



A Job Search Is a Formal Process

You have one opportunity to make a great first impression. Here are some tips to keep your search on target.

POSITIVE STEPS	OOPS ~ THINK AGAIN!
JOB SEARCH PROCESS:	
Create a written job search strategy. Maintain a journal of steps you have taken in your search. With whom did you speak? What leads were you given and by whom? Your follow-up steps.	
You have given your home/cell phone to potential employers. The voice message should <u>only include</u> your name and the request to leave a message.	Do not have your outgoing voice mail message reflect anything of a personal or informal nature during a job search. Personal greetings may cost you a job interview. If others answer the phone, coach them on the importance of a good first impression.
If you do not have an email address, you should obtain one right away.	Your email address should not include anything personal or informal (e.g. nothing “cute”, no identifying years, no gimmicks).
Seek the right job opportunities by: conducting internet searches; reviewing local newspapers; attending job/career events; networking with business owners, past associate, friends and family; and speaking with employment and staffing agencies.	Do not wait for others to find a job for you. Use all these resources to find the right job.
Research every company you are considering (written and online). Thoroughly review websites, their standing in their industry, etc. Your knowledge of the companies will impress the interviewers and show you have a sincere interest in their organization.	
JOB APPLICATIONS & MATERIALS:	
All correspondence, applications, materials, phone calls, and emails should be treated as formal information. Be sure all materials, particularly resumes, are PERFECT!	Do not assume that spell-check will catch all errors. Words with correct spelling, but incorrect meaning/intention, will defeat your application (e.g., “manger” instead of “manager”). YOU must proofread and catch all mistakes.
REVIEWING JOB DESCRIPTIONS:	
When reviewing job descriptions, read carefully; consider whether you are qualified. Apply for jobs when you meet the minimum qualifications. Before you submit your resume, review each skill or competency listed and be ready to justify your capability with examples of your past experience in each area.	Applying for every job you would like to have, disregarding your qualifications, will be a frustrating endeavor.
INTERVIEWING:	
Turn your cell phone off!	Answering, or even looking at your cell phone before, during, or after an interview, is unprofessional.
Prepare/Practice! With preparation and practice you will arrive at your interview with poise and self-confidence. Study the position description, match your abilities to the job requirements. Practice the questions often asked (see EFS Tip Sheet on Interviewing Questions).	
Practice listening! Be sure you are listening to the interviewer. Share your qualifications for the job. Look at the interviewer directly. An interview is a conversation, not an interrogation.	Do not answer a question that has not been asked.
Recognize that you may be interviewed by someone who is not a skilled interviewer. Be prepared for both good and bad situations.	Do not overreact during an interview; do not argue, or disagree with the interviewer. If you are asked questions you believe may be illegal or inappropriate, attempt to steer the conversation back to your qualifications. After the interview, carefully consider, if an offer is made, would you want to work for the employer.
Complete all paperwork, assessments, applications, physical tests. Be on time. Check the directions (do not depend on GPS). Practice by driving to the location before your interview.	

POSITIVE STEPS	OOPS ~ THINK AGAIN
INTERVIEWING (CONTINUED):	
Focus on your skills, direct job skills and transferable skills. Focus on your “soft” skills: stability, attendance, safety.	Do not stress that you “need a job”. Refrain from making comments such as, “I will do anything” or “I can do anything”.
Focus on your work today, not in the past. Focus on the job you’ve applied for, not on items unrelated to the job.	Do not apologize for your age. Do not discuss age, or other items which “age” your application.
Be confident, have self-control, look like a successful candidate.	Do not: mumble, speak indistinctly, be angry or defensive.
Dress for success, but be comfortable.	Chewing gum is not acceptable.
Preparing for the interview. Take only a portfolio containing 2-3 copies of your resume, a copy of the job description, your list of questions for the interviewer, and a pen.	You may not want to carry in a briefcase or handbag. They are unneeded and inconvenient to handle smoothly when greeting and meeting your interviewer. Leave “baggage” secured in your car.
Be sure you have done your “salary survey” research.	Do not discuss salary until the employer brings it up.
Be positive! Go in with a good attitude. Take a deep breath.	Do not ask for exceptions or special accommodations (unless prescribed by law), until you have received an offer. Requests made too early may result in a rejected application.
If you are asked to state a negative (e.g. greatest weakness), turn it around. Show you have “fixed” the negative; provide details on how the change occurred. Employers are looking for your ability to: identify situations, make change, and how you handle the question.	Do not respond that you have no developmental needs (weaknesses) if you are asked, “what are your weaknesses?” We all have challenges to be addressed.
Only give your list of references to the interviewer when requested. ALWAYS check with references to be sure they agree to assist you.	Do not assume someone is a willing reference. Do not use same references nonstop. Family members should not be references.
Send thank you letters within 24 hours to all interviewers (written or typed note is preferable to an email). Follow up appropriately.	
NETWORKING:	
Create and/or build your network. Stay in touch with each member and provide updates as you move through your job search. Use your network of contacts to help you find job opportunities. Create a list of people you know, including: friends, previous colleagues, managers, family and service providers. Create a brief summary of your job interests. Then, begin contacting your network with this summary, so they can help you find job leads. Other methods: call a company for an interview; newspaper ads may be helpful; use major search engines, employment agencies and nonprofits; employer websites; and informational interviews.	Do not contact your network list until you have a good idea of what work you are seeking and can explain it in a summary statement.
30 second statement about your job interests and skills (referred to as an “Elevator Speech”). Know 4-5 accomplishments and/or items about you/your skills that an employer should know.	This is not a memorized speech. Practice so the accomplishments are familiar enough that your conversation is comfortable.
Learn social media. LinkedIn is an excellent media to show your candidacy to your “network”, as well as researching companies and finding connections at employers.	Be very careful with social media—LinkedIn is not Facebook! Your professionalism is critical in this process; you can create or lose an opportunity very quickly.
Once you have located an organization/company with jobs that fit your interests, experience, and qualifications, identify a person with whom you can conduct an “informational interview.”	When participating in an “informational interview”, do not ask for a job. It is an opportunity to explore and research a company.
LEARN NEW SKILLS:	
If you discover the jobs you wish require experience/skills you do not currently possess, consider ways to obtain the training. Volunteering is one method to gain practical experience. Temp work, or looking for new experiences in your current job may also be of benefit. Research training opportunities; discover resources.	Do not assume that you cannot find/obtain training. Do not dismiss opportunities when you can easily receive training.