



Job Search Kit

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Kansas City Public Library

JOB SEARCHING 101

Job Search is a job! There are many steps in the job search process, from figuring out what you want to do and where you want to work to receiving a job offer. A helpful order of job search steps for job seekers is:

1. Finding focus, by naming job search targets and defining keywords.
2. Reach out to your communities and let them know that you are looking for a job and what kind of job you are looking for.
3. Finding openings of interest either online or through referrals.
4. Creating a strong resume and cover letter that can be adjusted for various positions.
5. Preparing for interviews.

A job search is not always a linear process. It is likely that after a job seeker completes the first four steps above that will continue to:

- Adjust a resume and or cover letter to fit for specific positions
- Establish new connections or reconnect with others
- Submit applications and interview for positions

Finding Focus: Job Search Targets

The first step in a job search is to figure out what kind of work you are looking for. This is known as a job search target. It is helpful to be able to name the type of job function you want paired with employer context.

Examples:

Job Search Target: Nurse (function) in a large hospital (context)

You can get more specific with the job function if desired.

Job Search Target: Emergency Room Nurse (function) in a large hospital (context)

You can vary the function or the context to create more targets.

Job Search Target: Nurse (function) in an outpatient facility (context)

The amount of flexibility you have in your targets can help you speed up or can slow down your search. Generally, it is recommended to have multiple job search targets. If you want to learn more about different types of occupations and related job titles, visit O*NET: www.onetonline.org.

Learn about job openings

Successful job seekers use a variety of search strategies including online applications in addition to referrals and networking. Many positions may never be posted and oftentimes they are filled through referrals. Online job searching is also important, and this includes finding jobs on company websites or job boards. Relying only on a single strategy to find positions could result in missed opportunities, so it is important to spend time on multiple strategies.

Company Websites

Identify companies in the area that you would be interested in working for, that also hire employees to perform one of your job functions and review their job postings frequently. Checking their sites one to two times a week can be a practical goal.

Online Job Boards

The two most used online job boards are Indeed.com and the job feature on LinkedIn.com. These boards will scan the internet for job postings and recruiters will also post positions there as well. As one of the most comprehensive job search boards, Indeed likely will have any posting that is available on the internet. When applying online, it is best to go to the company website and apply directly even if you found the job posting on another website such as Indeed.com or LinkedIn.com. One way to increase the effectiveness of online job boards is to set-up email alerts so that you are notified via email when a new job meets your search criteria, then you can quickly apply.

RESUMES

General Advice and Information

Your resume is your personal advertisement for a new position. It is helpful to adjust your resume for every application by including relevant keywords from the job description. Many companies now use automated systems to manage job applications; the systems scan resumes for keywords and typically work best with Microsoft Word documents. Proofread and have at least a second person review your resume if possible.

Resume Sections

Section 1: Header

- Your formal name, centered at the top of the page or at the far-left margin. Your name should be in capital letters and bold type so that it stands out.
- Address - You do not have to put a street address, simply including the city and state is enough
- Include your telephone number and e-mail address. Ensure you have set up a greeting on your voicemail, so employers can leave a message, and you can respond expeditiously. Make sure your email address is one you can check regularly and that the address is some version of your first and last name.

Section 2: Summary of Qualifications or Profile

- The next item on your résumé is summary of qualifications, or a profile, but you don't need both. Objectives no longer commonly used on resumes.
- A summary of qualifications is never required but is typically used if you have a lot of experience that you need to tie together. You might change the summary of qualifications each time you apply for a job.
- The summary of qualifications should also be targeted to the employer's needs and typically consists of 3-5 concise statements.

Example:

Summary of Qualifications

- Five years' experience with retail management and supervision
- Proven communication skills developed through coordinating hiring and training
- Experienced sales generator as a result of accurate sales report analysis

Section 3: Work Experience

- Work Experience is much more than your paid work experiences. It can include full-time, part-time, internship, volunteer, and other life experiences.
- You can divide your experience into a few sections (ie, Relevant Experience, Additional Experience, Volunteer Experience, Leadership Experience depending on your job search target)
- List your work experiences in reverse chronological order starting with your present or most recent experience.
- Write the title of your position, the name of the employer, the city and state where your job was located, and the beginning and ending dates of employment (month & year only).
- Then, describe what you did; do not just list your responsibilities. Write a brief statement of your accomplishments and skills gained. Also, be sure to start each description with an action verb.
- Choose the jobs that are most relevant to your new target for bullet statements. The rest can go under another section (such as Additional Experience) and they can either have one statement or no statements.
- Try to make each job entry unique, even if much of what you did is the same but maybe you did it at a different responsibility level or did the same job at different places.
- There isn't a specific number of bullet statements you should have. For the experiences that are most relevant, try to have anywhere from 3-6 per entry.

Example:

Warehouse Manager

National Envelope

Lenexa, Kansas

June 20xx – August 20xx

- Supervised and trained staff of 6 forklift operators
- Anticipated operating needs by quickly loading machines to increase efficiency
- Maintained operable and safe warehouse by keeping area clean and free of obstructions
- Recognized as Employee of the Year for organization by demonstrating commitment to safety and efficiency

Section 4: Education

- Add your present or most recent educational degree first.
- Include the name and location (city and state only) of your school, the degree and major you received or expect to receive (no abbreviations) and date of graduation. Eliminate date of graduation if your graduation was more than ten years ago.
- If you have extensive employment experience and you graduated (more than 10 years ago), your education will typically go after your experience at the bottom of your resume. If you recently graduated, your education will be one of the first sections, either under your header or under your summary of qualifications.
- If you earned a GED or H.S diploma, only include it if you do not have a 2-4 year degree and the job posting says the position requires that level of education. If you are attending a 2- or 4-year degree, there is no need to list your high school.

Examples:

Associates Degree, Metropolitan Community College, Kansas City MO

May 20xx

Or

GED, Kansas City Public Schools, Kansas City, MO

Resume Formatting Tips

Effective formatting helps the reader scan your resume quickly. Formatting should be consistent throughout the document so that information is easy to find. Additional tips:

- Your resume should typically 1 page in length; 2 pages with graduate level degree or higher; highly specialized or academic positions may require a CV of 2+ pages with no limit.
- Use 10-12 point, easy to read font. Most utilized fonts include Calibri, Cambria, Times New Roman and Arial. Use consistent size and font.
- Use bolding, italics, all caps to make the important things stand out (Name, section headers, position titles, etc).

Items to Avoid on Your Resume

There are several things to avoid in your resume. It is suggested to avoid the following items because they could be distracting, provide too much personal information, keep your resume from being read accurately by the applicant tracking system or are no longer used in the hiring process. Try to eliminate the following:

- Borders, shading, photos, graphics; Personal information such as age, birthdate, parental or marital status, gender identity, race, hobbies etc.
- Avoid listing groups of vague skills, such as “Good communication skills” or “strong team player.” Show excellent communication skills by talking about them the action statements in experience section.
- “References available upon request” and Objective Statements are no longer necessary; references belong on a second separate page.
- Avoid personal pronouns “I” “me” “my” etc.
- Templates are helpful to get an idea of formatting, but sometimes cannot be read by ATS systems.

Ways To Save Your Document

Now that you have a start on your resume, it is important to save it in a place that is easily accessible for the future and in the right format.

- Microsoft Word Document (.doc or .docx) is best for uploading or attaching a resume to an online application.
- Plain Text (.txt) is best for copying and pasting a resume into the text boxes on an online application.
- Portable Document Format (.pdf) is best for emailing a resume directly to a hiring manager or human resources department. Note, some ATS systems cannot read PDFs.
- It is highly recommended to apply directly on the company’s website instead of posting a resume on job boards such as Indeed.
- Store your resume on a USB drive or in your Google Drive connected to your email so you can easily adjust it for future job applications.

Resume Worksheet

Header

Name: _____

Location: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Summary of Qualification or Profile

Work Experience

Job Title _____ Dates _____ to _____

Company Name _____ City _____ State _____

Skills & Accomplishments

Job Title _____ Dates _____ to _____

Company Name _____ City _____ State _____

Skills & Accomplishments

Job Title _____ Dates _____ to _____

Company Name _____ City _____ State _____

Skills & Accomplishments

Writing Effective Bullet Statements

Bullet statements convey your experiences, skills, and the impact you had on your previous place of employment. Strong bullet statements are one of the most important parts of an effective resume.

| Ineffective | Effective |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bussed tables • Took orders • Cleaned workstation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided excellent customer service by using strong communication and listening skills when taking guest orders • Utilized strong attention to detail when maintaining clean food preparation station according to health guidelines and regulations |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operated forklift • Loaded trucks • Strong work ethic | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anticipated operating needs by quickly loading machines to increase efficiency • Maintained operable and safe warehouse by keeping area clean; reduced rate of workplace accidents by 20% • Recognized as Employee of the Year for organization by demonstrating commitment to safety and efficiency |

Another formula is the Problem - Action - Result framework. For each task or responsibility, what problem were you seeking to address? What action did you take to address this problem? What were the results of your action? Once you have determined these answers, you can summarize the content into one (or more) statements.

| Problem | Action | Result |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|
| Sidewalks needed snow removal and bushes needed pruned | Shoveled snow, cut grass, and bushes | Hotel guests were safe, hotel guests had a better experience because the property looked nice |

- *Maintained exterior of hotel property during all seasons to provide a safe and welcoming environment for guests*

Skill + Experience Decoder

Some common positions are listed in the left-hand column. If you have ever held one of these types of jobs, you might have used some of the skills or have experience in the areas listed in the right-hand column. You can use these transferrable skills or experiences in your bullet statements that describe your employment experiences.

| Job | Potential Transferrable Skills/ Words to use in descriptions |
|---|--|
| Maintenance/Janitor/Housekeeping | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attention to detail • Prioritizing safety/following safety guidelines • Adhering to policies and procedures • Teamwork • Problem Solving |
| Customer Service | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Problem Solving • Listening • Conflict Resolution |
| Warehouse Staff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritizing safety/following safety guidelines • Organization • Accuracy • Efficiency |
| Food preparation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food safety • Attention to detail • Teamwork • Adhering to policies • Efficient in fast-paced environment |

Types of Skills

There are different kinds of skills – hard skills and soft skills. Hard skills are usually directly related to a specific type of job. Soft skills are skills that can be used in any type of job. Personality traits are important, but employers would rather learn about your hard skills and soft skills on an application and see evidence of your personality traits through your interview answers.

| Hard Skill Examples | Soft Skill Examples | Personality Trait Examples |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operating tools and machines such as forklifts, power tools, etc. • Computer software knowledge • Operating a cash register | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teamwork • Communication • Listening • Problem Solving | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated • Hardworking • Enthusiastic • Passionate |

INTERVIEWING

Interview Preparation Ahead of Time

- ✓ When the interview is being set, ask for specifics – location, time, name of person(s) you will be meeting with, and any particular items you should bring.
- ✓ Practice interviewing with the Career Specialist or someone you trust to provide honest feedback a day or 2 before your interview.
- ✓ Review the job description ahead of time and be prepared to explain how you have done some of the duties listed in the job description in the past and/or share the transferrable skills you have that would be relevant to the position.
- ✓ Research information about the company before your interview appointment and be prepared to share what you've learned in your interview, as is relevant.
- ✓ Be sure to be well rested the day of the interview and have eaten as well.

The Day of The Interview (In-Person)

- ✓ Be on time!!! Best to arrive 10-15 minutes early. If you have to travel a distance, be certain to allow even more time, to ensure you won't be tied up in traffic. If the company has multiple buildings and doors, be certain you ask for detailed directions. Many people believe ***“Early is on time, and on time is late.”***
- ✓ Dress the part – Remember to dress one step up from what you would be wearing if you were arriving for work, as it is a business meeting to discuss the company's needs and your ability to meet and/or exceed those needs. Neutral color choices are generally preferred.
- ✓ Smell clean and fresh, but go light on any cologne, as the employer may have allergies or other sensitivities.
- ✓ Bring a neat copy of your resume, the job description, as well as a typed list of your work-related references to your interview. Connect how the references are related to your work history.
- ✓ Be friendly and positive – Greet the interviewer by name, smile, and give a firm handshake. Be sure to treat the reception staff and everyone you see in a friendly and kind manner as well.
- ✓ Show enthusiasm – Show energy and enthusiasm, which helps to create a good impression. Don't appear to be passive, indifferent or showing a lack of energy or tiredness.
- ✓ Maintain eye contact – In the U.S., direct eye contact when speaking and listening is the best way to let the interviewer know you are engaged in the conversation. If being interviewed by multiple persons, rotate eye contact.
- ✓ Speak clearly, concisely, confidently and audibly. Avoid using one-word answers and slang. Don't talk too much or share personal business or problems.
- ✓ Give some examples of past work/school/life situations where you have used the skills and performed the duties related to the job description, wherever possible. Outline how you would bring value and make a positive difference for the company. Emphasize your strengths.
- ✓ Be a good listener – Listen carefully to what is being shared and to the questions the interviewer asks. Wait your turn to speak.
- ✓ Be yourself – Interviewing is a two-way street, and you don't want to work for a company that doesn't seem to be a good fit or doesn't align with your values. When answering questions, speak from the heart.
- ✓ Be aware of body language – We communicate not with just our words, but also by our tone of voice,

facial expressions, and posture. If seated, sit up straight and engaged in the conversation. If touring the company, stay near the interviewer so you can hear and remain engaged.

- ✓ It is wise not to criticize past employers or co-workers. It will only give the interviewer a negative impression of you.
- ✓ **REMEMBER:** Employers are looking for 3 basic things: Evidence that you have the skills and motivation to get the job done; your personality in getting along with others; and your dependability.
- ✓ Always thank the employer for their time and ask for their business card, for follow-up.

Handling Difficult Questions

In every interview there is at least one question that is tough to answer. For example, most of us would have a tough time with:

Have you ever been fired or asked to resign?

Never try to blame someone *else* for something that happened to you ... even if it truly wasn't your fault. Be as concise as you can in explaining what happened. It is important to show the employer that you accept the responsibility for your role in the firing, and what you learned from the experience.

Why do you want to work here?

Don't talk about the benefits or the salary. Instead, tell the employer why your interest and skills would be a win-win for you AND the employer.

What are your weaknesses?

Don't give a personal weakness like smoking or chocolate. Instead, try to show something that has caused you a problem on the job and what you have done to correct it. For example, "I am something of a perfectionist and it has caused me to miss deadlines in the past. I realize that missing deadlines can be more costly sometimes than an imperfection, so I've really worked on it, and I haven't missed a deadline in several years.

How would you handle it if you didn't like your supervisor?

You want to show that you would be a professional in this situation. You might say that you would do what you were asked because you understand his or her authority. If the situation was deteriorating, you might ask to talk to the supervisor; if it didn't improve, you might look for an opportunity to transfer to another department or supervisor.

What are your career goals?

Employers aren't usually asking you to tell them that you expect to work there forever. Instead, they want to know if you have plans for the future and how working there fits in with those plans

Questions To Ask the Employer

In most interviews there is a point when the interviewer will ask if you have any questions. This is a good time to find out some important things about the job and the employer. Asking questions about the company not only helps you to decide if you want to work there, but it also shows the employer that you are serious about this interview. Ask questions like:

- How does this job fit within the company?
- What might a typical day be like for someone in this position?

- What is the dress code for this job?
- Will I be working alone or as part of a team?
- What days and hours will I be working?
- Will there be overtime work?
- Do you have orientation and/or training programs for new employees?
- Do you have programs to help me continue my learning?
- Do you usually promote from within?
- Could I tour the company?
- What are the next steps in your selection process and when will a hiring decision be made?
- What is the salary range and benefits package? (It is generally considered best to save questions about the salary and benefits as one of your last questions. If they share there will be 2nd interviews, hold the salary question, as your energy needs to be spent on making sure you make it to the next round, if it is a position you really are interested in. Be sure you do your homework to determine at least a salary range, if at all possible. On the converse, when a job offer is made -whether in person, by email or over the phone - make sure you DO NOT take a job until you know about the salary and benefits, preferably in a written offer letter, and be sure that you can accept what is being offered.)

Closing The Interview

There are three things that you should know at the end of every interview, and the only way to find out is to ask.

- When do you expect to make a hiring decision?
- When will the job start?
- May I follow up to ask about the decision?
- When the interview ends, shake hands and thank the employer for his or her time, making sure to get their business card, or at least ask for one.

After The Interview

- ✓ Send a short and sincere thank you note (handwritten or via email)
- ✓ Follow-up with employers (usually within 2 weeks of the interview), if possible.

Remember, in any job search you are going to get turned down somewhere along the way. We all do!

Try to avoid taking it personally when it happens ... and sometimes that is hard to do.

We usually pin a lot of hope on each job that we apply for, and it is disappointing if it doesn't come through. The truth is, however, that employers make their decisions based on what is best for the company ... and for them it is not personal.

JOB SEEKER COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

These organizations provide further individual assistance with your job search.

Career Specialist- Kansas City Public Library kathleenkennedy@kclibrary.org 816-701-3663

American Indian Council **tribal registered* 310 Amour Rd., Suite 205, KCMO 64116 816-471-4898

Bishop Sullivan Center 3936 Troost Ave., KCMO 64110 816-561-8515

Catholic Charities KCSJ-Workforce Development 4001 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Suite 250, KCMO 64130 816-221-4377

Community Services League 404 North Noland Rd., Indep., MO 64050 816-254-4100

Connections To Success 300 W. Linwood Blvd., KCMO 64111 816-561-5115

Full Employment Council 1740 Paseo, KCMO 816-471-2330

Goodwill of Western Mo. & Eastern Ks. 800 E 18th St., KCMO 64110 816-842-7425

Guadalupe Centers 1512 Van Brunt Boulevard, KCMO 64127 816-561-6885

Jewish Vocational Service **refugee services* 4600 Paseo Blvd., KCMO 64110 816-471-2808

Journey To New Life, Inc. **reentry following prison release* 3120 Troost Ave., KCMO 64109 816-960-4808

KCMCC Second Chance Program **reentry following prison release* 3100 Broadway, Suite 302, KCMO 816-231-0450

Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation **on disability or pending* 615 E. 13th St., Rm. 409, KCMO 64106 816-889-2677

University Health – Truman Employment Services **behavioral health* 300 W. 19th Ter., KCMO 64108 816-404-6270

Urban League 1710 Paseo Blvd., KCMO 64108 816-471-0550

Women's Employment Network 4328 Madison Ave., KCMO 64111 816-822-8083

Workforce Partnership - Wyandotte County 626 Minnesota Ave., KCMO 66101 913-279-2600

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