

Job Seeker Guide

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HIGHLIGHTS

- Preparation is the key to successful interviews.
- Resign gracefully without burning bridges.
- The pitfalls of counteroffers.
- Dress to win in the interview.
- Make that resume a winner.

Maximize Your Relationship With Your Recruiter



Most people who are in contact with recruiters have either lost their jobs, are about to lose their jobs, are unhappy with their jobs, and/or are seeking higher positions with more pay. Establishing and maintaining a productive relationship with your recruiter should be one of your most important priorities at this stage, and maintaining that relationship, even after you find that right job, can still be of great importance down the road as you hone your professional skills and look for future greener pastures. In finding the right recruiter for you, make sure get to know the individual by asking the right questions:

- What is your professional background?
- What field(s) do you specialize in?
- Does your firm have a confidentiality policy?

Knowing your recruiter, and what they can do for you, is very important in this stage of your job search. Take the time to know the person, what they need from you, and how

they can help you.

The foundation of your relationship is making sure you recruiter knows you very well. The recruiter needs to know your background, your interests, and your strengths and weaknesses. Make it easy for your recruiter to get to know you by being open and honest. Remember that by helping your recruiter work for you, you are helping yourself. Some ideas of things you can do to assist your recruiter:

- Make sure they understand your background, including previous and current responsibilities.
- Focus on your unique skills and specializations to help your recruiter pinpoint exactly what would be a good fit for you.
- Let your recruiter know why you want to change employers, and explain various position and/or company movements. Make it clear to the recruiter so he or she can confidently present you to the potential employer.

Know that you do not need to be actively looking for a new job to work with a recruiter. Many people actively work with the same recruiter throughout their careers. By maintaining a relationship with a recruiter, and keeping abreast of the latest opportunities in your industry, you can better position yourself in the event of sudden job loss. Furthermore, establishing and maintaining a relationship with a recruiter can accelerate your career progression.

The perfect job often comes along when you are gainfully employed and not looking to making any changes. By keeping open a relationship with your recruiter, you can make sure you are aware of these jobs when they become available, which better positions you to take advantage of potential opportunities.

Impress Your New Employer

Your boss and colleagues form the most lasting impressions of you during those first few weeks on the job. You aren't expected to be perfect or know everything, but you are expected to exhibit intelligence, versatility, and a willingness to learn. These traits are mandatory for successfully transitioning into a new position.

Statistics show that it often takes up to fourteen months to find the right job, yet only 90 days to lose it. Here is some advice that can keep you on track in that new position, and can impress your new employer.

Take a week or so off between jobs to relax and prepare for the new position. Also, note the names of the people you met during the interview so that you'll be able to remember their names correctly. Surf the net for information about the company, and college back issues of their newsletter, if possible, to study up on the latest company news. Studying up on competitors' happenings can keep you abreast of the latest industry news.

Work full days by coming in to work early and leaving after most of your colleagues. Be energetic and

positive in the workplace, as well as flexible. Most importantly, get to know your boss, know his or her personality and work style, and make sure that you are on the same page.

The key to surviving in a new job environment is to listen 80% and talk 20% of the time. Offering opinions or assessments is not wise, as you'll get more respect by listening to what your co-workers have to teach you, rather than showing off how much you know.

And lastly, be a team player, avoid gossip, share credit, and always make your boss look good.

Interview Preparation and Presentation

The **interview** is your first and only opportunity to make the right impression. The interviewer's only focus is to decide whether or not to offer you the job. Your work history, educational background, and accomplishments are only part of the criteria; this individual is also interested in your personality, your motivation, your attitude, and your values. The bottom line is: Will you fit into the environment within their company?

While the interview is a tool for companies to screen candidates, it is also an opportunity for you to learn about the company so you can make intelligent decisions about your potential employment with them. As you approach the interview, focus on whether you want the job and, if you do, then fully apply yourself and get that offer!

The job market these days is very competitive, and the most successful job candidates tend to be those who are very prepared. Odds are that you will not be the only qualified candidate for a position, and the deciding factor just might be the way you conduct yourself in the interview. Statistics show that most of the time, the candidate who receives the offer is less qualified than others who interviewed for the same position. Successful interviewing is an acquired skill, and the more prepared and practiced you are considerably increases your chances for success.

Interview preparation is of vital importance for a successful job interview. Make sure you can see yourself resigning from your current position. Summarize your strengths and weaknesses, as well as your short and long-term goals. Think of why the company should hire you, and be prepared to answer that question in the interview. Do not lose sight of the fact that you are there in the interview to sell yourself to secure a job offer.

Familiarizing yourself with the company is of utmost importance. Review trade magazines, annual reports, and news articles, while utilizing the internet to find

"Preparation is the key to successful interviews!"

company information, products, services, and industry statistics. Determine why the company is attractive to you, as you can bet that you will be asked that in the interview.

Bring to the interview items necessary for your success. These items include references and good, fresh resumes. Make sure that your references are at least three former supervisors who are familiar with your work. Make sure you include their names, the company names, and their home and work numbers. Always make sure that you consult with them for their approval, as well as to make sure they will say good things about you. Make sure your resume is reviewed thoroughly and that you are prepared to discuss it at length. It is imperative that it is identical to the one supplied to the interviewer, and it is wise to bring three or more copies with you. Be sure to never discuss proprietary information or trade secrets. A folder and pen are requirements for any interview to jot down notes. Make sure you have the recruiters phone number with you in the unlikely event you are running late (it better be a very good excuse, by the way).

Arrive at the interview no more than fifteen minutes before the interview, but no later than five minutes prior the interview. Allow plenty of time for traffic, parking, etc. Try to visit the location the day before the interview so you can prevent potential problems. Review your notes and be confident. If asked to complete an application, make sure you fully do so.

The interview itself will likely be fairly simple. The interviewer will likely start with a few general questions, as well as reviewing the company and their benefits. The meeting should progress into an interview with the immediate supervisor and peers, following by one with the hiring authority (manager, executive). Make sure you shake hands firmly and maintain eye contact with the interviewer. Decline offers for coffee and definitely avoid smoking. Sit up straight and keep a high energy level. Any subject of mutual interest is always an advantage, but do not fake knowledge. It is best to just be yourself, stay confident, and

have plenty of self-respect.

Preparation is the key to successful interviews, and knowing what kinds of questions the interviewer will likely ask can be very beneficial to your success (see below).

Conclude the interview confidently and be sure to make positive statements about the position. Make sure the interviewer knows that this is the opportunity that you've been looking for and that you would like to work for them in this position. Be sure to ask when you might be able to expect an answer. Say something along the lines of:

"Thank you for meeting with me today. I am impressed with your company and I would like to become a part of your team. If you have any more questions about my background or qualifications, please let me know. I will be more than happy to supply you with any more information. Thank you again and have a nice day!"

Be sure to end the meeting with eye contact, a smile, and a firm handshake.



Sample Interview Questions

Preparation is the key to successful interviews, and knowing what kinds of questions the interviewer will likely ask can be very beneficial to your success. Please peruse the following sample questions:

1. Why are you interested in our company?
2. What do you know about our company?
3. Tell me about your background and/or experiences.
4. How would you describe your ideal job?
5. What goals do you have in your career?
6. How do you plan to achieve these goals?
7. How do you personally define success?
8. Describe a situation in which you had conflict with a co-worker or direct report. How did you resolve it?
9. What do you think it takes to be successful in this career?
10. What accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction in your life?
11. Are you a team player?
12. What motivates you?
13. Why should I hire you?
14. What do you see yourself doing five years from now?
15. Where do you want to become ten years from now?
16. Have you ever had a conflict with a boss? How did you resolve it?
17. What is your greatest strength?
18. What is your greatest weakness?
19. If I were to ask a former boss to describe you, what would he or she say?
20. What qualities do you feel a successful manager should have?
21. Do you have any location preferences?
22. Are you willing to relocate?
23. Are you willing to travel? How much?
24. What kind of salary are you looking for?

You can count on being asked some of these questions!



Post-Interview Impressions For Success



After your interview, be sure to make the right lasting impression by following up with a quick phone call to thank the interviewer for their time, as well as add any information that was not discussed in the interview. It is important that this call take place on the day of the interview. Leave a voicemail if you are unable to reach the interviewer.

A thank you letter should be sent to the interviewer immediately after the interview. It should be a brief note thanking them for their time and reemphasizing your interest in their position. Make sure to send it to them as quickly as possible. Email is acceptable these days, although a formal letter is nice too. Most importantly, make sure they get the letter by the end of the following day. That's right, if you choose a written letter, sending it via overnight mail or courier can make a significant difference in the outcome. The faster the interviewer receives your letter, the greater the likelihood that you could be selected for the job. Rarely does anyone call after the interview and few take the time to write a thank you letter. These simple actions can make a huge difference in placing you ahead of your competitors for the job!

The following is a sample of what your letter should contain:

Dear Mr./Ms. (last name):

Thank you so much for meeting with me on (Date) to discuss the (position title) you have available. I appreciated the opportunity to learn more about (company's name) and to discuss how my qualifications can meet your needs.

I would like the opportunity to become part of your team. I feel strongly that I can be an asset to (company's name). I can assure you if considered for (position title), I would be a very reliable employee. I look forward to hearing from you regarding your decision. Thank you for your time and consideration.

**Please note that this sample letter is intended for guidance and is not guaranteed for accuracy or legality. It is intended as a sample and should be edited to fit your personal situation.*

Note that if you are writing letters to individuals in the same organization; make sure they are unique to each individual. You can bet that the interviewers will likely compare letters. Duplicate letters to the same individuals will considerably lose their impact.

Resigning Gracefully is the Right Thing to Do

Resigning from a job is a very difficult experience for most people, no matter how much you like or dislike your current position. It is possible to resign tactfully and gracefully, however.

Be sure to give notice that you are leaving, usually at least two weeks in advance. Do not say much, other than emphasizing the positive aspects of your experience with the company, although make sure to mention that it is time to move on. Make sure your old boss knows you are willing to assist during the transition period

with your replacement. Stay away from negativity, because it makes no sense to discuss anything negative now that you are leaving.

A resignation letter should always be written or presented immediately after announcing your intention to leave the company. It should be brief and positive, and it should include information denoting when you are leaving. It is advisable to include that you appreciate the time with the company and thanks for the opportunities you had during your employment with them. If you have

to mention why you are leaving in your letter, make sure not to include any disparaging comments about the company, your boss, your peers, or your subordinates. Remember that a resignation letter helps in maintaining a positive relationship with your previous employer, while clearing the road ahead to move on in your professional career. You may need your previous employers to give you a reference at some point in the future, so it makes sense to have a professional resignation letter.

"A resignation letter helps in maintaining a positive relationship with your previous employer."

Avoid Counteroffers: The Road to Ruin



Seriously considering accepting a counteroffer from your current employer is almost always a mistake once you have announced your intention leave the company. You are automatically labeled as disloyal. Bosses almost always take your desire to leave personal, as it is a direct reflection on the boss. Things can never again be the same between you.

Sometimes employers try to induce a resigning employee to stay after they have announced their intention to take another job. These "counteroffers" are almost always mere stall devices to give your employer more time to replace you. You have already demonstrated your "disloyalty" by wanting to quit. If you decide to stay, you will always be considered a fidelity risk, and you will almost always lose your status as a "team player" and your place in the inner circle. Your reasons for wanting to quit are still there, although conditions may have been made more tolerable for the short-term because of the raise, promotion, and/or promises they made to keep you. After the dust settles, you'll still be in the same old rut.

A national survey of employees who accepted counteroffers found that 80% voluntarily left their employer within six months of accepting the counteroffer because of promises not kept by the employer. The majority of the remaining 20% who accepted counteroffers left the company involuntarily within twelve months of acceptance due to termination, lay-off, etc.

Well-managed companies never make counteroffers. They consider their policies fair and equitable and will not be subject to "counteroffer coercion" or what they perceive as blackmail by "threatening to quit to get a raise." Acceptance of counteroffers are almost always career suicide. Do not be tempted or lulled into accepting them.

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**"The Right People, Right
Away For Your Staffing
Solutions!"**



Maximize Your Resume For Visibility

Many HR managers receive more than 50 resumes for each position, so it is important to be prepared for competition. Most HR managers look for relevant experience in candidates' resumes, while half consider candidates' abilities to demonstrate specific accomplishments. Half of all HR managers also look to see whether the candidates' resumes are tailored for their specific position.

Some of the top searched keywords managers use when screening resumes include:

- Problem-solving/decision-making
- Leadership
- Oral/written communications
- Team-building
- Performance and productivity improvement

Managers often see resumes with various mistakes. The most common mistakes include:

- Lying
- Too many insignificant details
- Resumes not customized for the position
- Resumes more than 2 pages long.
- Resumes with formatting errors

Most employers spent less than one minute reviewing candidates resumes. It is important that resumes are proofread over and again to ensure accuracy.

First Impressions Count: Dress For Success

Your appearance at the interview is very, very important. Make sure you stick to these dress and grooming guidelines:

MALES

- A navy blue or dark gray suite is most appropriate. Make sure it is clean and pressed. Heavier men should avoid three-piece suits.
- Shirts should be white, freshly laundered, and well pressed.
- A quiet silk tie with a conservative design and a hint of red is suitable for a first interview. Avoid loud colors and unusual designs.
- Hair should be clean, well-groomed, and freshly trimmed.
- Be freshly shaven. No beards, and mustaches could count against you. If you must have a mustache, make sure it is neat and trimmed.
- Fingernails should be clean and well manicured.
- Jewelry should be kept minimal. A watch and wedding or class ring is acceptable. Avoid wearing jewelry or pins that indicate membership in religious or service organizations. The idea is to not create unnecessary distractions or concerns. Absolutely no earrings.
- Use deodorant, but avoid colognes or fragrances. If you do use them, wear them very sparingly, as fragrances can be distracting.
- Shoes should always be black and freshly polished (including the heels). Lace-up shoes are best.
- Socks should be black or blue and worn over the calf.
- Do not take cell phones into the interview.
- Maintain good eye contact.
- Cross legs only at the ankles and not at the knees for good posture.

FEMALES

- Wear a suite or tailored skirt in navy or gray. Blouses should also be tailored and color coordinated. No big bows or ties. No dresses.
- Avoid exotic hairstyles and excessive makeup. Hair should be neat and clean. Makeup should be light and natural.
- Fingernails should be clean and manicured. Subtle, low-key colors work best for nail polish.
- Use deodorant and avoid perfumes.
- Jewelry should be kept to a minimum and remain subtle. No jewelry or pins that indicate membership in religious or service organizations. No more than one ring on each hand.
- A closed toe pump that is color coordinated with your outfit is appropriate for an interview. Avoid open-toed shoes or sling-backed shoes.
- Cross legs at the ankles and not the knees for good posturing.
- Avoid bringing cell phones into an interview.
- Carry a briefcase instead of a purse.

**Call us today!
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