

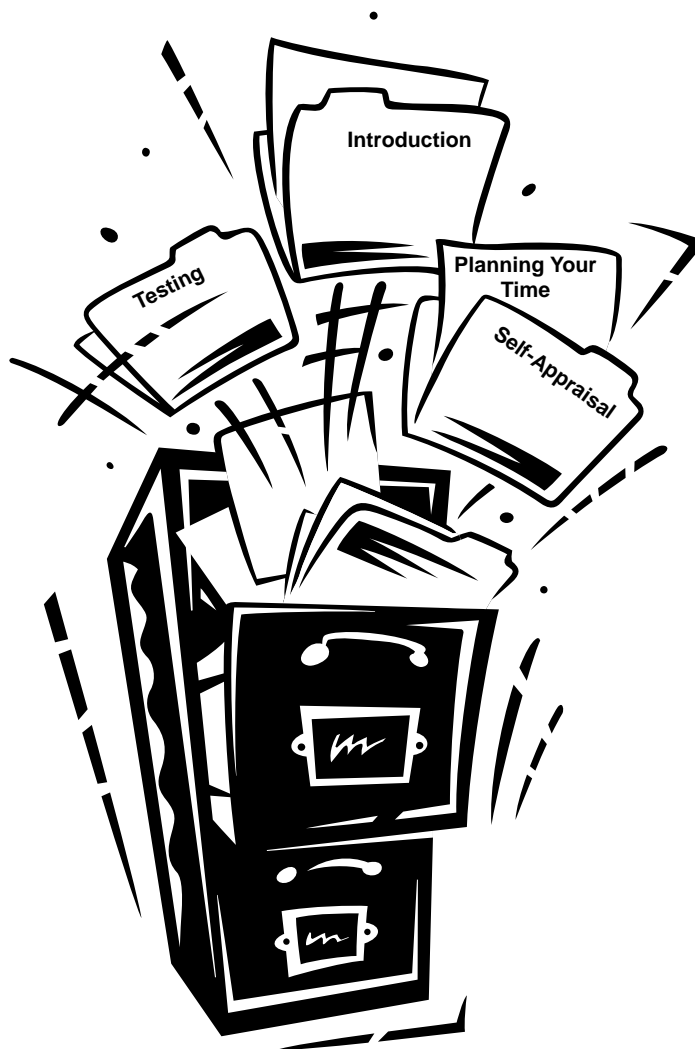
Stand Out In A Crowd!



Merchandising Your Job Talents

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Introduction

You want a job. And you believe that somewhere, some employer has precisely the job you want - one that fully utilizes your knowledge and abilities and provides challenge and opportunities for advancement.

To find that job, you need to perform a well-planned job search. You have a product to sell - your knowledge, skills and experience . . . YOURSELF! What you need to know is how to market yourself most effectively. Whether you are just out of school and ready to start your career or looking for a new position after 20 years of experience, some of the techniques presented in this booklet may help you. It offers suggestions on:

- Where you can find out more about the kinds of jobs you are qualified to hold.
- How to present your background in a résumé that will convince an employer you are the person needed for the job.
- How to write a letter of application that catches an employer's interest, making the prospective employer want to talk to you.
- Where to go for information on job opportunities in your field.
- How to present your qualifications to the best advantage at a job interview.

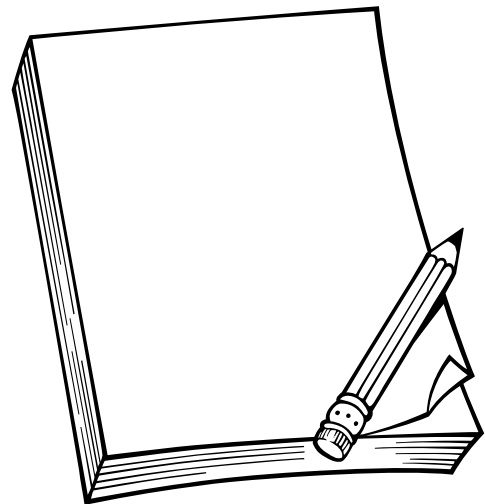
And it offers tips on planning your time, taking tests, and learning to profit from your job interviews.

Self-Appraisal

As the first step in merchandising your talents, you should decide exactly what your qualifications are. You need a detailed inventory of your background and experience so that you will know exactly what assets you have to offer an employer.

No matter what type of job you seek, your inventory will be a basic tool in your search. It will contain the information you need to prepare your résumé. It will help you decide how to present your qualifications at a job interview, and be a source for facts, dates and other information you will need to give an employer.

To prepare your inventory chart, follow the outline on the next page. On a separate sheet of paper, list all the data you think might help you in your job search. Later, you can sort the list and select only the assets relevant to the job you seek.



1. **Work history**

List all of your jobs, including part-time, summer, freelance work, internships, and volunteer activities. For each job, give the name and address of your employer, your job title, the details of your duties, and the dates you were employed.

Then ask yourself:

- What did I like about each job?
Why?
- What did I dislike about each job?
Why?
- Why did I leave?

2. **Skills and abilities**

Ask yourself:

- What personal qualities do I have that make me excel at certain types of work? Think back over your job experience, school and volunteer activities, and try to be honest with yourself. Are your strong points initiative, imagination, leadership, ability to organize, willingness to follow orders, interest in detail, or ability to work with people?
- What did I learn on the job that I could use in another position? (For example, operation of a machine or office equipment or blueprint reading.)

3. **Education**

List:

- The schools you attended, the principal courses you took, and the degrees you received. It is not necessary to list graduation dates.
- Any business, vocational, military, on-the-job training, or continuing education courses, the dates, and any certificates you received.

Then ask yourself:

- What courses or training did I like best and why?
- What courses or training did I dislike and why?
- Now list your scholarships or honors and your extracurricular activities.



4. **Interests, talents, and aptitudes**

Ask yourself:

- What are my hobbies or volunteer activities?
- What are my special talents or aptitudes? For example, can I fix a car? Play a musical instrument? Speak another language besides English? Am I good at drawing or painting? What do I learn most easily?
- How can I relate my talents and interests to a job?

If you are a recent graduate, your activities may be a significant part of your job qualifications (for example, work on the school newspaper or campus radio station). Even if they are not directly related to a job, they may help you decide where your talents and interests lie. (For example, do you enjoy sports, recreation and outdoor activities? Did you excel on the debate team? Are you good at organizing a group to do a job?)

5. **Does my physical condition limit me in any way?**

6. **Is it necessary for me to change my field of work?**

7. **How long can I afford to be out of work?**

8. **Career goals**

- What kind of work do I want to be doing five or 10 years from now?
- What sort of job should I seek now to prepare for my goal?

9. **Jobs I want**

Considering all the information in your inventory, list the types of jobs you feel you are best qualified for and want. List them in order of your preference.

You need to learn more about different types of jobs. A good place to go is your local Iowa Workforce Development Center. This center has information about the fast-growing jobs in Iowa and the qualifications needed to get them. In the center's resource room, you can also go online and research careers in the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, published by the U.S. Department of Labor (www.bls.gov). The handbook has the latest information about several hundred occupations. For each, it includes information about the work involved, where the jobs are located, what training and other qualifications are needed to fill them and the chances for advancement. It also discusses earnings and working conditions and assesses future job opportunities for people in the field. It also tells you where to go for more information about occupations of particular interest to you.

Another good source of information about various types of jobs is your local public library. You can find books that tell you about specific careers.

The appendix contains three self-assessment tools to help you identify your skills and interests.

If you have completed your inventory, you are ready for the next step - either preparing your résumé or selecting your sources of job information. But perhaps you have considered all the factors in your background and still are not ready to answer the key question: What kind of job do I want? You may be just out of school or the military and know little about the sorts of jobs open to you. You may have decided you are on the wrong track vocationally and want to switch to a new field. Perhaps you have been out of the labor force for years because of a variety of reasons. Or, you are not sure what your job goal should be for other reasons.

Once you have decided on your job goal, the Iowa Workforce Development Center has many self-service tools or can assist you in preparing your résumé, training on how to find and keep a job, and testing services to help you identify your skills, interests, abilities and training needs. The center will help match your skills and interests to the right job.

Preparing a Résumé

An effective résumé "gets your foot in the door." It often leads to personal interviews you might not otherwise have.

Your inventory chart should contain all the information you need to prepare your résumé. You now have to *select*, *arrange*, and *organize* this raw material in the way that best relates your background to the job you seek.

Your first task is to *select* the data you want to use. Ask yourself: Which

parts of my training and experience are relevant to my job goal? Which parts, if any, are unrelated? Give all pertinent details about the positions that relate to your goal. Be brief in listing unrelated jobs; they are of little interest to a prospective employer.

Next you must *arrange* the information you have selected. To catch an employer's attention, plan to list your best qualifications early in your résumé. Ask yourself: Is my work experience the most important part of my résumé? Or will an employer be more interested in my education and training?

You can *organize* your experience in one of two ways - by job or by function. You may want to review the suggested outline and sample résumés before you decide which one presents your work experience better.

Your résumé should be detailed enough to give an employer the information needed to assess your qualifications for the job opening. At the same time, it should be concise. A busy employer wants pertinent facts in as few words as possible. For example, in your work history the full sentence, "I was responsible for analyzing the cost sheets from the production department," can be condensed into a short phrase starting with an action verb: "Analyzed production cost sheets."

If you have more than one job objective, you have two alternatives.

1. You can list, in order of preference, the jobs you are qualified for. Your résumé should include

all data relevant to each job. This will give you one all-purpose résumé. It has the clear advantages of simplicity and speed. You can prepare in advance as many copies as you think you will need so you'll have one ready to distribute whenever you need it.

2. You can make separate résumés for differing types of jobs. You may wish to do this in the following situations:
 - If your job goals are in separate fields (for example, research assistant, copywriter, or English teacher).
 - If you approach several types of institutions, which may place more value on different aspects of your background (for example, one may emphasize certain academic degrees, while a second is interested in a particular part of your experience, and still another may be looking for clues to your personal traits, such as ability to persuade or deal tactfully with others).

For help in creating an outstanding résumé, visit your local Iowa Workforce Development Center. Many Iowa Workforce Development Centers throughout the state have a resource room containing tools to help you prepare your résumé. These tools include software that give you templates and tips to create résumés, cover and thank-you letters. PCs are available to use with word processing software. You can prepare and print your résumé and cover letter, and fax them to employers often at no cost.

Suggested Outline for Your Résumé

1. **Personal data**
Begin with your name, address and telephone number, and home E-mail address, if you have one.
2. **Employment objective**
Indicate the kind of job you are seeking. If you are qualified for several jobs and are preparing one all-purpose résumé, list them in order of your preference.
3. **Work history**
You can organize this information in two ways. Choose the one that best presents your work experience.
 - A. **By job**
List each job separately (even if the jobs were within the same firm), starting with the most recent one and working backward.

For each job, list:
 - Dates of employment
 - Name and address of employer and nature of the business
 - Position(s) you held
Then describe your job, detailing:
 - Specific job duties - the tasks you performed, including any special assignments and use of special instruments or equipment.
 - Scope of responsibility - your place in the organization, how many people you supervised,

and in turn, the degree of supervision you received.

- Accomplishments - if possible, give concrete facts and figures.

B. By function

- List the functions (fields of specialization or types of work, such as engineering, sales promotion or personnel management) you performed related to your present job objectives.
- Then, describe briefly the work you have done in each of these fields without breaking it down by individual jobs.

4. **Education** (If this is your main selling point, put it before your work history.)

List your formal education, giving:

- High school (can be omitted if you have a higher degree), college, graduate school, and other courses or training
- Dates of graduation or leaving school (optional)
- Degrees or certificates received
- Major and minor subjects and other courses related to your job goal
- Scholarships and honors
- Extracurricular activities (if you are a recent graduate and your activities pertain to your job goal)

5. **Military experience**

List your military service if it is recent or pertinent to your job goal, indicating:

- Branch and length of service
- Major duties, including details of assignments related to the job you seek
- Any pertinent military training

6. **Miscellaneous**

If appropriate to your field of work, give such information as:

- Knowledge of foreign languages
- Volunteer or leisure-time activities
- Special skills, such as typing, shorthand, or ability to operate special equipment
- Membership in professional organizations
- Articles published, inventions or patents

7. **Computer skills**

If relevant to the job you are seeking, include types of software in which you are proficient. Most job listings will reference specific computer skills required. If you have the required skills, list them.

8. **References**

List the names, positions, and addresses of three people who have direct knowledge of your work competence. If you are a recent graduate, you can list teachers who are familiar with your school work. Obtain permission from the people you use as references, and alert them to expect a call.

The following examples show some of the ways a job seeker can organize a résumé. They are for use only as general guides. It is suggested that references be listed on a separate page.

Sample Résumé

Jane D. Jones
593 Ninth Avenue
Anytown, AL 35204
(515) 422-2824
jdjones@abc.com

EMPLOYMENT OBJECTIVE

Reporter, copy editor

EDUCATION

Standard State University, University City, AL, B.S., cum laude.
Major: journalism, minor: psychology. Other courses: beginning and advanced photography.
Honors: Phi Kappa Phi
Extracurricular activities: Editor of college newspaper.

EXPERIENCE

1999-00 school year. Correspondent in University City for Anytown Gazette, Anytown, AL.

- Served earlier as copy editor and reporter.

June-August 2000. Copy runner, Anytown Gazette.

- Worked as a copy runner.
- Received and completed a number of editorial assignments.
- Covered meetings for other staff.
- Wrote obituaries.
- Did feature series with photographs on the county arts group. (Attached is a one-sheet photostat showing clippings of stories I wrote for the Gazette.)

Summers 1997 and 1998. Sales clerk, Wilder Dress Shop, 215 Main Street, Anytown, AL.

REFERENCES (Note - list on separate page)

Prof. J.W. Wynn, School of Journalism, Standard State University, University City, AL 34205, (555) 555-5555.

Mr. William T. Ryan, Editor, Anytown Gazette, Anytown, AL 35204, (555) 555-5555.

Mrs. Dora Cohen, Assistant Professor of Journalism, Standard State University, University City, AL 34205, (555) 555-5555.

Sample Résumé

Ruth A. Roe
487 Franklin Drive
Woodland, NY 10124
(555) 555-5555
rroe@abc.com

EMPLOYMENT OBJECTIVE

Children's librarian

EDUCATION

Hunter College, B.S., Major: elementary education; minor: child psychology.
Columbia University, M.A., library science.

EXPERIENCE

1999-2000 Woodland Elementary School, 231 Ritchie Lane, Woodland, NY.

- Taught fifth grade.
- Stimulated pupils to do more independent reading.
- Prepared displays and organized field trips to nearby libraries in connection with annual book fair.
- Assisted part-time librarian in reorganizing instructional materials center to make it easier to use and more inviting in appearance.
- Took training course and for two years, conducted a junior great books course for pupils at Woodland.

1997-1998 (part-time during school year and full-time during summer of 1998). Library clerk, Bowen Library, 441 Playford Street, New York, NY.

- Located books for patrons and answered nonprofessional inquiries.
- Received, sorted, repaired and shelved books.

Summer 1997. Clerk-typist, Mobile Manufacturing Company, 24 W. Fifth Street, Woodland, NY. Acted as secretary to vice president while regular secretary was on vacation.

Summers 1995 and 1996. Camp Counselor, Highpoint Camp, Wilson Road, Adirondacks, NY.

- Taught arts and crafts.
- Supervised bunk of 10- and 11-year-old girls.

SPECIAL SKILLS

Spanish, good reading, writing and speaking knowledge. Operate various types of audio-visual equipment.

REFERENCES (Note - list on separate page)

Dr. Margaret Martin, Professor of Library Science, Columbia University, New York, NY 10027, (555) 555-5555.

Mr. Wilbur Miller, Principal, Woodland Elementary School, 231 Ritchie Lane, Woodland, NY 10123, (555) 555-5555.

Mr. Walter Snyder, Chief Librarian, Bowen Library, 441 Playford Street, New York, NY 10009, (555) 555-5555.

Sample Résumé

Jean M. Doe
656 W. 33rd Street
Anytown, Iowa 50042
(515) 555-1516
jdoe@abc.com

Position Desired

Grocery store customer service clerk

Education

Jefferson High School, Anytown, Iowa - Graduated with honors.

Experience

Grocery Checker

Green's Grocery, 504 W. Main, Anytown, Iowa
May 2000 - present

- Scanning customers' groceries.
- Make price entries manually and enter vendor and store coupons.
- Assist customers in finding items and prices.
- Stock shelves, some light cleaning and other duties as assigned.
- Use cash register, scanner, adding machine and pricing gun.

Salesperson

Bays Video Store, 600 E. Walnut, Anytown, Iowa
August 1999 - May 2000

- Worked part-time after school in the video store.
- Assisted customers in selecting and renting videotapes and recorders.
- Used the computer for membership entry and retrieval.
- Rang up each sale, close the store and make the deposit.
- Left me in charge when owner was out of the store.

Babysitter/Nanny

Dr. and Mrs. B. White, 3256 N. Lincoln Drive, Anytown, Iowa
Summers 1998 and 1999

- * Cared for three small children each day including preparing meals and planning activities.
- * Cleaned the house.
- * Did the laundry.
- * Overall operations of the house.

References (Note - list on separate page)

Mrs. Alice Schwarz, Principal, Jefferson High School, Anytown, Iowa, (515) 555-5793.
Mr. George Hartwell, Salesperson, Tone's Spices, Anytown, Iowa, (515) 555-4924.
Mr. Lyle Olson, Owner, Olson's Electric, Anytown, Iowa, (515) 555-6441.

Scannable Résumés

Many companies are now storing résumés in electronic databases and then searching the database by key words when they have a job opening. Key words are nouns, not the typical action verbs used in traditional résumés. If a company is looking for an information technology specialist, they might search their résumé database using such key words as “systems engineer,” “software developer,” or “programmer.” Job listings will give you hints as to the key words you should include in your scannable résumé. Knowing the jargon of the industry of the job for which you are applying is also helpful.

Résumés that are scanned into the database require a different format for the database to read it. Here are some hints for creating a scannable résumé:

- Always have your name on the first line of your résumé, as well as at the top of each additional page. Databases store résumés by what is on the first line of the résumé.
- Use sans serif fonts, such as Arial, Helvetica, Futura, Courier or Times. Fancy fonts are not scanned well. Use only black ink - no colors.
- Use only 10 to 14 point font sizes.
- Avoid graphics, italics, bold, underlines, or shading. To emphasize a word, use capital letters.
- Do not use columns or horizontal or vertical lines.
- Instead of bullets, use asterisks.
- Use left justification, not center justification or tabs.
- Use hyphens in phone numbers, not parentheses to indicate area code, i.e.; 515-555-1111.
- Print your résumé using a laser printer or inkjet printer, not dot matrix, for better scanning.
- Use the fine mode, not standard mode, when faxing a scannable résumé.
- Always send an original, not a copy, on 8 1/2” x 11” letter size paper.
- Do not fold or staple your résumé.
- Use light colored paper for better contrast.

Following are examples of résumés shown on pages 8 and 9 in a scannable format.

RUTH A. ROE
487 Franklin Drive
Woodland, NY 10124
555-555-5555
rroe@abc.com

EMPLOYMENT OBJECTIVE

Children's librarian

KEY WORDS

B.S. in elementary education, Master of Arts in library science, elementary school teacher, library clerk, customer service, clerk-typist, summer camp counselor, bi-lingual – Spanish, audio-visual equipment.

EXPERIENCE

1999-2000 Woodland Elementary School, 231 Ritchie Lane, Woodland, NY.

- * Taught fifth grade.
- * Stimulated pupils to do more independent reading.
- * Prepared displays and organized field trips to nearby libraries in connection with annual book fair.
- * Assisted part-time librarian in reorganizing instructional materials center to make it easier to use and more inviting in appearance.
- * Took training course and for two years, conducted a junior great books course for pupils at Woodland.

1997-1998 (part-time during school year and full-time during summer of 1998). Library clerk, Bowen Library, 441 Playford Street, New York, NY.

- * Located books for patrons and answered nonprofessional inquiries.
- * Received, sorted, repaired and shelved books.

Summer 1997. Clerk-typist, Mobile Manufacturing Company, 24 W. Fifth Street, Woodland, NY. Acted as secretary to vice president while regular secretary was on vacation.

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- * Taught arts and crafts.
- * Supervised bunk of 10- and 11-year-old girls.

RUTH A. ROE
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EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science in elementary education (minor: child psychology)
Hunter College

Master of Arts in library science
Columbia University

REFERENCES

Dr. Margaret Martin, Professor of Library Science, Columbia University, New York, NY 10027,
555-555-5555.

Mr. Wilbur Miller, Principal, Woodland Elementary School, 231 Ritchie Lane, Woodland, NY
10123, 555-555-5555.

Mr. Walter Snyder, Chief Librarian, Bowen Library, 441 Playford Street, New York, NY 10009,
555-555-5555.

JEAN M. DOE
656 W. 33rd Street
Anytown, Iowa 50042
515-555-1516
jdoe@abc.com

POSITION DESIRED

Grocery store customer service clerk

KEY WORDS

Grocery checker, stocker, cashier, customer assistance, child care worker.

EDUCATION

Jefferson High School, Anytown, Iowa – Graduated with honors.

EXPERIENCE

Green's Grocery, 504 W. Main, Anytown, Iowa
Grocery Checker, May 2000 – present

- * Scanning customers' groceries.
- * Make price entries manually and enter vendor and store coupons.
- * Assist customers in finding items and prices.
- * Stock shelves, some light cleaning and other duties as assigned.
- * Use cash register, scanner, adding machine and pricing gun.

Salesperson

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August 1999 - May 2000

- * Worked part-time after school in the video store.
- * Assisted customers in selecting and renting videotapes and recorders.
- * Used the computer for membership entry and retrieval.
- * Rang up each sale, close the store and make the deposit.
- * Left me in charge when owner was out of the store.

Babysitter/Nanny

Dr. and Mrs. B. White, 3256 N. Lincoln Drive, Anytown, Iowa
Summers 1998 and 1999

- * Cared for three small children each day including preparing meals and planning activities.
- * Cleaned the house.
- * Did the laundry.
- * Overall operations of the house.

Jean M. Doe
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REFERENCES

Mrs. Alice Schwartz, Principal, Jefferson High School, Anytown, Iowa, 515-555-5793.

Mr. George Hartwell, Salesperson, Tone's Spices, Anytown, Iowa, 515-555-4924.

Mr. Lyle Olson, Owner, Olson's Electric, Anytown, Iowa, 515-555-6441.

Letter of Application or Interest

In many fields of work, writing a letter of application or interest is the customary way to ask for a personal interview. This is particularly true in the following cases:

1. When the employer you wish to contact lives in another city or town.
2. When you send your résumé to an employer.
3. When you are answering a want ad.

The following guidelines may help you write a letter of application:

1. Type neatly, using care in sentence structure, spelling and punctuation.
2. Use a good grade of letter-size white bond paper.
3. Address your letter to a specific person, if possible (use city directories or other sources).
4. State exactly the kind of position you are seeking and why you are applying to the particular firm.
5. Be clear, brief and businesslike.
6. Enclose a résumé.

Letters of application will vary considerably depending on the circumstances in which they are used. The following sample illustrates one way of writing such a letter.

(date)

Mr. Wilbert R. Wilson
President, Metallic Manufacturing Company
3893 Factory Boulevard
Cleveland, Ohio 44126

Dear Mr. Wilson:

Recently, I learned through Dr. Robert R. Roberts of Atlantic and Pacific University of the expansion of your company's sales operations and your plans to create a new position of sales director. I would appreciate your considering me for this position if it is open.

Starting with over-the-counter sales and order service, I have had progressively more responsible and diverse experience in merchandising products similar to yours. In recent years, I have carried out a variety of sales promotion and top management assignments.

I am enclosing a résumé of my qualifications for your review. I would appreciate a personal interview with you to discuss my application further.

Very truly yours,

John W. Doe

Enclosure

Sources of Job Information

Your primary source of job information will probably be friends, neighbors, and relatives. Through their work or social and business contacts, they may know of opportunities not listed by customary sources. But, of course, their knowledge is likely to be limited to their own, and perhaps a few other, places of employment.

At the same time you consult personal sources, you will want to explore the usual channels of job information. From among the many sources, you will have to select those most appropriate for you. Which ones they are will depend on the type of job you want, where you live and want to work, and the demand in your field.

Some of the sources of job information are listed below. Brief comments on their characteristics may help you choose the ones best suited to your needs.

1. Iowa Workforce Development Centers

- Have more job listings in more occupational categories than any other single source.
- Know about area job openings, even among employers who have not listed their opening with an Iowa Workforce Development Center.
- Provide access to Iowa Workforce Development's Web site (www.iowaworkforce.org) that contains job listings across the state as well as links to other state agencies. The IWD Web site is linked to IowaJobs, which features entry- to professional-level positions across the nation.

It also contains information on the fastest-growing jobs, average wages and work trends.

Résumés and cover letters can be posted on this Internet-based service.

- Offer counseling and career consultation.
 - Provide aptitude and proficiency testing.
 - Have daily contact with thousands of employers.
 - Accumulate and distribute local, statewide, and national labor market information.
 - Charge no fees.
- ### 2. School or college placement services
- A productive source for professional openings.
 - Usually available only to students and alumni of the school.
- ### 3. Want ads in newspapers, professional journals and trade magazines
- Provide a broad range of openings.
 - A large share of listings in magazines devoted to your field are likely to be for jobs you are qualified to fill.
 - Descriptions of jobs may not be detailed enough for you to decide whether you are qualified.
 - Analysis of the ads provides information about the extent of employment activity in your field throughout the area.
- ### 4. Industrial and craft unions
- Have exclusive hiring authority for some firms.
 - Each deals with a limited number of occupations.
 - Productive source for members, particularly those with seniority.

5. **Office of Personnel Management (previously called the U.S. Civil Service Commission)**

- Handles U.S. government civilian jobs.
- Fills jobs in a wide variety of professional, technical, clerical, craft and other occupations.
- Positions are located in Washington, D. C., throughout the United States and overseas.
- Jobs are filled on a merit basis as determined by the results of examinations and ratings of experience and education.
- Examinations are given several times a year in cities throughout the nation. Tests for entry-level professional positions are conducted at many universities and schools.
- Most post offices have application forms and information on job opportunities. Information is also available from the Office of Personnel Management, Washington, D. C. 20415.

6. **Private employment agencies**

- Usually specialize in a few occupations.
- Some charge applicants a fee for registration or placement; others collect fees from employers.

7. **Yellow pages of telephone directory, industrial directories, and chamber of commerce lists**

- Sources of names of firms that employ workers in your field and other information useful in applying to them.

8. **Professional associations**

- Useful for specialized occupations.
- Listings available at libraries.

Planning Your Time

Even if you are under no economic pressure to find a job quickly, starting your search promptly is a wise policy. Delays may hurt your chances of finding the job you want. If you have just finished school, for example, you are competing for similar positions with other new graduates in your field. Moreover, a long delay between school or your last job and your application for work may give an employer the impression that his or her office is one of your last stops in a long and fruitless job search.

Once you start your search, you should treat it as a full-time job. Looking for work can become discouraging at times, but sustained effort usually pays off.

The following suggestions may help you plan your time for an efficient job search:

1. Plan and start your search as soon as you know you will need to find a new job.
2. Make your job hunting a full-time project. You work at least a 40-hour week for your employer; you should work no less for yourself.
3. Once you start your search, do not allow yourself little vacations.
4. Apply early enough in the day to allow time for multiple interviews, tests, or other hiring procedures that may be required.
5. Be on time for appointments.

6. Before approaching a firm, try to learn the best time and day of the week to apply for a job.
7. Follow up leads immediately. If you learn of a job opening late in the day, call the firm to arrange an appointment for the next day. The employer might postpone a hiring decision until you can be interviewed.

The Job Interview

A job interview is your showcase for merchandising your talents. During the interview an employer judges your qualifications, appearance and general fitness for the job opening. It is your opportunity to convince the interviewer you can make a real contribution to the firm.

Equally important, it gives you a chance to appraise the job and the employer. It enables you to decide if the job meets your career needs and interests and whether the employer is someone you want to work for.

Before each interview, though, you should assume the job you are applying for is precisely the one you want - because it may be. To present your qualifications most advantageously, you will need to prepare in advance. You should have the needed papers ready and the necessary information about yourself firmly in mind, and you should know how to act at the interview to make it an effective device for selling your skills.

Preparing for the Interview

- Assemble in easily available order all the papers you need to take with you. The principal one

is your résumé. If you have not prepared a résumé, take your school records, Social Security card, and work records, along with the names of your employers and dates of employment. (Prepare your own list if you have no formal records.) You may also need any licenses, union card or military records you have. If your work is the type you can present at an interview, you may want to take a few samples (such as art or design work or published writing).

- Learn all you can about the company where you are going for an interview - its product or service, standing in the industry, number and kinds of jobs available, and hiring policies and practices. Host companies have Web sites with this information.
- Know what you have to offer - what education and training you have had, what work you have done, and what you can do. If you have not prepared a résumé, review your inventory chart before you go.
- Know what kind of job you want and why you want to work for the firm where you are applying.
- If you do not have a résumé that includes references, be prepared to furnish the names, addresses, phone numbers, and business affiliations of three people (no relatives) who are familiar with your work and character. If you are a recent graduate, you can list your teachers. Ask your references for permission to use their names, and alert them to expect a call.
- Learn the area salary scale for the type of job you are seeking.

- Never take anyone with you to the interview.
- Allow as much uninterrupted time for the interview as it may require. (For example, do not park your car in a limited time space.)
- Dress conservatively. Avoid either too formal or too casual attire.

In the Interview

You never get a second chance to make a first impression, so don't blow it by showing up at the employer's business in dirty clothes, bare feet and bright green hair. You might be there just to pick up an application, but that first impression may prevent you from getting an interview.

Ask yourself these questions:

- Are my clothes clean and neat? Are they appropriate to the job? Do they fit, or are they too revealing? When applying for a job, wear the type of clothes you would wear on the job. This is where your research pays off.
- Are my shoes clean? Don't leave a lasting reminder of your visit on the employer's carpeting.
- Do I need a haircut?
- Men — are you clean shaven, or is your beard or moustache trimmed?
- Women — is your makeup neatly applied?
- Are your teeth clean and your breath fresh? A beer with lunch can be a red flag at your afternoon interview, and if the employer doesn't allow smoking at the facility, don't have a cigarette and then claim you don't smoke.
- Be pleasant and friendly, but businesslike.

- Let the employer control the interview. Your answers should be frank and brief, but complete without rambling. Avoid strongly opinionated statements.
- Be flexible and willing, but give the employer a clear idea of your job preferences.
- Stress your qualifications without exaggeration. The employer's questions or statements will indicate the type of person the firm needs. Use these clues in presenting your qualifications. For example, if you are being interviewed for an engineering position and the employer mentions the job will require some customer contact work, use this clue to emphasize any work experience or courses you have had in this type of work.
- If you have not sent your résumé in advance, present it or your work history, references, work samples, or other materials to support your statements when the employer requests them.
- In discussing your previous jobs and work situations, avoid criticizing former employers or fellow workers.
- Don't discuss your personal, domestic or financial problems.
- Don't be in a hurry to ask questions unless the employer invites them. But don't be afraid to ask what you need to know. If the employer offers you a job, be sure you understand exactly what your duties will be. You also should discuss what opportunities for advancement will be open to you. A definite understanding about the nature of your job will avoid future disappointment for either you or your employer.

- Be prepared to state the salary range you want, but not until the employer has introduced the subject. Be realistic in discussing salary. If asked, it is also acceptable to answer with this question: "What is the normal starting wage for this position?"
- If the employer does not definitely offer you a job or indicate when you will hear back, ask when you may call to learn of the decision.
- If the employer asks you to call or return for another interview, make a written note of the time, date and place.
- Thank the employer for the interview. If the employer indicates you will not be needed, ask for suggestions on other possible employers.

Testing

Some firms may require a series of tests as part of the application procedure. The tests most commonly used are those that indicate intelligence or general aptitude. In addition, some firms use tests that give them information on specific aptitudes, personality traits and interest patterns.

If you are a recent school graduate, you are probably used to taking tests. But if you have been away from school

for some years, you may be apprehensive about the testing process. You may fear that your test scores will not reflect your real ability to do a job. *Don't let tests scare you off.* None of the commonly used tests require advance preparation; you need not feel concerned about not having "crammed" the night before. And bear in mind that your scores are only one among the many factors the employer will consider in judging your qualification for a job.

Many tests have time limits. When they do, you will be told how much time you will have. Listen carefully to the instructions you receive. If you do not clearly understand what you are expected to do, be sure to ask questions. The time for questions, however, is before the test begins. If the test is timed, seconds lost in asking questions after it starts could seriously affect your score. After you start the test, work steadily and carefully. In taking most tests, you should not spend too much time on any one question; instead, go back to difficult or time-consuming ones after you have completed the others.

Once the test is finished, do not reproach yourself for not having done better. If the test is well constructed, you probably would achieve a similar score if you took it again. Remember, too, that employers do not regard your score as an infallible measure of your abilities - but as only one indication of them.

After the Interview

Send a thank-you letter to the employer who interviewed you. You'd be surprised how many people miss this important step. This is just a short note thanking the employer for taking the time to talk to you, and reinforce your desire to work there.

Dear Ms. Smith:

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to interview for the quality control inspector's position at Acme Widgets. After our conversation, I am even more convinced that my experience and qualifications are a great match for the job you wish to fill, and I would welcome the chance to contribute to the future success of Acme Widgets.

Sincerely,

John Cramer

Make each interview a learning experience. After it is over, ask yourself these questions:

1. *How did the interview go?*

- What points did I make that seemed to interest the employer?
- Did I present my qualifications well? Did I overlook any that are pertinent to the job?
- Did I pass up clues to the best way to "sell" myself?
- Did I learn all I need to know about the job? Did I forget or hesitate to ask about factors that are important to me?
- Did I talk too much? Too little?
- Did I interview the employer rather than permit the employer to interview me?
- Was I too tense?
- Was I too aggressive? Not aggressive enough?

2. *How can I improve my next interview?*

APPENDIX

Part 1: Exercise 1 Interest Inventory Checklist

This exercise is an example of an interest inventory. Interest inventories are designed to help you identify your likes and dislikes - and to help you see which jobs are similar to each other. This exercise is useful in helping you narrow your ideas of career exploration.

From the list of activities below, color those boxes that best describe you and your interests in one color. Color all that are somewhat interesting to you in another color.

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.

Work on a farm.	Solve math problems.	Act in a movie or play.	Study how people get along with each other.	Ask people questions for the TV news.	Learn about money and how it is spent.
Read directions to put things together.	Do science experiments.	Manage a museum.	Lead a club.	Decide what to sell in a store.	Work at a desk all day.
Build some shelves and cupboards.	Study nature outdoors.	Do crafts.	Visit a home for older people.	Trade baseball/sports/other trading cards.	Make graphs numbers.
Drive a semi-truck.	Play chess.	Paint or draw a picture.	Work with babies or younger children.	Run for class president.	Work after school to save money.
Put together a model airplane/car.	Use a microscope.	Design a t-shirt.	Read and discuss books.	Talk about current events.	Put words in alphabetical order.
Cook or bake cake.	Study the stars & planets.	Take a pottery class.	Visit someone in the hospital.	Sell magazines or candy door to door.	Check papers for the teacher.
Plant seeds & watch them grow.	Put a puzzle together.	Write a short story.	Work with others for no pay.	Organize a soccer team.	Type information into the computer.
Fix & repair things.	Write a true story about something that happened to you.	Play an instrument.	Help others learn about religious things.	Work on a school newspaper.	Use a calculator.
Braid, curl or cut someone's hair.	Play word games.	Take photographs.	Work for someone running for elected office.	Lead a school meeting.	Work crossword puzzles.

Number of colored boxes:

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____ 6. _____

Part 1: Exercise 2

Interpreting Your Results

The following descriptions give you some of the characteristics associated with each career area. Look at the career areas where you had the most colored boxes. How well do the descriptions describe you? Now look at the jobs. Are any of these jobs ones you have thought about doing?

1. Doers

Doers are people who like to work with their hands. They like to fix and build things, and use tools. Doers are good at following directions, and at cooperating with others.

Some jobs **doers** might be good at are:

Mechanics	Hairdressers	Chefs
Farmers	Carpenters	Truck drivers
Dressmakers	Dental assistants	Firefighters
Computer repair persons	Electricians	Caterers
Computer specialists	Locksmiths	Physical therapists
Police officers		

2. Investigators

Investigators are curious about things. They like to research and figure out problems. They like to learn math, science and history. Investigators like to work on their own.

Some jobs **investigators** might be good at are:

Doctors	Geologists	Veterinarians
Paralegals	Data analysts	Lawyers
Police detectives	Pharmacists	Military analysts
Librarians	Medical assistants	College professors
Engineers	Reporters	Science lab workers
Consumer researchers		

3. Artists

Artists like to use their imaginations. They like to create things. Artists put their feelings into their work.

Some jobs **artists** might be good at are:

Musicians	Florists	Writers and journalists
Teachers	Editors	Actors
Painters	Illustrators	Dancers
Landscapers	Interior designers	Advertising personnel
Photographers	Fashion designers	Architects
Draftspersons		

Interpreting Your Results

Part 1: Exercise 2 (Con't)

4. Helpers

Helpers like to teach, and assist others. They communicate well, and they have good cooperation skills.

Some jobs **helpers** might be good at are:

Social workers	Dieticians	Government staffers
Receptionists	Nurses	Teachers
Clergy	Childcare workers	Sales persons
Personnel workers	Airline personnel	Office workers
Mental health workers	Home health aides	

5. Enterprisers

Enterprisers have good leadership skills, and good social skills. They like to organize things. Enterprisers like to compete.

Some jobs **enterprisers** might be good at are:

Finance specialists	Wholesale buyers	Reporters
Insurance underwriters	General managers	Sales persons
Real estate workers	Recreation workers	Retail store owners
Administrative assistants	Public relations executives	
Independent business persons		

6. Detailers

Detailers like to organize things. They like to work with numbers and words. Detailers will work in groups, but they also will work on their own.

Some jobs **Detailers** might be good at are:

Accountants	Paralegals	Credit managers
Cashiers	Proofreaders	Hotel clerks
Bank tellers	Auditors	Office clerks
Computer programmers	Science lab technicians	
Medical records technicians		

Part 1: Exercise 3

Working Conditions: What Is Important To You

When people decide on a career they also make decisions about the working conditions they would like in a job. This exercise is to help you compare your working condition choices with the working conditions you think are part of the job(s) in which you are interested.

1. What Do I Want In A Job?

Look at the following list of items. Using the left-hand column, check those working conditions you would want to have in a job.

2. Investigating Jobs That Interest Me.

Choose two or three jobs that interest you. Write them in the right-hand columns. Check those items on the list you think apply to these jobs. You may not know if they are part of the job or not, so check the ones you think apply.

1. What do I Want In A Job?

2. Jobs Which Interest Me.

	Job Title	Job Title	Job Title
Time			
A job that I only work at during the day.			
A job in which I could set my own hours.			
Stimulation			
A job where I can create things.			
A job where I do the same things every day.			
A job where I cannot make very many mistakes.			
A job that uses my reading skills.			
A job working with my hands.			
A job where I am physically active.			
A job where I am on my feet all day.			
A job where I sit at a desk all day.			
A job where I put things together.			
A job where I make many decisions each day.			
A job where I travel.			
Interpersonal Relations			
A job where I work as part of a group.			
A job where I help other people.			
A job that helps to make the community a better place.			
A job that I do on my own.			
A job where I am responsible for others' work.			
A job where I talk to people all day.			
Money			
A job that pays me by the number of hours I work.			
A job that pays me for completed work.			
A job that pays me for what I sell.			

Part 1: Exercise 4

Understand Yourself

Skills Awareness/Identification

This exercise is to help you identify those things you have already learned how to do. Figuring out what you can do now will help you in exploring all types of different jobs.

Put a check mark by each sentences that describes something you believe you know how to do.

I know and understand what time is.

I know how to arrange my time in an orderly way.

I know how to figure out what I need to do first, second, third and so on, to get what I want.

I know how to figure out how much time it will take to do the things I need to do to get what I want.

I understand money and can recognize the different denominations.

I know how to plan to use my money.

I know how to figure out how much money I need to help me get what I want.

I know how to figure out a budget and keep my own money records.

I know how to arrange things in an orderly manner within a space.

I know how to figure out how much space I need for the things I have.

I know how to understand people.

I know how to get people to work together.

I know how to figure out what each person can do best.

I know how to figure out what to ask someone to do, because I know what he/she can do best.

I know how to figure out when someone has done a good job and tell he/she did a good job.

I do well when I can be a member of a team and help the team reach a goal.

I do well when I can teach others new skills.

I do well when I can help other people get what they want.

I do well when I can be the leader and share the reasons why I think I should be the leader.

I do well when I can get other people to think about things the same way I do.

Understand Yourself

Part 1: Exercise 4

- I do well when I ask good questions about rules that do not seem right.
- I do well when I talk with people who are fighting and help them find a way to work out what they are fighting about.
- I play well with people who are different than me.
- I know where to go to get the information I need and figure out what to do with it.
- I know how to arrange and keep information neatly.
- I know how to understand and tell other people the information I have.
- I know how to use a computer, put information into the computer and get it back out again.
- I can understand how to get along with other people and how all people need to get along with each other.
- I can be at school or in a club and understand there are rules and set ways of doing things, and still follow the rules.
- I can understand when there is a problem with something, and I can figure out what I need to do to solve it, and then I fix it.
- I can watch over myself to make sure I can think about how something can be changed to make it work better.
- I do well in figuring out the right tools for the job. It may be a hammer, ruler, pencil, computer or instruction book.
- I do well reading instructions to hook up a VCR or Nintendo game to the TV, and then I can run the VCR or play the Nintendo.
- I do well watching over a machine, keeping it in working order, and if it breaks, I can figure out what is wrong.

Now that you have completed your interview, and know much more about the job(s) that interest you, do the following exercise again.

1. Go back and mark in the left-hand column those working conditions which you wanted to have in a job.
2. In the columns under your job choices, mark the conditions that are really part of the job(s) you explored. You should have found out this information in the interview(s).

1. What do I want in a job?

2. Jobs that interest me.

	Job Title	Job Title	Job Title
Time			
A job that I only work at during the day.			
A job in which I could set my own hours.			
Stimulation			
A job where I can create things.			
A job where I do the same things every day.			
A job where I cannot make very many mistakes.			
A job that uses my reading skills.			
A job working with my hands.			
A job where I am physically active.			
A job where I am on my feet all day.			
A job where I sit at a desk all day.			
A job where I put things together.			
A job where I make many decisions each day.			
A job where I travel.			
Interpersonal Relations			
A job where I work as part of a group.			
A job where I help other people.			
A job that helps to make the community a better place.			
A job that I do on my own.			
A job where I am responsible for others' work.			
A job where I talk to people all day.			
Money			
A job that pays me by the number of hours I work.			
A job that pays me for completed work.			
A job that pays me for what I sell.			

Do your answers match? Compare the boxes you checked on the left to the jobs that you are interested in.

1. Are the things you want in a job found in the job you explored?
2. Did you discover things in the job you explored that you liked? Disliked?
3. Are you still interested in that job?

That is why it is very important to spend time exploring careers. Besides, it's fun, you get to meet new people, and learn new things.



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