

# Your Job Search Journal



**Career Exploration:**

You and the Job Market

**Selling Yourself  
on Paper:**

Resumes, Applications and  
Cover Letters

**Networking:**

Finding the Job You Want

**Interviewing:**

Passing the Face-to-Face  
Test

**Your Job Searching  
Plan:**

Making the Commitment



[www.Mass.gov/dcs](http://www.Mass.gov/dcs)

# This is Your Job Search Journal

**Your Job Search Journal** is the Division of Career Services's comprehensive tool to help you get a job quickly. Filled with information and exercises you can complete on your own, **Your Job Search Journal** is one more way for you to work toward finding the right job for you.

Start on the road to your next job by:

- organizing your job search
- identifying and learning to talk about your skills
- learning to write effective resumes and job applications
- discovering tips to good cover letters that will help you get job interviews
- finding new sources of job leads
- getting prepared for job interviews
- deciding if a job is right for you

Put your One-Stop Career Center to work for you. Located across Massachusetts, these service centers offer a variety of employment services including:

## **Thousands of Statewide (and national) Job Listings**

The Massachusetts Job Bank has the largest computerized listing of jobs in New England. New listings come in daily, so review this up-to date service as often as you want. Access the Internet for job listings and job search information.

## **Resources You Can Use**

Fax machines, telephones, photocopiers are available for copying and faxing your resume and calling employers. Materials available include labor market information publications, resource guides, child care listings, transportation information, job search reference materials, and computer software to help you develop and format your resume.

## **Job Search Workshops**

Depending upon the location, you can take advantage of a wide variety of workshops, ranging from interviewing techniques to resume writing, career exploration to networking skills. Meet with other job seekers who share your concerns and hear their job search ideas and experiences.

## **Help from Experienced Job Specialists**

Career Center staff are available to provide you with support during your job search. Whether you want information about jobs, local employers, or job search tips, help is available.

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# Know Your Legal Rights When Job Searching

## Pre-Employment Questions

Categories:	Employers May Ask:	Employers May NOT Ask:
<b>Age</b>	<p>Are you a minor (under the age of 18)? May I have proof that you are 18 or over?</p> <p>Questions are allowed if based on a bona fide occupational qualification previously granted by the Commission or if necessary to satisfy provisions of state or federal law; i.e., certain public safety positions presently have age limits for hiring and retiring.</p>	<p>When were you born?</p> <p>How old are you?</p>
<b>Ancestry or National Origin</b>	No Questions	What is your language ancestry or national origin?
<b>Birthplace</b>	No Questions	<p>Where were you born?</p> <p>Where was your husband/wife born?</p> <p>Where were your parents (or other close relatives) born?</p>
<b>Citizenship</b>	Are you a citizen? Do you intend to become a citizen?	Are your parents/husband/wife citizens? Are you/your parents/husband/wife naturalized or native born citizens? When did you/they become citizens?
<b>Character</b>	Are you honest? Are you trustworthy?	<p>Do you belong to a church?</p> <p>Do you go to church regularly?</p>
<b>Criminal Records</b>	Have you ever been convicted of a felony? Within the last 5 years have you been convicted of, or released from incarceration for a misdemeanor which was not a first offense for drunkenness, simple assault, speeding, a minor traffic violation, an affray, or disturbing the peace?	Have you ever been arrested? Have you ever been convicted of a misdemeanor?
<b>Dependent</b>	No Questions	<p>Do you have any children?</p> <p>Do you intend to have children?</p> <p>What child care arrangements have you made?</p>

## Pre-Employment Questions

Categories:	Employers May Ask:	Employers May NOT Ask:
<b>Education</b>	What school, college, or vocational program did you attend? graduate?	The answer to: "When did you attend or graduate?" should not be used to determine an applicant's age.
<b>Experience</b>	What is your work experience?	The answer to a question about date of work should not be used to determine an applicant's age.
<b>Handicap</b>	No Questions*	Do you have any handicap? What kind of handicap do you have? How severe is your handicap?
<b>Marital Status</b>	What is your marital status? But only if both sexes are asked.	What is your maiden name? Or any other question that applies to one's sex.
<b>Military Experience</b>	Are you a U.S. veteran? What is your U.S. military service history?	Are you receiving a service connected disability pension?
<b>Organizations</b>	Are you a member of any organizations which advocate overthrowing the U.S. Government by violent means?	Do you belong to the NAACP/ B'nai B'rith? Or about any other organization, the nature, name or character of which indicates the religion, race, or national origin of its members.
<b>Race</b>	No Questions*	What is your race? Color? Or require that a photo accompany applications.
<b>Relatives</b>	No Questions	Where does your wife, husband, mother, father, or any other relative work or conduct business?
<b>Religion</b>	No Questions	What religious denomination, church, or synagogue do you belong to? What are your religious obligations? What religious holidays to you observe?
<b>Sex</b>	No Questions unless Commission has granted bona fide occupational qualification (BFOQ) for the position.*	No questions unless the Commission has granted a BFOQ.
<b>Sexual Preference</b>	No Questions	What is your sexual preference? Are you a homosexual?

\* Except for affirmative action purposes only  
Source: Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination

## Staying Motivated During Your Job Search

**Keep Your Self-Image Positive:**

It is sometimes very difficult not to take rejections personally. Lay-offs and hiring decisions rest on many factors that may have little to do with you personally. Resist any temptation to get angry at yourself. Try not to dwell on negative past experiences. Treat yourself with respect!

**Be Organized:**

Organize a daily and weekly job search plan. Keep to your schedule so that you do not brush important tasks aside or waste time wondering what you should do next. Looking for a good job is a 40 hour/ week commitment.

**Exercise Daily:**

Besides helping you remain physically healthy, exercise will assist you in keeping feelings of depression at a distance. Depression removes our desire to be active. Activity changes our body chemistry so that we actually feel better and desire more activity.

**Keep Emotions in Check:**

Be aware of how you are handling your emotions. Being responsible means responding appropriately to your emotions. Anger can be difficult to deal with. If you direct anger toward yourself, you risk the possibility of making yourself ill. If you misdirect anger on innocent people (like family, friends, or potential employers) you are not being responsible.

## Advantages to Finding a Job Quickly

Rank these in order of importance to you.

- \_\_\_ Earn Income
- \_\_\_ Independence
- \_\_\_ Good example to your children
- \_\_\_ Self-respect
- \_\_\_ Socialize/meet new people
- \_\_\_ Self-confidence
- \_\_\_ Control of your life
- \_\_\_ Use your skills
- \_\_\_ Find hidden skills
- \_\_\_ Stimulate mind, body and spirit
- \_\_\_ Build work history
- \_\_\_ Gain pride and dignity for you and your family
- \_\_\_ Improve your home life
- \_\_\_ Children become more independent
- \_\_\_ Improve standard of living
- \_\_\_ Retirement/pension
- \_\_\_ Health and other benefits

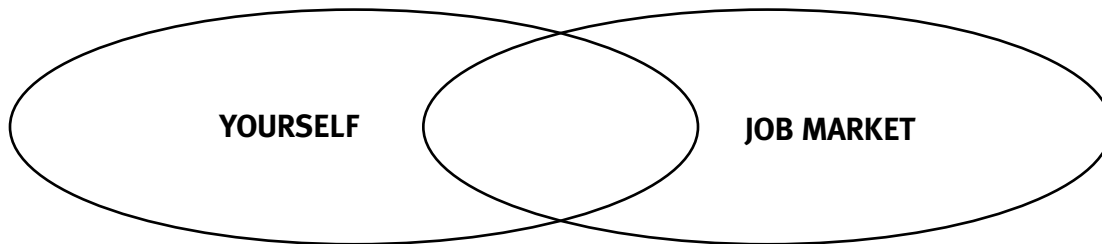
List three more advantages for you.

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# Career Planning Steps



## 1. Assess Yourself

- ◆ Interests
- ◆ Values
- ◆ Skills
- ◆ Accomplishments
- ◆ Personal Preferences and Needs

## 2. Research Careers and Occupations that Match Your Personal Profile

## 3. Understand the Job Market

- ◆ Occupations
- ◆ Industries
- ◆ Employment Outlook
- ◆ Local Economy and Employers

## 4. Identify Your Goal and Make a Plan for Achieving It



## What Do You Need?

Are the following issues of concern to you in your career planning? If they are, check the item and then write the specific issue for you and how you could go about solving it in the columns marked "Specific Issues" and "Solutions." Remember, your Career Center staff can help you identify solutions!

Type of Need	Specific Issues	Solutions
<input type="checkbox"/> Childcare		
<input type="checkbox"/> Other Family Responsibilities		
<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation		
<input type="checkbox"/> Financial Issues		
<input type="checkbox"/> Education		
<input type="checkbox"/> Training		
<input type="checkbox"/> Location of Job		
<input type="checkbox"/> Health Issues		
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:		

## Your Ideal Job

- ◆ You prefer to work in the following type of environment (type of industry, number of employees, etc.):
- ◆ You prefer to work in the following cities or towns:
- ◆ You prefer to work the following hours:
- ◆ You prefer a job:
  - requiring travel
  - not requiring travel
- ◆ How do you want to get to work?
- ◆ Are you inside or outside? If you imagine yourself outside, where are you? Are you in a forest, a park, on a city street? If you imagine yourself inside, where are you? Are you in an office building, a store, a factory? How large is the building?
- ◆ What activities are you doing? Are you writing, building something, talking with someone, fixing something, using a computer, something else?
- ◆ Are there other people around you? How many?
- ◆ Are you working with these other people? How many? In what ways?
- ◆ What is your salary?
- ◆ What kinds of things are you very good at on your job?
- ◆ What do you love about your job?

**Write down more highlights of your ideal job in this space:**

## Your Work Values

Please check work values that were present in a past job and those that you want most in your next job.

Value	Definition	Had in Past Job	Want in Next Job
Achievement	Personal/professional feelings of accomplishment		
Advancement	Opportunity to move up the ladder		
Authority	Responsibility for directing the work of others		
Autonomy	Freedom to develop own approach to doing the job, opportunity to work independently		
Challenge	A job that demands the best use of your resources and abilities to meet new situations		
Comfort	Low pressure, few constraints		
Conformity	The opportunity to let others set expectations and direction		
Contribution	Opportunity to have a direct impact on the success of the organization		
Cooperation	Work in a friendly, compatible environment		
Creativity	Opportunity to innovate and deal with new problems, varied and frequently changing situations		
Entrepreneurship	Motivation to be self employed, develop a new service, start-up a new program		
Environment Value	A workplace whose design and maintenance are compatible with your standards		

## Work Values (cont.)

Value	Definition	Had in Past Job	Want in Next Job
Interaction	Frequent and open interpersonal contacts with others		
Knowledge	Opportunity for much new learning		
Leadership	Be responsible for and direct the work of others, making decisions affecting others, and managing		
Mobility	Opportunity to travel		
Personal Time	Sufficient time for pursuits outside of work and/or family life		
Prestige	A job that gives you a great deal of status and respect		
Responsibility	To be held accountable for important tasks		
Routine Activity	Work that is uncomplicated and organized with the same tasks repeated frequently		
Salary	Being well paid for your work		
Security	A job that is not likely to be eliminated		
Social Interest	A job that helps people		
Variety	Work involving many different tasks		

## Skills Identification

This exercise will help you identify many of your skills. First, list your past work positions and the responsibilities for each position. Identify the skills you used to accomplish your responsibilities. And list past or present non-paid activities, such as volunteer work, internships, hobbies, and homemaking experience. Identify the responsibilities you had or the tasks you did in these activities and the skills you used in accomplishing these tasks.

### A. Past Work Positions

Position	Responsibilities	Skills
Receptionist	Answers phones Clerical work	Organizational, Communication Typing, Manual skills, Editing
Real Estate Broker	Supervises real estate salespeople Oversees business transactions between parties involved in sale of property	Supervision Management, Coordination, Communication

### Your Past Work Positions

Position	Responsibilities	Skills
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### B. Other Activities (i.e. volunteer work, internships, hobbies, homemaking activities)

Activity	Responsibilities	Skills
Homemaker	Raise a family  Cooking	Organizational, Leadership Communication, Budgeting  Math skills, Organizational, Manual skills

### Your Other Activities (volunteer work, internships, homemaking, etc.)

Activity	Responsibilities	Skills
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## Transferable Skills

A transferable skill is an ability that is not specific to a single job or task but is applicable to a wide variety of settings.

### Personal Skills

The following is a list of personal skills that can be very important in your adjustment to and effectiveness in a particular job or occupation. Circle those terms that describe you.

Accurate	Enthusiastic	Patient
Ambitious	Fair	Persistent
Artistic	Flexible	Polite
Assertive	Frank	Practical
Attentive to Detail	Friendly	Precise
Calm	Generous	Quiet
Capable	Hard working	Realistic
Cheerful	Helpful	Reliable
Clear thinking	Honest	Resourceful
Clever	Humorous	Responsible
Competitive	Imaginative	Self-confident
Considerate	Leader	Sensible
Cooperative	Likeable	Sincere
Creative	Logical	Sociable
Dependable	Loyal	Tactful
Determined	Mature	Thorough
Discreet	Open-minded	Tolerant
Easy going	Optimistic	Trustworthy
Efficient	Organized	Understanding
Energetic	Outgoing	Versatile

**Summary: Review your list and select the adjectives you think best describe you**

- |    |    |     |
|----|----|-----|
| 1. | 5. | 9.  |
| 2. | 6. | 10. |
| 3. | 7. | 11. |
| 4. | 8. | 12. |

## Ways to Learn about Careers and the Job Market

If you're considering changing your occupation, you will want to research your options. The following are several ways to learn more about occupations:

- ✓ Identify people working in those careers and talk with them
- ✓ Look up information about those careers — career books can be found at the following places:
  - ◆ One-Stop Career Centers
  - ◆ Public Libraries
  - ◆ Vocational Technical School Libraries
- ✓ Write to professional associations for more information — names and addresses of associations can be found in the following directories in the Career Center:
  - ◆ Massachusetts Occupational Outlook Handbook
  - ◆ Directory of Licensed Occupations
  - ◆ Careers and Training in the Allied Health Fields
- ✓ Visit work sites
  
- ✓ Find related part-time job or volunteer experiences

### Investigate Careers.

**Gather the following information for each occupation you research**

#### Occupation:

1. Brief description of Occupation/Daily tasks:
2. Education/Training required:
3. Skills/Interests required:
4. Starting salary/Salary range/Benefits:
5. Typical working hours:
6. Tools/Materials/Machines used
7. Work environment(s):
8. Career ladder:
9. Related occupations:
10. Where you can get more information:

## Developing a Great Resume

Research among hiring employers has shown the most preferred and effective resume format to be the chronological layout. Here are some tips for developing a great chronological resume.

1. Start with your present or most recent position and work backward, with the most space devoted to recent employment.
2. Detail only the last three to five positions, or employment covering the last ten or so years. Summarize early positions unless exceptionally relevant to the present.
3. Use year designations only, without specifying month or day. Greater detail can be given in the interview or application.
4. Do not repeat details that are common to several positions.
5. Within each position listed stress the major accomplishments and responsibilities that demonstrate your full competence to do the job. Once the most significant aspects of your work are clear, it is generally not necessary to include lesser achievements since they will be assumed by employers.
6. Keep your next job target in mind. Describe prior positions and accomplishments that most relate to your next job.
7. Education is not included in the work experience section. Generally speaking, education should go at the top of the resume if completed within the last five years; if more than five years, at the bottom. (This is not a hard and fast rule, however, and you can follow your own instincts whether to emphasize work or education.)
8. And, of course, try to keep it to one page.



# The Employer's Bottom Line about Resumes

## How to Make a Great First Impression

### Your resume has to sell the reader in the top half.

- ◆ If there is an objective, it should be simply stated with a particular employment opportunity in mind.
- ◆ Your strongest skills and qualifications should be listed either at the top of the resume in a skills summary or in the first job description.
- ◆ position titles and companies should be easy to pick out.

### The resume should be written with the employer in mind.

- ◆ Tailor your resume to the kind of job(s) you are looking for. If the jobs are different, your resume should be adapted to reflect the differences between employers and what they are looking for.
- ◆ The qualifications listed in your resume should match those listed in the job description for which you are applying.

### Your accomplishments should stand out.

- ◆ The employer should easily be able to determine your accomplishments when reading your work history. Do not bog the reader down with less important points.
- ◆ Your qualifications should not be buried in long paragraphs.

### Your resume should have eye appeal.

- ◆ It should look clean and professional.
- ◆ It should have plenty of areas (between paragraphs), and there should not be too much information crammed onto one page.

### What employers look for when reading a resume:

- ◆ Are there sufficient years and the appropriate level of experience?
- ◆ Is the work experience in the appropriate areas?
- ◆ Is the candidate missing any critical experience?
- ◆ Does the candidate have sufficient breadth and depth of technical knowledge?
- ◆ Does the applicant have sufficient supervisory, management or leadership skills?
- ◆ Is there a solid record of accomplishment?
- ◆ How does this candidate compare with others currently under consideration?

## Action Words for Resumes

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Administered	Directed	Managed
Advised	Distributed	Marketed
Analyzed	Drafted	Monitored
Assembled	Edited	Motivated
Assisted	Educated	Negotiated
Calculated	Established	Operated
Catalogued	Evaluated	Organized
Chaired	Examined	Persuaded
Changed	Executed	Prepared
Collaborated	Explained	Presented
Compiled	Facilitated	Programmed
Completed	Handled	Proposed
Conducted	Helped	Publicized
Constructed	Hired	Recorded
Consulted	Identified	Recruited
Contracted	Implemented	Revised
Coordinated	Improved	Served
Copied	Increased	Supervised
Created	Influenced	Taught
Defined	Informed	Used
Delegated	Initiated	Wrote
Demonstrated	Interviewed	
Designed	Investigated	
	Maintained	

## Accent on Accomplishments

Your resume and application should highlight your accomplishments. Take each of the employers and jobs that you have had and list the three most significant contributions that you made for each position. Don't forget to use "action words" in describing your accomplishments.

**1. Employer:  
Accomplishments:**

**Job Title:**

A.

B.

C.

**2. Employer:  
Accomplishments:**

**Job Title:**

A.

B.

C.

**3. Employer:  
Accomplishments:**

**Job Title:**

A.

B.

C.

# Sample Resume

**THOMAS B. JOHNSON**  
 439 South Adams Street  
 W. Bridgewater, MA 02331  
 (508) 378-9999

**OBJECTIVE:**

Manager of Credit and Collections

1995 to 2000

**EXPERIENCE:**

**H. P. Hood Inc., Boston, MA**  
**CREDIT MANAGER**

- \* Managed a credit and collection portfolio of food service, distributor, military and other government related accounts comprising a regional sales volume of \$150,000,000 and over 2,000 accounts.
- \* Contributed in reducing days sales outstanding by as much as eight days.
- \* Coordinated, organized and implemented a new set of invoicing procedures with a major school system resulting in the reduction of total payment time by 45%.
- \* Developed, designed and implemented vendor and bank credit inquiry letters.

**Quinol Industries, Inc., Quincy, MA**  
**CREDIT MANAGER**

1992 to 1995

- \* Managed an accounts receivable portfolio of petroleum distributors and home delivery dealers throughout New England totaling over 500 accounts and an annual sales volume of \$80,000,000.
- \* Brought previous collection turns from 75 days to present average of 38 days, turning sales increase to cash in less than 40 days.
- \* Planned, negotiated and secured a four way cross corporate guarantee from a well known high volume Massachusetts based petroleum dealer.

**Emerson and Cummings, a division of W. R. Grace & Company, Norwood, MA**  
**CREDIT and COLLECTIONS SUPERVISOR**

1981 to 1992

- \* Managed an accounts receivable portfolio of the company's Dielectric, Microwave and Flotation Divisions comprising an annual sales volume of \$30,000,000 in the electronics industry.
- \* Hired, trained and supervised a staff of six full time employees and handled 6,000 to 10,000 diversified accounts.
- \* Reduced bad debts by as much as 15% through an improved monitoring system and quicker inter-department pursuit.

**EDUCATION:**

**Data Corporation, Boston MA**  
 Introduction to MOS-DOS and Lotus 1-2-3

**Northeastern University, Boston MA**  
 B.S. in Management with Honors

**Dun and Bradstreet, Inc., New York, NY**  
 Certificate in Credit and Financial Analysis

**PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS:**

**New England Association of Credit Executives, Inc., Arlington, MA**

## Ten Things to Avoid on Your Resume\*

**We've surveyed scores of prime employers, career counselors and employment agencies to determine what they feel are the most common repeated mistakes in the thousands of resumes they see. Here are the top (bottom) ten:**

1. Too long (preferred length is one page).
2. Disorganized—information is scattered around the page— hard to follow.
3. Poorly typed and printed—hard to read—looks unprofessional.
4. Overwritten—long paragraphs and sentences—takes too long to say too little.
5. Too sparse—gives only bare essentials of dates and job titles.
6. Not oriented for results—doesn't show what the candidate accomplished on the job.
7. Too many irrelevancies—height, weight, sex, health, marital status are not needed on today's resumes.
8. Misspellings, typographical errors, poor grammar—resumes should be carefully proofread before they are printed and mailed.
9. Tries too hard—fancy typesetting and binders, photographs and exotic paper stocks distract from the clarity of the presentation.
10. Misdirected—too many resumes arrive on employer's desks un-requested and with little or no apparent connections to the organization—cover letters would help avoid this.

\* Tom Jackson, *The Perfect Resume*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1981, page 15.

## Resumes that Sell: Rate Your Resume

Use this form to rate your resume or to allow your friends to rate your resume. Grade the resume in each of the categories as either Excellent, Average or Poor. Write in suggestions for improvements.

	Rating			Suggestions for Improvement
	Excellent	Average	Poor	
Is resume error free (typing errors, spelling or poor word usage)				
Is objective statement focused, but not too narrow?				
Are there quantitative terms used to stress accomplishments?				
Does it stress accomplishments over skills and duties?				
Is the resume clear? Is it easy to get a "picture" of qualifications?				
Is irrelevant personal information left out?				
Does it avoid self-evaluation?				
Is the language clear and understandable?				
Does it emphasize benefits for a potential employer?				
Does it make the reader want to read it?				
Is it well printed on good professional-looking stock?				
Does the layout invite attention?				
Do strong points stand out?				
Is industry/product-line of past employer clear?				
Do the sentences begin with action words?				
Is it to the point and clear?				
Does it sell the writer's problem solving skills?				

## Tips for Filling out Application Forms

✓ **BE CAREFUL**

If you are careful about following instructions on your application, an employer will probably think that you may be careful as an employee.

✓ **BE NEAT**

Print or write clearly so that your application can be read easily. Use a reliable blue or black pen.

✓ **BE CERTAIN**

Before you begin to fill in the blanks, read everything on the application carefully. After you complete the form, read it again to make sure you have answered every question correctly.

✓ **BE ALERT**

If you are not sure about the meaning of abbreviations used on the form, ask the person who gave you the form to explain them.

✓ **BE COMPLETE**

Answer every question. If a question does not apply to you, write "Does not apply."

✓ **BE CORRECT**

Watch your spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

✓ **BE INCLUSIVE**

Describe all your skills and abilities. Also, list the kinds of computers, software programming, machinery, equipment, and tools you are able to use.

✓ **BE ACCURATE**

Make sure all information is correct. Check employment dates, telephone numbers, and addresses for accuracy.

✓ **BE PREPARED**

Take a sample application form with you when you go to apply for a job. By having all the information about yourself ready ahead of time, you will be able to complete the application completely and accurately.

## Your Cover Letter

The cover letter introduces you to the prospective employer and should always be included when you mail your resume. It is the first thing the employer should see and read. Your resume is not addressed to anyone in particular; however the cover letter should always be addressed to one specific person. Make the letter versatile so that changes can be made for each employer who will read it. Never write a form letter to just be duplicated and sent out.

Your cover letter should be brief and interesting and should ensure that your resume will be read. The content should not replicate the data in your resume. The first twenty words are important; they should attract the reader's attention.

There are two types of letters you may write. One is in answer to a specific advertisement (letter of application) and the other is an unsolicited mailing (letter of inquiry) to an employer who does not expect your resume. Remember to keep a copy of all correspondence you send and receive during your job search.

132 East Main Street  
Cambridge, MA 02138  
(617) 483-1234

Pat Murphy  
C.D.A. Analogic  
8 Centennial Drive  
Peabody, MA 01960

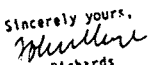
Dear Pat Murphy,

I am writing in response to the Customer Service/Order Specialist position you advertised with the Department of Employment and Training. I have enclosed my resume for your consideration.

The position interests me for several reasons. My work experience and education have prepared me for this position. As you can see from the enclosed resume, I have had experience with Customer Service working for the Good Hill Day Care Center. That experience prepared me to work with people. I also completed my schooling at Malden High. As you can also see from the resume, I can type approximately 45 words per minute.

I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss further my qualifications for this position. I will call your office next week to inquire about an interview.

Thank you very much for your time and your consideration.

Sincerely yours,  
  
John Richards

221 Poplar Street  
Missoula, Montana, 59801

Mr. John P. Johnson, Vice President  
Ajax Accounting Company  
555 Tamarack Drive  
Billings, Montana 59801

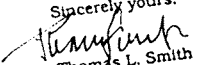
Dear Mr. Johnson,

**First Paragraph.** In your initial paragraph state the reason for the letter, the specific position or type of work for which you are applying and indicate from which resource (placement center, news media, friend, employment service) you learned of the opening.

**Second Paragraph.** Indicate why you are interested in the position, the company, its products or services — above all, what you can do for the employer. If you are a recent graduate, explain how your academic background makes you a qualified candidate for the position. If you had some practical work experience, point out the specific achievements or unique qualifications. Try not to repeat the same information the reader will find in the resume.

**Third Paragraph.** Refer the reader to the enclosed resume or application blank which summarizes your qualifications, training, experiences or whatever media you may be utilizing to present yourself.

**Final Paragraph.** In the closing paragraph, indicate your desire for a personal interview and your flexibility as to the time and place. Repeat your phone number in the letter and offer any assistance to help in a speedy response. Finally, close your letter with a statement or question which will encourage a response. For example, state that you will be in the city where the company is located on a certain date and would like to set up an interview. Or, state that you will call on a certain date to set up an interview. Or, ask if the company will be recruiting in your area, or if it desires additional information or references.

Sincerely yours,  
  
Thomas L. Smith



## Ten Tips to Great Cover Letters

A cover letter is a sales tool! - It should always accompany your resume or application. So, here are a few tips for writing effective cover letters:

**1. Always include important information**

Your name, address and telephone number (including area code) should be easily visible on every cover letter you send out. It will be the first thing the reader looks for when trying to contact you.

**2. Make it personal - Address your letter to a specific person within the company**

Start with and end with the reader. If necessary, call for a contact name. "To whom it may concern" and "Dear sir/madam" letters don't get read as often as those addressed to a specific person. And use a comma after the name – it's more personal.

**3. Make the opening sentence catchy**

When people read letters (especially business letters), they scan them for content: Who's it addressed to? What's the opener? What's the desired action? etc. Attention grabbing first sentences (ones that describe why you're the best person for this job, or ones that address the interests of the employer, etc.) will get the reader to read on.

**4. Write each letter to a specific job/company**

There's no such thing as a "one size fits all" cover letter. Each job you apply for is different. Show how you meet the needs of a given job. Be sure to refer to a specific job in the first few sentences so that the reader knows what job you are applying for (no need to refer to where you saw it – it doesn't add anything to your letter).

**5. Describe your skills as they relate to the job**

Saying you worked for a company in a job doesn't mean the reader will make the connection – between you, your previous job, and the job in question. It often helps to tie your experience to your skills, and relate your skills to the job description.

**6. Always type and proofread your cover letter before sending it out**

Your cover letter creates an impression of you. It's very important to appear professional and not make mistakes. If you make errors in your cover letter, it may reflect how employers may view you. If your letter is neat and professional, the employer may believe you are, too.

**7. Be brief, use action words to describe your accomplishments**

Some employers receive many cover letters and resumes daily, so they want to know about you without having to read a lot.

**8. Be confident, creative and enthusiastic**

Next to your resume, your cover letter is your best way to sell yourself on paper. It lets your personality come through as well as the benefits of hiring you.

**9. Always keep a copy of every cover letter you send out.**

Copies of past letters will make your job search and follow-up go smoothly.

**10. Always request a response or an interview.**

Your cover letter is to get you an interview – so, ask for one!

## Why Network?

Talking to or contacting people you know to find job leads is the most effective way to find a job. Because most of us find a job through personal contacts—people we already know such as our friends and family, our doctor, dentist, and people we meet when we go shopping and during our normal everyday lives. Personal contacts are also the people that our friends and family know.

Did you know that only a small percentage of jobs are advertised in local newspapers?

Did you know that only a small percentage of people who find a job get one from answering an advertisement in a local newspaper?

Did you know that most people who look for work go after advertised openings? Therefore, you increase your chances to be hired by networking with personal contacts to find unadvertised job leads.

Did you know that approximately 60% of job hunters find their new job with the help of friends, family members and acquaintances?

So, you should be sure that as many people as possible know that you are looking for a job. That way they can help you find it faster!

Networking is just one effective way people find jobs. Below are some of the most commonly used job search methods and how effective they've been. Use them all or combine these job search methods to find a job faster.

### Percent of Total Job

Seekers Using the Method	Method	Effectiveness Rate*
66.0%	Applied directly to employer	47.7%
50.8	Asked friends about jobs where they work (Networking)	22.1
41.8	Asked friends about jobs elsewhere (Networking)	11.9
28.4	Asked relatives about jobs where they work (Networking)	19.3
27.3	Asked relatives about jobs elsewhere (Networking)	7.4
45.9	Answered local newspaper ads	23.9
21.0	Private employment agency	24.2
12.5	School placement office	21.4
15.3	Civil Service test	12.5
10.4	Asked teacher or professor (Networking)	12.1
1.6	Placed ad in local newspaper	12.9
6.0	Union hiring hall	22.2

\* A percentage obtained by dividing the number of job seekers who actually found work using the method by the total number of job seekers who tried to use that method, whether successfully or not.

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration "Tips for Finding the Right Job" 1990 (revised)

## Knocking on the Right Doors

**A good contact is anyone who is able to:**

- ◆ Offer you a job;
- ◆ Tell you of a job opening;
- ◆ Refer you to somebody who can arrange an interview or read your resume;
- ◆ Give you the name of somebody who can do any of the above;
- ◆ Give you the name of somebody who can give you the name of someone else who can do any of the above.

This is an area in which the highest level of originality and creativity is demanded in seeking a job. It can really be a challenge for you in seeing how innovative and productive you can be in seeking out new resources. You should leave no stone unturned.

Consider the categories listed. Then, on the Networking Worksheet, write the names of at least two people from each category who may be able to help you in your job search. Again, these are not necessarily the names of people in your occupation or people you know well, just people you've met who may be willing to give you some helpful information.

### People

**List 100 people you know - each one of them knows 100.**

**Kinds of people to include:**

professional colleagues  
classmates  
ex-employers  
ex-co-workers  
doctors  
dentists  
clergymen  
salesmen, customers  
druggist  
barber  
banker  
parties  
PTA  
bartenders  
policemen  
insurance agents  
hairdressers  
faculty  
secretaries  
golf-tennis-skiing pros  
relatives and neighbors  
postman  
creditors  
fraternity-sorority members  
sub-contractors

building inspectors  
small food store owner  
interviewer in a company where you were refused a job

Other people I know – Include here your landlord, bank president, store managers and just about every one you know. People who interact with many people each day, serving the public are sources of good job leads.

### Places and Organizations

yellow pages  
consultants in country clubs  
local-state-federal gov't  
trade shows  
volunteer groups  
business calendars  
women's club  
alumni directory  
Kiwanis club  
synagogue-church  
health spa  
veterans groups  
conventions  
temporary employment agencies  
authors in professional journals

obituaries  
neighborhood employment center  
Chamber of Commerce  
Rotary Club, Lions Club  
YMCA/YWCA  
annual conventions  
professional associations  
alumni groups  
local newspaper of town where you live or want to work  
announcements in newspapers of new positions in a company  
trade journals  
State Dept. of Education-Community College Division  
Sunday & Wednesday editions of your local newspaper  
College bulletin boards  
College placement office  
closest bar to a company you are interested in  
bars at the airport

**Don't Prejudge! Anyone, no matter what their status, may be a source of a referral or leads that results in your next job.**

## Building Your Referral Network

You will notice that you know many people and some of them work or have worked before. They know about job possibilities. In addition, they have ideas about lots of different kinds of jobs and companies, and you might be interested in learning more about some of them. They may also be able to refer you to their acquaintances who know about job possibilities.

Because all of the people on your chart can help you look for work, make sure you put down everyone! Don't worry about the chart being too big. There is no such thing as too much help.

In the space below, complete the worksheet with your present network.

Name	Occupation	Company	Phone
Relatives			
1.			
2.			
Former co-workers, Employers			
1.			
2.			
Classmates			
1.			
2.			
Roommates			
1.			
2.			
From parties			
1.			
2.			
Neighbors			
1.			
2.			
Holiday cards to			
1.			
2.			
Others (Landlord, Store Manager, etc.)			
1.			
2.			
Clergy			
1.			

\*(If you don't know someone's occupation, company or phone number, list their name and get this information later.)

## Using Your Phone to Get a Job Interview

**Ask to be connected. If asked the purpose of the call is business...**

“Hello, this is \_\_\_\_\_ (name of caller).”

“I would like the name of the person in charge of the \_\_\_\_\_ (desired department),” please.

“Hello, Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_ (name of Dept. Head), my name is ...”

**If applicable, give the name of person who suggested that you call...**

“Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_ Smith suggested I call you. I am interested in the \_\_\_\_\_ (name of position).”

**If applicable, talk about how you found out about the job...**

“I am responding to the ad on (name of publication, posting, bulletin, career service agency), regarding the \_\_\_\_\_ (title of position).”

**If the department head is in a hurry and wants to end the conversation...**

“I understand that you are extremely busy, but could we set up an interview at your earliest convenience? ”

**If the department head wants you to call back...**

“When is a good time for me to reach you? ”

**If the department head wants more information... Give power statement regarding work experience, training, skills...**

“I have worked \_\_\_\_\_ (number of years) at \_\_\_\_\_ (agency name of former employer), where I \_\_\_\_\_ (past work activities related to skills in prospective job.)” or:

“I have experience in \_\_\_\_\_ (duties and work related activities). I am very interested in pursuing a career in \_\_\_\_\_ (field of related work).”

**Getting the interview...**

“I would like to set up an interview at your earliest convenience.”

- ◆ Make sure to have your a calendar at hand and some tentative dates.
- ◆ Do not ask for directions. Call later and ask the receptionist.

**If you are rejected...**

“Could I come in and talk with you anyway, in case something opens up in the near future?”

- ◆ Make sure to have calendar at hand.
- ◆ Do not ask for directions. Call later and ask receptionist.

**Ask for other leads...**

“Can you suggest any other places I could contact? Who would I speak to there?”

**Closing...**

“Thank you for your time.”

## Interview Tips

**Try to learn something about the company and/or its products before you arrive for the interview.**

- ✓ Dress appropriately.
- ✓ Go alone.
- ✓ Arrive early for your interview.
- ✓ Smile and be polite to all the people you encounter.
- ✓ Complete your application carefully.
- ✓ Don't smoke or chew gum.
- ✓ Bring any licenses necessary for that specific occupation.
- ✓ Leave your resume and letters of recommendation with the interviewer.
- ✓ Be sure to explain fully your qualifications and to relate your skills to the job.
- ✓ Be positive and confident but not arrogant.
- ✓ Answer questions completely but don't ramble.
- ✓ Maintain eye contact with the interviewer.
- ✓ Don't discuss your health.
- ✓ Be careful not to display nervous mannerisms.
- ✓ Never make negative comments about your previous employers.
- ✓ State your desire for work and your interest in the company.
- ✓ Ask a question about that specific company to reinforce your interest to the employer.
- ✓ Ask for permission to call back for the results of your interview.
- ✓ At the end of the interview thank your interviewer for his/her time.

## Interviewing Strategies that Give You a Winning Edge

### Common Interview Questions

To be successful at job interviews you will need to fine tune your interviewing skills. Be prepared to answer a wide variety of questions. It would be impossible to list all of the questions that could be asked in the course of an employment interview. The choices are just too many. The following questions, in addition to being fairly common, are also among the more difficult and thought-provoking. They should help you to fine tune your interviewing skills.

Note: Some employers may ask you questions they should not—questions that may be discriminatory. While you should not answer these, you should be prepared to deal with them in an appropriate manner.

### Early Background

These are representative of the questions that might be asked concerning your childhood and family background.

1. What major events occurred during your childhood that had the greatest impact on your life? Why?
2. What important values did you acquire during your early years?
3. What do you consider to be your most significant accomplishments while growing up and why?

### Education

1. What were your reasons for choosing \_\_\_\_\_ college major?
2. How did your college education prepare you for life/current career?
3. What were your most significant accomplishments in college and why?
4. What kind of a student were you?
5. How might you have improved your effectiveness as a student?
6. What were your favorite courses? Least favorite? Why?

7. How did you make use of your spare time?

8. What leadership roles did you assume while on campus? What results demonstrate your effectiveness as a leader?

### Work Experience

1. How did you decide to select \_\_\_\_\_ as a career? What were the factors that most influenced this decision?
2. Of the past positions that you have held, which did you like most? Why?
3. Which past position did you like least? Why?
4. What were the events and factors that led to your departure from \_\_\_\_\_ company?
5. What were your most important contributions and accomplishments in your position as \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_ company?
6. How would you compare your position as \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_ company to your position as \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_ company?
7. Which of these positions did you enjoy most/least? Why?

8. If we were to contact your current boss for a reference, what would s/he say about you?

9. What would s/he describe as your strengths/areas needing improvement? Why?

10. What are you doing to improve these areas?

11. What could you do to improve your overall performance in your current position?

12. What do you like most/least about your current job? Why?

13. What major projects have you undertaken in your current job that are beyond those normally required for this position?

14. How satisfied have you been with your career progress to date? What could you have done to accelerate this progress?

### **Personal Effectiveness**

1. How would you describe yourself?

2. What adjectives would others use to describe you?

3. What are your strengths/in what areas?

4. How have your past supervisors described you?

5. What major changes and improvements have you brought about in your last job? Why were these important?

6. What additional things could you have done to improve your overall impact and performance? Why didn't you do these things?

7. Tell me about your last performance evaluation?

8. What was your last performance rating? Why?

9. What plans do you have for improving your effectiveness?

10. In your last job, beyond your normal job responsibilities, what additional major projects did you undertake?

11. How did these extra projects come about?

12. What were the results?

13. In your career to date, what do you consider to be your most significant accomplishment? Why?

### **Managerial Leadership**

1. How would you describe your management style? Your management philosophy?

2. What are the methods and techniques that you employ when managing others? How effective are these?

3. How would your subordinates describe you as a manager?

4. In what areas would they be complimentary? What areas would they likely cite as areas in which you could improve your effectiveness as a manager? Why?

5. What do you see as the major role of management? Why?

6. What is the proper balance between managerial control and employee independence?

7. How do you motivate employees? What kinds of things do you do?

8. What methods do you use to monitor and direct department results?

9. How do you deal with employee performance issues? What methods do you use?

10. Describe your management planning process. How do you go about planning for department results?

11. Who is involved in your planning process? In what ways do you involve them?

12. On a scale of one to ten (ten, high), where would you rate yourself as a manager. Why? How could you improve your overall managerial effectiveness?



## Sample: After Interview Checklist

Company Name: _____	Your Interviewers Name: _____		
Date: _____	First Call Back Date _____		
<b>To be filled out immediately after interview</b>		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
1. Did you arrive on time?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. What did you wear? _____			
3. Did you introduce yourself to the interviewer?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. What qualifications did you discuss during your interview? _____ _____			
5. Did you go through the resume with the interviewer?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Did he/she discuss anything from your personal background? If so, what? _____ _____		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Did the employer comment on any of your skills? If so, what was said? _____		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. What was the employer's general impression of your resume? _____			
9. Did the interviewer discuss any special problems you may have? If yes, what was discussed? _____		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Did you look at the interviewer when you spoke to him/her?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Did you mention how you were referred to this company?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Did you state your desire for work and interest in the company?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. If you were feeling sure that you were not getting the job you were being interviewed for, did you inquire about other positions? What were they? _____		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Was part-time or temporary employment an option?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. If nothing was available at this place, did you ask if the interviewer knows of any job openings at any other company?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. What was discussed the most? _____			
20. Was there anything the employer seemed to dislike? If so, what? _____		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. What did he/she seem particularly interested in? _____ _____			
22. When did you say you would call back? _____			

## Follow-up Letter Sample

Follow-up after an employment interview can be pivotal to getting the job. A thank you or letter of appreciation can be very effective to “closing the sale,” – and always refer to the position discussed. Below is one follow-up letter sample.

Date

Company Name  
Address

Dear Ms. Smith:

It was a pleasure to meet with you last Tuesday.

Our discussion about the qualifications for the Customer Service Representative position only served to convince me further that I am right for this job. The people and the environment at your company were so welcoming and friendly, I could imagine myself as part of your team. I hope you can, too.

Once again, thanks for your time and consideration. If you have any questions, feel free to call me at any time.

Sincerely,  
John Richards

## Ways to Save Time

### “Work Smarter Not Harder”

#### Use Commuting Time

If you spend only an hour a day commuting you are spending the equivalent of more than six full work weeks a year in transit. Try to spend at least some of this time on high priority activities. You can read or work on a bus or subway or in a carpool. Even while driving you can slowly think over an important problem or project.

#### Schedule Free Time

Because your battery needs recharging, your daily schedule should include a number of breaks—brief periods when you turn your attention from hard work, relax and stretch your legs, do breathing exercises, read a novel, etc.

#### Enough is Enough

Most people don't do enough planning. A few do too much—they'd rather plan than act. If you think you're an “over-planner” set a definite time limit on your planning.

#### The Five-Minute Experiment

From time to time, everyone has a task they must do but just can't get started on. When this happens, commit yourself to a single five-minute effort.

#### Time Management at Home

Your personal life can also benefit from reflection on your most important goals, key tasks and daily priorities. Think about what is important to you at home—more time with family and friends, learning a new hobby—and think of the most important steps to achieve these goals.

#### Parkinson's Law

You've surely noticed that your work expands to fill the time available for its completion. Fight this waste of time with deadlines. If you don't have an actual deadline, make one for yourself.

#### Fight Procrastination

Delaying the unpleasant may be part of human nature, but it becomes a guiding principle if not resisted. Fight procrastination by:

- ◆ setting deadlines and making commitments
- ◆ thinking about the benefits of doing what you know you're supposed to do
- ◆ thinking imaginatively about the bad things that will happen if you procrastinate
- ◆ replacing the habit of procrastination with the habit of doing the most unpleasant thing first
- ◆ reward yourself for completed work

# Weekly Goal and Activity Planner

Month of \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_

Goal/Activity	Date
1st Week	
2nd Week	
3rd Week	
4th Week	
5th Week	

After determining your weekly goals and activities, transfer them to the "Monthly Planning Calendar" on the following page.



## Record of Job Leads

Who to call	Phone results
Name of company:	Date of calls:
Address:	Notes:
Phone number:	Date/time interview or application:
Person to see:	
Follow-up action:	Date:

Name of company:	Date of calls:
Address:	Notes:
Phone number:	Date/time interview or application:
Person to see:	
Follow-up action:	Date:

Name of company:	Date of calls:
Address:	Notes:
Phone number:	Date/time interview or application:
Person to see:	
Follow-up action:	Date:

Name of company:	Date of calls:
Address:	Notes:
Phone number:	Date/time interview or application:
Person to see:	
Follow-up action:	Date:

Make copies of this page and keep your job leads current and organized.



