

# Conducting An Effective Job Search

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# **HOW TO CONDUCT AN EFFECTIVE JOB SEARCH**

## **Step 1: Get Organized**

Identify career and life values, goals, and objectives. Then realistically assess your interests, strengths, weaknesses, skills, etc.

## **Step 2: Research and Understand Employers' Needs**

Review annual reports and web sites where available.

## **Step 3: Network**

Speak with professional and personal contacts. Let people know that you are job searching and be specific about what your areas of expertise are. Every one you meet is a networking contact.

## **Step 4: Schedule Informational Interviews**

Speak with current employees in the field or at the company if possible.

## **Step 5: Pace Yourself and Be Persistent**

Review and adjust your objectives and strategies as required.

## **Step 6: Make New Contacts Every Week**

Identify, develop and promote your most marketable skills.

## **Step 7: Follow Hiring Process Instructions**

Adhere to the specific application instructions provided for each company.

## Networking

Networking can be an effective method for identifying employment opportunities and should be an integral part of everyone's job search activities. You probably know at least 50 people – friends, relatives, neighbors, classmates. These 50 people are your primary network. They are the eyes and ears you need to learn about a job opening. Talk with them.

### Getting Started

Set an easy goal. Talk to five people every day. Get a notebook and write down the names of the people who say they might be able to help you. Give them your resume. Call them back after a week to see if they've had any luck. Refer to the dialogue tips below.

1. Call a friend:

"Hi, Mark?" This is Anita Workman. I'm one of the morning customers at your donut shop."

2. Ask for some help:

"Mark, you know lots of people. I wonder if you might be able to help me?"

3. Explain that you are looking for a job:

"I'm looking for a job as a payroll clerk."

4. Ask if your friend knows of any job openings:

"Do you know any employers who might need a full-time payroll clerk?"

5. Get the name and telephone number or email address:

"That's Mini R. Chosen at Pretty Faces Salons. Do you have her telephone number or email by chance?"

6. Ask for information about the person:

"How long have you known her? What's she like? Is she the person who does the hiring?"

7. Get a recommendation:

"Would you mind if I said that you and I were talking and that you recommended that I give her a call?"

8. Ask if your friend could set up a meeting:

"Mark, if I gave you a copy of my resume, could you give it to her and ask if she'd talk to me about the job?"

9. Show some gratitude:

"Mark, you're a life-saver. If I get the job, I'll buy every jelly-donut in your shop!"

10. Follow-up:

After the interview, call your friend to let him know how you did – and to thank him again.

## THE INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW

Today's job seekers must develop their own contacts to find jobs. The *Informational Interview* is a job search technique used to obtain INFORMATION about an occupation, a firm, or an industry. People who have the type of job you might be interested in doing are excellent sources of information. And most people are more than willing to give advice to someone who is genuinely willing to listen. *Informational Interviews* can be set up by phone, mail or preferably through a personal contact. Ask for a specific amount of time, usually fifteen minutes, and stick to it. When interviewing for information, try to speak to the person who would have the power to hire you if there were an opening or to someone who is doing the kind of work that you think you'd like to perform. You control the interview by being prepared with a list of questions. The following are some questions you might find useful when conducting an *Informational Interview*.

1. What is it about your job that makes it interesting or challenging? Or what are the biggest challenges connected with this line of work?
2. What attracted you to this type of work? Or how did you get into this field?
3. What training would you recommend to be most competitive for this line of work?
4. What do you enjoy most about your work? What do you enjoy least?
5. What keeps you interested or excited about your work?
6. What does it take to become successful in this field?
7. What are some of the qualities that successful people tend to share in common in this field?
8. Are there any special areas or needs that a newcomer could fill?
9. If you were starting over in this field, what would you do differently?
10. Are there any companies that appear to be hiring on a regular basis in this field?
11. Who else should I talk to about this kind of work? May I tell them you gave me their name?

## **PROFILE WORKS FOR PROFESSIONALS AND EMPLOYERS**

PROFILE is an all volunteer networking organization for professionals. The members find employment through networking and preparing themselves with all of the latest job search techniques through workshops in interviewing skills, résumé and cover letter writing, salary negotiation and much more.

The traditional methods of looking for a job or advancing your career are not very effective anymore. You cannot rely solely on listings in the newspaper, online or from agencies. These sources may be fine for entry level jobs but for professional work in management, high tech, marketing, training and many other fields, networking is the most successful path.

Employers of Santa Cruz County and other areas are invited to take advantage of the great resource that PROFILE is. PROFILE has provided a highly talented and experienced pool of professionals to businesses and organizations since 1992 at no cost to job seekers or employers. PROFILE'S mission is to provide a means for local employers and potential employees to connect with each other.

PROFILE of Santa Cruz County is a chapter of Experience Unlimited and is sponsored by the California Employment Development Department. Membership and services are free.

PROFILE is located within the Workforce Santa Cruz County Career Center at 2045 40<sup>th</sup> Ave, Capitola. Visit <http://www.santacruzprofile.org/index.php> or call (831) 479-0393.

## CAREER ADVANCEMENT AND TRAINING

Thinking of changing careers? Need some additional job skills? Want to pursue a degree?

Cabrillo College offers associates degrees, certificates in a variety of occupational fields and skills certificates. In addition, approximately 70% of all courses offered at Cabrillo are transferable to four-year colleges and universities. Classes are scheduled during the day, evening and weekend and are also offered in a variety of Distance Education formats. Career and academic counseling and academic support services are available to help you achieve your education goals. For additional information contact Cabrillo College at 479-6100 or visit the website at [www.cabrillo.edu](http://www.cabrillo.edu).

Additionally, in Santa Cruz County a number of adult education classes are available to prepare diverse populations of adult learners for success in the community as problem solvers, communicators, creative individuals, community contributors and lifelong learners. A variety of class offerings are available to meet a wide range of educational, vocational and personal enrichment needs. Additional information can be found about events, individual classes, times and locations at the following websites:

- Santa Cruz Adult Education (429-3966): [www.adulted.santacruz.k12.ca.us](http://www.adulted.santacruz.k12.ca.us)
- Watsonville/Aptos Adult Education On-Line Education (786-2100 ext. 320): [www.ed2go.com/pvusdadulted](http://www.ed2go.com/pvusdadulted)
- Watsonville/Aptos Adult Education (786-2160): [www.waas.pvusd.net](http://www.waas.pvusd.net)
- Goodwill/Shoreline (429-6415): 350 Encinal St., Santa Cruz, CA.

Discover how easy it is to continue your education whether it's to refresh your skills, learn a new trade or earn a degree or diploma. Opportunities abound so visit one of the websites today or call for additional information.

# The Cover Letter

## Purpose

It is important to keep these objectives in mind when putting together your cover letter.

A cover letter serves to:

- Create a favorable first impression
- Introduce yourself
- Demonstrate your professionalism
- Highlight your most important qualifications
- Illustrate your communication skills

Position requirements often list “good communication skills”. Demonstrate those skills through your cover letter. Make sure to use proper punctuation, capitalization and grammar.

## Cover Letter Sections

A cover letter has three general sections. The first section should create interest and explain why you are writing. It should state the type of position you are applying for, as well as how you heard about the company. Also in your first paragraph, refer to your enclosed or attached resume.

The second part or paragraph should explain your interest in this type of position. You should relate your qualifications to the job opening, and use action verbs to describe your experience. This should be brief. Be specific in what you have to offer the employer.

The third part is the closing paragraph. Here you request action, such as an appointment, an interview, or some other definite action. Make action easy for the reader to take by listing the best time to call you, the best number to reach you on, and/or your email address to contact you electronically. Close by restating your interest in the company.

## Formatting Guidelines

The following are general guidelines to follow in writing your cover letter:

- Address the letter to the hiring manager (if known) or the Search Committee
- Use block style with one inch side margins
- Use the same font and type size as used for resume
- Use complete, concise sentences
- Proofread the cover letter, and have someone else proofread it as well
- Match resume stationary if sending hard copies.

# Creating an Effective Resume

## Preparation

The following questions can help you bring together all the information you'll need to create an effective resume. By answering the following questions, you can begin to put that information into a well-constructed, clear, concise and appealing resume.

- What jobs have you held? Include unpaid work, such as internships and volunteer work. List the company/organization, the position title, and the dates you worked there.
- What are your duties and responsibilities for each of the above positions? Use action verbs whenever possible.
- What were your specific accomplishments and contributions at each of the above position? Again, use action verbs and quantify whenever possible.
- What skills, knowledge, experience and abilities do you have that enabled you to be successful in previous positions? Which of those match up with the qualifications section of the job announcement?

## Content

- Tailor your resume to each job for which you apply. Emphasize the qualifications most relevant to each position. Put the most related experience and accomplishments up front. Think about your background from the perspective of the hiring department.
- Stress results, problems solved, responsibilities, skills, contributions, and accomplishments, rather than merely making an exhaustive list of job duties.
- If specific education is required or preferred for the position, include it towards the top of the resume. Include professional development and volunteer activities that are relevant to the position or point to a pattern of continued growth and learning.
- Use volunteer or extracurricular activities for emphasizing skills acquired: project management, team leadership, and so on.
- Do not list any personal information on your resume such as age or marital status.
- Always represent yourself accurately on the resume. Misrepresentation can lead to disqualification, or immediate dismissal.

## Format

- List first the information most pertinent to the specific job for which you are applying.
- Keep the resume short – no longer than two pages.
- Be consistent in your use of dates – don't use "April 1999" one place and "4/99" in another.
- Use short phrases rather than complete sentences.
- Do not use personal pronouns, such as "I" or "she".
- Do not list specific references or "References available upon request".

## **Identifying Accomplishments**

- Did you identify a problem and solve it? What were the results?
- Did you introduce a new procedure/process that made work easier or more accurate?
- Did you save your department money or time? How much? What impact did the savings have on the organization?
- Did you effectively manage systems or people? What were the results of your efforts?
- Did you initiate an incentive program that worked? What were the results on your department's image or on morale?
- Did you participate in decision making or planning? What contributions did you make to the team? What were the results of your efforts?
- Did you write any major reports, programs, publications, promotions or newsletters? What was the intended audience? What was the distribution or readership?
- Did you improve the efficiency of people or operations? What were the savings?
- Did you automate or create systems or procedures? How much did that improve the efficiency of your department?
- How many people did you train? How much better were they at their jobs after the training?
- Were you a liaison between departments? How were you able to make things run more efficiently?
- Did you produce reports or data that enabled management to make more informed decisions?
- Did you receive any awards or promotions?
- Did someone in a higher position ever give you a particularly strong compliment?

## **Tips to Keep Your Resume Concise**

- Avoid repeating information.
- Don't include irrelevant information. Avoid listing hobbies and personal information such as date of birth or marital status.
- Cut down on job duties. Create a paragraph that briefly highlights the scope of your responsibility and then provide a bulleted list of your most impressive accomplishments.
- Remove "References Available Upon Request". That is a given and stating it takes up valuable space.
- Edit unnecessary words. Review your resume for unnecessary phrases such as "responsible for" or "duties include".
- Customize your resume for the job. Only include information relevant to your goal. Target the resume to fit each job description.
- Always have someone else proofread your resume. ALWAYS!

## **Does It Pass The Skim Test?**

Your résumé needs to pass the skim test. Dust off your résumé and ask yourself:

- Can a hiring manager see my main credentials within 10 to 15 seconds?
- Does critical information jump off the page?
- Do I effectively sell myself on the top quarter of the first page?

## **Career Transition Resources**

The following organizations offer assistance in a variety of areas including skills assessment and training, career advising, resume preparation and interviewing techniques. They provide the content, tools and motivation to empower people to succeed in job interviews and find their ideal job.

### **Resume Tutor!**

<http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/careerdev/resources/resume/>

### **Quintessential Careers**

<http://www.quintcareers.com>

### **Wisebread**

<http://www.wisebread.com>

### **Job Seeker's Workshop**

<http://www.jobseekersworkshop.com>

### **Best-job-interview.com**

<http://www.best-job-interview.com>

### **How to Write a Resume.org**

<http://www.how-to-write-a-resume.org/>

### **Cabrillo College: Resumes & Cover Letters**

<http://www.cabrillo.edu/services/jobs>

### **UC Davis Career Management Toolkit**

<http://www.hr.ucdavis.edu/sdps/career-management-toolkit>

### **UCSC Job Seeker Toolkit**

[http://shr.ucsc.edu/toolkits/job-seekers/toolkit\\_job-seekers](http://shr.ucsc.edu/toolkits/job-seekers/toolkit_job-seekers)

## **Keys to Effective Interviewing**

### **Prior to Interview:**

Review your application package and be prepared to clarify any questions regarding your information. Research the position and the unit/department.

Review the job description/posting. Compare what you learned about the unit with the actual tasks stated in the job description/posting so that you can be prepared to describe how your previous experience matches what they need done in the position. Thoroughly review the stated qualifications – experience, skills, knowledge, and abilities.

Conduct practice interviews. Prepare your responses to standard interview questions including actual examples of how your experience fits.

Always have questions for the committee – your research will help you come up with at least 3-5 questions. It will show you have a particular interest in this position/unit.

### **The Interview:**

Dress accordingly; plan to arrive at least 15-20 minutes early. You might want to drive up to campus the night before to locate the office and parking availability.

Have available in a folder: copies of your application package; copy of the job announcement; samples of your work (if appropriate); a list of your professional references, including name, title, company, phone number to give the committee, and your list of questions for the committee.

Refer to your notes if you need to – tell them you've written some examples down so you won't forget anything important. Answer questions using specific examples of work you've done. Emphasize the positive. Do not make negative comments about current or previous employers, colleagues or work situations.

If there are areas of experience that you feel were not covered in the interview but are relevant to the position, mention them when asked if you have anything else to add; or comment on why you are interested in working in this particular job.

### **After the Interview:**

Send a card or e-mail thank you.

## **TIPS FOR SUCCESS – THE INTERVIEW**

### **Preparation**

- Research the business before the interview.
- Do a dry run a day or two before to find the room, parking, etc.
- Get the name and number of someone you can contact on the day of the interview if needed.
- Prepare several accomplishment statements.
- Ask if you can come a few minutes early to review the interview questions.
- Familiarize yourself with the application materials you submitted.

### **During the Interview**

- Greet the employer with a firm handshake.
- Make frequent eye contact.
- Smile, be polite, and try to relax.
- Be upbeat and make positive statements.
- Use examples of how your skills and abilities would fit the job.

### **Questions to Expect**

- What do you know about the type of work we do?
- What is your greatest weakness?
- What are your strengths?
- Why did you leave your last job?
- Why should we hire you? (Sometimes cloaked in the “Tell me about yourself” question.)

### **Questions to Ask the Employer**

- Who would supervise me?
- What do you see as my greatest challenges within the first 6 months on the job?
- When do you expect to make a hiring decision?
- Where do we go from here?
- Do you have any concerns about my skills and experience that I could address at this time?

### **Closing**

- Thank the interviewers for their time.
- Request a business card.
- Make eye contact and shake hands with a firm handshake (men and women).
- Send a thank-you note.

## Additional Resources

Temporary Employment Agencies	
<p><b>Spherion Temporary Services</b> 720 River Street Santa Cruz, CA 95060 Phone: 831-459-0720</p>	<p><b>Express Personnel Services</b> 9000 Soquel Ave. #102 Santa Cruz, CA 95062 Phone: 831-462-1202</p>
<p><b>Manpower</b> 2001A 40<sup>th</sup> Avenue Capitola, CA 95010 Phone: 831-476-6666</p>	<p><b>Kelly Services</b> 1414 Soquel Avenue, Ste 105 Santa Cruz, CA 95062 Phone: 831-425-0653</p>
<p><b>Volt Services Group</b> 2425 Porter Street, Suite 11 Soquel, CA 95073 Phone: 831-479-8658</p>	<p><b>Santa Cruz Staffing</b> 312 Locust Street Santa Cruz, CA 95060 Phone: 831-316-0051</p>
Internet Job Boards	
<a href="http://www.santacruzjobs.com">www.santacruzjobs.com</a>	<a href="http://www.caljobs.ca.gov">www.caljobs.ca.gov</a>
<a href="http://www.montereybayhelpwanted.com">www.montereybayhelpwanted.com</a>	<a href="http://www.montereybayjobs.com">www.montereybayjobs.com</a>
<a href="http://www.Linkedin.com">www.Linkedin.com</a>	<a href="http://www.monster.com">www.monster.com</a>
<a href="http://www.careerbuilder.com">www.careerbuilder.com</a>	<a href="http://www.norcalherc.org">www.norcalherc.org</a>
Computers & Career Centers	
<p>Goodwill/Shoreline Neighborhood Career Center provides assistance with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job Search</li> <li>• Resume Writing</li> <li>• Interviewing skills</li> <li>• Skills testing &amp; certification</li> </ul>	<p>350 Encinal Street Santa Cruz, CA 831-423-8611 9am-1pm; Monday-Thursday <a href="http://www.shorelineworks.org">www.shorelineworks.org</a></p>
<p>Workforce Services-Career Center <a href="http://www.workforcescc.com">www.workforcescc.com</a></p>	<p><b>Capitola:</b> 2045 40<sup>th</sup> Avenue 831-464-6281 <b>Watsonville:</b> 18 West Beach Street 831-763-8700.</p>
<p>Santa Cruz County Libraries:</p>	<p>All branches have internet access. Some branches have “homework information centers” available to adults during school hours. Call 831-420-5730 for more information.</p>