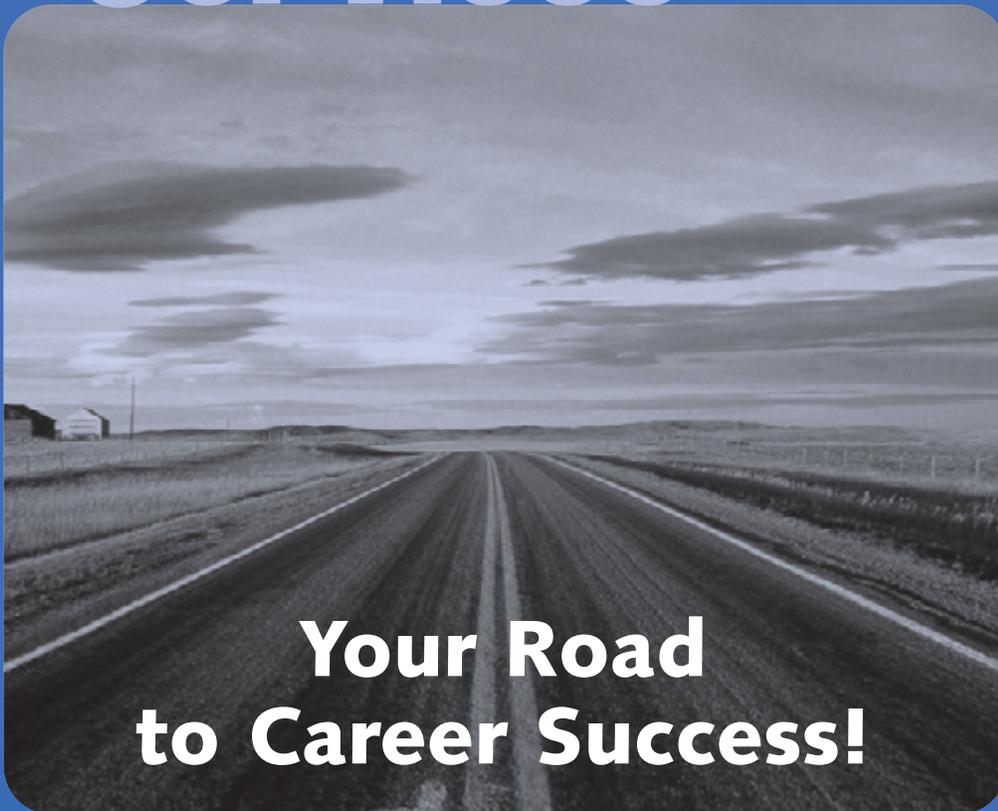


Career Services



**Your Road
to Career Success!**

The Job Search Guide



College of DuPage

Table of Contents

I.	Introduction	1
II.	Identifying Skills, Abilities, Attributes and Values	2
III.	Understanding the Job Market	11
IV.	Researching the Job Market	17
V.	Establishing a Career Path	19
VI.	Preparing a Dynamic Resume	20
VII.	Resume Categories	22
VIII.	Key Resume Words	25
IX.	Sample Resumes	26
X.	Portfolio Development	35
XI.	Job Search Correspondence	36
XII.	The Cover Letter	37
XIII.	Sample Job Search Correspondence	38
XIV.	The Employment Process	48
XV.	Internet Research	50
XVI.	Establishing Strong Networking Relationships	53
XVII.	Selling Your Skills in the Interview	55
XVIII.	Negotiating Salary and Benefits	59
XIX.	Assessing the Job Offer	60
XX.	Job Search Summary	61



An effective job search is the result of careful planning, research and thorough self-assessment. In today's job market, it is imperative to develop an effective strategy for your job search in order to be marketable and successful.

The following strategy gives you a step-by-step plan for an effective job search:

- Identify your career-related skills, attributes, interests and values.
- Research economic trends regarding job outlook and salary potential.
- Establish a career objective/focus.
- Prepare a results-oriented, targeted resume with impact statements.
- Establish strong networking relationships.
- Prepare for an effective interview.
- Develop salary negotiation techniques.
- Envision positive results.

Identifying and knowing your technical and transferable skills, attributes, values and interests, in addition to understanding the careers in demand will help you begin the job search process. Also, examining your criteria for job satisfaction is essential for this transition.

A good way to begin examining your expectations for job satisfaction is to answer these questions:

- What are your interests?
- Which skills do you enjoy using?
- What personal values are critical to your job satisfaction?
- In what kind of work environments do you feel most productive?
- Do you work well under pressure?
- What job responsibilities in your previous positions were most satisfying?

II. Identifying Skills, Attributes and Values

Self-assessment is the single most important step in a job search. Most individuals base their self-worth and personal happiness on the success of their careers. Career coaching experts indicate that there exists a strong correlation between one's interests and how well a person will succeed in that particular field.

Self-assessment is the process of identifying your interests, values, personality style, attributes and technical skills. This self-assessment process is important for career satisfaction and success. A variety of career inventories, such as the Strong, COPS (California Occupational Preference Survey), SDS (Self-Directed Search) can identify your interests and correlate these interests to career areas. Additionally, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator is an assessment which matches your personality to various careers and work environments. These interest and personality inventories are available through a counselor's referral to College of DuPage's Assessment and Testing Office.

The following exercises will give you insight and provide guidance in your job search. These exercises give you a chance to look at yourself honestly and thoroughly, and to identify what you do well, what makes you valuable to an employer, and what kind of work or work environment best suits you. This will provide you with the foundation for identifying and finding your desired career.

In the hiring process, employers want to know:

- Can you do the job?
- Will you fit into the company culture?
- What motivates you to put forth your greatest effort?

Skills Assessment

These skills have been found to be directly related to specific clusters of occupations. Many of these skills are transferable from one career to another. In a time of career change, it is important to identify patterns of strengths and achievements.

Please rate yourself on the following skills. For those skills you rated a 4 or 5, write statements based on past professional and/or personal experience where you have used these skills.

	Very Skilled				Unskilled
	5	4	3	2	1
Analytical	5	4	3	2	1
Clerical	5	4	3	2	1
Communication	5	4	3	2	1
Creative/Artistic	5	4	3	2	1
Creative/Literary	5	4	3	2	1
Decision-Making	5	4	3	2	1
Detail-Oriented	5	4	3	2	1
Helping Others	5	4	3	2	1
Instructing/Training	5	4	3	2	1
Language Usage	5	4	3	2	1
Leadership	5	4	3	2	1
Manual Dexterity	5	4	3	2	1
Math Reasoning	5	4	3	2	1
Mechanical Reasoning	5	4	3	2	1
Meeting People (Social)	5	4	3	2	1
Numerical	5	4	3	2	1
Organizational	5	4	3	2	1
Reading	5	4	3	2	1
Sales	5	4	3	2	1
Scientific	5	4	3	2	1
Space Relations	5	4	3	2	1
Technical	5	4	3	2	1

(continued on page 4)

Skills Assessment (continued)

	Very Skilled				Unskilled
Troubleshooting	5	4	3	2	1
Written Communication	5	4	3	2	1
Listening	5	4	3	2	1
Feedback	5	4	3	2	1
Problem-Solving	5	4	3	2	1
Conflict Resolution	5	4	3	2	1
Verbal Communication	5	4	3	2	1
Interpersonal	5	4	3	2	1
Empowering	5	4	3	2	1
Leadership	5	4	3	2	1
Negotiating	5	4	3	2	1
Delegation	5	4	3	2	1
Motivation	5	4	3	2	1
Critical Thinking	5	4	3	2	1
Team Building	5	4	3	2	1

Write validating statements of your experiences where you have used these skills.

Identifying Attributes

Rate yourself on the following attributes. For those attributes you rated a 4 or 5, write statements based on past professional and/or personal experiences where you have used these attributes.

	High				Low
Dependability	5	4	3	2	1
Flexibility	5	4	3	2	1
Persistence	5	4	3	2	1
Integrity	5	4	3	2	1
Efficiency	5	4	3	2	1
Competitiveness	5	4	3	2	1
Independence	5	4	3	2	1
Team Player	5	4	3	2	1
Self-Motivated	5	4	3	2	1
Goal Oriented	5	4	3	2	1
Responsibility	5	4	3	2	1
Strong Work Ethic	5	4	3	2	1

Write validating statements of your experiences that used the attributes rated 4 or 5.

Values Clarification

DEFINITION: Value — a belief held so strongly that it guides your actions.

At this time of career transition and re-evaluation, it is important to consider how your choices are affected by personal values. Because choice of careers, position, and even industries can be influenced by values, it is especially important to identify your most important career values. Job satisfaction is, in part, connected to fulfillment of personal values.

To help determine what career values are critical to job satisfaction in your next position, complete the following exercise:

Career Values Exercise

The following is a descriptive list of values that satisfy people in their work. Using the scale below, indicate the degree of importance that you would assign to each.

	Very Important			Not Important
Ability Utilization	4	3	2	1
Achievement	4	3	2	1
Activity	4	3	2	1
Aesthetics	4	3	2	1
Adventure	4	3	2	1
Affiliation	4	3	2	1
Artistic Creativity	4	3	2	1
Change and Variety	4	3	2	1
Community	4	3	2	1
Compensation	4	3	2	1
Competition	4	3	2	1
Creativity (General)	4	3	2	1
Decision Making	4	3	2	1
Excitement	4	3	2	1
Fast-Pace	4	3	2	1
Friendships	4	3	2	1
Help Others	4	3	2	1
Independence	4	3	2	1
Influence People	4	3	2	1

Very Important

Not Important

Intellectual Status	4	3	2	1
Knowledge	4	3	2	1
Location	4	3	2	1
Moral Fulfillment	4	3	2	1
Physical Challenge	4	3	2	1
Power and Authority	4	3	2	1
Precision Work	4	3	2	1
Public Contact	4	3	2	1
Recognition	4	3	2	1
Security	4	3	2	1
Stability	4	3	2	1
Supervision	4	3	2	1
Teamwork	4	3	2	1
Time Freedom	4	3	2	1
Work Alone	4	3	2	1
Work Under Pressure	4	3	2	1
Working Conditions	4	3	2	1

List all values that you rated as a 4 — very important:

From the list of 4's, rank order your top five values:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Skills and Accomplishments

List each position you have held (paid or unpaid). Identify both what you liked and disliked most about that position. Next, indicate the skills you used in the position and those acquired. And finally, identify and list one or more accomplishments for each position. Repeat this process for each of your employment experiences.

Job Title and Employer: _____

Likes: _____

Dislikes: _____

Skills Used: _____

Skills Acquired: _____

Accomplishments: _____

Job Title and Employer: _____

Likes: _____

Dislikes: _____

Skills Used: _____

Skills Acquired: _____

Accomplishments: _____

Job Title and Employer: _____

Likes: _____

Dislikes: _____

Skills Used: _____

Skills Acquired: _____

Accomplishments: _____

Skills Match

This exercise will help you to honestly assess your attributes and skills, assisting you in making a good career decision.

1. What job-related and transferable skills are necessary to be a successful _____? (Job target) Research this information in the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*. See Section IV, Researching the Job Market, for more information.

2. From the above research, list the skills you have that match or exceed those required for your job target.

3. Prioritize those skills that you feel are most important for success in your job target. Match the skills you possess with those skills you feel will be most important for job success. The skills you match are the skills and abilities that you should emphasize in your job search process.

4. Write accomplishment statements emphasizing the skills you possess that match the requirements and demonstrate proven past success using the above skills.

Career Satisfaction

What brings you career satisfaction?

Check the factors that are most important to your vision of an ideal job.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Working with children | <input type="checkbox"/> Working alone |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Working with older adults | <input type="checkbox"/> Working as a team player |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Working outdoors | <input type="checkbox"/> Working in a technical environment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Working indoors | <input type="checkbox"/> Working without interruptions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flexible schedule | <input type="checkbox"/> Quiet atmosphere |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Regular schedule | <input type="checkbox"/> Busy atmosphere |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Evening work hours | <input type="checkbox"/> Formal environment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Daytime work hours | <input type="checkbox"/> Informal environment |

Tangible Factors

- Geographic Location
 - Length of commute
 - Amount of travel on the job
- Compensation and Benefit
 - Commission/bonus
 - Company car/expense account
 - Company investment plans
 - Salary/signing bonus/total compensation plan
- Company Profile
 - Type of industry or services
 - Size of organization
 - Service or product oriented
 - Competitive position
 - Annual sales
 - Diversified or specialized
 - Publicly or privately held

Intangible Factors

- Company Culture
 - Management philosophy
 - Perspective toward environment, social and political issues
 - Working climate
 - Political structure
 - Closeness to company headquarters
 - Diversity of staff
 - Internal social events
- Type of Manager
 - Highly supportive
 - Gives frequent feedback
 - Encourages autonomy
 - Tolerates "learning mistakes"
 - Expert in this field
 - Teacher/mentor
 - Approachable
 - Creates an environment to take risks
 - Willing to make tough decisions

The world of work is consistently changing; no one can be certain about what they will be doing for more than a few years into the future. Downsizing, outsourcing and off-shoring have resulted in reconfigured organizations almost overnight, bringing dramatic change to employers, employees, the economy and the job market.

Therefore, making an informed career decision requires information about what kind of employment opportunities will be available in the future. The job market is a result of the relationship among the consumer population, the available labor force and the demand for goods and services. Understanding this relationship will keep your job ready for this ever-changing world of work.

In today's job market, individuals can become obsolete in their knowledge base, skill sets, and attitudes almost overnight. The best defense against obsolescence is to continue learning and developing new skills through new experiences and through acquiring portable, transferable skills that will enhance employability.

Many experts stress additional training/education to keep individuals prepared to respond to both planned and unplanned changes. Obtaining a traditional four-year degree no longer insures job security or lifetime employment. Lifelong learning will become a way of maintaining marketability. Staying current with marketable skill sets gained either through work experience or through formal education/training will be imperative for employment security.

According to the Virginia-based American Society for Training and Development:

- More than 65 percent of all jobs will require education beyond the secondary level.
- More than 23 million persons will be in professional and/or technical jobs requiring on-going training and education.
- At least 50 million persons will need additional training just to perform in their current capacities.

Individuals must begin to recognize that acquiring knowledge, skills and workplace attributes/attitudes are not just obtained in your formative years, but rather it is an ongoing process. The more technological or complex the knowledge sets, the shorter the life expectancy of that information. For example, the emerging technology occurring in the industrial engineering field changes every 9 to 10 months. If an industrial engineer is unemployed for over one year, finding comparable employment becomes a critical issue. It is vital to stay current in your field in order to maintain employability.

It is equally important to understand **what factors and trends affect the job market**. No one has a crystal ball to see into the future; however, there are indicators capable of being determinants of future growth in the job market. This report will focus on those factors and how they influence the job market.

Factors Influencing the Job Market

Globalization: Integration of the United States into the World Economy

Broadening global competition continues to spur radical changes in our organizations and the way we think about business and how we deliver services and products. We will no longer determine the market value of labor by comparing Chicago to Detroit, but rather, by comparing Chicago to Hong Kong and to Munich. For many years, the United States was the leader of the Industrial World by default. However, those days appear to be long gone. Workplace expansions and reductions have been one of the most important influencing factors in the current job market. Although workplace expansion was the norm for many years in past decades, deductions and downsizing have dominated business headlines since the early 1990s.

Asia/Pacific Rim Economic Expansion

The economic, political and cultural modernization of Asia is yet another factor influencing the job market. The powerhouse of Asia, currently Japan, is the second world economic power. The economic growth of Japan has been built on trade and investment. In the early 1990s, Japan exported more goods to Asia than to the United States. However, Japan's economy has suffered since the mid 1990s.

In recent years, China, the sleeping giant of Asia, has awakened. China's economy has doubled in the past 10 years. China is not merely potentially powerful because of its size; it has a very integrated network system for trading and is known as a great entrepreneurial country throughout the world. At one time, the majority of production shifts into China were concentrated in relatively low-skill, low-wage jobs in light manufacturing industries. U.S. firms are increasingly investing in more complex, higher-end industries in China, including petrochemicals, machinery, finance, metals, and electronics. An increasing number of the jobs leaving the U.S. are in the higher-paying industries.

Influence of Technology

Technological change will bring both winners and losers among industries, companies, occupations and individuals. Technology reduces cost and increases production. Jobs are dramatically affected by technology. Some jobs are lost and some are changed beyond recognition; however, many other jobs are created. Trying to keep up with the challenges of a technology-oriented workplace has been increasingly more demanding and will remain so for many years to come.

Growth in New and/or Internet Businesses

Small/new businesses are reshaping how corporate America looks at customers and how to do business by meeting the needs of customers. As a company grows, it tends to become more bureaucratic, creating formal procedures that restrict and break down communication. Innovation is replaced by tradition. As it has been stated in almost every labor market review, employment growth is greatest in small and new companies that are emerging into corporate America. More large corporations are learning from these small businesses and are changing their philosophy from bureaucracy to an entrepreneurial environment like those found in small business.

The key to achieving an "entrepreneurial culture" lies in breaking an organization into small, efficient teams and giving them autonomy to be innovative and creative. For example, the 3M Company has always nurtured an innovative culture. More than 30 percent of 3M's revenue, approximately \$14 billion annually, comes from new products and services.

Shift of Production from Goods to Services

With the influences of rapid technological change, globalization, Asian economic growth, and the aging U.S. population, the need for goods and services is never-ending and always changing. Additionally, with the increase in communication and transportation means, products and services have been expanded to broader audiences simultaneously. Consumers now can choose from a wider range of similar products, and one type of service or goods can easily be substituted for another.

At the beginning of the 20th century, 63 percent of American workers produced goods, and only 37 percent produced services. Farming alone occupied more than 40 percent of the workforce in 1900, and manufacturing accounted for another 13 percent. Americans mainly produced *things* in those days.

But by the 1970s, the situation changed drastically. By then, only 30 percent of American workers produced goods. Farmers made up less than five percent of the workforce, and workers in manufacturing comprised 22 percent, down from the 1953 peak of 30 percent. By the 1990s, only 22 percent of the nation's total workforce produced goods. The Bureau of Economic Analysis estimates that 83 percent of the U.S. workforce will be in the service sector by 2025.

There is a major concern in the rapidly growing employment of service-oriented fields. The concern is *low-paying jobs*. Employment in goods production commanded higher salaries due to the unionization of employees. However, this is not the case with many service sector employers.

Mergers and Acquisitions

From computer giants to the world's biggest oil companies, mergers have become the favorite activity in the corporate world. Mergers are in, with new consolidation occurring on a regular basis. The good news is that these new super companies are slashing costs. The down side of this, of course, is the massive layoffs of employees. The list of companies whose reorganization and cost cutting efforts are causing layoffs is long. Merger and acquisition activity in the United States costs trillions of dollars, which happens to equal a quarter of the gross domestic product.

Baby Boomer and Echo Boomer Generations

The final force shaping our economy is a demographic one. The impact of the aging baby boomers will continue to change the world as it has throughout this generation's history. This generation numbering nearly 83 million U. S. citizens is far larger than the generations before them or those following them. Americans are living longer because of better health care, nutrition and lifestyles. Currently, individuals between the ages of 45 and 60 have the most influence on our country's economy. At this age, individuals generally have acquired more powerful positions in corporate America and in the political arena. They have become very stable in their communities and tend to provide leadership in their work environments as well as in their communities. Most importantly, they stimulate the economy more than other age groups. Individuals in this age group purchase big-ticket items such as homes, cars, vacations and college tuitions. Many if not most of these purchases may require loans, mortgages and/or installment plans. Baby boomers have reached this age group. As this large group of 83 million ages, imagine what their needs will be and the jobs will follow. The demand for goods and services for this aging population will change as they mature. Just as the baby boomers strained the capacity of the nation's elementary schools in the 50s and 60s, they will increase the demand for elderly care facilities within the next 10 to 15 years.

Because the spending patterns of retired individuals tend to favor services, the demand for these services will be vastly increased. This demand will create millions of new jobs ranging from highly skilled positions like registered nurses and doctors, to moderately skilled positions like repair persons, to unskilled labor such as home health aides and cleaning persons.

The echo boomers are the offspring of the baby boomers and are 80 million strong. They are being highly sought after by retailers. This generation is about to embark on the automobile industry. We can expect retail and services to expand to the needs of this generation.

Careers in Demand

The indicators and trends suggested in the context of this report are the result of readings and findings from dozens of career-related books, the Internet and many publications, i.e., *The Futurist*, *The Economist*, *Trend Letter*, *The Global Network, Inc.*, *Fast Company*, *Forbes*, and *The Wall Street Journal*.

Indicators previously highlighted in this report:

- Integration of the United States into the World Economy
- Pacific Rim Economic Expansion
- Technological Advancement
- Growth of New/Internet Businesses
- Shift of Production of Goods to Services
- Mergers and Acquisitions
- Influence of Baby Boomers and Echo Boomers

All of these will continue to have a great impact on the growth and development of the job market. So, what careers can be expected to show growth and provide employment for the next generations?

Research, Sciences and Biotechnology

After suffering tremendous ups and downs over the past couple of decades, scientific research has gained prominence as a political, social and economic issue in the United States. The United States seeks to protect its economic base by regaining world leadership in scientific research. More than half of the Ph.Ds in the science arena are foreign born. American students have not kept pace with students of other countries. Job openings in the area of scientific research will remain very active. The amount of money devoted to research in recent years also will contribute to the growth of these industries.

Information Technology

In the recent past, many IT positions were lost in the dot-boom era. However, employment in the Information Technology field is expected to increase by 18.5 percent, adding more than 600,000 positions. Many of the IT positions will move to the service sector arena, such as medical, government and lending. Growth in IT can be expected in industries related to software publishers, Internet publishing and broadcasting, Internet service providers, Web search portals and data processing services.

Finance, Insurance and Banking

In years past, three out of four street corners were occupied by gas stations. That trend has been replaced by the growth of the financial and banking industry. Now, when you look at street corners, you see many more financial institutions than ever before. Several factors have moved this field into one of the fastest growing industries. The United States economy is currently over \$11 trillion per year (GNP). The financial service field has grown tremendously over the past decade and is projected to grow even more rapidly in years to come. This growth directly reflects the increased number of baby boomers in their peak savings years, the growth of tax-favorable retirement plans, and the globalization of the securities markets.

Health and Medical Professions

The health care industry is huge and growing every year. About one out of every four new jobs created is in a health care related industry. As baby boomers age, the need for health and medical professionals will continue to grow at a very rapid rate.

Construction, Building and the Trades

The deterioration of bridges, roads and buildings built in the 50s, 60s and 70s will force municipalities to spend billions of dollars to repair or replace the nation's infrastructure. Additionally, as the United States demographic changes occur, the explosive growth of suburban communities and retirement housing continues, the need for skilled trade persons will also be in high demand. Additionally, this field has experienced a faster rate of individuals retiring than the rate of those individuals entering this field. This is largely due to the decrease in the number of vocational-technical programs offered at the high school level. Also, this field is not viewed as a "glamour job" in the eyes of youth. There are not many movies or television programs depicting this field in a "glamorous" fashion. However, this industry is expected to grow 15 percent by 2012.

Law, Law Enforcement and Security

Security and law enforcement have become big business! Private security agencies employ more than one million people to guard and protect schools, stores, businesses, factories and private homes. We live in a litigious society. Many people complain about the readiness with which we sue one another and the degree to which new laws and regulations are imposed on how we live or conduct business. Yet, we have more law enforcement and legal personnel than ever. Many students are attracted to careers in the law and law enforcement fields due to the fact that many local, state and federal government officials come from a law or law enforcement background glamorized by TV and the film industry. Additionally, executives with a legal background head many corporations. Careers in law and law enforcement tend to open doors.

Environmental Technology

Advancing at a rapid rate of growth is the environmental technology profession. Many view environmental technology as a noble and charitable line of work with few financial rewards. The truth is that today's environmental work is paying very well and, in fact, can be quite lucrative. The reason is that long lists of federal and state projects are funding pollution control and prevention, water and wastewater treatment. As conservation and public awareness continues to grow, so will this field.

Marketing, Sales and Business

Sales and related workers transfer goods and services among businesses and consumers. Sales and related occupations are expected to add 2 million new jobs by 2012. The majority of these will be cashiers and retail related jobs. Both echo boomers and baby boomers are largely responsible for the growth in this market. Students know how important marketing and sales are to business enterprises. Marketing and international business are the more popular business degrees being sought today.

Travel, Entertainment, Leisure and Hospitality Industries

Leisure activities are influenced by many of the same business trends that are currently benefiting the retail industries. As discretionary money and the availability of time to pursue leisure interest increases, there will be more career opportunities available. Salaries can vary from low paying positions to high paying positions. Overall employment will grow more than 17 percent by 2012.

Social Sciences

In a business sense, social sciences/services are not the best financial bet; the pay is low, the hours are long, and the rewards are sometimes only in the imagination of the providers. However, workers in this field speak readily about the "calling" to this line of work and a sense of purpose in their lives that many others never find. One thing is clear: with the growing problem and concern for the homeless, the aged, the AIDS crisis, domestic violence, drug problems, and emotionally distraught children, the need for social service providers will extend for decades to come and the money might follow.

Teaching and Training

Like the sciences and law enforcement fields, teaching and training have become a matter of national concern and importance. The well being of the United States depends on having trained workers. Economists are predicting that in the near future, we will have a labor shortage. The teaching/training profession is one of the fastest growing careers and has a great effect on our society as a whole. This field can expect growth for many years to come.

Summary of Changes in the Job Market

Although there are many uncertainties regarding the state of the economy and job market, the overall patterns of change during the last 10 to 15 years has been fairly consistent with the indicators. The patterns or indicators highlighted in this report are strong indicators of what jobs will be marketable in the next 15 to 20 years. The labor market will demand highly educated or trained workers who can create and apply the emerging new technologies to a variety of positions. Upward mobility will depend on advancing career awareness, and on improving skill and proficiency levels. Education and training opportunities, therefore, must be in the forefront of corporate America, educational and governmental decisions.

Individuals who are armed with timely information regarding careers and employment opportunities can determine those skills they will need for career advancement. The problem today is that most people do not have access to good information regarding labor markets or educational programs. Nor do individuals have the necessary information to match their interests, values and abilities with the supply and demand of the job market. In most communities, no one entity is responsible for or assumes the role of providing labor market information or career development information to adults preparing for careers. The same holds true at the high school and college levels. There seems to be a mismatch between higher education and the labor force. Colleges are largely inflexible in responding to labor market demands because of funding mechanisms and tenure faculty systems.

The future holds incredible promise and opportunities for U.S. workers. However, the need to take personal responsibility as individuals, parents, educators and employers and confronting these changes is imperative to continual growth of our nation. Outdated government programs, corporate practices, educational programs/degrees and individual skills, abilities and knowledge need to be altered and updated to successfully keep pace with the upcoming economic realities.

Once you have identified careers in which you have an interest, it is time to research these selected careers. The more thoroughly you research your desired occupation, the more realistic your expectation will be of these fields. Also, you will be better equipped to make an informed career decision.

Your research should answer the following questions:

- What responsibilities and skills does this field require?
- What are the advancement opportunities?
- Does the salary structure meet my requirements?
- What is the future outlook for this career?
- Are my most important values being met in this career?
- What training or education is required?

Reference Materials

An excellent resource is the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* published by the U.S. Department of Labor. This publication lists more than 260 occupations and provides vital information for each occupation. The *Occupational Outlook Handbook* includes information on an occupation's nature of work, working conditions, employment, training, advancement opportunities, job outlook, salary, professional associations and sources for additional information. This publication is available in any library and is also online. The web address is: www.bls.gov/oco/

The *O*Net OnLine* provides detailed descriptions for occupations covering nearly 100 percent of the U.S. workforce. This resource includes information on earnings, education, tasks, skills and related jobs. It can be found online at <http://online.onetcenter.org/>

The *Dictionary of Occupational Titles* (DOT) is a directory that lists more than 14,000 occupations and gives a brief description of these occupations. It can be found online at www.occupationalinfo.org or in the College of DuPage Library.

Informational Interviewing

The Informational Interview is a tool that will assist you in obtaining the information you need to identify your career target. The Informational Interview is based on the premise that the best way to get information on particular fields is by talking with a professional who actually works in those fields.

You have the opportunity to meet people who share your enthusiasm, have similar talents and interests, and are using them in their careers. These people may know about possible networking opportunities in their fields and can share this information with you. You will also gain experience, self-confidence and skill in interviewing with professionals regarding your career interests. Informational Interviewing often yields insightful information and advice, and can result in employment leads.

How do you go about completing an informational interview?

- Select an occupation you would like to know more about. Do library research on the occupation.
- Ask your friends or relatives to give you a contact name of someone in your desired occupation.
- Begin contacting people who work in this field.
- Call companies with employees in this field and ask for someone who could provide you with some insight regarding your desired occupation.
- When you contact a professional, ask if you can spend 15 to 20 minutes of their time obtaining more information about the field.
- Be prepared with the following questions:
 - How did you get started in this type of work?
 - How would you describe your present job responsibilities and duties?
 - How do you spend a typical day?
 - What training or education did you receive for this position?
 - What do you like best about your job? What do you like least?
 - How difficult is it to obtain an entry-level position in your line of work?
 - What are some important issues/skills that a person going into this field should know?
 - What are the current trends in this industry?
 - What is your opinion on the future of this career?
 - Is there anything else I should know about the industry?
 - What advice can you give me?
- Ask if they could recommend others to talk to who are in the same field.
- Thank the person for the opportunity to talk.
- The next day, send a letter thanking the person for taking the time to help you to prepare for your future.

Remember to ask for business cards so you will have your contact's name and job title for future reference.

Follow-up

Always send a follow-up letter or e-mail thanking them for the opportunity to meet, and for their time and expertise. This is an important courtesy often overlooked. This keeps you in mind and strengthens your position as someone who would be an asset to a company. See the sample thank-you letter after "Informational Interview" in this booklet.

Goals and objectives are the vehicles that lead to success. Goals are broad statements of purpose; objectives are specific and practical steps used to accomplish those goals. When you identify specific objectives, you increase the probability for achieving your goals.

Consider these five points when setting goals:

- Identify what you are willing to sacrifice to attain your goals.
- Give yourself a realistic length of time to attain your goals.
- Set your goals high yet realistic enough to be achieved.
- Reward yourself after completing each step toward your goals.
- Be sure that your goals are really your goals, and not someone else's goals.

Identifying a career goal is the direct result of thorough self-assessment. The more time and effort you devote to identifying your skills, abilities, interests and values, the more completely you can determine your career objectives. This will also help you achieve your goal. Employers are looking for people who know what they do best and know where they want to go and how they can make an impact at their organization.

A key to identifying a career goal is overcoming the hurdle of negative thinking. Put aside any fears, excuses and old paradigms. Convert that energy into creating and accomplishing objectives and setting new paradigms that will lead to your optimal career goal.

Prepare for Multiple Careers

Keep in mind that career planning is not a one-time occurrence. It is a lifelong process. Job seekers in today's market must be flexible, keep their options open, and stay current on global, national and local economic trends. The days of remaining in one career with one employer have long vanished. Job seekers need to continually look for growth opportunities within their company and/or prepare to transition to a different occupation.

Here are some ways you can stay prepared:

- Keep current with employment trends.
- Stay updated with the latest technological advancements.
- Be flexible, and keep an open mind.
- Become comfortable with career changing.

Job security has been replaced by career management. Be prepared to move through a series of different careers. Career management is an ongoing process and allows you to be in charge of your own career.

Developing Career Goals and Objectives

Answer these questions to begin developing career goals and objectives as part of the process of obtaining your ideal job.

- Are you looking for a job in a specific field or industry? Describe as completely as possible the fields or industries that you believe best fit your skills, attributes, interests and values.
- How would you describe your preferred next job? Be as complete as possible.
- What do you consider the five most valuable professional skills or abilities that you can offer a prospective employer? (Examples: electronics skills, sales experience, planning and organizational ability, superior communication skills.)
- What would be your ideal job five years from now?
- List the steps you must accomplish to obtain your ideal job. (Examples: advanced education, development of managerial skills.)
- Develop a job-search plan with a calendar schedule that includes daily, weekly and monthly goals and activities.

The resume has been recognized by job seekers as the most important basic requirement for the job-search process. People now spend more time researching, developing and producing quality resumes than in past years. When an opening is advertised, the employer may receive hundreds of resumes. Job seekers must be well-versed in the styles and techniques of resume development to be competitive.

A resume is a summary of paid and unpaid work experience, accomplishments, capabilities and skills. The secret of an effective resume is to target and highlight the skills, abilities and experiences most important for success in that position. It is essential that you identify the top five skills required for the career you are pursuing and incorporate those skills into your resume.

For the job seeker: Resumes serve as a sales tool and an introduction to the employer. The purpose is to get an interview that, in turn, will get you the job. For that reason, your resume must project you in a positive light. Your first objective is to get the interview!

For the employer: The resume serves as a preliminary screening device. By reading resumes, the employer can easily compare candidates' educational backgrounds and employment histories, thereby limiting the number of individuals invited to interview.

Preparation/Research

Writing a good resume cannot be accomplished overnight or at one sitting. Your resume must project you as being unique among all the applicants and best suited for the position. To establish that, it is essential to complete a thorough assessment of your skills and abilities targeting your career objective. This assessment will provide the foundation for drafting your resume. It may take many attempts to develop an effective resume for your career target.

Identify the specific position(s) you want. Learn what skills are needed for that position. This research can be done in the library and/or in an informational interview. (See Section IV — Researching the Job Market.)

Resume Formats

Employers want to see a top quality resume — an attractive error-free document that represents your best self. The main idea is to keep your resume professional, concise, factual and current. Always prioritize components/categories according to what is most important to the employer. Resumes may be written in several formats.

Chronological Resume

The chronological resume effectively highlights dates of employment, employers' names, skills acquired, accomplishments and responsibilities for each position listed. All employment and educational background is listed in reverse chronological order.

One of the major benefits in developing a chronological resume is that employers are most familiar and most comfortable with this format. The chronological format is excellent for individuals who have a strong and continuous employment history that relates to the career they are pursuing.

Skills-Based Resume

The skills-based resume highlights your skills and abilities in specific skill areas. This format emphasizes specific skills and abilities that are related to the profession you are pursuing. The skills-based format is effective for individuals who have changed careers, who are in the process of changing careers, or who have a work history that is not continuous. Information regarding employment history is included in the resume and usually is listed at the end.

Electronic Resume

The introduction of electronic technology into the job search process has made an impact on the way individuals find jobs and the way employers screen applicants. Many large, mid-sized and even relatively small corporations use scanners and searching of resume databases by computers using retrieval software. If you have not designed a resume to accommodate this technology, you might be hindering your job search. Consider these elements when preparing your electronic resume:

- Avoid using lines, italicizing, underlining, shading or various graphics. This makes the information unscannable.
- Limit your use of bold type. Instead use capital lettering.
- Bullets must be filled in and dark. Scanners will read hollow bullets as the letter “o.”
- Use adequate white space on top, bottom, margins and between sections.
- Font size should be from 10 to 14. Font size 14 would only be used for names and possibly headings. Very large or very small fonts present scanning problems.
- It is best to use the following fonts for scannable resumes: Arial, Helvetica, Futura, Times New Roman and Palatino.
- Your name and page number should be included at the top of each page on its own line.
- Write out specific terms and acronyms, e.g. UNIX, Visual BASIC and C++ instead of merely listing generalized “programming languages.” Avoid abbreviations of organizations because the software scan program may not recognize it.
- At the top of your resume, provide links to your experience and education. Experience is usually the first quality employers look for in candidates. A fancy resume will not get you the job if you do not have the right qualifications. Many online resumes provide hyperlinked examples of their work.
- An e-mail hyperlink provides an easy way for prospective employers to contact you by e-mail. By clicking on the link, they can send you a message, ask questions or request additional information. Anything that makes it easier for recruiters improves your chances of being called for an interview.

The following categories should be included in your resume:

Contact Information — Heading

Place your name, permanent address, home and cell telephone numbers and e-mail prominently at the top of your resume. Do not include work phone numbers. Your e-mail address should sound professional; avoid casual terms and nicknames.

Career Objective — Optional

An objective is NOT always needed. If your most current work experience and education is in your targeted field, it is not necessary to include an objective. As an alternative to using a career objective, you can incorporate your career objective as the first sentence in your summary of qualifications.

If you decide to use a career objective, describe your professional objective or direction in clear, concise words. Be specific. The objective should be a simple statement referring to the career area you have targeted. It should not be so narrow as to be restrictive or so broad that it is too vague. Employers prefer a focused applicant. Avoid using a career objective that is unfocused and general for any job, since it might give the impression that you are not certain of your career path. The following is an example of an appropriate career objective: "Seeking a networking position in the IT field."

Summary of Qualifications

The summary of qualifications section is the most important part of your resume. It is your opportunity to highlight related skills that are most valuable to your career. This is the category in which you can really sell yourself, and it is the first area employers really look at. List your achievements, best professional/personal attributes and your related experience. Include special talents such as awards, foreign languages, and knowledge level of computers, specifying software, hardware and operations systems. The summary consists of a four- or five-sentence paragraph, four-to-five bullets, or a combination of a paragraph and bulleted skill sets representing your accomplishments specific to the career target.

Education

Begin with your most recent college-level degree or educational experience and then work backward chronologically. List the college/school name, city and state, degree/diploma conferred, major and graduation date. Optional items include honors and awards, GPA (if 3.0 or higher on a 4.0 scale), relevant coursework, affiliations and activities. List any college organization, government and/or club involvement by highlighting the positions you held and your dates of involvement. Describe your activities, experiences and contributions that add value to your resume.

Employment History

Begin with your most recent experience and work backward chronologically. List the name of the organization, city, state, position title, dates of employment (only the year is required), description of duties, and technical and transferable skills acquired. For your resume to be dynamic, state results. Provide achievements, not just duties and responsibilities. Include action words and quantify your data whenever possible, such as, "*Supervised and evaluated a staff of 25 professionals.*" See sample action verbs in this booklet.

The priority order for listing education and employment history can be interchangeable. New college graduates should put education first. Individuals who have been in the work place for several years should put employment history first, especially if your work experience is related to your job target.

You do not need to list every position you have held on your resume. Instead, include those positions that add value to your resume. The rule of thumb is to include employment experience that dates back no more than 10 to 15 years.

Impact Statements are the KEY TO RESUME SUCCESS!

Rather than only listing duties you performed in your previous jobs, include impact statements on your resume. Impact statements describe how your performance affected the company's outcomes. Impact statements should describe specific, measurable outcomes, such as an increase in sales volume, decrease in employee turnover, decrease in amount of time required to perform certain tasks, etc. Impact statements will be most valuable if you can relate them directly to the requirements of your targeted position. If you are not sure about ways you have impacted a company, refer to past performance reviews and talk with previous employers/supervisors.

Impact statements can be incorporated into your summary of accomplishments, can be placed in a category called career highlights, or can be incorporated into your employment history!

Examples:

- Conceived and implemented manufacturing communications system, **increasing annual production capacity \$20 million.**
- Developed unique direct mail program, **enhancing revenue stream \$2 million annually.**
- Consistently exhibited superior customer focus resulting **in high level of repeat and referral business.**
- Negotiated innovative facility lease contract, **reducing annual expenditure by 20 percent.**
- **Raised** more than \$2,000 with student participation in the American Heart Association's Heart Walk.

Note: The part in **BOLD** indicates the **IMPACT STATEMENT**. Most resumes end with just a description or accomplishment. The impact statement indicates how it made an impact with the employer.

Volunteer Efforts or Community Activities (optional)

List community involvement by highlighting the organization names, date of involvement and the position held (if applicable). Briefly describe your volunteer efforts by providing the activities and experience in which you were involved. List only those experiences that relate to and enhance your career objective.

References

This section is no longer used in today's resumes. Instead, on a separate sheet of paper that matches your resume paper, list three to five professional references that have agreed to discuss your qualifications and background. Include at least three ways for these references to be contacted. Your list of references is only provided to the employer when requested.

It is essential to check with your references and give them notification if an employer will be contacting them. Coach your references regarding the job you are seeking and the skills you could bring to that company. A very effective way to provide reference information is to briefly write of your relationship with this reference.

Example:

Mr. B. is the former general manager of the Chicago Transportation District. He was a supervisor and my mentor for more than five years. He can attest to my capabilities in project management, community relations, supervision, communication and problem solving skills.

Additional Factors to Consider When Preparing Your Resume

You should pay particular attention to the details and exacting quality required in producing a first-rate resume.

Review and Proofread

Ask several people to assist you in proofreading your resume. Misspelled words can be deadly to your success in today's competitive job market. Grammatical errors, even minor ones, can quickly eliminate you from consideration. Since you will have spent considerable time developing your resume, it is possible you may have overlooked minor spelling errors or other mistakes. This step will help you avoid errors before it is too late to correct them.

Design and Layout

Use adequate “white space.” Have a good balance between white space and text. This makes an aesthetically pleasing resume. If your resume has long paragraphs, information from margin to margin and not enough white space, it looks cluttered, overwhelming and not easily readable. On the other hand, if your resume has too much white space and not enough information selling your skills, your qualifications look limited and unimportant. Ask professionals in your career field to give you feedback on your resume.

Format

Use the following tips for formatting your resume:

- Personal pronouns (such as I, my, they, our) are not used in the resume.
- Full sentences are not used. Instead use accomplishment phrases that begin with an action verb. (See listing of action verbs in this booklet.)
- Be consistent when formatting your resume. If you abbreviate the state in your address, use that abbreviation throughout. (Use the U.S. Postal Service abbreviations for states.)
- The company name along with the city and state location are included. The company address, zip code, phone number, supervisor name and phone number are not included.
- If you italicize or bold particular sections, use italics or bold on all similar sections.
- Use a consistent font throughout your entire resume. This gives a uniform appearance and adds to the resume’s professional appearance.

Paper

Even though most resumes are transmitted electronically, you will need to bring hard copies of your resume to interviews. The following are tips for printing your resume:

- Use good quality, white, off-white or light gray paper. These colors are acceptable and will add to the professionalism you seek.
- Your cover letter and envelope should be the same texture paper and color.
- Do not staple or paperclip your resume and cover letter together. If your resume is more than one page, list your name and Page Two on the top of the second page.
- White paper with black ink should be utilized for electronic or fax transmissions.

VIII. Key Resume Words

With your current position, use present tense verbs. With your past employment use the past tense of verbs.

ability	encouraged	presented
academic	equipped	processed
accomplished	established	productive
accountable	evaluated	professional
accurately	evolved	proficient
achieved	executed	projected
actively	expanded	promoted
adapted	experience	proven
adjusted	fabricated	provided
advised	facilitated	qualifications
altered	feasible	qualified
analyzed	forecasted	quality
appraised	formed	recommended
approved	founded	regrouped
arranged	generated	reorganized
assessed	guided	reported
assisted	handle	repositioned
attained	helped	represented
audited	implemented	resourceful
balanced	improved	responsible
briefed	increased	rethought
capability	influenced	revamped
capacity	initiated	reviewed
clarified	innovated	revised
collaborated	inspected	scheduled
compared	instructed	scope
competency	instrumental	selected
compiled	interpreted	served
completed	investigated	significant
computed	knowledgeable	solved
conceived	led	sound
conducted	made	source
consistently	maintained	specialized
contributed	major	streamlined
controlled	manage	substantially
counseled	mature	successfully
created	monitored	supervised
defined	motivated	supported
delegated	observed	taught
demonstrated	organized	trained
designed	originated	transferred
developed	participated	updated
directed	particularly	used
discovered	performed	verified
effectiveness	positive	versatile
efficiently	potential	vigorously
eliminated	prepared	wrote

IX. Sample Resumes

Chronological Resume (Entry Level)

John T. Smith

444 Oak Street
Glen Ellyn, IL 60137

Home: (630) 777-7777
Cell: (630) 888-0888

Smith444@hotmail.com

Objective: Seeking a position as a Lab Assistant in an educational or medical area.

Summary of Qualifications:

- Professional and academic experience as a Computer Lab Aide.
- Extensive knowledge of computer hardware and software, including web site development and customized building of computers.
- Technical skills: Microsoft Office Suite, including Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access, Microsoft Visio, Front Page, Microsoft Windows XP/NT/2000.
- Proven track record in effectively training faculty, staff and college students using various software.
- Hard-worker, quick learner, responsible, team player, honest.

Education:

College of DuPage, Glen Ellyn, IL
Associate in Science, Computer Engineering
GPA = 3.4/4.0

December 200X

Experience:

College of DuPage, Glen Ellyn, IL
Computer Lab Aide

2006 to Present

- Assist faculty, staff and college students using various computer software.
- Maintain computer equipment, software, printers, scanners and copy machines to ensure equipment is in working order.
- Complete various administrative projects efficiently and accurately.
- Provide excellent customer service in going above and beyond in resolving software and hardware problems.

Office Max, Naperville, IL
Computer Sales Associate (Seasonal)

Fall 2006

- Identified customer's computer needs and requirements and made appropriate recommendations for selection.
- Promoted to sales associate from cashier after one month.

Freedom Home Mortgage Company, Glen Ellyn, IL
Telemarketer

2005 to 2006

- Performed networking of company's computer systems.
- Used superior communication skills to assist customers in refinancing homes.

Sample Resumes

Chronological Resume (Support Staff)

Sue Mansion
4444 E. 50th Street
Winfield, IL 66666
(630) 665-XXXX
Mansions@gmail.com

Summary of Qualifications

Bilingual and knowledgeable technical liaison and assistant with strong administrative skills who takes initiative to identify problems and develop solutions. Experienced in technical support and managing the workflow for day-to-day operations. Proficient in MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Access, Outlook, Windows NT/XP, Lotus Notes and Adobe Acrobat. Knowledgeable in Dreamweaver, Photoshop, Image Ready and Illustrator. Fluent in Spanish.

Professional Experience

Wabauunsee College, Aurora, IL

Administrative Assistant

2005 to present

Provides extensive administrative support for four Counseling Center Program Directors.
Supervises two student workers. Schedules, arranges and facilitates program meetings and activities.

- Implement tracking system and procedures needed for grant reporting which significantly increased ease of information retrieval.
- Implement daily office procedures improving efficiency of office operations.
- Develop marketing pieces and correspondence for all program activities resulting in an increased student population engagement.

McDonald's Corporation, Oak Brook, IL

2000 to 2004

Administrative Assistant (2001 to 2004)

Provided technical support to Supply Chain Management Department; designed interactive presentations, updated templates for manuals, solved technical issues relating to software, hardware and network functions; fulfilled the role of technical liaison between Information Technology Department and Supply Chain Department.

- Tracked and maintained hardware/software inventory resulting in a 20% reduction in overall costs.
- Implemented departmental technology training process that promoted efficiency and reduced administrative expenses.
- Recommended appropriate software for ongoing projects to ensure consistency and efficiency.
- Facilitated software rollouts and ongoing upgrades and responded to employee inquiries with regard to rollouts and upgrades, such as Windows 2000 and Lotus Notes 5.5.
- Designed and developed departmental worldwide website to promote effective and timely communication across global supply chain network.
- Reduced print and mailing costs by transferring print materials to a web-ready format.

Sample Resumes

Chronological Resume (Support Staff)

Susan Mansion

Page Two

Administrative Secretary (2000 to 2001)

Performed full range of administrative support to 2 senior directors and Assistant Vice President of Supply Chain Management Department; drafted and prepared correspondence; designed presentations; managed domestic and international travel arrangements; maintained business calendars; scheduled and arranged business meetings; assisted employees with various computer related issues.

- Assisted employees with computer software/desktop problems and trained them in the effective use of their computer resources and software applications increasing their knowledge, efficiency and productivity.
- Maintained accuracy of supplier database, reducing the amount of returned mail.
- Coordinated monthly department meetings, luncheons and outings resulting in employee camaraderie and satisfaction.

Jones & Associates, Inc., Chicago, IL

1997 to 2000

Office Manager (1999 to 2000)

Directed staff of 6 responsible for accounts payable/receivable and production sections for a photographic firm specializing in tradeshow and large-scale events.

- Directed the day-to-day operations with production manager in CEO's absence.
- Monitored staff workflow to meet tight production deadlines reducing overall operation and production costs.
- Trained office staff in Windows 95 and Office 97 to enable transition to new network environment.
- Reconciled daily account receivables and production reports and bank deposits.

Executive Assistant (1997 to 1999)

Performed a full range of administrative support; drafted and prepared correspondence; managed travel arrangements; maintained complex business/social calendar; screened/answered mail and telephone calls.

- Developed templates for manuals and documents to create consistency and eliminate redundancy.
- Created and maintained databases to streamline sales and marketing mailings and reduced cost of overall production.
- Developed an information folder to increase awareness regarding company's resources and services to increase client base.
- Researched and resolved high level customer complaints to ensure continual customer satisfaction.

Education/Professional Development

Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL

B.A. Sociology; Certificate in Urban Studies

Franklin-Covey, 7 Habits of Highly Effective People

Sample Resumes

Chronological Resume (Management Level)

Martin Bold
6666 South Fairfield Avenue
Westgate, IL 60555
Phone: (630) 666-6666
Cell: (630) 444-6666
martinbold@comcast.net

SALES AND MARKETING EXECUTIVE

Expert in building top-producing business relationships with start-up ventures and high growth companies. Provide expertise in new market development, key account relationship management, product purchasing and pricing. Possess high integrity and business ethics. Consistently increased account base and sales at each position. Skilled in the following:

Sales Management	Business Planning and Forecasting
Customer Relationship Management	New Marketing and Business Development
Direct Marketing Strategies	Financial Negotiations and Vendor Transactions

SALES EXPERIENCE

PLP Direct Marketing Company **Elk Grove Village, IL** **2005 to present**
Senior Sales Consultant

Major Accomplishments: Increased account base by 300% through assertive salesmanship; took new sales position from minimal sales to \$2 M in less than two years.

- Pursued, acquired and developed large high volume accounts with Fortune 500 companies.
- Devised multi-channel marketing strategies for various companies to achieve maximum Return on Investment, increasing corporate sales and profits by 15%.
- Developed new market segments for Paw Print that would utilize our services. These included Universities, Cable Television Providers and Telecommunication.

DK Mailing Services **Schiller Park, IL** **2003 to 2005**
Sales Executive

Major Accomplishments: Generated business through the development of NEW accounts resulting in exceeding \$1M.

- Established new sales accounts by cold calling resulting in qualifying and converting 33% of leads into new business.
- Negotiated with outside vendors to develop a one-stop shop for new clients (envelopes, paper, printing, etc.) resulting in extensive repeat business.
- Earned six annual company wide sales awards for being in the top five in sales.
- Customized and designed direct mail strategies for accounts.

Sample Resumes

Chronological Resume (Management Level)

Martin Bold

Page Two

LDS Fabrics

Deerfield, IL

1997 to 2003

VP Sales/General Manager (2001 to 2003)

Major Accomplishment: Developed long term business relationship, which generated sales of \$5M. Rose to position of Vice President/General Manager.

- Directed sales and field activities of 15 account executives.
- Established successful method of purchasing all merchandise from vendors on a contractual basis.
- Developed efficient manufacturing and distribution process for various home furnishing products.
- Designed and implemented channels of distribution to ensure fast turnover of inventory.

Account Executive (1997 to 2001)

- Generated and secured new accounts which increased sales by 15% within 2 years.
- Demonstrated excellent negotiation skills resulting in most cost effective pricing for purchase and resale of merchandise.

PRIOR EXPERIENCE

Gallo Winery/Romano Brothers, four years

- Increased sales and profits a minimum of 35% per year.

Home Depot, three years — part-time

- No.1 sales associate in region for sales of window treatments to general public.

EDUCATION

University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI

Bachelor of Business Administration

Major: Marketing Minor: Finance

Sample Resumes

Chronological Resume (Executive Level)

Larry Richard

111 Royal Lane
Aurora, IL 60504

larryrichard@execgroup.com
(630) 111-1111

PROFILE

Management professional with significant expertise in **sales** and **marketing**. Extensive background in **global product management**. Full **P&L** responsibility with excellent record initiating and implementing strategies for **cost reduction**, improved efficiencies, **increased profitability** and enhanced **shareholder value**. Successful record of **fast growth**, **start-up** and **turn-around** management. Effective **change agent**, communicator and **mentor**. **Innovative** problem solver, **motivator** and **team builder**.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE SUMMARY

Executive Group, Chicago, IL

Principal/Consultant

2001-Present

Boutique financial, technical and management consulting firm

- Developed and implemented corporate operating, marketing, public relations and financial plans, **increasing revenues** from \$500K to \$2MM and **profit margins** from 4 to 30% within first year.
- Created best practice advertising program, **increasing sales 200%**.
- Conceived and produced promotional video, securing 23 new corporate accounts.
- Established innovative financial program, **reducing cost 30%**, saving \$100K annually.
- Negotiated and secured new contracts, yielding **\$500K per year new sales**.
- Formulated manufacturing communications system, raising annual production capacity \$20MM.
- Initiated unique direct mail program, **enhancing revenue** stream \$2MM annually.
- Executed national and international expansion plan, resulting in first year **increase of 50 national and 28 international chapters**.
- Designed and produced live stage production to secure new contracts and clients, resulting in one new contract for 126 performances and 11 new clients.

E-Market, Chicago, IL

Principal/Vice President

1997-2001

\$150 million, multi-location computer retailer

- Developed and implemented strategic expansion plan which expanded customer base, resulting in **\$20MM** increase in annual revenues.
- Consolidated inventory operations, **increasing profitability \$200K** per year.
- Originated an innovative telemarketing program, **increasing sales 15%**.
- Created and implemented innovative print advertising campaign, **increasing** annual sales **\$15MM** per year.
- Initiated innovative sales and marketing strategies for IBM application software and HP laser printers, resulting in **recognition as the national sales leader**.

Sample Resumes

Chronological Resume (Executive Level)

Larry Richard

Page 2 of 2

ABC Corporation, New York, New York

1992-1997

Product Manager (1995-1997)

Global non-impact printer technology, \$1 billion revenue accountability

- Directed **global product development** strategies in 123 countries, successfully reducing cost by 2%.
- Established innovative **global competitive analysis** manual, resulting in increased sales of 7%.
- Executed TV and print advertising campaign to turnaround falling sales; results significantly **exceeded** corporate objectives by **15%**.
- Completed strategic long range technology development forecast, proved 98% accuracy, enhanced development focus and reduced cost 5%.

Marketing Manager (1992-1995)

Branch sales and marketing, \$30MM annual revenue responsibility

- Instituted marketing plans for **20 person team**, which resulted in achieving of team annual objective within 90 days and **exceeding annual objectives** by **220%** within 9 months.
- Negotiated first government contract for PC products, resulting in **\$1MM** annual **sales** contract.
- Conceived and implemented first direct mail catalog program, resulting in the establishment of IBM Direct.
- Established cost reduction program resulting in the **lowest cost to sales ratio** in the Midwest Region.
- Implemented innovative motivational approach, resulting in **team achievements** of **48 consecutive months, exceeding** organizational **objectives**.
- Developed sales strategies, resulting in **exceeding annual performance objectives** in less than **three months** on two occasions.

EDUCATION

MBA, Finance

Harvard University

Bachelor of Business Administration and Accounting

University of Hawaii

Sample Resumes

Skills Based Resume

Anne Mickelson

1210 Rosebud Ct.
Wheaton, IL 60187
Home (630) 555-5555
Cell (630) 444-4444
Email: abcd@wowway.com

Profile:

Highly motivated professional seeking a customer service position utilizing my diversified experience. Strong organizational and communication skills. Proficient in Microsoft Office with particular emphasis on customer database and inventory programs. Proven ability to work effectively with all levels of personnel. Resourceful, goal oriented closer.

Summary of Skills:

Communication/Customer Service:

- Conducted informative and entertaining public tours of Chicago Loop for corporate guests and visitors.
- Showed and leased properties elaborating on the advantages and highlights of individual units.
- Effectively interfaced with individual and corporate sponsors for ongoing contracts.
- Created and presented in-house seminars regarding quality ratings, amenities, style and destination served by Apple.
- Provided exceptional customer service and problem solving resulting in being given authority to make decisions with disgruntled passengers.
- Coordinated corporate communications between management and sales force.

Sales/Marketing:

- Responsible for sales and service for company's top 10% customer base.
- Researched Fortune 500 companies for leads — identified one new client resulting in a \$4MM sale, largest single sale.
- Successfully completed cold calling to develop leads with "decision maker" to establish national account.

Administrative:

- Managed office of three support staff for newly developed company.
- Coordinated all aspects of corporate parties/events for Fortune 500 company with 500 participants.
- Processed leasing agreements and mortgage closings of condominiums.
- Efficiently scheduled property maintenance to ensure homeowner's satisfaction.
- Maintained data base for recording sales information utilizing Lotus Notes.

Experience:

Range Steel Corporation, Broadview, IL	Account Executive	2005–present
Prescott Park Town Homes, Plano, TX	Leasing Agent	2003–2005
Apple Vacations, Dallas, TX	Meeting Planner	2001–2003

A career portfolio is a collection of documents and other artifacts that demonstrate your past performance and academic accomplishments. Customizing your portfolio to match the job opening can be instrumental in providing a polished, professional image for your interview. Choose documents that highlight your most valuable, targeted and current work.

Your portfolio can be packaged in a three-ring notebook or a portfolio case that is available at office supply stores.

Another option for your portfolio is to use a computer-based system, which can either be kept on diskette or posted/accessed on the Internet. Electronic portfolios eliminate the concern of the best time to present your portfolio to the employer. You want your portfolio to add to your interview presentation, not distract the employer from you and your accomplishments. An electronic portfolio can be left with the employer to view after the interview without worrying about it being returned!

Ideas for selecting documents to include are:

- Achievements in relation to the potential employer's requirements.
- Copies of awards
- Marketing plans
- Performance evaluations
- Innovative projects
- College transcripts
- Business reports, charts, graphs
- Writing samples
- Certificates, recommendations, awards,
- Outlines, blueprints
- Technology documentation
- Reference information

Word of Caution: Make sure that you are not sharing intellectual property of your prior and/or current employer. Everything you include in your portfolio should not cause any legal concerns.

An effective job search involves several different types of letters, such as the cover letter, thank you letter, letter following telephone inquiry, thank you after informational interview, first initial thank you, second thank you, thank you/acceptance, and declining. This section provides tips for preparing effective correspondence related to your job search. Presenting a professional image often begins with how you represent yourself on paper. Many times the cover letter and resume become the employer's first impression of you.

Customize your correspondence to meet the requirements for the position applied for and to meet the employer's specific needs. Research the company to gain insight on its goals and philosophy. Evaluate your correspondence as if it were the final exam for a critical college course, and then refine your work until you are completely satisfied.

Produce a Top-Rated Letter

Evaluate your final correspondence using the checklist provided below. If you have checked "No" to any of these, rework your cover letter to improve its effectiveness.

- | | | |
|--|----------|---------|
| 1. Presents an overall professional appearance in order to make a favorable impression | Yes ____ | No ____ |
| 2. Is concise, yet gets the point across | Yes ____ | No ____ |
| 3. Radiates a positive, energetic tone | Yes ____ | No ____ |
| 4. Is individualized to meet specific needs of employers | Yes ____ | No ____ |
| 5. Produced on a high-quality printer | Yes ____ | No ____ |
| 6. Proofread and checked for errors | Yes ____ | No ____ |
| 7. Printed on high quality paper | Yes ____ | No ____ |
| 8. Expresses appreciation for reviewer's time | Yes ____ | No ____ |
| 9. Lays foundation for future communication | Yes ____ | No ____ |

The cover letter is an essential part of your correspondence with an employer in your job search. It is important to take the opportunity to submit a cover letter no matter which method of transmittal you use — postal mailing, emailing or faxing. It serves as your personal introduction to the employer. A cover letter is most effective when individualized for a specific employer and position. Whenever possible, a cover letter should be addressed to a particular person rather than “Dear Search Team.” Specific names and titles of employers may be obtained by consulting various reference directories. For the most current information, contact the company directly and ask for the appropriate person’s name and title.

Objectives of the Cover Letter

- To express your interest to the employer regarding their organization and career opportunity
- To demonstrate how your education and experience directly relate to the position in which you are interested
- To suggest a possible meeting time for you and the employer

The Introductory Paragraph (one paragraph)

The first paragraph should state the position for which you are applying and mention how you learned of the position and /or the name of the person referring you.

The Body (one or two paragraphs)

These paragraphs should refer to the enclosed resume. Explain your interest in working for this company, and emphasize your personal qualifications that directly relate to that organization and position. ***Include point for point, your skills and experience that match the employer’s desired qualities.*** A bulleted format to provide this information can be most effective. This is where thorough self-assessment pays off.

The Closing

The last paragraph should thank the employer for his or her time and for considering you for this position. State the desired response and suggest an interview/appointment. You may also indicate that you will be contacting them to follow-up.

Guidelines for Writing a Cover Letter

Keep your cover letter short, energetic, enthusiastic and to the point, usually not more than three or four paragraphs. Avoid overusing the words “I, me, mine” when writing your letter. Address your cover letter to a specific person, preferably to the person who will make the hiring decision. Print your cover letter on good quality 8 ½ by 11-inch paper that matches your resume.

If you are e-mailing your resume, use the same cover letter principles for your e-mail. The resume is included as an attachment.

XIII. Sample Job Search Correspondence

Sample: Cover Letter

April 16, 20XX

John R. Davis
1234 Main Street
Glen Ellyn, IL 60137
(630) 555-5555

Mary Patterson
Section Manager
CATERPILLAR
16399 W. Orchard Drive
Aurora, IL 60525

Dear Ms. Patterson:

In June 20XX, I will be graduating from Northern Illinois University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering. I am writing to explore present or future employment opportunities as a Control Systems Engineer at your Aurora facility.

Early in my course work at NIU, I seriously began considering future employment with Caterpillar. We use a number of your products in our laboratory work, and their design, precision and reliability are impressive. More recently, however, I noted in a professional computing journal that you are undertaking a new project to implement microcomputers in automatic control systems. Many of my electives were in the fields of control systems and computer, and worked for three summers in microcomputer applications. I feel that I am well-qualified to begin my professional employment on your new product.

I have enclosed my resume providing additional information about my undergraduate work and campus activities. I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to discuss how my education and experience would be consistent with your needs.

Sincerely,

John R. Davis

Enclosure

Sample Job Search Correspondence

Sample: Cover Letter

March 7, 20XX

John R. Davis
1234 Main Street
Glen Ellyn, IL 60137
(630) 555-5555
Davis@aol.com

Mr. Sidney Helm
ABC Company
1112 Michigan Avenue
Chicago, IL 60604

Dear Mr. Helm:

I am writing in response to your Tribune advertisement for Corporate and Technical Editor which appeared Sunday, June 29, 20XX. Enclosed is my resume for your review.

By description, the skills required for the position reflect my own career development from a technical writer and promotion specialist to my technical training as a programmer and systems analyst. My specialization in computers began with a variety of writing projects for computer clients. That experience prompted me to increase my technical know-how. I consider myself a proficient journalist and have developed a rapport with software developers and managers in the data processing environment. In addition, I have worked with systems developers and programmers designing and documenting business applications.

I would appreciate an opportunity to present my qualifications in a personal interview to discuss how I can fulfill your needs. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

John R. Davis

Enclosure

Sample Job Search Correspondence

Sample: Cover Letter — Executive Level

LARRY RICHARD
195 Royal Lane
Aurora, IL 60504
(630) 111-1111
larryrichard@execgroup.com

May 5, 20xx

Person Name
Dept
Company Name
Address
City, IL Zip

RE: Position title (Position #)

Dear Mr. Jones,

After a successful career in a variety of executive management positions in the high-tech field and a stint owning my own high-tech and consultant companies, I have seen many examples of great leadership and a few that were less than that. What seems to separate the truly successful senior executive from the mediocre is the degree of commitment that she or he is able to instill in people. Building strong teams of productive professionals by creating comfortable yet challenging environments that are stimulating and satisfying, is the hallmark of my career.

Having participated in changes that have transformed the industry, my desire is to continue being a catalyst to this challenge, in an executive leadership position that takes advantage of my corporate, business and leadership abilities.

As an experienced executive who motivates teams to exceed growth and financial objectives, my record of accomplishments indicates my ability to deliver those expectations and more. The enclosed resume will provide you with details of my experience and accomplishments. The opportunity to discuss how my talents and experience can be beneficial to your organization is certainly welcomed.

Sincerely,

Larry Richard

Sample Job Search Correspondence

Sample: Cover Letter

May 12, 20XX

John R. Davis
1234 Main Street
Glen Ellyn, IL 60137
(630) 555-5555

XYZ Company
525 Middle Street
Chicago, IL 60606

Dear Chairman, Search Committee:

You recently posted an employment listing at College of DuPage for the Sales/Marketing Director position. Your requirements for this position and my background are quite similar, and therefore your position is very interesting to me.

Some of my attributes, which would appear appropriate for this position, include:

- Significant background developing successful sales teams, and developing and implementing effective sales and marketing strategies.
- Executive presence and interpersonal skills that influence individuals and situations, enabling the creation of successful alliances and partnerships.
- A professional, highly self-motivated attitude and the ability to thrive in a fast-paced and challenging environment.
- Acting as an effective agent for change for the development and implementation of new technology.
- Being an impact, team player capable of turning around difficult situations.

The opportunity to discuss with you how my background would benefit your organization is welcomed. I am available at your convenience. Your response will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

John R. Davis

Sample Job Search Correspondence

Sample: First Interview Thank You Letter

July 19, 20XX

John R. Davis
1234 Main Street
Glen Ellyn, IL 60137
(630) 555-5555

Mr. Sidney Helm
ABC Company
1112 Michigan Avenue
Chicago, IL 60604

Dear Mr. Helm:

It was a pleasure meeting with you on July 18, 20XX, to discuss the qualifications for the position of corporate and technical editor. I was very impressed with your organization's commitment to excellence and dedication to consumer-oriented results.

As discussed in our meeting, I place great importance on staying current in the computer industry. My education in the computer industries, combined with my technical background and my practical experience in new product design have prepared me for this position. This strength, coupled with my journalism experience, would result in an excellent match and successful working relationship.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Sincerely,

John R. Davis
(630) 555-5555

Sample Job Search Correspondence

Sample: Second Interview Thank You Letter

October 12, 20XX

34-H Maplewood Street
Chicago, IL 60601
(312) 234-5678

Mr. Ira Nash, Director
Belden Fulfillment Company
3289 West Park Street
Chicago, IL 60611

Dear Mr. Nash:

Thank you for meeting with me again on Wednesday, October 11, 20XX to further discuss the administrative opening at Belden Fulfillment Company.

After seeing your operation firsthand, I am confident that I could make an immediate contribution by effectively streamlining your computer system. I would also welcome the additional responsibilities in the areas of research and marketing.

I would like to say that during both meetings I felt comfortable interacting with you and your staff, and I believe your operation would provide a positive work environment.

As we discussed, I am available to come on board at the beginning of next month. I will check with you at the end of next week about the status of my candidacy.

Sincerely,

Kevin O'Malley

Sample Job Search Correspondence

Sample: Letter Following Telephone Inquiry

Tina A. Wong
3 Sixth Street
Naperville, IL 60555

Ms. Donna Carzzo, Manager
Trimar Desktop, Inc.
17 Biltmore Avenue
Glen Ellyn, IL 60137

Dear Ms. Carzzo:

I enjoyed our phone conversation and would appreciate the opportunity to further discuss the Customer Service position with your company.

Customer service is the keystone to keeping customers and building additional business. I believe that companies increase sales by providing services that maximize the use of their products.

It would be very exciting for me to become involved with researching and implementing various customer support services. The skills I have acquired while selling will be very beneficial in this type of marketing position. Since I sold sophisticated systems in the high-tech industry, I am confident that the transition to the desktop publishing market would be a smooth one. I have the ability to understand customer needs, and am able to develop strong customer relationships contributing to repeat business.

I am enclosing my resume for your review. I will be in touch with you next week to arrange for a convenient meeting time. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Tina A. Wong
(630) 234-5678

Enclosure: resume

Sample Job Search Correspondence

Sample: Thank You Letter After Information Interview

November 30, 20XX

299 Bellforte
Oak Park, IL 60301
(708) 222-1234

Mr. James Dillworth, General Manager
Armstrong Hotel
3889 Pennsylvania Avenue
Chicago, IL 60607

Dear Mr. Dillworth:

I appreciate the time you spent with me to share information about the hospitality industry. From our discussion I gained a very accurate and comprehensive picture of the future of the hotel industry, and I have decided to aim my future career plans in that direction.

The Armstrong Hotel is an impressive facility. The décor and atmosphere reflect the overall excellence of the operation, and its location near top tourist attractions in the city gives it direct exposure to thousands of potential customers. What an exciting place to work!

Thank you again for your time and for sharing your knowledge of the hotel industry with me.

Sincerely,

Alex Roper

Enclosure: resume

Sample Job Search Correspondence

Sample: Thank You Letter/Accepting Job Offer

September 4, 20XX

2150 W. 21st Street
Chicago, IL 60608

Susan Waters, Police Superintendent
New York State Police
Administrative Division
92 South Park
Albany, NY 11081

Dear Ms. Waters:

I wanted to thank you and Mr. Gordon for giving me the opportunity to work with the New York State Police. I am very pleased to accept the position as a research and data analyst with your planning unit. The position requirements match my skill sets, and I feel that I will be able to contribute to your organization.

As we discussed, I will begin work on October 1, 20XX. In the meantime, I will complete all the necessary employment forms, obtain the required physical examination, and locate housing. I plan to be in Albany within the next two weeks and will deliver the paperwork to you personally, and will finish any remaining items pertaining to my employment. I will call you next week to schedule an appointment.

I look forward to beginning my employment with the planning unit.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Ayers
(312) 455-2555

Sample Job Search Correspondence

Sample: Letter Declining an Offer

October 2, 20XX

463 Arrowhead Park
Decatur, IL 36203

Stephen Rich, President
Main Company
84 Thompson Street
Carol Stream, IL 60188

Dear Mr. Rich:

I was pleased to receive your call on Monday, Oct.1 20XX offering me the opportunity to manage your shop in Carol Stream. I had hoped from our initial conversation that the opening at your Decatur shop would become available a little sooner. Since this has not occurred, I'm in the disappointing position of having to decline your offer. I have accepted another retail management position.

Thank you so much for the confidence you showed by selecting me for the manager's position. I would like to keep in touch from time to time for the possibility of exploring future opportunities.

Sincerely,

Lauren Brosnan
(630) 222-2222

Networking, scanning the classified advertisements, college career centers, employment/temporary agencies, recruiters, job fairs, job search networking groups and the Internet — what methods are the most effective to obtain employment leads and/or career information? Do mass mailings of resumes to employers work? What about cold calling recruiters or human resources departments? The most efficient job search strategy will use a combination of these methods, with networking as the best strategy.

Classified Advertisements

Newspaper advertisements can be a resource; however, only 20 percent of job openings are advertised. Eighty percent of job opportunities are never posted. Many major corporations do not place job advertisements in the paper. Advertised positions are often entry-level, as many companies promote from within. Consequently, higher-level positions will not be advertised.

The competition is most fierce when applying through classified advertisements. Employers often receive hundreds of resumes for one position. Remember, if the job sounds “too good to be true,” it probably is. Read advertisements very carefully.

College Career Services Centers

These centers assist individuals with job-search preparation, provide employment listings and opportunities, and act as a resource center with videos, books, reference materials and resume development software. Often, former students of the college will post employment opportunities on the career services job board.

Employment/Temporary Agencies

During the past 10 years, the workplace has changed significantly. In response, many types of agencies have been created to assist employers with filling their work force needs. These agencies recruit candidates for temporary, temporary-to-permanent, part-time and full-time opportunities. Should you decide to use such agencies, research the agency’s reputation, professional practices and fee structure.

Career/Job Fairs

During a job fair, your goal should be to meet and discuss your background with those employers who interest you. It is important to develop a one-minute “Elevator Speech.” (See the Networking Section for information on developing an elevator speech.) The purpose of the one-minute sales pitch is to highlight your best skills and experience that relate to the career you are pursuing. Give a clear summary of your qualifications along with your targeted career objective. Careful preparation and practice of your elevator speech are required to get your desired results.

Job Search Networking Groups

In a structured networking group, the association sets up meetings for members to join together for the purpose of networking, building professional relationships and gaining job leads. The group is usually led by facilitators. It is recommended that new members attend at least four meetings and master their one-to-three minute elevator/sales pitch before initiating contacts. Consider joining more than one networking group.

Even in structured settings, networking groups range from formal to informal. Networking groups are available based on for-profit, not-for-profit or state-sponsored organizations. Profession, income level, geography, demographics or some combination of those define the groups. Networking groups are ideal for anyone who has difficulty seeking referrals and leads through others. You will find both employed and unemployed individuals at these networking groups, with all levels of income represented.

Part of the benefit of attending large networking groups is the volume of information among members and the high volume of contacts. Be sure to have plenty of business cards, resumes and/or handbills ready to share with other attendees.

The Employment Application

An often-overlooked component of the job search is the employment application. Like your resume and cover letter, the employment application gives employers an important first impression of you. It is another example of your work; thus, it should be neat, complete and error free. The following are guidelines for completing this important form.

Because it is a legal and binding document for an employer, it should be completed 100 percent accurately.

- Look over the entire form before you start.
- Respond to all items either by providing the requested information or by writing N/A (not applicable) if the item does not apply to you.
- If you submit a resume with the application, never write “see resume” on the application instead of completing the information. The application is considered a legal document.
- Be prepared. Bring all relevant information to complete the application at the time of the interview. This can be done by completing a sample application for your records or by writing information on a separate piece of paper.
- You are not legally required to supply information about your age, sex, marital status, ethnicity or religion on an employment application. However, not supplying this information could have an adverse effect on your potential employment.

A key benefit of the Internet — easy access to information — is also its curse. The Internet offers access to more information than any one person could sort through in a lifetime. Even narrowing your search using carefully selected terms often provides more links than you could possibly navigate. For instance, a recent search on a common search engine using the words “Chicago,” “musical” and “employment” yielded 199,000 hits. The overwhelming nature of the Internet prevents many people from finding the information they need for a successful job search.

Let the College of DuPage Library come to your Internet rescue. The Library has extensive information on effectively accessing Internet resources. It has databases that can provide extensive, customized information on companies, and reference librarians are always available to assist you in managing your search.

A word of caution: Spending the majority of your job-searching time on the Internet can be very unproductive. Research indicates only 4 percent of jobs are found via the Internet. The most advantageous way of using the Internet is to combine the Internet research of job openings/company information with a follow-up of networking contacts regarding those openings.

Richard Bolles' JobHuntersBible.com

<http://www.jobhuntersbible.com/>

Besides links to internet-based career interest inventories, includes career and job search information, job-hunting advice, networking information and more from the author of the well-known job-hunting guide, *What Color is Your Parachute?*

The Riley Guide

<http://www.rileyguide.com/>

One of the most extensive lists of links available. Includes much helpful advice in the introductory sections.

America's Job Bank

<http://www.ajb.dni.us/>

Sponsored by the Department of Labor and state employment agencies. Provides a nationwide job bank plus individual job banks from 2,000 state employment services offices. Illinois jobs listed under: <http://www.ajb.org/il/>

CareerBuilder

<http://www.careerbuilder.com/>

Search the classified job listings of over 130 local newspapers, including the Chicago Tribune, L.A. Times, Miami Herald and others. Provides a menu choice of career field and location, giving information of Web and newspaper postings for jobs that match. The program will search for job listing matches and send them to your e-mail address, if you register. Registration is free.

Hoover's Online

<http://0-premium.hoovers.com.lrc.cod.edu/cgi-bin/enterprise.cgi>

Great site for background information on companies prior to an interview. Provides links to companies that have recruiting sites on the Web. Fee charged for full company profile, but much free data, including links to newspaper and trade magazine articles on a company. Also includes links to job listings from company entries.

Guide to Company Information Using Only the Internet

<http://www.ithaca.edu/library/biblio/companynet.htm>

Ithaca College Library's step-by-step guide to researching both publicly-traded and privately-held companies using the Internet.

Researching Companies on the Internet

<http://www.learnwebskills.com/company/>

Free tutorial on locating high-level company information, financials, company news and more. Also be sure to look at the C.O.D. Library's Business Research Guide for a list of Library resources useful for finding company and industry information.

Salary.com

<http://www.salary.com/>

Salary Wizard Basic Report estimates salary for hundreds of job categories under 60 job families in major U.S. Metro areas, while Cost of Living Wizard to help job changers learn living cost differences between specified U.S. locations. Personal Salary Report available for a fee.

JobBank USA Metasearch

<http://www.jobbankusa.com/>

Search over 20 Internet job-listing sites using one of seven national multi-site searches. Be sure to read the privacy policy on sharing registration and resume information with advertising partners.

Monster.com

<http://www.monster.com/>

Huge job listing, resume posting and employer information resource.

AbilityLinks.org

<http://www.abilitylinks.org/>

Site sponsored by Marianjoy Rehabilitation Hospital listing job openings for people with disabilities.

Career Connector

<http://www.CareerConnector.com/>

Full- and part-time job listings, apprenticeships, internships and co-ops for DuPage County.

Chicagojobs.com

<http://www.chicagojobs.com/>

Job listings from numerous local newspapers, including the Chicago Sun-Times, Daily Herald, Sun, Suburban Life and Pioneer Press.

College Central Network: College of DuPage Career Services

<http://www.collegecentral.com/dupage/>

Register for this job search and resume service for College of DuPage students and alumni.

Definitive Chicago Area Job Guide

<http://www.chicagojobs.org/>

Many links to local Chicago job listing, career counseling, networking sites and more.

Job Club, Networking & Support Groups in the Chicagoland Area

<http://www.careervision.org/Resources/JobGroups.htm>

County by county list of area job clubs with address, phone, other contact information and meeting times.

NPOnet: Jobs in Chicago Area Nonprofits

<http://www.itresourcecenter.org/nponet/jobs/>

Popular guide to jobs in Chicago-area nonprofit organizations.

Cover Letter Resources for Job-Seekers

<http://www.quintcareers.com/covres.html>

Links to checklists, formatting advice and sample letters on the Quintessential Careers web site. Includes advice on and samples of thank-you letters.

Guide to Job Interviewing Resources

<http://www.quintcareers.com/intvres.html>

Links to checklists, formatting advice, and sample letters on the Quintessential Careers web site. Includes advice on and samples of thank-you letters.

JobWeb's Guide to Resumes & Interviews for College Graduates

http://www.jobweb.com/Resumes_Interviews/default.htm

Links to advice on resumes, cover letters and interviewing for new graduates.

Preparing a Curriculum Vitae

http://www.quintcareers.com/curriculum_vitae.html

How to write a CV for academic and research positions.

Professional Employment Portfolios

<http://www.bsu.edu/students/careers/documents/portfoli/>

How to showcase your skills and achievements in an employment portfolio.

Rebecca Smith's E-resume Resources

<http://www.eresumes.com/>

Links to "how-to-do-it" essays and articles, including tutorials on producing e-resumes in various electronic formats.

Networking is the process of requesting assistance from people who might be able to help in your job search. This is how you access “The Hidden Job Market.” Networking is crucial in an effective job search. The more people you network with, the greater your odds of being at the right place at the right time. The contacts you make may lead to job referrals. Combining networking with the traditional job-search methods, such as Internet searching, classified ads, college career centers and employment agencies, are the key to your success.

Networking Realities

Approximately 65 to 70 percent of all positions are found through networking. With that success rate, networking should be your primary method of job searching.

Employers are becoming increasingly cautious and selective with new hires, so a recommendation from a colleague is most welcome. The average cost of hiring and/or recruiting one individual is more than \$5,000 and is increasing.

How do you start networking?

1. The **first step** is to make a list of people you know. This list should include:

Personal contacts

- Friends
- Family
- Relatives of your children’s friends
- Neighbors
- Social contacts at events

Professional contacts

- College alumni/associates
- Past co-workers/supervisors
- Customers/clients
- Professional trade associates
- Teachers
- Classmates

Community contacts

- Clergypersons/church members
- Support groups
- Other volunteers

Service contacts

- Stock brokers
- Insurance agents
- Social workers
- Bankers
- Lawyers
- Accountants
- Medical personnel

These contacts do not have to be your “best friends,” but they should have the potential for referring you for possible career opportunities. Many times job seekers believe that the only useful networking contacts are those in a related industry or in positions of high authority within the organization. This is not true. Any network contact has the possibility of being the indirect link to an organization looking for an employee with your skills and abilities.

2. The **second step** in networking is to prepare a sample telephone script and/or elevator speech that briefly describes your job target, related skills, experience and education. It should be a short summary that is approximately 30 seconds to one minute in length.

The elevator speech should include the following:

- A summary statement that includes key, power words and phrases that emphasize the scope of your professional experience, special abilities, general accomplishments and expertise. Key words and phrases can be: building and managing successful teams, communicating, organizing, making group presentations, developing effective processes, demonstrating stellar customer service, etc.
- A targeted position that would utilize these skills and abilities.
- Targeted companies, other networking contacts or additional resources that could be used in your job search.

3. The **third step** is to contact individuals from your networking list. Telephone calls are likely to be more effective than letter writing in obtaining a potential job contact. In your telephone conversation, cover the following information:

- Your job target and qualifications.
- Ask for their input and job search advice.
- Request possible networking referrals and, if appropriate, try to obtain the names of two referrals from each network contact.

4. The **fourth step** is to initiate contact with the referral. Repeat the above third step process when talking to this person.

5. The **fifth step** is to keep your initial networking contact informed about the outcome of your meeting. Sending thank-you notes can increase the likelihood of them remaining involved in your job search. Everyone appreciates hearing that their advice is followed.

Try to meet people daily and grow your networking list. This is true even while you are working. Networking should become a way of life. Networking becomes NetWORTHing!

The job interview is the most widely used method of screening job applicants. Often it provides the best information about the applicant's values, personality and work ethic. Preparation is the key to success, as it not only gives you necessary information, but more importantly, confidence. The goal of the job interview is to obtain a job offer. And successful interviews are the result of thorough preparation.

Preparing for the Interview

During your interview process, you will be expected to give information about the skills, experiences and accomplishments you can bring to the employer. This means marketing yourself specifically to the job you are seeking. Prepare for the interview by identifying your accomplishments, experiences, education and skills that match the qualifications required for that job. You want to be prepared for the commonly asked questions such as your strengths and weaknesses, past experience and accomplishments.

Research the Company

Company recruiters and hiring managers are impressed with candidates who have taken the time to research their company. Here are some ideas for company research:

- Utilize the library to review annual reports, newspaper articles and trade magazines.
- If possible, ask the prospective employer to send you a job description.
- Do an Internet search on the company and industry.
- Investigate the company's products or the services provided by the organization.
- Determine the location of the company and specifically the meeting place.
- If possible, do a "dry run" so you will know how to get there and the amount of time it takes to arrive.

Overcoming Stress

The interviewing process can be intimidating, but the key to successful interviewing is preparation. When you have adequately researched the company and practiced answers based on your research and assessment of skills, you will be more confident walking into the interview. Most interviewers expect a certain amount of nervousness. Adequate preparations will help to reduce your stress level. Keep in mind that the employer already sees you as qualified for this position, or they would not have asked you to interview. This should give you some sense of accomplishment and help you to overcome your stress level!

Interview Stages

An interview consists of four stages: rapport building, employee questions and answers, your questions, and the closing.

1. Rapport Building

Prior to the interview, there is a good possibility that the first person you will meet will be the receptionist or clerical staff. Remember to "put your best foot forward" at all times. Positive first impressions with every staff member you meet may make the difference in your being hired. Often, hiring managers will ask for staff input regarding the individual being interviewed.

During the first few minutes of the interview, again critical first impressions are made. The interviewer probably will initiate small talk as an attempt to get to know you and make you feel more comfortable. It is important to be responsive and friendly. Displaying interest, confidence and enthusiasm throughout the interview projects personality traits that are sought by most interviewers. It is important to keep in mind that when it comes down to two or three candidates for a position, the person who is the "best fit" is usually the one who is hired.

2. Questions and Answers

The second part of the interview covers “what, when, and where.” It is your opportunity to explain your background and experience and how they relate to the position. The interviewer will try to determine your values, aspirations and motivations. You will be asked questions about what you liked or disliked about your previous employment. Never criticize past employers or give negative answers to these questions. Even if you have a legitimate complaint about a past employer, the interview is not the time or the place for this discussion. Remember that you are in an interview and not a counseling session. Your job is to stay upbeat and positive.

The interviewer will ask questions regarding your goals, motivations and interactions with staff and management. Employers are seeking answers to three questions:

- Can you do the job?
- What motivates you to do your best?
- How well will you fit into the company’s culture?

It is important to give complete and targeted answers to the employer’s questions.

[NOTE: College of DuPage’s Career Services has interactive interviewing software that offers more than 200 interview questions, with sample answers and helpful hints!]

Sample Responses to Interview Questions

Q. *So, tell me about yourself.*

A. This question is difficult for many applicants to answer. It gives you the opportunity to show the interviewer the four important traits in selecting a candidate: enthusiasm, confidence, dependability and intelligence. Outline a presentation of one-to-three minutes that covers your strongest skills and knowledge, your best personal attributes, and your key accomplishments.

Q. *Why are you thinking about leaving your current job?*

A. If you are currently employed, emphasize that while you enjoy your current position, your personal development and growth are limited. Employers want to see your vision of career advancement.

If you are unemployed due to downsizing, indicate this. If you were part of a group that was downsized, provide the employer with this information. In these economic times, employers understand cost-cutting strategies and do not view this as a negative reflection on you.

Q. *What experience do you have in this field?*

A. Briefly summarize all your education and job experience that relate to the position. As much as possible, provide the employer with examples of your accomplishments or career highlights.

Q. *Why did you leave your previous job(s)?*

A. Keep your answer positive, or at least neutral, in terms of the reasons for your leaving. If you left a job for a better opportunity, mention why it was better (pay, hours, location, etc.). If there was a company reduction in force, be sure to mention that you were part of a group that was downsized. In any case, never say you left because you disliked your past manager or co-workers!

Q. *What can you bring to this company?*

A. Summarize your key technical skills and personal strengths that relate to the position for which you are applying. Cite examples of accomplishments from previous experiences (training and jobs) that can be valuable to this particular employer. State, through examples, why they should hire you.

Q. *What are your accomplishments?*

A. The following are examples of accomplishments to present in the interview:

- Were you promoted?
- Did you receive any awards?
- Did you make your employer more profitable?
- Did you develop new procedures that decreased company costs?
- Did you simplify procedures which improved operational efficiency?
- Did you receive any educational degrees, certifications and licensures?
- Do you have accomplishments unrelated to your job?
- Did you improve company morale?

Q. *What do you think determines a person's progress in a good company?*

A. Mention the importance of an employee's ability to communicate effectively with their manager and co-workers, their ability to learn quickly, and to constantly update their skills. Cite examples from your experience where you have advanced using these skills.

Q. *What are your strengths?*

A. Mention all of your technical skills and personal strengths that relate to the job. Give examples of how you have demonstrated each of these skills from past experiences. This is your opportunity to shine. Let the employer know how you can contribute to the organization.

Q. *What are your weaknesses?*

A. There are several ways to handle this question.

- Mention something that can be interpreted as a possible strength, such as "perfectionism to get the job done right."
- Indicate a weakness of which the employer is already aware. Explain that you are bright and willing to do whatever it would take to obtain this particular skill set, e.g. taking internal training, attending community college, self-study.
- Provide a weakness that is not an important requirement for the position. Indicate that it would not in any way affect your performance for this position.

Q. *What kind of manager do you prefer?*

A. Be careful with this question. Mention that you can work with a manager who supervises people closely or one who gives minimal supervision. Cite examples from your previous experience, if you can. Another approach is to comment that you do not have a strong preference, as long as the manager is fair and expectations are communicated.

Q. *Do you work well under pressure?*

A. Mention confidently that you can handle pressure, although you usually like to plan work so that you are not frequently working under pressure. Then give specific examples from your past training or jobs where you demonstrated working under pressure effectively. Use examples that could relate to the current opening's responsibilities, if possible.

Q. *What five words describe you best?*

A. Tell the employer five top personal strengths with confidence. Mention personal qualities such as positive attitude, friendliness, flexibility, dependability, responsibility, and being a team player.

Q. *What have you done that shows you have gone above and beyond what is required?*

A. Mention projects, work assignments, and overtime work that shows you do not quit until the job is done (This demonstrates fortitude.) Mention times when you have helped others in a "pinch" or have worked as part of a team to accomplish something outside your particular job duties.

Q. *How would you have managed your previous/present organization differently?*

A. Be careful. You're being asked to criticize your present/past employer. Is it in your best interests to do so? If you offer ideas, preface them by pointing out that top management and your manager worked very hard at providing good management. No more than two improvements are recommended. You are just showing that you were paying attention, not being the organization's critic.

Q. *What are your salary requirements?*

A. Do not give a direct salary amount if at all possible. Indicate, from your market research, the industry is paying in the following salary range: from \$xx to \$xx for this position. Again, this is where your homework will pay off. (See Section K — Negotiating Salary and Benefits).

Q. *Why should we hire you?*

A. Summarize specifically how you can contribute to the open position. Reemphasize the main technical, interpersonal and communication skills that would make you a good employee. Match as many of your skills to the employer's needs as possible. This is where a thorough assessment of your skills will assist in your success.

3. Questions to Ask the Employer

Before the close of an interview, the employer probably will ask if you have any questions. It is your chance to get the specific information about the position. Prepare a list of questions in advance. Below are some sample questions to ask:

- What would be my initial duties and responsibilities?
- What are your expectations for this position?
- What kind of training would I receive from your company once employed?
- What are the top priorities of this position?
- Why did the last person leave this position? Why is this position open?
- Assuming I do well in this position, what is the career path?
- What are the most important characteristics the person filling this position must possess to be successful?
- How often will I be evaluated?

4. Closing the Interview

Always allow the interviewer to initiate the close of the interview. The interviewer should explain the process in which they will make the hiring decision. If this information is not stated, it is appropriate to ask how the process will proceed and when a decision would be made. Before leaving the interview, take the opportunity one last time to emphasize your desire for this position. Express your thanks for the interviewer's time and the opportunity to interview for this position.

Be sure to get a business card so that you can send a thank-you note within 24 hours of the interview.

Behavioral-Based Interviewing

The latest trend in interviewing is Behavioral-Based Interviewing (BBI). Behavioral-Based Interviewing has been found to be an accurate predictor of future behavior or job performance. The more recent the related behavior, the better its predictive power. In the BBI, open-ended questions are asked and designed to probe into the applicant's past employment experiences. This line of questions is becoming more popular with employers because of its successful predictive abilities rather than responses to traditional questions.

BBI is ideal for first-time job seekers and for career changers because you can use any experience, not just job experience.

Sample BBI questions include the following:

- Describe a situation where it was most important for you to display tact and diplomacy.
- Tell me about a time you had a disagreement with someone and how you handled it.
- Tell me about a difficult decision you had to make and its outcome.
- Give me a situation with an angry customer and how you resolved it.

One of the keys to successfully negotiating salary is to avoid salary discussions until the employer introduces the subject. Talking about salary too early can lead to selling yourself short and/or your elimination from the competition because of being “overqualified” or too expensive. You have more negotiating power once an offer is made rather than before the offer.

The following are some examples of possible responses:

- “I’m sure you pay a fair salary.”
- “I’d like to fit into your salary structure, if you think I’m the best candidate.”
- “Could you give me the range you have in mind?”
- “I’m sure we can come to an agreement.”

It is essential that you research the marketplace to get information on what companies are paying in your field. Contact professional organizations for their annual salary surveys. Web sites that will give salary information based on your occupation and geographic region are available. A good place to start your salary search is www.salaryexpert.com.

If you are pressured to give a salary figure, always give a range that reflects the amount you want to make. The lower end of your range is usually the salary that will be offered. Make sure this amount is acceptable to you, otherwise state a higher range. Try to deemphasize salary by saying, “Salary is important to me, but it’s not the most important thing. I am looking for a position that will allow me to be challenged, utilize my skills and make a contribution to the organization.”

Negotiating is a skill that requires preparation and practice. The more you practice and role-play this negotiating skill, the better you will get. (That might mean a higher salary and/or better benefits.)

Most organizations will not expect you to decide immediately once a job offer has been made. You can expect at least 24 to 48 hours to make your decision.

This section explores issues to consider when assessing a job offer. You need to look at four areas: the organization, the nature of the work, the opportunities, and the salary and benefits.

The Organization

Look at the company's product and/or service line, customer base, and reputation in the industry. Is this organization's business or activity in keeping with your own interests, beliefs and values? How will the size of the organization affect you? Large employers generally have a greater variety of career paths. However, positions in small business firms may offer broader authority, responsibility and diversity. You can see more clearly how you are contributing to the organization's success.

Is the organization in an industry with favorable long-term prospects? No matter how hard you work, your job security and advancement will depend on the company's success. The most successful companies tend to be in industries that are growing rapidly. Roughly, a 10 percent to 15 percent growth rate is considered healthy.

Where is the job located? Where are the headquarters and branches located? You may need to consider relocating. If this occurs, what is the cost of housing, the quality of education and the quality of safety in that community?

The Nature of the Work

The duties and responsibilities of the job should be explained in enough detail to answer this question: Does the work match your interests and make good use of your talents? Also consider how important the job is to the company. A clear understanding of where you fit in the organization and what expectations they have for you in supporting and contributing to the firm's success are important.

Are you comfortable with your supervisor and other employees? Personality conflicts can undermine your satisfaction in the job. Carefully evaluate this area.

How long do most people stay with the company? High turnover can mean dissatisfaction with the nature of work, management and/or company culture.

The Opportunities

A good job offers you the opportunity to grow and develop within the organization. It gives you a chance to learn new skills, increase your earning potential and grow in authority and responsibility. A lack of opportunities can dampen interest in work and result in boredom and frustration. Make sure you know what the typical career path is for your position.

Salary and Benefits

When considering salary and benefits, remember that it is not a question of what salary you need to cover your expenses, but rather what is the job market paying for the position. If it is a fair market salary, but is lower than you want, try to negotiate a possible merit review within several months.

Don't think of your salary as the only compensation you will receive. Consider benefits. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, for each dollar employees spend on wages, another 38 cents on the average is contributed to employee benefits, including those benefits required by law. Benefits can add significantly to your base salary, i.e., health insurance, dental insurance, life insurance, pension plans, paid vacations, holidays and sick leave. It also can include profit sharing, tuition reimbursement and moving expenses.

A successful job search takes time, patience and preparation. The more accurately you assess your skills, abilities, values and interests, the more honestly you can expect to match your career expectation with the real marketplace. Take the time to thoroughly assess your needs for career satisfaction. This entire process is an opportunity for you to take control of your career destiny. Seize the day, enjoy the journey and find your way to a fulfilling career!

Quotes

“The most fortunate people of all ... are those for whom the line between work and play gets rubbed out, for whom work is pleasure and pleasure is work.”

Joseph Epstein, Essayist, *The American Scholar*

“Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work.”

Thomas Alva Edison, Inventor

“Do what you love. The money will follow.”

Marsha Sinetar, Psychologist

Your Road to Career Success Begins Here!

Career Services
College of DuPage
Student Resource Center (SRC), Room 1490
(630) 942-2230
www.cod.edu (Click on "Employment")

08-537(7/08)

