

Got it!

**A Step-by-Step Guide to
Writing Resumes and Cover Letters
and interviewing for and Starting
a New Job**

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Got it!

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Dedication

This workbook is dedicated to
the family members who
asked me to help them
in their job search activities

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Part 1:

Resumes and Cover Letters

Introduction

As a 72-year-old man. I have written resumes for a variety of jobs in a variety of fields. I did this for myself, family members and friends. Also, there are many books and YouTube videos about writing resumes and cover letters. I have read and watched a variety of them. And in my own job searches, I have worked with various Recruiters who gave me feedback on my resume.

What I learned is that there is no one “right way” or “wrong way” to write a resume or cover letter.

- There are various opinions about what works and does not work.
- Resume styles (like clothing fashions) come and go.
- Resume styles may vary by industry and type of job.
- Each person is unique. It makes a difference if this is your first job after college or a side-gig during retirement after a lifetime of work and experience.

This section presents a generic all-purpose format. And I believe there are some simple truths that do apply in all cases.

Assume that you are applying for a specific position as a (Job Title).

- The goal of the Cover Letter is to get the reader to read your Resume and/or schedule you for an interview.
- The goal of the Resume is to have the reader choose you as one of the (x) number of people they will interview.
- The goal of the Interview is to have the employer make you an offer.

Overall, you need to put your best foot forward and, hopefully, stand out from the crowd. To do so, you will ultimately need a short summary or “elevator speech” saying that if they are looking for a (Job Title), you are one of the people they should talk to.

In this section, we will first look at what you need to do before you sit down to draft your Resume and Cover Letter. Then, we will work on drafting the various sections of your Resume. And finally, after you have a draft Resume, we will look at drafting your Cover Letter.

Preparing to Write Your Resume

Information About You

Before you sit down to write you need to assemble the information you will incorporate in your resume.

A list of all previous employers.

- The name of the employer.
- The City and State where you worked.
- And the Month and Year you started and the Month and year you left.

Note: Every employer wants to see if there are gaps in your employment history. We will talk later about how best to address such gaps.

A list of the colleges or educational or technical training programs you participated in.

- The name of the institution
- The City and State where you attended
- The year you graduated or if your study is on-going
- A summary of your course work if it is not obvious

Note: If you have very little employment history you can also list your High School attendance and any AP (Advance Placement college credit) courses you may have completed.

- A list of any special accomplishments in your life or awards or special recognition that you have received.
 - *These can be work or non-work.*

- A list of what you consider your six greatest strengths to be as a person.
 - These can be work and non-work. You might ask your friends what they consider to be your greatest strengths.
- A list of what you consider your three greatest passions in life.
 - What makes you feel excited and alive.

Information About Potential Employers

OK, enough about You! Now let's focus on collecting information about potential jobs.

- Go the Indeed.com website and sign-up.
- Search on various job listings that may be of interest to you.

Your goal is to come up with from 1 to 3 position titles that you are interested in and save or print out the example job listing(s), including position requirements.

After reviewing this material, make a list of from 1 to 3 position titles that you wish to create a Resume and Cover letter for. Be as specific as possible.

Examples:

- Customer Service Representative – Retail
- Software Customer Support – Remote
- Hospital Intake Worker
- Senior Marketing Manager
- Security Guard

After you identify a business or organization with a position you want to apply for, you first need to research that business or organization.

- Make a copy of the Position Description. There can be a lot of fluff in Job Postings and Position Descriptions. So be sure to pay particular attention to the “Duties” or “Responsibilities” section. This is where the rubber meets the road.

- Go to the website of the business or organization and see what you can learn.
 - If there is a link for “News” check their latest press releases.
 - If there is a link for “Careers” check their posted job listings
- Go to Google and search on the business or organization name.
- Go to Google News and search for news articles about the business or organization.
- Go to the Glassdoor website and see if there is information about the business or organization.
- Ask your friends if they have friends who have worked or are currently working for the business or organization.

Basically, you want to get as much information about the position and the business or organization as you can.

Sample List of Accomplishments

One of my grandsons wanted to be hired as a Security Officer at the University Hospital.

- The good news was that he had graduated from high school with honors, was smart, friendly, hardworking and had taken some self-defense training.
- The bad news was his only real job was pumping gas for four years in the Crown Food & Drug parking lot.

But when asked to draft a list of his accomplishments he did a great job.

- *I have 4 years of customer service experience. The past three have been working with people in a problem solving.*
- *During my time working as a Fuel Station Attendant, I excelled at handling a diverse and always changing set of circumstances. My job ranged from assisting customers with problems at the pumps, all the way up to incident response.*
- *I successfully handled repeated large hazardous spills. Most notable being a diesel spill of approximately 20 gallons. This meant contacting and working with the fire department. Also, as part of cleaning up oil spills I had to work with many hydrocarbon cleaners.*
- *Other aspects of the job included receiving deliveries, participating in regular inspections, opening secured areas for others, and the locking up and closing of the entire location.*
- *I am a very outgoing and friendly person who makes connections wherever I go.*
- *I would say that my greatest quality is my ingenuity. I can come up with things on the spot. This has proven to be very beneficial in the past.*

Who knew that pumping gas involved all of this? And he got the job!

One recruiter recently wrote an article that suggested that you not only try to quantify each accomplishment but also say something about what you did to achieve the successful outcome.

Drafting Your Resume

Purpose

To be clear, the primary purpose of the resume is to get the Hiring Manager to select you as one of the candidates that will be interviewed.

The secondary purpose of the resume is to serve as a possible guide during the interview.

Typeface

Recommend using a sans serif typeface like Arial, Helvetica or Calibri. Do not use a decorative type face.

Heading

- Include name, address, phone number and email. A recruiter from Google indicated that you only need to list the city, state and zip code.
- If you use a first name other than your legal first name in business, put the legal first name first, and then the name you like to be called second in parentheses. For example: Benefield (Bo) Smith.
- In general, do not include a picture. It can give the employer an unstated reason to discriminate.
- I would not recommend including a link to your Linked In page unless you are very sure that what the reader will see is exactly what you want them to see.

Position Title

- Rather than a general “Objective” statement, enter the title of the position you are applying for.
- Should be centered across the page and should appear in bold. Can be left justified if that is your resume style.

- The Position Title can be in a larger font size or color than the text of the resume.

Summary

This is one of the most important sections of the resume. Hiring Managers do not spend a lot of time reading a resume. What you say right at the top needs to catch their attention.

- The Summary section appears below the Position Title.
- It can be as short as a paragraph with 3 sentences.
- More typically it will have 3 bullet points.

Ask yourself, if you were the hiring manager what would be the 3 or 4 things that would be most important to you given the position.

Then consider your strengths, accomplishments, work history and education that would best apply.

Here's an example:

CUSTOMER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE - RETAIL

- *Proven track record in customer service*
- *Strong interpersonal communication skills - friendly, accepting, supportive, and patient.*
- *Able to collaborate with others and/or work independently to provide intelligent solutions to problems.*

Impact on the reader:

"A proven track record? I wonder what that is?"

"Yes, we do need good interpersonal skills."

"Can work in a team or on their own. Hmm ... that's good."

And she says she's "intelligent".

Work History

This is the meat of the matter. The top line lists the name of the employer, the city and state of employment, and the start and end month.

The next line lists the Position Title and the nature of the business if the reader would not automatically recognize the business name. This is followed by a summary of the duties.

Here's an example:

Tom's Market, Portland, OR - June 2018 - Present

Cashier / Self-Checkout Attendant for a regional supermarket chain. Duties include providing exemplary customer service and resolution of issues, maintaining workplace cleanliness and safety standards, managing a cash till, managing multiple self-checkout kiosks and customer issues at one time.

- Four years of customer service experience. Originally hired as a bagger; promoted to cashier at age 18.
- Dealt with over 100 customers each day - order processing and problem solving.
- Recognized by management for efficiency, organization, and being detail oriented.
- Store metrics showed that I was one of the quickest cashiers in my location.

In describing accomplishments use active words like streamlined, managed, implemented, improved, strategized, increased, produced, and generated.

To the degree possible include quantifiable accomplishments in these bullets. These bullets also give a potential interviewer something to ask you about.

If possible, you might comment what you did to achieve the accomplishment.

In general, provide more information about your more recent jobs, and less information about jobs further back in your work history.

Education

College

- If you have college or university education list the most recent first.
- In general list the institution and the city and state of its location.
- Then enter the degree, the subject, and the year graduated.
 - If you are currently taking courses (but don't have a degree) just say "coursework in..."
 - If you are older and your degree was earned 10 or 20 years ago, you can just not enter the year graduated.
- You can describe your area of academic study.
- You should include any special awards or accomplishments.
 - Did you graduate "cum laude", "magna cum laude" or "summa cum laude"?
 - If appropriate, you might include your grade point average.

Technical Training Programs

- Have you received technical training and/or earned certifications? If so, be sure to include these.

High School

- If you have a college degree, you probably don't have to list any information about high school.
- If you have a limited work and/or education history, you will want to indicate that you are a high school graduate.
 - Enter the name and city and state of the school and the year you graduated.
 - You might enter your GPA and/or ACT or SAT scores.

- Include a list of any Advance Placement college-credit courses you may have taken.
- Indicate any special awards or recognition you received.
- You might indicate participation on sports teams, student council, clubs or organizations. Other
- You might consider adding more informal education experiences, like traveling abroad or special summer programs. However, these should only be included if they would be helpful for the reader to know.

References

- You can conclude the resume with a line that says, “References Available on Request”. However, a recruiter from Google suggested that you do not need to include this statement because everyone knows that references are available on request. I tend to agree with her.
- But when you give the employer your References, make sure you have alerted your References that they may be receiving a call and let them know about the job you are interviewing for so that they can be prepared.

About Links to Social Media

- Unless you are applying to be a media consultant, do not to include links to Facebook, Instagram, or TikTok?
- However, the one social media website that you should consider is LinkedIn. In this case you can enter your resume on your LinkedIn page. Some Recruiters scan LinkedIn to find candidates.

About Key Words

- Use and highlight relevant key words, but do not use “hidden” key words.

Sample Resume 1

Software Customer Support

Summary

- Extensive experience in direct customer service both as an office systems analyst and as a bed & breakfast innkeeper (hosting over 30,000 guests).
- Experienced in a variety of desktop and SAS software including groupware, CRM, and reservation systems as well as Microsoft Office.
- Fast learner who is also able to make technical information understandable to customers.

Experience

- Bramble Haus B&B, Mateo, CA (October 2002 – June 2021)

Small Business Owner of 8-guest room bed & breakfast

- Hosted over 30,000 guests - top-rated by Trip Advisor
- Implemented three different SAS reservation systems, including data migration and interface to online booking services
- Maintained and updated website and BLOG in WordPress
- Marketed rooms on airbnb, Expedia and Booking as well as on own website
- Implemented unique service model that enabled guests to book a stay based on their needs and budget
- Used Big Commerce to sell over \$2,000,000 in bed linens online with Google AdWords
- Used QuickBooks online to manage \$500,000 of annual revenue and associated expenses
- Created and maintained BLOG to cover impact of airbnb on housing availability

- Belek, San Francisco, CA (June 1999 – June 2001)

Product Marketing and Sales Operations Director for late-stage start-up creating B2C and B2B online bill-pay platform

- Implemented SAP CRM and web-based Document Management systems to support sales reps and track sales opportunities

- Developed product and marketing strategy to include acquisition and integration of a second start-up
- Majorcan Employer Services, San Francisco, CA (June 1996 – May 1999)
 - Marketing Director for second largest outsource payroll provider (after ADP)
 - Led “Executive ADVISORY Board” sessions to gather input from existing customers on their need and our proposed strategies.
 - Developed 5-year business strategy covering multi-product offerings (HR, Payroll, Benefits, Time and Attendance, etc.)
 - Co-lead successful acquisition of HR software company to turn the strategy into reality
- Xerox/XSoft, San Francisco, Los Angeles and Palo Alto, CA (July 1983- May 1996)
 - Office Systems Analyst for network Office Systems Division of Xerox
 - As District and Region System Analyst worked with major customers (such as Chevron and Harris Digital) on implementing client/server networks
 - Promoted from San Francisco District Office Systems Analyst, to Western Region Technical Support Specialist, to U.S. Product Marketing Manager, to Marketing Director for a software line of business
 - Trained Network Office Systems sales force on methodology for work flow analysis
 - Developed Desktop Publishing marketing materials for strategic initiative to train Xerox Copier Sales Force on digital documents

Computer Application Skills

Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access, Big Commerce, HTML, WordPress, GoDaddy, Google Ads, YouTube Ads, Facebook Ads, Etsy, QuickBooks

Education

B.A. in Humanistic Psychology, Yale University (New Haven, CT)

M.B.A. in General Management, Keller Graduate School (Chicago, IL)

References Available Upon Request

Sample Resume 2

Data Analyst

- 15+ years successfully working in data analysis, IT and medical technology
- 7 years experience working as a data analyst at the University of Utah
- 6+ years experience working as a Lab Technician at the University of Utah and Stanford University.
- 10 years experience in Information Technology and Network Administration in a medical setting.
- Excellent customer service and interpersonal skills developed by working with staff at all levels in corporate, research and health care environments.

Experience

“Stay at Home Dad”, Salt Lake City, Utah, 12-2020 - Present

- Needed to take care of my family at home while my wife taught high school during the Covid epidemic. She is now recovering from surgery that was delayed.
- Took temporary jobs as available.

University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah, 08-2008 - 11-2020

Data Analyst for facilities management group. 12/2013 to 11/2020

Helped develop database and record keeping systems.

- Campus wide records and mapping system
- Database system used for projects, timekeeping, and energy usage
- Gathered, entered and check energy use readings
- Made corrections and estimates where needed

Lab Technician for Pathology and Cardiology research lab. 08-2008 - 12-2013

Maintained a population of 1,500 laboratory mice assuring that proper standards were met. Lab was closed when the primary researcher moved to Wisconsin.

- DNA extraction and PCR testing
- Mouse husbandry and injections
- Records keeping
- Making buffers & maintaining lab stock.

Stanford University, Stanford, California, 05-2005 to 05-2007

Lab Technician for research lab. Maintained population of 1,000 mice. Responsible for DNA extraction, PCR testing, and lab records. Updated and maintained lab web site to meet Stanford standards.

Kaiser Permanente, Hayward, CA. 04-2001 to 09-2003

Junior Network Administrator for five regional campuses. Supported several thousand users in different departments, on multiple platforms. Performed duties ranging from second level help desk to technical training of users.

Ariba Software, Mountain View, CA. 06-2000 to 03-2001

Assistant Network Administrator for customer education services. Maintained and reset eight servers and 64 workstations in classrooms and utilized and maintained seven rack-mounted servers serving the education department.

Skills & Training

Experience using databases, Microsoft Office,
and other specialized programs

Training and experience in use of X-Ray Machines, anesthesia,
Mouse model and Flow Cytometers

Education

University of Utah (Salt Lake City, Utah)

- Course work towards Computer Science degree

Missouri State University (Springfield, Missouri)

- Course work in Computer Science

Foothill College (Palo Alto, California)

- Course work has included chemistry, biology, math and computer science (languages; databases)

References Available Upon Request

Drafting Your Cover Letter

Purpose

- The purpose of the Cover Letter is to have the reader read your resume and/or schedule you for a job interview.

Tone

- Your Resume is usually a “formal” document, but the Cover Letter is more informal and needs to communicate who you are as a person. In a way, it should sound like you talking.

Heading

- Can be centered at top or upper left.
- Include name, address, phone number and email address.
- You could have the name appear in a more decorative typeface.

Greeting

- If you are writing to someone specific and you know their name, enter their name.
- If you do not know the name of the recipient, and you cannot include a personal greeting, do not enter any greeting line.

First Sentence

- “I am writing to (name of business) regarding your opening for a (Job Title).”
- Another possibility is, “Why would (name of business) interview a (something about yourself) to be a (Job Title)?”

Second Sentence

- Why you? What makes you different?

- The second sentence can be one paragraph of two or three sentences or a set of three bullet points.
- Ideally the content will catch the reader's attention and make them want to know more about you.

Summary Paragraph

- Provide a short statement that summarizes the above and how you could contribute to the (Business Unit)

Call to Action

- Close the letter with a sentence that says something like "I look forward to talking with you soon."
 - Even if they don't call you back at least you have made your interest known.

Closing Salutation

- Enter something like "Thanks for your consideration" rather than "Sincerely". Then enter your name.
- If you have not done so already, include your phone number and email address under your name.

Sample Cover Letter 1

3 reasons why Morrison County should consider interviewing a former Innkeeper as an EBS Support Specialist

Because, in addition to hosting over 30,000 guests at top-rated bed & breakfast ...

- I implemented three SAS reservation systems (including data migration and interface to online booking services)
- I implemented a SAP CRM and web-based document management system for an e-billing start-up
- I used major e-commerce platform to sell over \$2,000,000 of bed linens online with Google AdWords

In addition, prior to being an Innkeeper, I worked in Product Marketing for the 2nd largest outsource payroll provider in the U.S. and the network Office System Division at Xerox.

Note, if at all possible, I would be interested working from at home at least part of the time., Also I am open to part-time or temporary assignment.

Look forward to talking with you soon.

Thanks for your consideration.

(Your Name)

(Your Phone Number)

(Your Email address)

Sample Cover Letter 2

Dear Mr. Smith,

Why would Showcase Events Planning hire a Saxophone player to be a Sales Representative?

- *Being part of a music group has taught me how to be an effective team member even when the going gets tough.*
- *I was responsible for managing the bookings for the group and collecting payment from the performance venues.*
- *I managed online advertising for upcoming performances.*

Given my experience, I believe I could make a significant contribution to your sales team.

I look forward to talking with you soon.

Thanks for your consideration.

(Your Name)

Sample Cover Letter 3

Dear Hiring Manager,

Three reasons you should interview me to be the next IT Technician on your team:

- *10+ years experience working in various aspects of Information Technology at major universities, a major health care provider, and a Silicon Valley start-up.*
- *Enjoy technology, am detail oriented and enjoy solving problems and finding opportunities for process improvements.*
- *Am friendly and would rather focus on the work rather than small talk or office gossip.*

I would appreciate a chance to meet and understand your needs in more detail and how I could contribute to the success of your programs.

Respectfully yours,

(Your Name)

Follow-up

Once you have completed your Resume and Cover Letter, I recommend that you download a copy to Indeed in Word format so that Indeed will index it. This will allow recruiters and hiring managers to find you more easily.

- You can either also download a separate copy of your Cover Letter, or you can include the Cover Letter as the first page of the download version of your Resume.
- When applying for a job posting in Indeed you can edit the version to be sent out so that it better matches the Job Posting.

Summary

I was going to title this workbook “A Simple Guide to Writing Resumes and Cover Letters”, but, after writing this section, I realized that the process I described was not quite “simple”.

I know it seems like a lot of work, but with practice writing cover letters and resumes can become easier ... and sometimes even fun. You generally will end up with 1 to 3 resume and cover letter templates that you can modify for a specific job position. And, over time, you can edit the templates based on what seems to work or not work.

Part 2 of this step-by-step guide focuses on preparing for, participating in, and following up on an Interview.

Short Form

Here is an easy way to get started ...

Employment History
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-
-
Education
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Strengths
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-
-
Passions
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-
-
Position Titles
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-
-

Notes:

Part 2:

Job Interviews

Introduction

I have interviewed for a variety of jobs in a variety of fields. And in my own job searches, I have worked with various Recruiters who made suggestions and gave me feedback before and after job interviews.

What I learned is that there is no one “right way” or “wrong way” to plan for a job interview.

- There are various opinions about what works and does not work.
- The people conducting your interview can vary widely.
- The interview process may vary by industry.
- You are unique, and it makes a difference if this is your first job after college or a side gig during retirement after a lifetime of work and experience.

But I believe there are some simple truths that do apply.

Assume that you have been asked to interview for a specific position as a (Job Title).

- You need to prepare for the interview.
- The goal of the first Interview is to get called back for a second interview and/or be offered the position.
- The goal of the subsequent interviews is to receive a job offer.
- After each interview you need to send a follow-up email.

Overall, you need to put your best foot forward and, hopefully, stand out from the crowd. To do so, you will ultimately need a short summary or “elevator speech” saying that if they are looking for a (Job Title), then you are the one they should hire.

In this section, we will first look at what you need to do to prepare for the job interview. Then, we will work on strategies to be employed during the interview. And finally, we will look at what you need to do after the interview.

Preparing for the Interview

Information About You

The information about you should already be included in your Resume and Cover Letter. Your challenge will be to practice communicating this information clearly and succinctly.

Also, you need to consider if there are any “show stopper” issues on your part. Are there potential conditions of employment that could cause you to turn down an offer?

Information About the Company and Position

After you identify a business or organization with a position you want to apply for, you first need to research that business or organization.

- Make a copy of the Position Description. There can be a lot of fluff in Job Postings and Position Descriptions. So be sure to pay particular attention to the “Duties” or “Responsibilities” section. This is where the rubber meets the road.
- Go the website of the business or organization and see what you can learn.
 - If there is a link for “News” check their latest press releases.
 - If there is a link for “Careers” check their posted job listings
- Go to Google and search on the business or organization name.
- Go to Google News and search for news articles about the business or organization.
- Go to the Glassdoor website and see if there is information about the business or organization.
- Ask your friends if they have friends who have worked or are currently working for the business or organization.

Basically, you want to get as much information about the position and the business or organization as you can.

Question About the Nature of the Interview

Will this be a phone, video or in-person interview? Given a choice you might prefer an in-person on-site interview because you can learn a lot by seeing the work environment and reading the non-verbal behavior on the interviewers.

- If it will be a video interview:
 - What software will be used, for example, Zoom or Teams?
 - Will you be asked to display to the interviewers items on your screen, such as making a short presentation?
- If it will be an in-person interview, it is good to find out how people usually dress for work.
 - It is OK to be dressed one live up from their business standard.
 - If you wear a suit and tie, be prepared to take off you suit jacket if everyone is dressed more casually.
 - “Business Casual” (e.g., simple blouse or collared shirt, khaki pants, loafers) is usually safe.
- Who will you be interviewed by – their department, role, and name.
- Will you be interviewed by team members with whom you will be working day-to-day?
- Will the person you are currently communicating with be present? Will they moderate the interview?
- Is there any test that you need to complete before or during the interview?

Prepare Answer to Key Questions

You need to develop a list of questions you think the interviewers are likely to ask and prepare and practice your response.

Typical questions include:

- Tell us about yourself.
- What do you know about our company?
- What do you know about the position?
- What do you think are your greatest strengths?
- What do you think are your greatest weaknesses?
- Give me an example of an accomplishment?
- What did you do to achieve this accomplishment?
- Give me an example of a failure and how you handled it?
- Give me an example of a failure and what you learned from it?
- Why do you think you are a good fit for this position?
- Do you have any questions for us?

You want to have a short answer ready for each of these questions.

Sample Elevator Speech

An “elevator speech” is a summary of your interest, experience and qualification that you could give to someone in a short ride in an elevator. It is really your “pitch”.

For example, if the interviewer asks “why are you interested in this job”, you might respond:

“You know, over the past 10 years I have been promoted from a District Systems Analyst to the Director of Marketing at a software division at Tek Corporation. I really enjoy software marketing and now want to work in other environments.”

An optional second sentence might be:

“My greatest strength is my ability to operate both at a strategic and tactical level.”

And/or:

“And, I have the ability to quickly digest, package and communicate technical information so that non-technical people can understand it. I seem to do this faster than other people.”

Having said this, the secret is to stop talking. Let the other person respond or ask questions.

Another example, assume you are a semi-retired doctor looking to work with immigrants at the southern border of the U.S.

“My greatest joy as a doctor has been caring for Spanish speaking children. Since I speak fluent Spanish and have a good sense of humor, I have been able to quickly develop a special rapport with these patients. Also, my skills using a “yo-yo” have been a plus.”

During the Interview

Greeting and Tone

Don't be overly formal. Be friendly but not *familiar*. Indicate that you are pleased to have the opportunity to talk with the interviewer(s).

Opening Questions

Your initial questions should be about the interviewers' names, departments, and roles. You can also ask them about the nature of the position and what they are looking for in a candidate.

Clarifying Questions and Listening

Asking the interviewer(s) questions and listening attentively to their response is critical. Give them a chance to talk. If their answers spur follow-up questions, ask them. It is a good idea to restate what you heard them say in your own words. For example, "so what you are saying is ____?". And you might add, "Is that what you meant?".

Sample Questions from You

- Can you tell me about the person currently in this position?
- If there was one thing you could change about how this position is performed, what would it be?
- In general, what has not worked for you about the manner this position is be handled now?
- What makes the biggest difference to you in how this position is performed.
- How does this position contribute to your own work?
- How supportive are the team members of each other?

Your Concerns

You may be interested in a job but have some concerns about it. For example, if you are going to work in a medical testing lab you might be concerned about the

attitude of the head of the lab – down-to-earth or egotistical? Or you might be concerned about how supportive the team members are of each other.

You probably don't want to address these directly, but you may be able to ask some general questions to sound these out. For example, "how would you describe the team dynamics?".

“Show-Stopper” Questions

If you have some make-it or break-it conditions that would cause you to turn down an offer, you might bring these up in a general or hypothetical sense.

How flexible could you be if ... ?

Do you have any statistics about ... ?

About what percentage of people in this position progress to the next level?

The objective is to gain information what would inform your decision to accept or not accept a possible job offer.

Your Closing Question

Sometimes at the end of the interview, the interviewer will ask “do you have any questions for us?” If all your other questions have been addressed, here is one suggestion that is almost always appropriate.

- A recruiter on TikTok said that if at the end of the interview you were asked if you had any questions, the question you should ask is “If you hired me today, in one year how would you know if you had made the right decision?”
- He pointed out that this question did two things:
 - The interviewer has to picture you doing the job.
 - You will learn more about their criteria for success.

Drafting Follow-up Email

Purpose

- Thank the interviewer(s) for the interview and say that you enjoyed it.
- Make observations about what you learned.
- Make a “call to action” at the end, saying you look forward to talking with them again.

Tone

- Do not be overly formal. The tone should be friendly but not familiar.

Heading

- If this is an email (recommended) just enter the date.
- If this is a written note:
 - Can be centered at top or upper left.
 - Include name, address, phone number and email address.
 - You could have the name appear in a more decorative typeface.

Greeting

- At this point you probably have someone specific you are communicating with. Your best bet is to address them as “Dear Ms. Anderson”.
- If you are writing to a Recruiter that you have been working with, you might just use their first name.

First Sentence

- “Thank you for interviewing me for the _____ position.

Second Sentence

- Something like “I really enjoyed the interview and talking with the various Department Heads and Team Members.”

Summary Paragraph

- Provide a short statement that summarizes what you learned from the interview and how you could contribute to the Team.

Call to Action

- If you interviewed with many people, you could ask your contact to share your email with the people who interviewed you.
- Close the letter with a sentence that says something like “I look forward to talking with you soon.”
 - Even if they don’t call you back at least you have made your interest known.

Closing Salutation

- Enter something like “Thanks for your consideration” rather than “Sincerely”. Then enter your name.
- If you have not done so already, include your phone number and email under your name.

On-going Emails

- Write a short email every time you receive a communication for the recruiter or hiring manager. This conveys you are paying attention.
 - Thank them for their note and acknowledge the topic they wrote about
 - Provide whatever information they may have requested
 - Conclude by saying you look forward to talking with them again.

Sample Interview Follow-up Email

Dear Mr Michaels,

I very much enjoyed interviewing for the position of Data Analyst. And am very much interested in the position.

In the interview I gained a better understanding of the structure of you current database and the issues confronting the team as they plan for the next software update.

I can see that my previous experience working with Oracle databases would be helpful to the team.

Look forward to talking with you soon.

Thanks for your consideration.

(Your Name)

(Your Phone Number)

(Your Email address)

Your Final Question

If You Don't Get the Offer

OK, at the end of this whole interviewing process you either get the job offer or you don't. If you do not get the job offer, I suggest that you ask the following question:

"Could you tell me a little about the candidate that you did select?"

The answer to this question can give you important feedback and my ease the pain of not getting the offer. In one case I was told"

"We gave the job to a person who had worked for us before, left the company and wanted to come back."

In another case I was told:

"The candidate we chose knows every member of the City Council personally, which would help us greatly in getting our housing proposals approved."

Really, in these cases I could understand and more easily accept why I was not selected.

Summary

So, there you have it – a step-by-step guide to the job interview process and the necessary follow-up. In some ways interviewing for jobs can be fun, especially if you share “who you are” with the interviewer(s) and look upon the experience as a learning opportunity.

Short Form

Here is an easy way to get started ...

About the Interview
-
-
-
-
-
About the Position
-
-
-
-
-
Strengths
-
-
-
-
-
Passions
-
-
-
Concerns or “Show Stoppers”
-
-
-

Notes:

Part 3:

Starting a New Job

Getting Ready

Introduction

OK, you've got the new job, but now you need to prepare for your first day, week and month. Why? Because you are entering a new environment. First impressions count. You may well feel overwhelmed with new and confusing information. You may feel worried or concerned that you will make some kind of mistake.

Probationary Period

One thing to check, probably with the human resources department (HR), is whether there is a "probationary period" during which a new hire can be terminated "without cause". If so, you want this period to go well.

Giving Notice on Your Old Job

You may leave your old job with sadness or relief, but in any event, you do not want to burn any bridges. If there is a notice period do your best to honor it. You may want a reference in the future.

You may also want to check to see if you have any paid time off or accrued vacation time that could be applied to this period.

During the Two Weeks Before You Start

Forms

- Check with your hiring manager and/or HR to see if there are any forms you need to fill out, options you need to choose, or information you need to provide.

Arrival Details

- What day do you need to report to work and at what time? Where do you report. Who should you ask for upon arrival?

Questions for HR

- How do I contact human resources in the future?

- Is there a corporate “intranet”?
- When are paychecks issued?
- When do benefits start?
- What are the standard Federal holidays?

Connecting with Your Manager

The Best Way to Communicate

Either before you start or in the first week it is important to talk with your Manager about their preferred vehicle for receiving communications from you.

- In general, do they prefer to receive communications - by phone, text, email or in person.
- Do they have a preference for how best to communicate important or high priority items.
- Do they have a preference for having on-going regularly scheduled meetings or communications.
- How often do they hold team meetings.

Questions for Your Manager

- Reviews and Bonuses
 - Are there regularly scheduled performance reviews?
 - What is the policy on bonuses?
 - When are they awarded?
- Expenses
 - If travel is required, how are reservations made and to whom are they charged?
 - What is the system for filing expense reports?
 - Am I reimbursed for mileage?
- Be prepared
 - Any recent departures I should know about?

- Any expected new hires I should know about?
 - Are there any previously scheduled group events\ coming up.
 - Is there a formal or informal dress code?
- Lunch
 - Where do people go for lunch?
 - If I bring food is there a place I can keep it cold.

Planning

Weekly Goals

To help you through the first month, you may want to start each week with a set of goals for that week in mind.

In weeks 1 and 2 it is normal to feel overloaded and perhaps frustrated. Each day you learn more and more new information. By weeks 3 and 4 the amount of new information daily should start to taper off.

First Month Guidelines

Unless you were brought in at a high leadership level or to “shake things up” it is probably best to keep a low profile during the first month. Listen and learn.

Try not to irritate your coworkers especially if there is a probationary period where you can be dismissed without cause. And be sensitive to co-workers who have a long tenure, they may have a fair amount of influence beyond that of the official job title.

If you have concerns during the first month, you might communicate them to your manager and ask for guidance. Or you might keep a diary of thoughts and suggestions that you could use in the future when appropriate.

The First Day and First Week

The first day focuses on:

- Connecting with your manager
- Locating your office or workspace
- Introductions to team members and key managers
- Where can I store my belongings?

During the first week:

- Computer
 - Getting your computer set up
 - Getting your email set up
 - Getting set up in the preferred team software
 - Where are the printers and how do I access them
 - How do I send and receive faxes?
- Phone
 - Getting your phone number
 - Getting you voice mail set up
 - How do I receive calls from the outside?
 - How do I place calls to the outside?
 - How do I place outside calls?

The Second, Third and Fourth Weeks

The Second Week

- Access
 - Special instruction when staying late or getting in early?
 - How do I set up to be able to work from home.
 - If I work at home at nights or weekends is there any restriction on files that I cannot take home to do work?
- Supplies
 - Where are supplies stored?
 - How do I access them?
 - How do I order office supplies for myself?

Weeks 3 and 4

Weeks 3 and 4 should focus more on job training and doing the work. Continue to ask questions, listen and observe.

What If It Doesn't Work Out?

Despite the best laid plans, sometimes things do not work out as you had hoped. If you are “released”, “dismissed” or let go, take a deep breath. Go home and give yourself a few days to recover emotionally.

I am not a lawyer, but unless there is evidence of gross discrimination, it is probably best not to question this decision.

When you are ready, write a short note to your former manager. Tell them you appreciate the opportunity to have worked together and ask them if they had any feedback or guidance for you that you could use in the future.

Sample note:

Dear _____,

I am writing to ask a favor.

I very much appreciated the opportunity to work with you and the team and am of course disappointed that it did not work out.

I was wondering if you would have any feedback or guidance that could help me plan for the future.

I appreciate your consideration.

(Your Name)

Summary

Successfully starting a new job takes some planning and work as did finding the job.

The first week can be an overload of “set-up” activities, but by weeks 3 and 4 your work life will settle down.

Also, establishing a strong connection with your manager will benefit you during the first month and thereafter.