TOP 10 Ways to Find a Job

When you're job hunting, it pays to use a variety of approaches. Here you'll find ten ways that you can look for, find, and land a good job.

1. Networking

Most companies would prefer to hire someone who is connected to them in some way, or who's been recommended by someone they know. This is why so many jobs never get advertised or posted—and why it's so important for you to reach out to the people in your network.

2. Job websites

Nowadays, one of the most common ways to find a job is to check job postings on websites such as **Indeed.com, Glassdoor.com, Monster.com, Snagajob.com**, and **LinkedIn.com**.

3. Company websites

Many companies advertise job openings on their own websites. Go online and check out the companies you're interested in.

4. Career fairs

Employers come to career fairs looking to find quality applicants. Be one of those quality applicants!

Networking

Tips for Building Professional Connections

At least 70% of job openings are never posted. Why? Because employers are more likely to hire someone they have a connection to rather than a total stranger. So how do you learn about these jobs? Through networking!

Here are some networking tips to help you build professional connections—and find a great job.

Use existing connections.
Talk to friends, family members, teachers, co-workers, and former bosses. Explain to them what you're looking for. Perhaps you need information on an occupation, or maybe you're seeking a full-time position.

Use social media.
Make a **LinkedIn** account and add people you know. Then interact with some of their connections by liking or commenting on posts they've shared. You can then add them as connections, and so on. You can also try this with **Facebook** or **Twitter**, but keep it professional.

Ask for advice.
Most people enjoy providing advice and assistance to those they like. And remember, you're not asking for a handout; you are seeking counsel and advice. *Don't be shy about reaching out to others.*

ORGANIZING YOUR JOB SEARCH

When you're searching for a job, it's not unusual to be applying for several jobs at the same time. And when you're dealing with multiple applications, it can be easy to miss deadlines, leave out important application materials, or mix up employers because you can't keep track of them all.

One way to make your job search more successful and less stressful is to be organized. Here are some tips to help you organize your job search.

Methods of Organization

There are several ways to organize your job search. It doesn't matter which method you choose, as long as it makes sense to you and you're comfortable using it.

▶ **Spreadsheet.** If you're familiar with **Excel** or **Google Sheets**, create a spreadsheet with details of your job search.

▶ **Website or app.** There are websites and apps specifically designed to help you organize your job search. Some of the most popular ones include **JibberJobber.com** and the **Huntr** app.

▶ **Table.** Create a table in **Microsoft Word**.

▶ **Job search site.** Sites like **Monster, LinkedIn** and **CareerBuilder** have organizational tools to help you keep track of your applications. If you choose this option, make sure you apply to all jobs through the same site.

▶ **Pen and paper.** Sometimes the old fashioned way is the easiest!

Finding the Right Job

Finding the right job takes time, energy, and sometimes luck. You will save yourself a lot of time and disappointment if you look and apply for jobs that focus on your strengths—and that are also in line with your values.

What are your strengths?

Consider each of the following and check the column that best describes your ability in that area.

	Good	Average	Poor
Language usage – ability to communicate verbally and in writing	☐	☐	☐
Advanced math – able to understand algebra, geometry, and more	☐	☐	☐
Social skills – ability to meet, talk to, and get along with people	☐	☐	☐
Management skills – ability to plan, organize, and implement programs and ideas	☐	☐	☐
Mechanical reasoning – able to understand how things work	☐	☐	☐
Creativity – ability to find new ways to do or say something	☐	☐	☐
Artistic – have talent in music, art, drama, and/or dance	☐	☐	☐

Which is your strongest ability area?

_____

What You Need for Job Applications

Companies have different requirements regarding the information and documents needed to complete their job applications. You'll save a lot of time if you have the information you need ready to go. Here's what you need to complete most job applications.

Personal Info

All applications will likely ask you for your date of birth, address, phone number, email address, and possibly your social security number. *Note: make sure you have a professional email address for applications.*

Work History

Applications will ask you for your work history, including job start and stop dates, reasons for leaving, and contact information for previous employers. Be sure to include unpaid jobs and volunteer work.

Resume and Cover Letter

Applications often give you the option to (or require you to) upload a resume and cover letter. Make sure your resume is up-to-date, proofread, and tailored to that particular position. Your cover letter should also be tailored to the specific position, and addressed to a particular person if possible.

References

You may need to include contact information for your references, including name, phone number and email address. Be sure to ask permission before you list someone as a reference.

Job Applications

The job application is often your first chance to make a good impression. Here are some Dos and Don'ts to make sure that your application presents you in the best possible light.

DO – sell yourself

Provide details of your skills and accomplishments, and if you have a resume, letter(s) of recommendations, or examples of relevant work, attach them to your application.

DO – fill out everything

Complete every section. If a question doesn't apply to you, write "N/A" or "not applicable."

DO – choose references carefully

Choose references that can attest to your strengths, skills, and talents. Be sure to ask permission before you list someone as a reference.

DO – keep track of applications

If you're applying to more than one company, keep a list of the places you've applied to, the date you applied, and a contact name.

DO – follow up

If you haven't heard from an employer in a week, give them a call or send an email reiterating your interest in the job.

For tips on how to prepare for an interview, watch this short video.

VIDEO

YOUR RESUME
DOS AND DON'TS

Your resume is a marketing tool that highlights your education, work experience, accomplishments, skills, and talents. The following Dos and Don'ts will help you create a resume that's impressive and professional.

DO RESEARCH RESUMES.
Look into how resumes for your career field should be formatted, and what they should include.

DO MAKE IT EASY TO READ.
Use a basic font like Arial or Times New Roman (11–12 point), choose a simple format, and have a good amount of white space on the page.

DO TAILOR YOUR RESUME.
Customize your resume for each job application by adding key words from the job posting.

DO HIGHLIGHT RELEVANT HOBBIES.
Include hobbies or interests that are related to the job, such as your interest in fashion for a job at a retail store or your experience with computers for a tech job.

DO MAKE IT LOOK PROFESSIONAL.
Your resume should be attractive, professional looking, and easy for hiring managers to skim. Be sure to proofread it carefully.

DO INCLUDE A COVER LETTER.
Even if it's optional, include a cover letter expressing your interest in the job.

COVER LETTER
DOS AND DON'TS

A cover letter is often your first contact with an employer, so it's very important that it portrays you in a positive and professional manner. The following Dos and Don'ts will help you create cover letters that are professional and impressive.

DO TAILOR YOUR LETTER.
Your cover letter should be customized for each job. Research the company and the job so that you can present yourself as the ideal candidate.

DO REFERENCE THE JOB.
Discuss how your skills and experience make you uniquely qualified for the job you are applying for.

DO MAKE IT EASY TO READ.
Use an easy-to-read font, simple language, concise sentences, and short paragraphs. Keep your cover letter to one page.

DO USE KEY WORDS.
Whenever possible, use keywords from the job posting. Avoid using overused cliches.

DO GRAB THE READER'S ATTENTION.
Explain what job you're applying for, and how you learned of the opening. If you were referred by an employee, mention them.

DO ALWAYS INCLUDE A LETTER.
Include a cover letter whenever you send your resume to a potential employer.

PREPARING FOR YOUR INTERVIEW

You landed an interview! Congratulations! Now it's time to prepare. Do the following to help ensure that you have a great interview.

DO YOUR HOMEWORK
Research the company, as well as the position for which you will be interviewing. Check out the company's website, and learn about their products and services. Use this information to figure out how you would answer the question, *"Why are you interested in working here?"*

PLAN YOUR ANSWERS
There are a number of common questions that are often asked in interviews. Some examples include: *Why do you feel you're qualified for this position? What are your greatest strengths? Your weaknesses? How would you describe yourself?*

Practice your answers to these and other common interview questions. Also be prepared to talk about your education, interests, previous job experience (paid and unpaid), and goals.

FIGURE OUT LOGISTICS
Look up the address of the interview location, as well as how to get there. Plan to leave early enough to get to your interview 10 minutes early.

DOS AND DON'TS ON WHAT TO BRING
Bring three copies of your resume, a notepad, and a pen. Don't bring a water bottle, an oversized purse, or another person. And before you walk into the interview, silence your phone.

Interview Questions

While all jobs and companies are different, there are a few types of questions that employers often ask during interviews. Learn about these types of questions, and think about how you might answer them at your own interview.

Getting to Know You

Most interviews include a few questions designed to get to know you—and to see if you'd be a good fit for the company. Here are a few examples.

▶ What are your biggest strengths and weaknesses?
▶ How would you describe yourself?
▶ Why are you interested in this position?

When asked about weaknesses, come up with something that can be seen as a positive. For example, *"I really enjoy meeting new people and sometimes I spend more time talking to customers than I should."*

Skills-Based Questions

Skills-based interview questions pertain to your ability to do the job for which you're interviewing. For instance, someone interviewing for a retail position might be asked questions like, *"What kind of experience do you have maintaining inventory?"* or, *"What kind of customer service experience do you have?"* Before any interview, find out what skills-based questions are common for that career field.

Interview Follow-Up
Dos and Don'ts

So you've completed your job interview. Now what? The period of time directly after your interview can play a crucial role in landing the job you want.

Here you'll find Dos and Don'ts on what you can do after an interview to impress any employer.

Do send a thank you note. Handwritten is best, but if that won't work, an email will suffice. Thank the interviewer for taking the time to meet with you.

Do use your thank you note to reiterate your interest in the position and to briefly highlight your skills. Keep your thank you note short and concise.

Do follow up again if you haven't heard back within a week or two. You might send a follow-up email asking if they need anything else from you.

Do alert your references that you have completed an interview, and that they may be contacted. Remind them of the job and your potential role.

Do be patient. Companies often need a certain amount of time to complete their interviews, contact references, and consider their decision.

Do connect with your interviewer on **LinkedIn**. Even if you don't get hired, keep the potential connection going. You never know where your next job lead might come from.

Ways to Get the Most Out of Career Fairs

A career or job fair is an opportunity for you to impress recruiters and employers with your preparation, confidence, and enthusiasm. Here are ten tips to help you prepare for, and get the most out of, a career or job fair.

1. Find out who will be there

If you're able, find out which employers will be there. You can then research the companies and make a list of the employers you definitely want to talk to.

2. Fine tune your resume

Use this opportunity to polish, update, and tailor your resume to include things that will impress the employers you want to see.

3. Print your resume

Print hard copies of your resume to hand out to employers. Have a folder to carry your resumes, and pen and paper for notes. Make sure your resumes stay flat, neat, and professional looking.

4. Dress to impress

Select an outfit to wear that's comfortable, stylish, and appropriate for the industry you're trying to get into. Dress like you're going for an interview. Be sure to try on and clean your outfit before the day of the fair. And finally, make sure your shoes are comfortable to walk and stand in.

Internships

Job postings often state *"1-2 years of work experience preferred."* Even when experience isn't preferred or required, college students and recent graduates often find themselves competing with experienced candidates.

The solution, of course, is to obtain relevant work experience before you enter the job market. *That's where an internship comes in.*

What is an internship?

An internship allows you to "test drive" a career. It's a temporary job that provides an inside look at an occupation, company, and industry—while helping you determine if a prospective career is right for you.

Do internships pay?

Some internships pay, and some do not. But it's important to remember that whether or not an internship pays doesn't impact the quality of the internship opportunity.

Are all internships the same?

No! Some companies and businesses use interns for "cheap labor," giving them menial tasks that do not contribute to their professional skill set. Ideally, an internship should provide you with relevant work experience, and give you the opportunity to improve your skills.

DRESS FOR SUCCESS
A GUIDE TO BUSINESS ATTIRE

Whether you're interviewing for a job or following a dress code set by your employer, appearances matter! It always pays to look your best!

WHAT IS BUSINESS ATTIRE?

Business attire is whatever you are expected to wear at a job. What's considered appropriate attire varies from industry to industry, and job to job; however, there are a few standards that apply no matter where you work.

TYPES OF BUSINESS ATTIRE

Business attire can range from very formal to very casual, depending on the business and situation. Here is a quick reference guide to the different types of business attire.

- **CASUAL:** Casual business attire can be described as most people's everyday wardrobe. This can include jeans, T-shirts, or open-toed shoes, though when worn in a business setting, these clothes should still be clean and in good shape.

- **SMART CASUAL:** Smart casual dress is similar to Casual in its flexibility, but with a "step up" in neatness. For instance, smart casual dress may include jeans with a button down shirt rather than a T-shirt.

- **BUSINESS CASUAL:** This is the most common type of business attire. Business casual often includes dress pants (khakis or slacks) or skirts, button down or collared shirts, and closed-toed shoes. Business casual is a safe choice if you're not sure about the dress code.

What Are Employers Looking For?

What employers look for in a candidate varies from industry to industry, and from job to job. There are, however, a few common traits and soft skills that most employers look for. *Which ones do you have?*

Problem-solving skills: Employers want employees who can confidently take on a challenge and figure out the best way to tackle it without getting discouraged.

Ambition: Having plans and goals for the future tells an employer that an applicant is willing to work hard and wants to grow.

Digital literacy: More than just computer skills (although they're important), digital literacy means anything from being comfortable doing research online to being able to quickly learn whatever software or apps the company regularly uses.

Leadership skills: Being able to motivate others, take initiative, and make smart decisions are qualities employers value and look for.

Flexibility: Employers want employees who are able to adapt to different situations, tasks, and people. Being flexible means being comfortable with change and open to new ideas.

Elevator Pitch

An elevator pitch is a quick synopsis of your background, skills, accomplishments, and goals. A good elevator pitch lasts no longer than a 30-second elevator ride.

With regard to job hunting, an elevator pitch allows you to introduce yourself to recruiters and employers in a clear and confident manner.

Here are tips for writing your own elevator pitch.

Give a brief background.
Consider what information will be the most interesting and relevant to your listener (education, skills, work experience) and give a quick recap of who you are.

Share your skills.
Focus on what you excel at and how your skills will help the company reach their goals. These can be soft skills (problem-solving, communication) and/or hard skills (social media, programming, writing).

Mention your goals.
These don't need to be specific, but they should be goals you can achieve at their company. For example, "I'm looking for an opportunity to use my marketing skills to help a business grow."

Here's an example.
My name is Claire Jones, and I just graduated from Skyler University with a degree in English. I was the editor-in-chief for the Skyler University newspaper and I've maintained my own blog for five years. Both have helped me build my knowledge of publishing. I'm now looking for an opportunity to use my print and digital media skills in the business world.

Benefits Basics

Benefits are "perks" employers offer to attract and keep quality employees. Benefits vary from job to job, so when you're looking for employment, it's important to know which benefits are the most important to you.

Common Types of Benefits

While benefits vary, the following are the most common full-time job benefits.

▶ **Health insurance** is a common benefit offered by employers; however, health insurance plans are not all the same. Plans vary greatly in what they cover, and in the percentage of the cost companies pay. If health insurance is important to you, find out if a prospective employer offers this benefit, and if they do, find out what it covers and what you're required to pay.

▶ **Paid time off (PTO)** is a bank of days employees can use for vacation, illness, and/or personal time. For example, a full-time employee may be given 15 paid days off a year, in addition to the holidays observed by the company.

▶ **Short- and long-term disability** benefits provide employees with a percentage of their salary if they are injured or ill and can no longer do their job.

▶ **Retirement plans** are a common benefit. For example, if your employer offers a 401(k) plan, you can invest part of your wages in a retirement account. There are tax advantages and sometimes employers will match your contribution—which is like getting free money.

Your Digital Footprint

According to a survey by CareerBuilder, 70% of employers check a job candidate's social media and online presence, with 54% reporting that they have rejected a candidate based on something they found.

This is why it's important to leverage your digital footprint for your benefit, and to never give an employer a reason to disqualify you.

Be smart about what you post.

To the casual observer, your posts online lack context and largely speak for themselves—so choose what you post carefully.

Here are some simple rules to keep in mind.

▶ **Be extra polite online.** People can't see your expression or hear your tone of voice, so what you say can easily be misunderstood.

▶ **Avoid "racy" or party photos.** While your personal life is your own, you never want to give an employer a reason not to hire you. Go with the "Grandparent Rule." If you wouldn't want a grandparent to see it, don't post it. This goes for tagged photos as well.

▶ **Avoid controversy.** Avoid posting controversial statements or opinions—you can't know how they will be viewed by prospective employers. They could raise a "red flag" and keep you from being considered for a job you would like to have.

To learn more about digital citizenship, watch this quick video.

VIDEO