



## FINDING A JOB



**The Internet...** This is a good place to start looking for work. There are many employment sites available to help narrow your search, post resumes, and apply for work. See the handout for website links.

**Other Resources...** Friends, family, friends' parents, school counselors, teachers... all these people know other people and together that can be quite a large network of information. You don't have to put the burden of finding a job onto these people, but it can be very helpful to graciously let them know you are looking for work. You'll hear this saying throughout your life, "It's not what you know; it's who you know." This phrase isn't one to *live your life by*, but it certainly proves to be true now and again; during a job search is one time to exercise that thought!

**Research!** Research the company you are applying for so you know something about them, other than the obvious. This is beneficial for two reasons:

- So you know the company is legit if it happens to be a place you've never heard of or been to as a customer.
- So you can learn something about the company and then during the interview, let the interviewer(s) know you care about the company and understand what you are interviewing for, by mentioning what you've researched.

You don't want to sound like a show off; just humbly tell them what you learned and try to put it in context. For example, if you go to their website and find out they are adding a new product line to their store, you can mention it by saying, "How do you think adding Nike to the store's inventory will affect sales?" It will impress them that you do thorough research. Just be sure your information is accurate and not outdated! Note: when doing online research, be sure to check when the article was updated. If it's the company's website then it's probably up to date. You can also research their competitors' websites so you understand what the challenges of the company are.

**Be realistic...** Having *confidence*, *reaching for the stars* and *perseverance* are all very admirable qualities, IF, you are also realistic. Let's say you apply for a position that needs you to be an agricultural researcher, but you have no experience. It's okay to apply for the job if you know you have strong research skills but if the position requires you to have a master's degree and you haven't finished your undergrad, do not waste everyone's time when you know you aren't even close to meeting the requirements. Instead, you might want to call them or submit your resume and point out your qualifications for an assistant-researcher position.

There are some situations that might be a gray area, where you'll think it is okay to apply even if you are not qualified. Follow your gut instinct and give it a shot if you must. If you get rejected, that's okay if you thought it was worth a shot. Just be realistic. Make sure you can fulfill most of the requirements listed in the job description.



**Don't give up...** Sometimes one week of job hunting can feel like a month! It can be depressing to work hard and not secure any interviews. Don't give up! Be sure to exhaust all your resources and keep looking. Some companies may not be hiring when you first contact them but they might be a few weeks or months later. If a job you really want isn't open right away, give it a month and contact them again.

Use your network of friends, the Internet, the newspaper, and the radio to find out who is hiring. Pay attention to "Now Hiring" signs while you are doing other things in your town day to day. And by all means, don't be too shy to put a little face time in. If you walk in the door with a shining smile, it's possible they will remember you when they are shuffling through applications and preparing to call people for interviews. Smaller companies may interview you right away if you walk in and they happen to be hiring.



**Be flexible...** If you get offered a great job but the hours aren't what you wanted, be as flexible as possible. Obviously you will have other commitments that prevent you from being entirely flexible, but do what you can. If you think your proposal is fair, you can negotiate with your future employer by saying, "If I work the hours you are offering for two months and you are completely satisfied with my performance, will you switch the hours to meet some of my needs?" Most employers are willing to negotiate because they want the situation to be favorable for everyone.

**Think creatively!** Remember what we discussed earlier about entry level jobs being reflective of the career you desire, and the skills you are trying to build? If you can't find work that will teach you the skills you need, then be creative and ask yourself these questions:

- What other benefits does the job have that might outweigh this problem?
- Are the hours perfect?
- Does the schedule help you get other important things accomplished, like school work or music practice?

- Are you finding that you are short on time to fulfill your college or other necessary reading requirements?
  - If you get a job as a pizza delivery person, you can listen to books on CD in the car while you work. Or you can listen to music you might be studying for your music career?
  - If you have a job that requires sitting and waiting then you might be able to fulfill writing and reading requirements while working, this might be worth the boredom of the job!

If you are having a difficult deciding then write a pros and cons list. This will help you see the whole picture so you can make a good decision.

**Be persistent...** Persistence is a very important characteristic. The more you practice it, the better you'll be at getting what you want for the rest of your life. Many people find it difficult to be persistent because they are too shy or they don't want to be judged as bossy. Here are some pointers on good versus bad persistence.

- **Good persistence is simply a matter of following up.** When you leave someone a voice mail or send them an email, wait a few days for their response. Then contact them again if you haven't heard from them. Be sure you are polite and always give them the benefit of the doubt. For example, "I know you're probably very busy; I'll only take a moment of your time. I'm following up to see if you've had a chance to give my last call some consideration."
- Bad persistence is when someone is annoying, harassing, or when they drop guilt. It is being pushy, or persistent with a bad attitude.
- Good persistence is getting answers from people or companies that have ignored your request; or getting specific answers when their answer is too vague. You can follow up politely by saying, "I'm patiently waiting for your response but I've had other offers. I don't want to lose another opportunity while waiting for your answer, but working for you is my first choice."
- Some might say bad persistence is when you can't take no for an answer. This is true; however, if they can't justify the "no" then it is okay for you to ask for further explanation for why your application was rejected. Say something like this, "Please tell me why I am not a candidate for the job because your advice will help me improve my resume or increase my experience."

✓**Think positive...** If you don't get hired for a job or when you do get hired for a job, learn from the information you gathered during the process. Then apply the training to future employment applications and interviews.



### And finally, know what you need...

1. How much money do you need to make? Is it a realistic amount?
2. How far are you willing to travel to get to work?
3. Do you have adequate transportation to and from work?
4. Will your transportation arrangements make it difficult to get to work on time?
5. Do you have other commitments that require adjustments in your work schedule? (Such as physical therapy or other kinds of reoccurring appointments.)
6. Do the work hours give you enough time for sleep and other important things in your life?

## Resumes

You should have a resume with you at all times when you are looking for a job. Even if you don't have previous work history, you'll want to make a resume based on your skills and experiences, regardless of what they are.

See the handouts for examples of resumes.

Resume services are included in the Get in the Game Program. These services include advice and editing, which means you'll still need to become familiar with how to write a resume and you'll need to create your own first draft. Your Evaluator will help you understand the structure of a resume and polish it into a final draft.

### Below are important writing tips:

1. Use correct grammar
2. Check and double check your spelling
3. Look for mistakes that spell check might not catch
  - a. Their v. There v. They're
4. Use words that have multiple meaning in the appropriate context.
5. Watch for words that sound the same with multiple meanings and different Spelling:
  - a. Red, Read, Read (reed)
6. If you have a silly or inappropriate email address, create a new email address that is professional.



## The Interview

1. Dress appropriately
  - a. Wear clean clothes.
  - b. Not too form fitting and not too baggy.
  - c. If you can't afford nice shoes, just be sure your shoes are clean and try to blend the color into your pants.
  - d. Do not show too much skin or tattoos.
  - e. Consider removing unique piercings.
2. Be early.
3. Don't smell like strong perfume or smoke.
4. Don't chew gum during the interview, but have fresh breath.
5. Have clean fingernails.
6. Be prepared with questions you want to ask the interviewer.
7. Be prepared to answer obvious questions they will ask you.
8. Have a notepad and pen available.
9. Have your resume available with crisp edges and clean paper.
10. Call to cancel or reschedule if you are unable to make the appointment. Even if you changed your mind, do the polite thing and give them notice that you won't be interviewing for the job anymore.
11. BE YOURSELF! BE POSITIVE! BE CONFIDENT!

## The Interview

When you meet the person or group of people that will conduct your interview, remember your first impression during the greeting will create the tone of the interview. Give them a firm handshake, but not so firm that they think you are trying to intimidate them with your confidence. Maintain eye contact as much as you possibly can.

*Mastering a good handshake and consistent eye contact are important gestures that will help you gain respect for the rest of your life!*

Be calm when you speak; talk slow; and try not to ramble. Remain focused when they are speaking to show you have good listening skills. If you don't, it will reflect in your responses and they'll realize you



aren't paying full attention. If you happen to fumble in this area, say, "Pardon me, would you please repeat the question?" If you are sincere, they will assume you are nervous and that is perfectly acceptable.

Absolutely, under no circumstance, should you use swear words, or God's name in vain. Try to avoid using the word "God" in slang form. It's best you avoid religious conversation all together, unless you need to discuss your beliefs as they relate to you accepting the job.

Try to avoid using absolute statements such as, "I always come to work early." "I never misplace anything." Everyone makes mistakes; it's good to be confident and convince them you can be trusted, but soften the statement like this, "I do not have a tendency to misplace things; in fact I am extremely organized." Or, "I tend to be early for appointments."

After the interview, thank them for their time and leave the building as gracefully as you entered. But beware; you are not in the clear when you leave the office because potential co-workers might be in the hallway, the restroom, the lobby, or the parking lot. Avoid smoking, belching, or discussing the interview on your cell phone until you are at least one block away.

Follow up with a thank you phone call, email, or card. Try to say something memorable or find a card that will help you stand out from the rest of the applicants... but do not say anything risky. Boring and professional is better than fun and possibly offensive.

Base further follow-up decisions on what they told you to do. If they said something like, "Give me a week and I'll get back to you," then wait a week before you contact them. If they didn't give you any instruction, follow up two days later and continue to do so unless they instruct you otherwise.

If they offer you the job, be sure you discuss all employment expectations before you officially accept the position. When you're new in the job market, it's normal to feel vulnerable, like you are *begging* for a job. In reality, it is a two-way street. If the interview goes well and they like you as much as you like them, then you are *asking for* a job as much as they are *asking you* to work for them. You can turn them down for a better job offer as easily as they could turn you down for a more appropriate employee candidate.

Once you have gotten the job you want, be sure to follow through and be the person they thought they hired. You will risk losing your new job if you act like a different person at work than the person you portrayed at the interview.

It may sound like there are countless rules and expectations during this process. Doing it the right way is not about pleasing people; it is about building professional integrity. Having integrity is being someone you respect... being someone people can trust, believe in, and enjoy being around.