

Job hunting tips

Job hunting can be emotionally exhausting, especially if the search lasts for a long time. You can improve your chances of finding a job by casting a wide net, polishing up your resume and practising your interview technique. There are various government and private agencies that can help you. For example, Centrelink and the Job Network offer education, training and career information.

Where to look for jobs

Jobs are listed in many different media. Sometimes, just spreading the word that you're looking for work can get you an interview or two. Other suggestions include:

- Newspapers
- Trade magazines and newspapers
- Internet job-search websites
- Centrelink
- Job Network services
- Recruitment firms
- Network with colleagues in the industry
- Join professional organisations
- Attend public conferences and workshops in your field
- Volunteer work in your chosen field may get your foot in the door, or at least broaden your network.

Resume suggestions

Estimates suggest that prospective employers will spend between 10 seconds and two minutes looking at your resume before deciding whether or not they want to interview you. Make sure your resume grabs their attention and demands a second look. Suggestions include:

- If possible, tailor your resume to fit the particular job.
- Remember that a resume is only a summary, not a full-blown account of your every career move. Keep it brief - three pages is more than enough detail.
- Include basic information (such as full name, address, telephone number and other contact details) on the top of the first page.
- Next, list your educational qualifications, starting from the most recent and working backwards.
- Then, list your employment history, once again starting from the most recent. Include position, company and length of employment.
- For each previous job, only list pertinent and interesting details. Don't just retype your job description - write about your accomplishments.
- Include specific information if you can. Use numbers and figures. For example, instead of saying 'raised funds for projects', put 'raised over \$100,000 per annum'; rather than 'supervisory position', write 'supervision of 25 people'.
- Explain any gaps in employment history, if you have them. For example, you may have taken time off to travel or further your education.
- Consider including a summary paragraph of your work skills.
- Include any other skills that may be relevant such as first aid training, a forklift licence or typing ability.
- Include industry awards.
- Include references or contact details for referees.
- Avoid using gags or novelty tactics to flag attention to your resume. Always type your resume on white A4 paper, and don't include little gifts or send your resume in unusual packaging. These tactics are just annoying.

- Attach a short, to-the-point and professional cover letter. Include a summary paragraph to sell your experience and qualifications.

Job interview suggestions

Your resume impressed a potential employer, and now you have an interview. Suggestions include:

- Research the company or organisation. Be familiar with its products and goals.
- Think about what you want to say in the interview. Imagine the kind of questions you might be asked, and rehearse a few answers.
- Prepare questions of your own. For example, you could ask them to tell you about the working environment.
- Dress conservatively and in a business-like fashion.
- Make sure your personal grooming (such as fingernails and hair) is up to scratch.
- Arrive on time.
- Try to be polite, positive and friendly to everyone you meet during the job interview.
- Don't use slang or swear words.
- Display positive body language - such as good posture, firm handshake, relaxed smile and make eye contact - these can make a great first impression.
- Don't say anything negative about previous employers.
- Let the interviewer take the lead. Don't try to control the conversation.
- Avoid talking about salary and employee benefits too early.

Keeping up your morale

It is important to approach every interview with confidence because a defeated attitude won't impress a prospective employer. However, job hunting can be difficult and sometimes demoralising. Suggestions on how to keep up your spirits include:

- Look after yourself. Eat a healthy diet, exercise regularly and get plenty of rest.
- Consider limiting your job hunting to certain days of the week, leaving the other days free for hobbies, personal interests and other rewarding pursuits.
- Remind yourself of the positive efforts you are making.
- Seek support from family and friends.

Where to get help

- Centrelink Tel. 132 490
- Job Network Information Line Tel. 1300 363 365
- Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs Tel. (03) 9920 4777
- MoneyHelp Tel. 1800 149 689 Monday to Friday, 9.30 am to 5.00 pm — a free financial counselling and debt advice phone service for Victorians (includes interpreter services).

Things to remember

- You can improve your chances of finding a job by casting a wide net, polishing up your resume and practising your interview technique.
- A resume is only a summary, not a full-blown account of your every career move, so keep it brief.
- It is important to approach every interview with confidence because a defeated attitude won't impress a prospective employer.

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