunities is to become good at networking. It is a powerful job search and career development strategy. You never know when a conversation will lead to a job or a growth opportunity for you in the future. Starting a conversation, introducing yourself, asking people questions about their work and interests, and sharing information about yourself will all help to develop a network of people who are connected to you. It is critically important to stay in touch with your network of supporters, advisors, friends, and co-workers. These network relationships need to be nurtured over time and you always need to be looking for ways to expand your network.

Certain individuals seem to have a talent for networking or relationship building. The following five simple strategies will help individuals initiate, expand, and deepen their networks.

1. **Begin conversations** with people whenever good opportunities present themselves. Make an observation, give a compliment, or make a statement that invites people to engage with you. The person sitting next to you at a meeting may become one of your strongest network supporters.
2. When initiating a conversation with a stranger, **ask questions and listen carefully** to their responses. One of the keys to opening and developing relationships is to show you are more interested in who they are, rather than talking about yourself.
3. **Start with the people you know.** Identify people within your circle of friends, co-workers, and acquaintances who you believe can be influential within your network. Learn more about them, their work, their goals and interests, their skill sets, and perhaps interests you may have in common.

4. **Explore different ways you can expand your network.** Again, start with people you know. Ask them to introduce you to people they know, who may be in the position to help you with your career goals, or to help you learn skills you need. You need to expand your network with the right people. Use every opportunity to gather helpful information from them, and make it mutual by providing them with useful information.

5. **Do not sit back and expect people to come to you.** Waiting for the right people, and being overly selective about who you want in your network, will not serve you well. Take the initiative or the risk and approach people who can be potentially helpful to you. Successful people admire those who are not standing on the sidelines watching the parade.

Network contacts are very important to help you tap into the hidden market, the 70-80% of jobs that are never advertised.

My Networks

Who are the influential people in your networks?

| Family | Friends | Professional Contacts |
|--------|---------|-----------------------|
| | | |

How do you keep in touch with people in your networks?

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

Ideas for expanding your networks (teachers, coaches, teammates, classmates, neighbors, colleagues, volunteer groups, community leaders)

| Strategies that work for you | Ideas from others |
|------------------------------|-------------------|
| | |

Resumes

- A resume is your primary way of introducing yourself professionally. It is a document that tells a story about your collective professional work experience and qualifications.
- Your resume needs to be performance-based, and highlight your skills. It also needs to describe your accomplishments and tangible results you have achieved. Remember the importance of your unpaid work and apprenticeships, and that skills you include in your resume can be gained from all experiences.
- Resumes always need to be tailored for each specific job you are applying for. You will also need to develop a primary resume that you can distribute when you are not applying for a specific job.
- You need to research the company and carefully read the job description to identify key job requirements. Then, be sure that your resume is aligned to this work and the workplace. It is very important that you develop resumes around the employer's needs.
- You want to tell your story, connect your skill set to the job requirements, and differentiate yourself from other candidates, so that you get an interview.
- Resume components:
 - Your name and contact information (can include professional social media links, i.e., LinkedIn profile)
 - Target job title
 - Performance profile / work summary
 - Core competencies / skills
 - Technology skills
 - Accomplishments / performance highlights
 - Work experience (unpaid and paid)
 - Education
- When your resume works, you get work. When it doesn't, you never get to the interview stage. You need to really impress them when they first look at your resume. You need to think about ways you can stand out through the format and content of your resume.

Jennifer Dickey

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Education

Boston Community College – Early Childhood Education – Associates Degree 2012-14
Harrison High School 2009

Work Experience

Substitute Teacher – Oakley Public Schools 2010-12

- worked in several schools in primary grade classrooms

Camp Counselor – YMCA 2008-12

- served as a junior and senior camp counselor
- supervisor of other counselors for two years

Nanny – Paris 2009-10

Waitress – Mel’s Place 2007-09

- server
- food expo
- manager of servers

Basketball Camp Instructor 2007-08

- participated as a staff member at summer basketball camp for two summers

Community Service

- volunteer at The Berkley Retirement Home
- volunteer at the Special Olympics
- volunteer at Blue Nose Marathon
- volunteer Parker Food Bank

Other

- Outward Bound – 50-day wilderness course 2012
- Bilingual – French

References – available upon request

Brad Smith

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Technology Supervisor

Performance Summary

Ten years IT experience in both the public and private sectors. Proven experience with installation, maintenance, troubleshooting, and building programs. Excellent organizational skills, good problem solving skills, team building skills, enthusiastic, positive, and dedicated.

Core Skills and Competencies

| | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• leadership• organizational• teamwork• communication• research• writing | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• problem solving• analyzing• presentation• project management• social media• mediation |
|---|--|

Technology Competences

| | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• EXCEL• Windows• Twitter• Facebook• YouTube | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Google+• LinkedIn• Pinterest• Instagram• TeamViewer |
|--|---|

Work Experience

- Smith Tech Works – Small business and private client tech support 2000-15
- ACE Insurance – Technology Technician 2012-14
- Public Education Foundation – Administrative Intern – Technology Support 2010-12
- Jefferson County Schools – Technology Assistant 2007-10
- Xavier High School – Technology Lead – Student Productions 2007-10

Education

- Maritime Community College – Information Technology Associates Degree 2010-12
- The Computer Learning Center – Computer Course Work 2008-12

Guidelines for Writing a Primary Resume

When you are developing your resume to apply for jobs, you need to create a primary resume to capture all the essential information you will need to prepare job specific resumes:

- career objectives
- technical and transferable skills
- technology skills
- professional values
- accomplishments / achievements / successes
- work experience
- education
- professional training (courses/seminars/workshops)
- professional certifications and licenses
- professional organizations
- community / volunteer activities
- hobbies / interests (related to work)

Technical and Transferable Skills and Professional Values

It is very important that your resume highlights your technical and transferable skills and your professional values:

- Technical skills are the competencies that you learned that qualify you for a specific job and typically received certification for (i.e., welding competencies, EXCEL, web-design)
- Transferable skills are a combination of people skills, teamwork skills, and general competencies you will need in most jobs.
 - critical thinking
 - communication
 - teamwork
 - leadership
 - creativity
 - problem solving
 - research
 - writing
 - project management
 - social networking
- Professional values are the beliefs and qualities that are important to you.
 - motivation and energy
 - commitment and reliability
 - determination
 - pride and integrity
 - productivity

Advice for Students with Limited Work Experience

Employers are looking for people with transferrable skills, professional values, and positive traits when they are searching for new employees. The challenge is to learn how to demonstrate that you have these skills, values, and traits when you are writing a resume, and when you have very limited work experience.

The good news is that you can demonstrate these transferrable skills, values, and traits that you learned from many life experiences, whether or not they are tightly aligned with the job you are applying for. You need to think beyond paid work when you are presenting your varied talents in a resume. The key is to learn how to write well-crafted skill demonstration statements.

Skill Demonstration Statements

A powerful way to communicate your talents and valuable life experiences is to write skill demonstration statements that tap into your school projects, community work, volunteer experiences, and casual / part-time work in any field. Everyone should be writing skill demonstration statements in their resumes, not only students with limited work experience.

Skill demonstration statements have three parts:

- a) A verb (what did you do)
- b) A noun (describing the focus of the action and the people impacted by your actions)
- c) Value added information quantifies the experiences (by describing how many, how often, and to what degree)

When you are writing skill demonstration statements, it is important to use specific numbers, but not overdo it. If possible, you also need to think about and highlight tangible results that were achieved from your actions.

Writing Skill Demonstration Statements

Examples*

- developed and monitored a Risk Assessment Program, for a group of fourteen male teenagers, during a three-day wilderness expedition
- supported woman and children, in a twenty-four bed transition house, who were escaping domestic abuse, by directing them to appropriate community resources and coordinating a community outreach program

Statement _____

Statement _____

Statement _____

* Both examples are written based on the volunteer and part-time work experiences of a college age, female student.

Actions Words

| | | |
|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| Accomplished | Finalized | Organized |
| Achieved | Facilitated | Planned |
| Analyzed | Generated | Performed |
| Applied | Guided | Presented |
| Balanced | Identified | Produced |
| Built | Increased | Provided |
| Calculated | Informed | Recognized |
| Classified | Invented | Recommended |
| Coached | Involved | Repaired |
| Conducted | Launched | Reported |
| Created | Learned | Researched |
| Designed | Maintained | Reviewed |
| Directed | Managed | Selected |
| Ensured | Mentored | Set-up |
| Examined | Monitored | Solved |
| Evaluated | Negotiated | Strengthened |

My Primary Resume

| |
|--|
| Work / Career Objectives |
| Performance Profile / Summary |
| Technical and Transferable Skills |
| Professional Values |
| Technology Competencies |

Accomplishments / Achievements / Successes

Work Experience

Education

Professional Licenses / Certificates

Community Service / Hobbies

Guidelines for Writing a Targeted Job Specific Resume

- Carefully study the job description, analyzing key skills that describe the requirements and identify what seem to be the priorities in the work. Pay attention to the specific language that is used. Also, think about the potential interview questions:
 - What will be the focus of the interview?
 - Anticipate the interview questions.
 - Identify relevant examples to illustrate your answers.
 - Identify the job skills and responsibilities.
 - Identify problems to be solved in the job. Be prepared to share examples of problems you have solved.
- Prepare a **performance summary** that provides your work experience profile. This is your opening statement that describes what you will bring to the job.
- Highlight your **technical and transferable skills**, as well as your professional values related to the specific job.
- Identify your **accomplishments** and strongest contributions from past job experiences that are relevant to the specific job you are applying for.
- Summarize your **work history** and **educational credentials**.
- Include information on your community service, hobbies, or interests that are relevant to the specific job.

Resume Do's and Don'ts

Career specialists consistently inform their clients, that employers spend less than 30 seconds looking at a resume, when they are flipping through a pile of job applications. Therefore, in terms of format, it is very important for your resume to be professionally attractive, and formatted consistently with clear spacing from section to section. Employers want resumes that can be easily read, with headings and job titles / experiences that stand out.

- Format tips for giving your resume punch:
 - use action words
 - use short sentences
 - use headings to guide the readers – separate using lines or boxes
 - use the third person
 - make it readable
 - use one font throughout
 - summarize your resume to one or two pages
 - proof read for spelling and grammar
 - be consistent with your format (headings, bolding, spacing, indenting)

- Things to “never do” in a resume:
 - talk about personal flexibility or relocation issues
 - talk about availability
 - talk about salary
 - mention age, race, religion, sex, or national origin
 - describe health issues
 - include photographs

Targeted Job Specific Resume

| |
|--|
| Targeted Job |
| Performance Summary |
| Core Skills and Competencies |
| Work Experience |
| Education |
| Professional Certifications |
| Community Service (if relevant) |

Cover Letter – Basic Components

Date

Your Name

Your Address

Employer's Name

Employer's Address

Dear _____, (research and identify the person's name who is receiving the applications)

Opening Paragraph

- state the position you are applying for and give a short introduction of your related job competencies
- explain how you know about the position
- keep it within two-three sentences

Second and Third Paragraphs

- connect your past experience to the position you are applying for (use brief concrete examples)
- present more of your key competencies to highlight why you are qualified for the position (experience, training, skills acquired)
- summarize your talents and accomplishments, that define your success, by using “key words,” and pull these key words from the job posting under job requirements and qualifications
- convey confidence in your ability, at the end of the paragraph
- these paragraphs need to separate you from other candidates, and identify how you can meet the employer's needs and

Closing Paragraph

- thank the employer for considering your application, and quickly summarize what you can offer
- identify when you are available for an interview

Sincerely,

signature

Your name (printed)

Developing a Cover Letter

| |
|---|
| Date |
| Your Name Your Address |
| Employer's Name Employer's Address |
| Opening Paragraph |
| Second Paragraph |
| Third Paragraph |
| Closing Paragraph |

Interviewing Skills

The purpose of an interview is to gather information about your qualifications and history to ensure there is a good match between the individual and the position.

According to Many Employers

- Most college age job candidates have very weak interview skills.
- People sometimes get hired because they are good at interviewing, not because they are well qualified.
- People with great qualifications often lose out, because their confidence does not come through in the interview.
- The biggest error made by job seekers is going into an interview unprepared.

Interview Experiences

Describe an interview you had that went really well. Why was the interview a success?

Describe an interview that did not go well. What happened?

Lessons Learned About Interviewing

Preparing for the Interview

Know Yourself

An interview is about one thing, YOU. So, it is important you understand your strengths and talents, and that you can clearly talk about who you are, what you want, and how you are a good fit for the job.

Learn About the Interview Process

It is difficult to prepare for something when you don't know what to expect. Read about interviewing and talk to a career counselor, or a human resource specialist about how interviews are structured. If you can, find out who is doing the interviewing and learn about their backgrounds. Generally, there is an interview panel, rather than an individual interviewer.

Research the Organization or Company

Take time to learn as much as you can about the company or organization where you have the interview. Also, try to find out what is really involved in doing the job. Understanding these two elements (the interview process and the company) can help you stand out from other candidates.

Anticipate the Questions

Take time to think about the possible questions the interviewers will ask. Study the job description and the requirements, and generate a list of questions. Then, prepare your answers and embed them in your memory. Remember, they will ask more than technical questions focused on your content expertise and training. They will also ask personal questions about your background, your goals, and your interests.

Practice Answering the Questions

Ask a friend, colleague, or family member to help you practice by conducting a mock interview. They can pose as the interviewer and walk you through your list of questions. Analyze your answers and ask them for their honest feedback on how you did.

Dress Appropriately

First impressions are very important, and interviewers will *see* you before they hear you present yourself. Make sure your clothes are clean and pressed, and that you are comfortable and look professional when you walk into the room. Be on time.

Prepare Your Own Questions

The questions you ask are a reflection of who you are, and employers place a high value on the types of questions you ask them. Think about the questions you want answered, prepare a list of questions, and try to leave a lasting impression by asking intelligent and insightful questions. Ask about the work and the company. Do not ask about salary, benefits, or vacation time, unless they bring it up.

Bring Along

When you go to the interview, bring extra copies of your resume, and a notebook or writing pad so you can take notes. Bring a map to ensure you arrive at the correct location on time. Bring a cell phone so you can call ahead in case you have an emergency, or if you are running late.

Visualize Success

The reason many people perform poorly in interviews is that they think about and dwell on what can go wrong, and their anxiety gets the best of them. Mentally walk through the interview and picture yourself answering all the questions clearly and confidently. Hold on to this visual image of success.

Internship Interview

ABC Company offers four internships each summer to provide leadership and management experience for Community College students interested in construction management. This is an opportunity to learn the various components of project management, through job shadowing and working alongside a senior company supervisor, who is responsible for overseeing people from a variety of trades. The company is presently responsible for planning and building an oil refinery.

The internship is for 15 weeks and successful candidates will receive \$500/week.

Successful applicants need to:

- communicate effectively
- work well on a team
- demonstrate interest in leadership
- have some construction experience or understanding
- be motivated and responsible.

You have been shortlisted and contacted for an interview.

Your task is to prepare for the internship interview.

Interview Preparation Template

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| Strengths | Weaknesses |
| How You Are a Good Fit for the Job | |
| Anticipated Interview Questions | |
| Questions You Want to Ask | |

During the Interview

“Do’s and Don’ts”

- **Talk about yourself with enthusiasm** because you need to sell yourself. Elaborate about the contribution you can make to a team, and the skills and talents you can bring to the work. Avoid giving “yes” and “no” answers when responding to questions.
- **Be comfortable with silences.** There may be a time in the interview when you need to stop and think about your answer. This may feel awkward, but take the reflection time you need before you answer. Be careful not to fill in the airtime with impulsive responses.
- **Speak the truth.** It is important to be honest in an interview, and not exaggerate your abilities and experiences. It will catch up to you when the company does their reference checks.
- **Ask questions.** As the interview unfolds, you will find yourself thinking about questions you want answered. Ask the questions. It is important to find out if the job is the right fit for you. You may change your mind about wanting the job, as you learn more about what is involved in the work.
- **Don’t be too casual.** This means dressing appropriately and not sitting back and responding in a way that communicates you are only half interested in the job. Remember, first impressions count. How you appear, whether you smile and make good eye contact, say thank you and shake hands, makes a difference between you and the next person.

- **Follow-up.** When you have completed the interview you are not finished. Write an email or note thanking the interviewer, or interview team, for the opportunity to compete for the job. At this point, you can add a few extra comments in your note or email about your motivation, skill set, and/or your fit with the job.

Interviewers Want

A lot of information about you in a short period of time

The interviewer needs enough information about you to help make a decision about whether or not you are the right person for the position.

A sense of your interest, attitudes, and values

Interviewers are trying to get a read on what you want to do and why you want to do it. This means trying to understand your career goals, your interest in continuing to learn, your openness to change, and what is most important to you.

To understand your qualifications

Interviewers want to know your work experience, roles you have taken on, your success in school, and hobbies that still interest you. They are trying to get a sense of your past behaviors and successes, that have proven to be strong indicators of your future behavior and success.

Interview Demonstration Notes

| Interview 1 _____ | Group Rating |
|-------------------|--------------|
| Interview 2 _____ | |
| Interview 3 _____ | |

Different Approaches to Interviewing

| Traditional Interviews | Behavioral Interviews |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interviewers will ask you how you would behave in a particular situation.• Interviewers will often follow a very structured process of asking a limited number of focused questions.• Interviewers will often ask questions that allow you to give general answers or theorize about answers.• Interviewers will give you considerable latitude to talk about what you feel is important. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interviewers will ask you to describe how you actually behaved in a certain situation.• Interviewers will have a set of questions, but will typically probe deeper or ask other questions as you respond.• Interviewers will ask questions that expect you to respond with details and give specifics.• Interviewers will concentrate, in a very structured way, on areas that are important to them. |

Behavioral Interviewing

| What was the situation? | What did you do? | What was the result? |
|-------------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| | | |

The behavioral interview is based on the idea that behaviors the candidate displayed in the past are likely to be repeated on the job in the future. Interviewers are also working from a profile or grid of “desired behaviors.”

Examples:

1. Describe a major problem you have faced and how you dealt with it.
2. Give an example of when you made a decision that backfired. What did you do?
3. What class in college did you like the most, and what specifically did you like about it?

Follow-up Questions:

There are two things that follow-up questions are trying to determine: One, how consistent you are in terms of your behavior from situation to situation, and two, whether you are exhibiting the desired behaviors.

- Can you give me an example?
- Why did you behave differently in those two situations?
- What did you say at that point?
- What were you thinking?
- How did you feel?
- What was your role?

How to Prepare for a Behavioral Interview

1. Think about recent situations, at work or school, where you behaved in a way that proved to be very positive for you. It could involve leadership, teamwork, coursework, or where you took the initiative to act and it was a good decision.
2. Write short descriptions of these situations on file cards and memorize the information. Be prepared to give details about these situations, if asked.
3. When you tell these situation stories in an interview, be sure each story has a beginning, middle, and end. Do not ramble or talk in circles. Describe the situation, how you behaved, and the result of your behavior.
4. Ensure the results you talk about in the interview reflect positively on you, even if the overall result was not what you intended, or was not considered favorable. Remember, the interviewers are interested in your behavior, how and why you behaved as you did.
5. Be honest and be specific. Answer questions honestly when asked about situations, and give details in a straightforward and crisp manner. Stay focused when talking about a situation and avoid generalizing.

Targeted Questions to Expect

Education

1. How do you think your education has prepared you for this position / job?
2. Why did you choose to study what you did?
3. What were your favorite classes and why?
4. How do you plan to continue your education?

Work Experience

1. What have you learned from your past jobs?
2. What were your biggest responsibilities?
3. What skills have you used in other jobs that will help you in this position?
4. What did you like most / least about your last job?

General Qualifications

1. What makes you the best candidate for this job?
2. What new skills have you developed recently?
3. Give me an example, from a previous job, where you have gone above and beyond expectations?
4. What have been your greatest accomplishments to date?
5. What is important to you in a job?

Job Interest

1. Describe the job you are interviewing for, as you understand it.
2. Why is it attractive to you?
3. What are your concerns about the job?
4. What is your interest level?

Career Drive

1. What motivates you in your work?
2. What would you like to be doing five years from now?
3. What type of position are you interested in?
4. How will this job fit in your career plans?
5. What do you expect from this job?
6. Are you prepared to travel, or move locations with your work?

Previous Positions

1. What were your most significant accomplishments?
2. Why were these accomplishments important?
3. What challenges did you face?
4. What did you do to overcome these challenges?
5. Describe where you had a lead role, a key role, or a support role in a project.

Abilities and Confidence

1. When you think about doing this work, where are you most confident?
2. In terms of this job, where are you the least confident?
3. What are the strongest abilities you would bring to this position?
4. What abilities would you need to improve your success with this work?

General Questions Asked in Interviews

1. What is a personal goal you have for yourself?
2. If you had to pick one word to describe yourself, what would it be?
3. Where do you see yourself in five years?
4. Describe a project you worked on that failed, and how you handled the situation.
5. Why do you want to work for this company?
6. What do you know about our company?
7. Describe a time you went above and beyond what was expected of you?
8. Tell me about yourself.
9. What is the hardest thing you have ever done?
10. What is one thing you are most proud of?
11. What motivates you?
12. Tell me about a difficult situation you had with a person, and how you handled the situation.
13. What are your strengths and weaknesses?
14. Provide examples of times you demonstrated leadership.
15. Tell me about a time you thought or acted outside the box.

Hard and Easy Interview Questions

Hard Questions

Easy Questions

Interviewing Practice With Feedback

| Guidelines | Examples |
|---|----------|
| <p>Presenting Yourself with Enthusiasm (positive, movements, facial expressions)</p> | |
| <p>Being Authentic (eye contact, smiling, relaxed)</p> | |
| <p>Asking and Answering Questions (clarity, direct, evasive, active listening)</p> | |
| <p>Presenting Positively with Confidence (believable, tone, voice)</p> | |
| <p>Sharing Interests, Attitudes, and Values (pace, focused)</p> | |
| <p>Educational Qualifications and Experience Fit</p> | |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Overall</p> | |

Lessons Learned About Interviewing Skills

| | |
|----|-------|
| 1. | _____ |
| 2. | _____ |
| 3. | _____ |
| 4. | _____ |
| 5. | _____ |
| 6. | _____ |
| 7. | _____ |
| 8. | _____ |