



March

TIPS FOR GETTING A JOB

Regardless of the post-secondary path followed by students, at some point, they will all likely be looking for a job. Whether it be a summer job, a permanent, full-time job, or a job while they are in college, it is important to know the proper procedures for obtaining employment. Below are some beneficial tips for applying, interviewing, and following up with a prospective job.

HOW TO WRITE A LETTER OF APPLICATION

Your first contact with a prospective employer may be your letter of application. Employers use letters of application to sort out prospective employees in a very efficient and easy way – they simply throw away all the letters that they don't like and keep only the very best. It is very important, therefore, that your letter of application be written well enough that yours is one of the few the employer will keep. It has to be neat, have proper spelling and good grammar, and say just enough, but not too much. Below is an example:

Date

Contact Person's Name

Title (if known)

Name of company

Street address

City, State, ZIP

Dear Mr., Ms., Mrs., Dr. Last Name (do not use a first name)

1st paragraph: State the purpose of your letter. Tell exactly for what position you are applying. Identify how you became aware of the opening.

2nd paragraph: State why you are applying and how you are qualified for the position. Provide reasons for the type of work you desire. Use concrete, specific examples to explain how your education, experiences, and other qualifications support your ability to succeed in that position. Indicate your interest in the position, the company, its products or services. Explain what you can do for the employer. Expand on your resume, mentioning specific details without simply repeating the information. Indicate what abilities, skills, and knowledge you possess and provide concrete, specific examples to support your claim. Avoid mentioning how the position will benefit you and the experience you'll gain. The employer wants to know what you can do for the company. If the paragraph is too long, split it up into two.

3rd paragraph: Ask for an interview at the employer's convenience. Tell how and where you can be reached. Write a brief expression of appreciation, and tell the employer you are anxious to hear from him/her.

Sincerely,

Your signature

Your name typed (exactly as you sign it and as it appears on your resume)

Enclosure (this means that your resume is enclosed in the envelope, too)

HOW TO WRITE A RESUME

Every application should be accompanied by a resume. A resume is a picture of you in print, your background, and your experiences. A resume should be very much to the point, easy to read, and a tool that employers use to reduce their top candidates for a job down to the few best. It is very important that your resume be one of the best. The following is an outline as to how your resume should be structured:

Name
Address
Telephone
E-mail Address

Career (or Job) Objective:

Brief statement about the type of job or career interest (should match position for which you are applying)

Education (present back to high school):

Dates attended
Complete name of school, city and state
Degree
Majors
GPA (grade point average) – ex. 3.0/4.0

Experience (present to past):

Dates
Names of companies, cities and states
Position
Brief description of duties and responsibilities

Special Skills (directly related to job):

From either work experience or education
Examples: can type 50 wpm, know BASIC computer language, can operate electronic cash register, etc.

Community Service:

Clubs, organizations, leadership

References:

Statement: References available upon request.

OR

List 3 references on separate sheet of paper. Include names, occupations, address, and phone numbers. References should be easily recognized as a reliable source of information about you, and able to tell about your character and/or your work ability. Always **ask** these people first if you could use their name as a reference. Do not use parents, relatives, your personal young friends or classmates as references. The best possible people for references are: former employers, teachers, counselors, ministers, people for whom you have worked

HOW TO FILL OUT AN APPLICATION

One of the first things you will be asked to do when you go for an interview is to fill out an application. Employers get a lot more from an application than facts and numbers. They check your neatness, your writing and reading skills, your spelling and grammar, and even your organizational skills. The application is one more chance for you to keep your name in the “prospective employee” file.

Regardless of whether they require an online or paper application, here are some tips:

- Read the application first!
- Follow all directions printed on the application. Show the employer that you can do what is expected of you..
- Think before you write to avoid mistakes.
- If picking up a job application directly from the prospective employer, dress neatly. Some employers interview on the spot.
- Have all of your data handy (ex. dates, addresses). It shows good planning on your part.
- Be as specific as possible with all of your answers.
- Spell correctly. If you don't know how to spell a word, pick another word with the same meaning or reference the dictionary.
- What special skills or abilities do you have to offer? Many applications ask questions like this one. DO NOT leave it blank. It is your chance to shine above everybody else. Practice a couple of short sentences that reflect a good image of you. If you haven't had a lot of work experience, refer to good attitude, reliability, accuracy, etc.
- Be neat and accurate. Take advantage of this and make sure it paints the best picture of you possible.
- Be honest. Don't give false information. Employers do follow through and check most of the information given on an application. Putting false information on an application is the quickest way to get your name tossed in the wastebasket.

HOW TO CONDUCT AN INTERVIEW

Most interviews contain some common questions. You should be prepared to answer these questions. If you are not prepared, you will appear unorganized, you will lose eye contact, and you will appear generally unimpressive to the employer. Practice your answers to these questions:

- *Tell me a little bit about yourself.* Any education from high school, training programs, work experience, career goals.
- *What do you want to be doing in five years?*
- *What jobs have you had? Why did you leave?* Reasons for leaving should be tactful. Do not bring in personal conflicts with past employers or fellow workers.

- *What is your main strength?* It could be a strong competence in a technical area or a strong work attitude, for instance.
- *What is your major weakness?* Everybody has some weaknesses. Think of yours. Be honest.
- *What can you offer the company?* They are basically asking why they should hire you. List your work experiences and technical skills that relate to this job. Tell them your best work attitudes, such as willingness to learn, dependable, hard worker, etc. Again, be honest.
- *What is your favorite subject in school?* Give a responsible answer – not lunch. Try to pick a subject that relates to the job.
- *What do you do in your spare time?* Saying “not much” or “nothing” may be an easy answer, but it also shows that you are lazy. Pick something that shows that you are able to use your spare time in a constructive manner.

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEW

- Get all of your paperwork in order. These include your application, copies of your resume, a list of questions you want to ask.
- Know what the company does. Do research in advance (ex. look at the company’s web page).
- Know with whom you will be interviewing.
- Know what you are going to wear. Be clean, neat, and conservative.
 - Clothes: Clean and pressed. Free of spots, stains, and odor. Conservative in color without conflicting patterns. Appropriate to the job you are applying for. For instance, for an office job, men should wear a suit or slacks and sport jacket and conservative tie. Women should wear a suit, dress, or skirt with jacket or business-like dress. If applying for a job which you will wear a uniform, work outside or in a plant or service department, men should wear slacks, nice shirt (tie optional), and women should wear a skirt or slacks with a conservative blouse.
 - Shoes: Clean and polished.
 - Jewelry: Limited in quantity. Avoid large, flashy items.
 - Make-up: Limited in quantity. Conservative in color.
 - You: Freshly bathed or showered. Teeth brushed. Clean hands, and hair washed.
- Get a good night’s sleep.
- Go alone. Don’t take friends or relatives.
- Be early. Allow an extra 10-15 minutes.
- Greet the receptionist or secretary with respect. Use an appropriate greeting, state your name, why you are there, time of your appointment, and with whom you will be interviewing.
- Greet the interviewer with the same type of greeting. Shake hands and always use good eye contact.
- Don’t sit down until asked.
- Be polite. Don’t interrupt. Say “please” and “thank you.”
- Don’t chew gum.
- Be as relaxed as possible. Don’t tap your fingers or jiggle your foot.
- Be honest.
- Keep an attentive, relaxed posture. Don’t slouch in your chair.
- Keep good eye contact with your interviewer.
- Don’t ask about money until near the end. A good way to ask is “What is your salary schedule for beginning employees?”
- Ask questions. You need to know about the job too.

- Sense when the interview is over. Don't try to drag the interview on.
- Present the employer with your resume, if they haven't asked for it already.
- Try to "hook" the interviewer into committing themselves to call you and let you know if you got the job. If they won't say when they will get back to you with an answer, then ask when you can call them back. This shows responsibility and good planning on your part.
- Your exit should be just as good as your greeting. Thank the employer for talking with you. Use his/her name. Tell him/her you want the job ("I would really like to work for..."). Tell him/her you are anxious to hear from them. Shake hands. Keep good eye contact. Say goodbye.
- Say goodbye and thank the secretary as you walk out.

HOW TO WRITE A THANK YOU LETTER

Every interview should be followed by a thank you letter. It is just one more chance to show that you really do want to work for that company and get your name in front of the employer. Here's an example.

Date

Contact Person's Name, Title

Company Name

Company Address

City, State, ZIP

Dear Contact Person's Name:

1st paragraph – Thank them for giving you the opportunity to interview for the position with their company.

2nd paragraph – Include anything you may have forgotten to tell them during the interview.

3rd paragraph – Indicate that you are very interested in the position.

Sincerely,

Your Signature

Your Name Typed

JOB SEARCH WEBSITES

Below are a few useful websites for individuals actively seeking employment.

- www.michiganworks.org
- www.mitalent.org
- www.careerbuilder.com
- www.monster.com