**Career**
**Training**
**Employer**



# A C C E S S

**A**cademy for **C**ontinuing **C**areers, **E**mployment & **S**oft **S**kills

**Kentucky**
**Career Center**
**Career Training Employer**
Bluegrass
**american**job**center**

# WELCOME TO
# ACCESS.

The Academy for Continuing Careers, Employment & Soft Skills (ACCESS) was developed by the Kentucky Career Center – Bluegrass WIOA staff in collaboration with local employers to bridge the employability skills gap between what job seekers know about what employer's want and what employers really expect of their future employees. The program is an intensive, multi-day, free training for job seekers seriously interested in securing a career and succeeding in that career.

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# Introduction

ACCESS is a work readiness academy that will provide those who choose to commit to it everything needed to enter full-time employment and to keep that job. The purpose of this academy is to match you, the job seeker serious about finding a good job and keeping it, with employers who are looking for a great employee.

The first thing we need to address is that this will not be your typical, "Let's tweek your resume, and you will get a job" kind-of-class. This is a class for those who are ready to face some harsh realities about the job market and walk out of here with tools - not excuses - ready to do what it takes to find the right job and keep it. There is no longer an excuse for people who are looking for work to say, "There just aren't any jobs out there." That simply isn't true. We know this because the Kentucky Career Center - Bluegrass holds countless job fairs and hiring events around the area each year. Each event brings out employers and hundreds of employment opportunities! These jobs run the spectrum from entry-level blue collar jobs to highly-specialized white collar careers.

# Orientation

ACCESS is an employment boot camp, not a classroom. Completing this academy will require the same level of dedication and commitment you would place into being hired. Your success in this program is tied 100% to demonstrated competencies; these competencies will be measured as assessment tests or by observations of your individual behavior.

**How this book works.**

This training will take an honest approach to the hard work it takes to find a job, get a job, and keep a job.

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**Section I: Finding the Job**

*TRANSFERABLE SKILLS WILL BECOME EVEN MORE IMPORTANT TO EMPLOYERS AS AUTOMATION REPLACES THE NEED FOR REPETITIVE AND MANUAL TASKS.*

# Transferable Skills

## Know Your Value

A significant challenge you may face in preparing for a new career is recognizing value in the skills you currently have, and how they are useful to other employers and the careers they can offer. Career changes can be intimidating enough when you have "apples-to-apples" experience. Writing a resume becomes more of a challenge when you're taking a completely new career direction.

So, what do you do as a job seeker when you're forced to consider a career change? You embrace those transferable skills!

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Communication

Problem solving & Analysis

Digital literacy & Tech-savviness

High work ethic & Motivation

Team Work
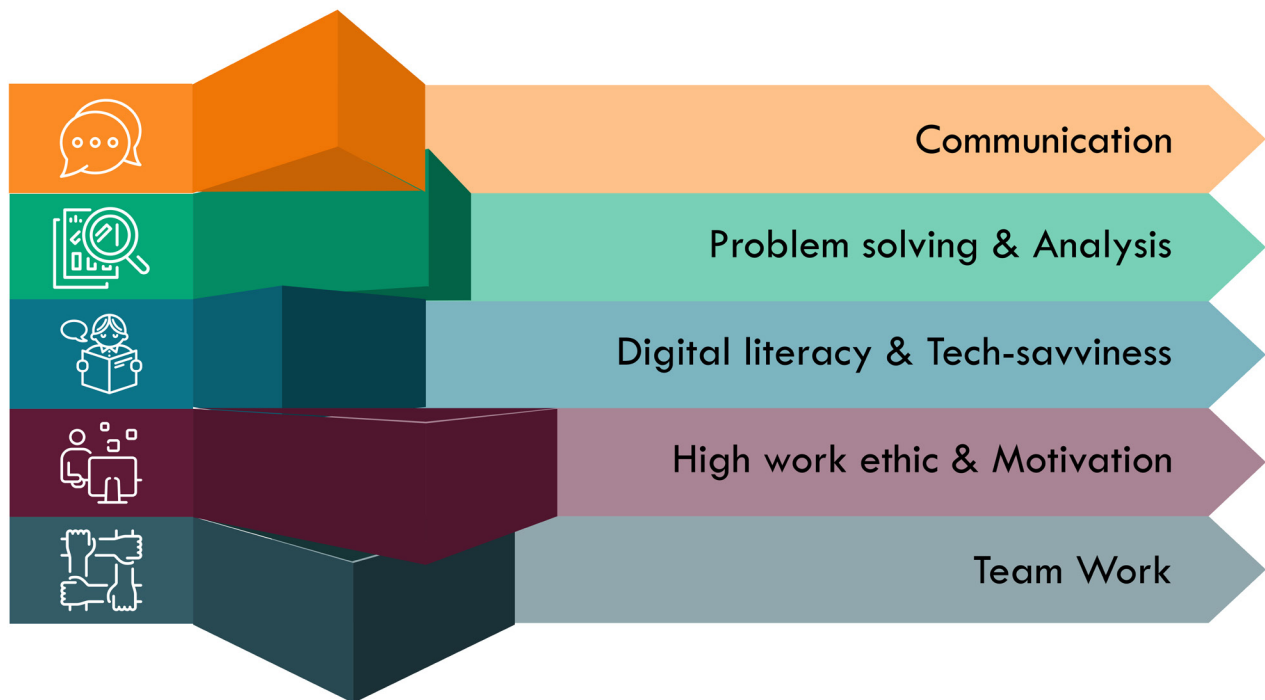
# What are Transferable Skills?

Transferable skills go with you from job to job. These skills can be broken down into two types "hard" and "soft" skills. From there we can look at them in five categories: Communication, Problem Solving & Analysis, Digital Literacy & Tech Savviness, High Work Ethic & Motivation, and Team Work.

If you take the time to identify your transferable skills, you can convince employers that you have the core skills necessary to excel in your new career choice.

# Identify Transferrable Skills

Recognize strengths and opportunities: One of the first steps you need to take is identifying your current skills. Knowing your strengths and weaknesses will help you match your skills to a suitable job. This includes determining your abilities, skills, preferences, and interests and how they align to opportunities in fast-growing fields or in-demand careers. Online job sites and newspaper classified ads can help you discover who is hiring and which professions are in-demand. The Kentucky Career Center - Bluegrass/American Job Center can assist you in identifying your transferable skills how they align with the high-demand fields in the Bluegrass Area.

Create a personal fact sheet: Making a comprehensive list of your past experiences is one of the most practical things you can do in your job hunt. Putting everything in one document will help you pick the most appropriate items to include in your resume. In addition, having this document with you when applying for jobs will ensure that you complete your applications quickly and accurately.

Become familiar with required skills: Read job ads and focus on the skills a job requires. You may not

possess all of the requirements, but look for skills that are somehow related to those you developed via another career, hobby, or educational pursuit.

For example, a teacher making the transition to sales might find that presentation, organizational, and interpersonal skills are desirable for salespeople. They could then highlight their experience giving daily group presentations, creating and launching educational programs, and building team morale. All these are examples of transferable skills.

Occupational Information Network (O*NET) (onetonline.org): This site provides a keyword search tool that lists job skills based on career field. Search the list for those skills you can transfer to your new industry. Refer to your personal fact sheet, if necessary.

Industry Networking: Talk to workers in your desired field, read trade publications, read employer websites, network at industry events and connect with industry associations to learn which skills are important. Once you have a good understanding of desirable skills, you'll know which ones to emphasize.

Demonstrate you're qualified for your career change

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by prominently displaying your transferable skills on your resume. Showcasing transferable skills upfront helps the employer see the keywords they are looking for and prompts them to look at other parts of the resume for more details.

Your transferable skills may be included as a key skills list within your qualifications summary. You can lead with a statement like, "Highlights of related skills include:" followed by a bulleted list of your transferable skills.

# Why do transferable skills matter?

If you want to answer, "Why are transferable skills important?", you can consider how these abilities might enhance your job applications and help you succeed at work. There are many types of transferrable skills, and they're important for the following reasons:

- They can make you more adaptable. Transferrable skills can ultimately make you a more adaptable employee. With the right skill set, you can prepare for sudden changes or challenges that might arise at work and meet them more effectively. Adaptability is often a key characteristic that employers search for in job candidates because it can show a prospect's ability to handle changes positively. Adaptable employees might require less supervision and contribute more to the team. A strong set of transferrable skills can increase your overall adaptability and potentially impress an interviewer.

- They are versatile. One of the main reasons transferrable skills are important is because they're versatile. Usually, you can use

transferrable skills in almost any position. For instance, if you have project management skills, you can use those skills in most management or leadership positions. Transferrable skills can also change as you use them in different roles, often improving or becoming more technical. You might use certain transferrable skills rarely in some positions and more frequently in others, giving you more opportunities to improve upon them.

- They are often permanent. Transferrable skills are typically permanent because you use them in any job. Permanent skills give you a lifetime of opportunities to use, improve, and share those skills with others, which means they often become more valuable to employers over time. For example, if you've used the same three transferrable skills for 20 years across four different positions, you likely have a firm understanding of how to use those skills, which can greatly benefit your next employer. You can learn new transferrable skills at any time during your working years, so you might accumulate quite a few of them.

- Transferrable skills are reliable. Transferrable skills are moldable and desirable, making them a reliable source of confidence during your career. Transferrable skills can sometimes help you expand on technical skills, making them more valuable. For instance, if you have strong research skills, you can use those in any position to research the current technical standards in your industry and learn how to improve your basic technical skills. You can include transferrable skills on a resume, which may help fill any skills gaps where you lack experience, such as for entry-level positions.

- They can make you a more desirable job candidate. A core set of transferrable skills can ultimately make you a more desirable job candidate by showing an employer that you have other skills to offer besides your technical ones. This is important because employers often look for more than just someone who has technical proficiency. They might look for candidates with strong social or teamwork skills, problem-solving abilities, or organizational skills that aid in the execution of the job duties. You can discuss transferrable skills during an interview and include them on your resume.

- They're often easy to learn and comprehend. An advantage of transferrable skills is that they're typically easy to learn and comprehend. With some practice, you can quickly master certain transferrable skills that you can use in any job. For instance, you can learn to collaborate with team members by working closely and communicating with your team. This is a skill most employers want in a candidate, and it requires little practise to become proficient in it.

- You can teach them to others. You can also teach transferrable skills to others quickly and efficiently. For instance, if a teammate wants to improve their organization skills, you can offer them tips to reorganize their time and workspace and techniques to maintain that organization long-term. You can teach transferrable skills to anyone, which can help impact your work positively and gain the trust and confidence of your team, which may result in career advancement opportunities and recognition.

## Applying Transferrable Skills.

Now that your transferrable skills are identifed and you've applied them to your resume, back them up with examples of how you successfully used those skills in another career field or other experience. Use the STAR (situation, task, actions, results) approach:
• **Situation**: Set the scene.
• **Task**: What task(s) needed to be done?
• **Actions**: What did you do to accomplish the task?
• **Results**: What were the results of your work?

As a career changer you can build confidence that the basic skills you have developed in one career transfer to a new career. The STAR stories can be added to a key accomplishments section to demonstrate previous success using these transferable skills.

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# Job Search

## W a y s   t o   L o o k   f o r   A   J o b

Searching for a job has changed in the last few years. There are new rules for job searching that make finding a job faster, but it can be more challenging.

Most job-hunters think there are basically only three ways to go about their search: ads, agencies, and the internet. Actually, there are a lot more:

1.  Contacting companies directly.
2.  Going to places where employers come to pick out workers, such as a job or career fairs.
3.  Taking a Civil ServiceEexam.
4.  Networking with family members, friends, former coworkers, and teachers or professors for job leads.

5.  Using social media.
6.  Uploading your resume to a recruiting site.
7.  Creating a virtual resume or portfolio.
8.  Knocking on the door of any employers.
9.  Networking or Job Clubs

**Can you think of ways to job search that aren't listed here?**

There really isn't a bad way to job search; the important thing is to mix it up a little and stay persistent! Your job hunt gets a lot more in-depth as you begin to look at job opportunites, the employers offering them, and how they want you to apply.

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# Resume Building and Customizing

Your resume communicates your qualifications tells employers what makes you different. The purpose of a customized resume is to get you an interview.

Recruiters use Google and LinkedIn searches to find talent, instead of paying for job-board or talent databases. Many companies are even mandating that every new application goes through a Google screening process. That means that the first page of your Google results matters. A customized resume may have a better chance of passing an employer's applicant tracking system (ATS). Even if you have the experience and skills, if your resume does not contain the right words, it may not pass the ATS. That is why a resume customized to the specific job is so important.

## Resume Building

Let's begin with some best practices to resume building.

1. A clear resume format. We'll look at a few popular resume formats in just a moment.
2. Your resume should be one page in length. You should only extend it to two pages if you really believe additional information is needed to get you the job.
3. Clear section headings. Make each section clear and use the same size font and style for each heading.
4. Don't fear the white space. You should have nice wide margins. If you overcrowd your resume, it will be difficult to read and discourage hiring managers and recruiters.
5. Use an easy-to-read font. Use a font that is eye-catching but in a good way. (Examples: Acumin, Roboto, Source Sans, or Tunga), Don't ever use scripted or cartoony fonts like: "Comic Sans", Chiller or Gigi)
6. Make the font size readable. For normal text use a size 11 or 12 font and 14 to 16 for section titles or headers.
7. Save your resume as a PDF. Always have a PDF version of your resume available. Word is an acceptable alternative, but there is a chance of messing up your resume. You should reserve Word for editing your resume, then export it to a PDF.

**Types of Resume Formats:**
- **Chronological** resume format. This is the most popular resume format among recruiters and, as such, the right format for most jobseekers if you have a work history to pull from.
- **Functional** resume format. This format focuses more on skills rather than work experience and is beneficial if you're just getting started with your career and have little-to-no experience in the field.
- **Combination** resume format. The combination resume is a great choice for experienced job-seekers with a very diverse skill set. It's useful if you're applying for a role that requires expertise in 3-4 different fields and you want to show all that in your resume.



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Microsoft Word offers a variety of resume types. If you're not sure which to choose, a functional resume is a safe choice and showcases your skills over experience. The purpose of a functional resume is to draw attention to those transferable skills we identified earlier and lets the employer know you're up to challenge of the position you're applying for.

**Building Your Resume.**

Now that you've chosen a format you will complete the header. The header lets the employer know name and relevant contact information. You will need to make sure you have a professional and appropriate email address, and it should be an email you check regularly.

Here are some examples of acceptable and unacceptable emails to use when applying.

| Acceptable Emails | Unacceptable Emails |
| --- | --- |
| lori.smith@gmail.com | younghottie@gmail.com |
| mpratt21@gmail.com | 0bunk0skunk@gmail.com |
| taba.jones@gmail.com | sickshoes69@gmail.com |

Below the header you will provide a summary or objective. A resume summary is two or three sentences which summarizes your career. Objectives are reserved for those with little to no work history or if you lack the skills to the job you're applying for.

What to include your resume summary:
- Your job and years of experience. (Example: Client Support Agent with 3 years of experience in the technology sector.)
- One or two of your top achievements (or primary responsibilities) in that position. (Example: Served as new staff ambassador and specializing in client retention)
- Lastly, you will include your goal. (Example: Looking for new opportunities as a Client Retention Manager with a growing company.

Here is an example of how it all comes together.

*"A dedicated, task-driven IT professional with three years experience in client relations, team building, and staff mentoring. Skilled at leveraging exceptional communication and interpersonal skills to engage with diverse individuals and groups at all levels of an organization. Seeking a position as a Client Retention Manager with ABC Company."*

Here is an example of a career change objective:

*"Manufacturing project manager with more than five years' experience management. Provided oversight to a team of 12 production team members including guidance on LEAN manufacturing. Looking to leverage skills and experience in LEAN theory managing outside sales for ABC Company."*

If you don't have the experience to provide a summary, a resume objective is your other option. Objectives used to be the standard in resume writing, and is essentially the goal of the resume written in two or three sentences.

Here is an example of an entry-level obective:

*Seeking a position in a dynamic organization where I can launch my career and work towards building a strong skill set. A hard working individual looking for a challenging position where I can showcase my skills and contribute to the growth of the organization.*

Once you have your 10 second introduction, its time to focus on skills. Here, you want to mention all your know-how that makes you the perfect candidate for the job.

You will want to provide both types of skills - hard and soft skills.

- Remember hard skills are measurable abilities. This can be anything from using a particular type of machine or computer program to knowing how to rebuild an engine.
- Soft skills are personal skills are a mix of social skills, communication skills, personal traits, career attributes, and so on. Leadership, time management, and organization, are examples of soft skills.

When putting your hard skills in your resume, be sure to identify them by skill level. Here is how you do it.

- Beginner: You have some experience with the skill, either entry level or some classroom training.
- Intermediate: You have used this skill at work and have a good level of understanding.
- Advanced: You have a high level of skill and are the go-to person for that skill around the office and can assist other employees.
- Expert: You've applied this skill in several projects, you're not only the go-to for this skill in your office but other professionals in your field seek your advice.

Remember: NEVER misrepresent your skill level.

Soft skills aren't measurable so list them accordingly and based on what the employer may be looking for.

**Adding Work Experience**

There is a standard format to presenting your work experience…

- Job title/position. Your job title goes on top of each work experience entry. When the HR manager scans your resume, you want them to know, at a glance, that you have relevant work experience for the job.
- Company Name/Location/Description. mention the name of the relevant employer, as well as the location of the office you work/have worked in.
- Dates Employed: This is the timeframe of your employment in each company. Refer to your personal fact sheet. The standard format expected by recruiters and employers is mm/yyyy (this is especially important when your job application will be parsed by an Applicant Tracking System). Don't worry, you don't need to have the specific day, just month and year.
- Achievements and Responsibilities: This is the core of each work experience entry. Depending on your field, you want to list either your achievements or responsibilities.

One of the most common resume mistakes is listing only responsibilities in your work experience section. The hiring manager will have a good idea what your responsibilities were, so highlight your achievements. Specifically, tell them how exactly you helped the company grow, reach goals, and so on.

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**WORK EXPERIENCE:**

**Wardiere Inc.**

Web Developer | Date and Year

- Ensure user satisfaction and retention by providing responsive tech support.
- Build and maintain software documentation sites using various programming languages.
- Increase productivity by using software to organize, track bug patches and add feature requests.
- Collaborate with other developers to update the website and create new features.

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Correct Examples:
- Exceeded sales team KPIs by 30%+ for 3 months straight.
- Generated over $24,000 in sales in 1 month.

Incorrect Examples:
- Generated leads through cold-calling
- Managed existing company clients

In some fields, there aren't that many achievements you can mention. In such fields, it can be difficult to separate yourself, so it's totally OK to stick to responsibilities instead.

**Providing the Right Amount of Work Experience.**

If you've got over a decade's worth of work experience, you're probably confused about how much of it you mention in your resume.

On the other hand, if you're new to the job market, you probably don't have any experience and are wondering what you could even mention.

Here are some tips for how much information you'd mention in your resume depending on your level of experience:

- Job hunters with no experience. If you don't have any experience, it might be a bit hard to fill in your work experience section. You can either keep it empty and focus on all the other sections, or fill it up with work experience in student organizations or volunteer experience. You might also consider using a Functional resume format.
- Entry-level candidates. List all the work you've done up to today. While some of it won't be relevant, it will still show the hiring manager that you do have practical work experience.
- Mid-level professionals. ONLY mention work experience relevant to the position you're applying for.
- Senior professionals. List no more than 15 years of relevant work experience. If your recent experience is as a CEO, no one cares about how you started your career as a production specialist.

**Tips for an ATS Friendly Resume.**

As you're compiling your work experience section make sure to consider Applicant Tracking System software.
- As mentioned previously, make sure your resume contains keywords tailored to the position you're interested in pursuing. Make sure to include them in your responsibilities and achievements under your work experience section.
- Keep your resume concise. Don't let your resume extend longer than two pages and try to keep it to one page. Sometime ATS software will disqualify resumes over one page long. Employers can set that limit.
- Always use an active voice when describing your achievements. An achievement written as "managed a production floor of 12 team members" is more engaging than the passive voice of "a production floor group of 12 managed by me".
- Use action words. Instead of saying "was responsible for," make your work phrasing impactful by using action words like "facilitated" or "guided".

**Listing Your Education.**

Formatting your education section is direct and simple. Bullets are perfectly acceptable.

Refer to the example below:

**EDUCATION:**

2022 - 2026 | Really Great University
Bachelor of Computer Science - Software Engineering

**Optional Sections.**

Finally, there are other sections that you can include on your resume but are not expected, things like hobbies and interests, languages, certifications, awards, or volunteer experience. These sections can help boost your resume, especially if it may be light in other areas like work experience. Just remember to keep to the two page limit.

# Application Completion

1. Arrive prepared with the information you need. Be sure to bring your resume, social security card, driver's license, etc. You probably will also need addresses and phone numbers of previous employers, as well as starting and ending salaries for each previous job. It's always better to have too much information than not enough.

2. Read and follow instructions carefully. Always take a few minutes to review the entire application. Some applications ask for information differently and all have specific spaces in which you are expected to answer questions. Think of the application as your first test in following instructions.

3. Complete the application as neatly as possible. Neatness and legibility count; the application is a reflection of you. If completing it by hand, be sure to use only a blue or black pen -- and consider using an erasable pen or taking some correction tape to fix minor mistakes. Don't fold, bend, or otherwise mar the application.

4. Tailor your answers to the job you are seeking. Just as with your resume and cover letter, you want to focus your education and experience to the job at hand. Give details of skills and accomplishments and avoid framing your experiences in terms of mere duties and responsibilities. Show why you are more qualified than other applicants for the position. Include experience from all sources, including previous jobs, school, clubs and organizations, and volunteer work.

5. Don't leave any blanks. One of the reasons employers have you complete an application is

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because they want the same information from all job applicants. However, if there are questions that do not apply to you, simply respond with "not applicable," or "n/a." Do not write "see resume" when completing the application (but you can certainly attach your resume to the application).

6. Don't provide any negative information. As with any job search correspondence, never offer negative information. Your goal with the application is to get an interview. Providing negative information (such as being fired from a job) just gives the employer a reason not to interview you. That doesn't mean lie, try putting a positive spin on the information. Remember even more important than not providing negative information is to be honest.

7. Always answer questions truthfully. The fastest way for an application to hit the trash can is to have a lie on it, but that doesn't mean you need to give complete answers either. For example, many applications ask your reason for leaving your last job. If you were fired or downsized, you should try to be as positive as possible and leave longer explanations for the interview; some experts recommend writing "job ended" as the reason you left your last job.

8. Do not put specific salary requirements. It is way too early in the job-seeking process to allow yourself to be identified by a specific salary request. You don't want to give employers too much information too soon. In addition, employers often use this question as a screening device -- and you don't want to be eliminated from consideration based on your answer. It's best to say "open" or "negotiable", if possible.

9. Provide references. Employers want to see that there are people who will provide objective information about you. Pick your references carefully utilize past employers, coworkers, teachers, or family friends who are willing to be a rerence. Be sure to ask them first! Most young jobseekers have a mix of professional and character references, while more experienced job-seekers focus on professional references who can speak of their skills and accomplishments.

10. Keep your application consistent with your resume. Make sure all dates, names, titles, and etc. on your application coincide with the information on your resume. Don't worry if the application is based on chronological employment while you have a functional resume.

# Cover Letters

## Types of Cover Letters

Cover letters provide detailed information on why you are qualified for the job you are applying for. Effective cover letters explain the reasons for your interest in the specific organization and identify your most relevant skills or experiences. Cover letters are sent or uploaded with a resume when applying for jobs.

1.  Email Cover Letters: When you're sending an email cover letter, it's important to follow the employer's instructions on how to submit your cover letter and resume, and to make sure that your email cover letters are written as well as any other correspondence you send.

2.  Inquiry Letters: An inquiry letter is sent to companies that may be hiring, but haven't advertised job openings. Inquiry letters should contain information on why the company interests you and how your skills and experience would be an asset to the company. Also provide information on how you will follow up and your contact information.

3.  Referral Cover Letters: When you are applying for jobs a referral can go a long way. Hiring managers and recruiters are more likely to take a closer look at candidates who were referred by someone they know. When you mention a referral in your cover letter, be sure to mention the individual who referred you by name and also mention your connection with the person - how you know them.

4.  Summer Job / Internship Cover Letters: When you're writing a cover letter for a summer job or internship, your cover letters should reflect how you are qualified and why you are interested in the position. It's also a good idea to mention your availability if the job posting mentions a start and end date for the job.

5.  Networking Letters: Networking letters are used to request job search advice and assistance from your connections. These include introductions, referrals, meeting requests, and requests for career advice. These letters can be sent to people you know or to people to whom you were referred. They may be sent by mail, email, or via networking sites such as LinkedIn.

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# How to Write a Cover Letter

1. Begin by adding your contact information at the top. This will ensure that the hiring company can reply to you. This should include your whole address and phone number(s), email(s), and even a LinkedIn address whenever possible.

2. Write the date in the letter.

3. Write the name of the employer to whom you are applying for the job. Include the address.

4. Write the name of the person to whom you are writing.
   - If his/her name is not known, write Hiring Manager.

5. State the position to which you are applying so that the employer knows for certain. Explain where you found the advertisement too, such as in a newspaper, via a job site or through a friend who works there, etc.

6. Begin the letter by telling the employer why you want the job.
   - Also explain why the job would be suitable for you. Do not forget to mention that it will benefit by adding you to their team.

7. In the next paragraph, summarize your strengths and any particular qualifications or experiences that would be considered relevant to the position.
   - Refer to your resume for more detailed explanations of your qualifications and skills.

8. Include the most relevant aspects of your career in the next paragraph.

9. Finally, explain how you think you can contribute to the company and help it become more successful.

10. At the bottom of the letter, but before your closing and signature, write "I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience."

11. End appropriately. Use closings such as: Sincerely, Respectfully, Thank you for your consideration, or Regards.

12. Sign and write your name underneath. (Signatures are not required for electronic or email cover letters.)

**Here are some additional tips to keep in mind:**

- Your letter should be clear and to the point. The employer's first impression of you is formed through this document.

- Type your letter.

- Double check that spelling and grammar are correct. Use correct paragraphs and punctuation. Have a friend, family member, or career center staff read through the letter to see if they can spot errors.

- Check to make sure that the letter is formal and does not contain any slang or informal language.

- Use a relevant font. Try to go with **Arial** or $\text{Times New Roman}$. Avoid fun fonts, such as Comic Sans, as this will impact the reputation of the letter immediately as it displays a lack of professionalism. There are some quirky jobs where this will go over well but they're the rarity, so err on the side of caution.

Examples of other cover letters can be found by doing a Google search for the type you are writing. Learning the value of each type of cover letter is important in your job search and in gaining the employers attention.

Your Street Address
City, State Zip Code
Email Address
Phone Number

Month, Day, Year



Mr. / Ms. / Dr. First Name Last Name
Title
Name of Organization
Street or P.O. Box Address
City, State Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr./M. Last Name: (M. is now used to deal with gender identification assumptions.)

1st paragraph: State why you are writing, how you learned about the job opening, and introduce yourself.

2nd paragraph: Tell why you are interested in this job or working for this company. Share what you know about the company or this position and share your relevant experiences. Mention specific skills, qualities, or educational abilities that qualify you for this position. Detail specific items in your resumé that match the job requirements.

3rd paragraph: Say that you would like to interview for a position or to talk with the employer about hiring plans. Mention that your resumé is enclosed along with any other required documents. State what you will do to follow-up, such as call the employer within two weeks. Thank the employer for his/her consideration.

Sincerely,



(Handwritten signature)
Name typed

Enclosure(s) (refer to resumé, etc.)
NOTE: If necessary add another paragraph or two after the 2nd paragraph to further describe experiences and abilities.

# Follow-Up Contact

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You find a promising job listing online. Excited, you send a customized resume and tailored cover letter and wait for a response. Six weeks later, you're still waiting, your enthusiasm has waned, and you've concluded your resume has fallen into a black hole.

A proactive approach to your job search can improve your chances of landing interviews. These six tips will help maximize your success.

1. Make contact before sending your resume. Unless you're responding to an ad that requests "no phone calls," try to contact the hiring manager before you send your resume. Even if you don't know the name of the person handling the search, you can do a bit of investigation to locate the correct person.

   Once you get the person on the phone, be brief. The purpose of your call is to express enthusiasm about the opportunity and that you can positively contribute to the team. Be prepared with an elevator pitch about your qualifications and the ways you could benefit the employer. Keep the focus on the employer, not yourself.

   If you don't get to speak with the hiring manager, find out who the recruiter in charge of hiring for the position is, as well as the correct spelling of his/her name.

2. End your cover letter with a promise of action. Conclude your letter with something like, "I will follow up with you in a few days to discuss the possibility of an interview. In the meantime, please feel free to contact me at _____." If you say you will follow up, make sure you do.

3. Follow Up Quickly on All Resumes You Send. Follow up within three to five business days. You can follow up by phone or by email (if replying to a blind ad or the ad specifies no calls.)

When following up by phone, try saying something like, "Hi, my name is _____ and I submitted my resume for your _____ opening. I'm extremely interested in this opportunity, and I just wanted to touch base with you on how I can benefit your operation."

If you are following up by email, your message should be brief. Here's an example:

*Dear Name (or "Hiring Manager" if name is unknown):*

*I recently applied for your _____ opening, and I just wanted to follow up to make sure my resume was received. My strong background in _____, _____ and _____ appears to be an excellent match to the qualifications you are seeking, and I am very interested in your opportunity. I realize you may not yet be at the interview stage, but I am more than happy to answer any preliminary questions you may have, and I can be reached at _____. Thank you for your time and kind consideration.*

*Sincerely,*

*_____*

4. Be purposeful in your subsequent follow-up contacts. If several weeks pass after your initial follow-up without word from the employer, initiate another call or email.

   Your purpose for following up could be to find out if a timeline has been established for interviews or to leave an alternate contact number if you will be traveling. As always, be polite, professional, and respectful.

5. Keep a contact log. Your follow-up attempts will be much easier if you keep a contact log of all positions to which you apply. Your log should include a copy of the ad for the position (don't rely on a job posting URL, as

jobs can be removed from the Web), the file name of the resume and cover letter you sent, contact dates, names of hiring managers and a summary of information you gleaned during your contact with them.

6. Don't be a pest. Repeated follow-ups are tricky. Exercise restraint after your third or fourth follow-up contact. Don't give up hope if your follow-up efforts don't yield immediate results. Depending on the employer, industry, specific job and number of responses, the time between the application closing date and the day interview invitations are issued can be several months.

**Section I: Finding the Job**

# Conclusion: Know Your Value

**Section I: Finding the Job**

In your job search and throughout your career, self-awareness is critical to success.

When people don't really know their strengths and weaknesses, they often can't answer questions well, promote themselves effectively, or emphasize their key qualities.

In order to help someone help you when job networking, you must know what you are looking for and be able to articulate it well.

Taking the time to really examine and discover your strengths, talents, and abilities will give you greater confidence and go a long way toward helping you land your next position. Most people never do an honest self-appraisal and assume things about themselves that may, or may not, be true.

So, how do you do that effectively?

It should probably be done in a variety of ways…

Self Assessment: Take time to thoroughly review your career. Ask yourself introspective questions, and write out your honest answers.

What have been your wins, and what have been your set backs? | Which jobs have you liked the most? | Which tasks have you enjoyed the most? | What gave you the most satisfaction? | What came most easily to you? | Which jobs or tasks seemed most chore-like? | Which manager did you like to work for the most? | Why? | Which manager got the most productivity out of you? | What was your greatest achievement? | What was your greatest setback? | If you were to do your career over, what would you change? | Which characteristics do you have the most confidence in?

Asking yourself these questions and more will force you to articulate the pluses and minuses of your career and your self-characteristics. Don't assume you know, give it serious consideration. The process may be very enlightening to you!

Reference Assessments: Find out what others really think of you. Often we don't necessarily know how others see us and we might be surprised.

Compile a list of four or five questions to ask others you've worked with in the past. Question what they see as your strengths, weaknesses, biggest accomplishments and achievements. Send it out to five or six people who know you well in a work environment, and with whom you have a good enough relationship that they will give you an honest answer.

Many times people are surprised to learn that previous colleagues think they have an exceptional skill or strength that they never thought they possessed. A task may come easily to you because you've done it so many times and you don't see anything special about it. Others may see it and marvel at how you do it so easily and so well while they struggle with it. Be sure to know those things about yourself - get the opinions of others.

Assessment Tests: Finally, take tests that can effectively determine some of your strengths and weaknesses. Getting an objective determination can add credibility to statements you make in your job interview.

Assessment tests will most certainly help you understand yourself and your motivations better. It will help you figure out many of the "whys" in your behaviors, your accomplishments, and your achievements. Take a test and fill in some of the gaps in your knowledge about yourself.

Examining yourself in these three different ways will give you a much better understanding of what to emphasize in your conversations with others, and what to minimize.

Take the time to know yourself better. It will pay dividends in many surprising ways!
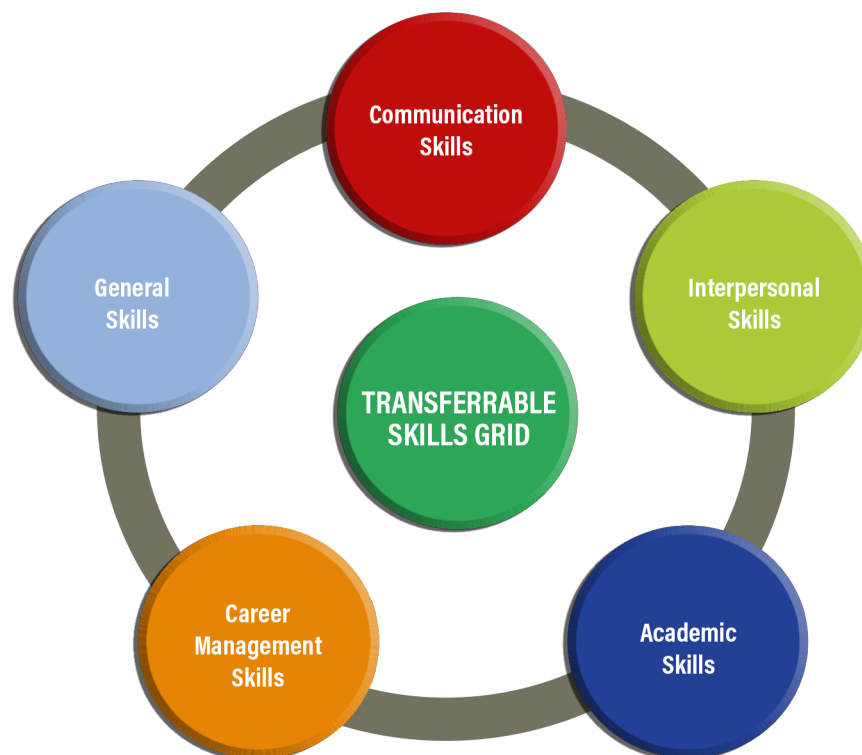
# Workbook Section 1: Finding the Job

## Exercise 1.1 - Transferable Skills

**FIRST**. On the following pages is a list of tranferable skills. The skills are broken down into three main categories:

**Instructions:**

- Make a checkmark next to each Transferable Skill on the 2-page inventory if you believe you possess the described Transferable Skill.
- Check the box entitled EDUCATION if you think you learned the skill in school.
- Check the box entitled LIFE if you think you learned the skill at home, from family or friends or from general life experiences.
- Check the box entitled NEXT JOB if you believe you would like to utilize that skill in the workplace. Meaning: it is a skill you enjoy possessing, learning or using and you would like it to be a part of their future careers.

Communication
Skills

Interpersonal
Skills

General
Skills

TRANSFERRABLE
SKILLS GRID

Career
Management
Skills

Academic
Skills

# Exercise 1.1: Transferrable Skills

| EDUCATION | LIFE SKILLS | NEXT JOB | | EDUCATION | LIFE SKILLS | NEXT JOB | | EDUCATION | LIFE SKILLS | NEXT JOB | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | listen | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | process information | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | service equipment |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | locate information | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | process materials | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | set goals/objectives |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | log information | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | produce | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | set up equipment |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | make/create | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | program | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | set up systems |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | make decisions | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | promote | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | sew |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | make policy | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | protect property | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | shape |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | manage a business | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | provide maintenance | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | signal |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | manage people | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | question others | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | size up situations |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | mediate problems | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | raise money | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | sketch o o o weigh |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | meet the public | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | recommend | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | socialize |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | memorize information | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | record data | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | solve problems |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | mentor others | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | recruit people | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | speak in public |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | monitor progress | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | rectify | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | study |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | motivate others | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | reduce costs | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | supervise |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | move materials | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | refer people | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | supply |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | negotiate | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | rehabilitate people | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | support |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | nurse | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | remember information | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | survey |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | nurture | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | remove | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | synthesize |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | observe | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | repair | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | tabulate |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | obtain | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | replace | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | take instructions |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | operate equipment | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | report information | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | tend equipment |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | order goods/supplies | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | research | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | test |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | organize data | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | resolve problems | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | think ahead |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | organize people | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | restore | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | think logically |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | organize tasks | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | retrieve information | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | tolerate interruptions |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | own/operate business | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | review | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | track |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | paint | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | run meetings | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | train/teach |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | perceive needs | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | schedule | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | transcribe |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | perform routine | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | seek out | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | transfer |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | persuade others | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | select | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | translate |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | plan | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | sell | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | travel |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | plant | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | separate | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | treat |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | prepare materials | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | sequence | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | troubleshoot |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | print | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | service customers | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | tutor |

# Exercise 1.1: Transferrable Skills

| EDUCATION | LIFE SKILLS | NEXT JOB | | EDUCATION | LIFE SKILLS | NEXT JOB | | EDUCATION | LIFE SKILLS | NEXT JOB | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | act/perform | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | converse w/others | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | explain |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | adapt to situations | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | coordinate activites | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | explore |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | advise people | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | cope w/deadlines | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | file records |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | analyze data | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | copy information | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | find information |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | anticipate problems | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | correspond w/others | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | fix/repair |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | appraise service | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | create | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | follow directions |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | arrange functions | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | delegate | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | gather materials |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | assemble products | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | deliver | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | generate |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | assess situations | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | demonstrate | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | guide/lead |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | audit records | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | design | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | handle complaints |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | bargain/barter | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | detail | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | handle equipment |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | o o o be cost conscious | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | detect | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | handle money |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | budget, responsible for | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | determine | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | help people |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | build | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | develop | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | illustrate |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | buy products/services | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | direct others | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | imagine solutions |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | calculate numbers | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | dispense information | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | implement |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | chart information | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | distribute | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | improve |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | check for accuracy | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | do precision work | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | improvise |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | classify information | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | do public relations work | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | inform people |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | collect money | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | draft | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | initiate action |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | communicate | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | drive | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | inspect products |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | compare data | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | edit | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | install |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | compile statistics | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | encourage | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | instruct |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | compute data | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | endure long hours | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | interpret data |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | conceptualize | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | enforce | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | interview people |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | conduct | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | entertain | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | invent |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | confront others | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | establish | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | inventory |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | construct buildings | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | estimate | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | investigate |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | consult w/others | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | evaluate | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | lead people |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | contact others | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | examine | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | learn |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | contact w/others | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | exchange | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | learn quickly |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | control costs | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | exhibit | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | liaise |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | control people | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | expand | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | lift (heavy) |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | control situations | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | expedite | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | lift (moderate) |

# Exercise 1.1: Transferrable Skills

| EDUCATION | LIFE SKILLS | NEXT JOB | | EDUCATION | LIFE SKILLS | NEXT JOB | | EDUCATION | LIFE SKILLS | NEXT JOB | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | tutor | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | use hand/eye coor. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | weigh |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | type | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | use words correctly | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | work quickly |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | understand | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | verify | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | write procedures |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | unite people | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | visit | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | write material |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | update information | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | visualize | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | write proposals |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | upgrade | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | volunteer | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | write technical work |

**SECOND.** Organize your responses from the Transferable Skills Checklist on the summary sheet below.

1. Once you have completed the list, begin identifying skills from each column you do not have in your current resume.

    1. _____

    2. _____

    3. _____

    4. _____

    5. _____

    6. _____

    7. _____

    8. _____

    9. _____

    10. _____

2. What were some of the skills you have that you had not considered?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

# Exercise 1.2: Job Search

1.  Name three ways to look for a job?

    1.  _____

    2.  _____

    3.  _____

2.  Of the three ways you listed, what do you consider the most successful and why?

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

3.  Conduct a search for positions that fit your current or transferrable skills and list at least three below.

    1.  _____

    2.  _____

    3.  _____



**Section I: Finding the Job**

# Exercise 1.3: Application Completion

**PERSONAL INFORMATION:**

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____ M.I. _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ Alt. Phone: _____ Email: _____

Birthdate: _____

**EMERGENCY INFORMATION:**

In case of an emergency, please notify:

Contact's Full Name: _____ Relationship to You: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ Alt. Phone: _____ Email: _____

**EDUCATION:**

High School: _____ City, State: _____

Focus of Study (Degree): _____ Dates of Attendance: To: _____ From: _____

Did you graduate? ☐ Yes ☐ No    Degree Earned: _____

Vocational Program: _____ City, State: _____

Focus of Study (Degree): _____ Dates of Attendance: To: _____ From: _____

Did you graduate? ☐ Yes ☐ No    Degree Earned: _____

College: _____ City, State: _____

Focus of Study (Degree): _____ Dates of Attendance: To: _____ From: _____

Did you graduate? ☐ Yes ☐ No    Degree Earned: _____
_____

Other Training (explain): _____

Focus of Study (Degree): _____

Dates of Attendance: _____

Did you graduate: ☐ Yes ☐ No    Degree Earned: _____

# Exercise 1.3: Application Completion

**SPECIAL SKILLS:**

List machines and special equipment you can operate: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

List any license or certifications you have: _____

_____

_____

_____

List any special skills you have: _____

_____

_____

_____

**PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT:**

Please list the last three jobs you have held.

Company Name: _____   Address: _____

City: _____   State: _____ Zip: _____

Supervisor's Name: _____   Position: (Job Title): _____

Duties: _____

Dates of Employment (MM/YY):   From: _____   To: _____ Salary: _____

Reason for Leaving: _____

Company Name: _____   Address: _____

City: _____   State: _____ Zip: _____

Supervisor's Name: _____   Position: (Job Title): _____

Duties: _____

Dates of Employment (MM/YY):   From: _____   To: _____ Salary: _____

Reason for Leaving: _____

Company Name: _____   Address: _____

City: _____   State: _____ Zip: _____

Supervisor's Name: _____   Position: (Job Title): _____

Duties: _____

Dates of Employment (MM/YY):   From: _____   To: _____ Salary: _____

Reason for Leaving: _____

# Exercise 1.3: Application Completion

**REFERENCES:**

Please list three references. Please do not use relatives.

1. Name: _____ Occupation: _____

   Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____

   Email: _____ Business Phones: _____

   Relationship: _____

2. Name: _____ Occupation: _____

   Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____

   Email: _____ Business Phones: _____

   Relationship: _____

3. Name: _____ Occupation: _____

   Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____

   Email: _____ Business Phones: _____

   Relationship: _____

*You can add any other information that you think might be needed to complete the job application. There may be other questions on job applications, such as:*

**OTHER INFORMATION:**

1. Are you a citizen of the United States or are you legally eligible to work in the U.S? ☐ Yes   ☐   No
   If legal alien, certification number: _____

2. For which position are you applying? _____

3. When can you start work, if hired? _____

4. What hours are you willing to work? _____ Will you work weekends? ☐ Yes   ☐   No

5. What special skills or qualifications do you have that will benefit you in this job? _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

6. What wage/salary do you expect? _____ (circle one: yr, hr, week)

7. Are you eligible for or have you ever been bonded?   ☐ Yes   ☐   No

# Exercise 1.4: Resume Building and Customizing

1. Use the information you completed in the previous section to complete a resume.
2. Why should you have multiple versions of your resume?

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. Based on the job openings you identified in Exercise 1.2 question 3 and on the information you completed in Exercise 1.3, prepare an up-to-date resume. Kentucky Career Center - Bluegrass staff are available to assist you in this portion.
4. Transfer the information to create a viewable, professional web presence by creating a LinkedIn account. If you already have a LinkedIn account, spend time researching ways to improve your views by potential employers.

# Exercise 1.5: Cover Letter

1. What is the value of a cover letter?

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Create a cover letter for at least one position you identified in Exercise 1.2, question 3.



# Exercise 1.6: Follow-Up Communication

1. Why is follow-up communication so important?

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Draft a short email to the potential employer following up on a resume you submitted.

# Preparing for the Interview

**Section II: Getting the Job**

You've done it! You did everything right; you found a job opening that fits you. You identified your transferable skills and customized your resume for just this job. You even went to your local Career Center for assistance in uploading it to the web before the close date. Now, you've gotten the call. You have an interview. But how do you prepare? Start by reviewing these tips and advice on how to prepare, so you can ace the interview and make a terrific impression on the interviewer.

An important part of interview preparation is to take the time to analyze the job posting, or job description, if you have it. Analyze what the company is seeking in a candidate. Make a list of the skills, knowledge, professional and personal qualities that are required by the employer and are critical for success in the job. When you have created a list of the qualifications for the job, make a list of your assets and match them to the job requirements. Create a list of up to 10 assets, including skills, certifications, experiences, professional qualifications and abilities, computer skills, and knowledge bases ready to share with the interviewer. Be sure your assets correlate directly with the skills and abilities required by the company. Refer back to your list of transferable skills, if you need assistance.

**Know where you're going**. Confirm the date, time, and place of the interview. If you are not familiar with the location, get detailed directions in advance. You can find the address and directions online.

**Know who you are meeting**. Know the name and job title of the individual you will be meeting. If you are unsure of the individual's title or how to pronounce his or her name, call the company to confirm the information or research it on the company's website. Often interviews are scheduled by Human Resources (HR) personnel. You may be met by an HR representaive who will then introduce you to the interviewer.

**Be prepared**. Prepare everything you will need for your interview the night before. Make sure you select what clothes you will wear, plan how to get to the interview, and have everything you may need at the interview. There are a few item that you should always bring to an interview such as copies of your resume, the job posting, and any official documents you may need. You should bring hard copies of these documents even if you have already sent them electronically. You should also bring any items that the interviewer specifically requested.

**Necessities for an Interview:**

☐ Personal Fact Sheet

☐ Copies of your resume

☐ List of questions you want to ask

☐ Work permit or work visa (if any)

☐ State-issued ID

☐ Social Security card

☐ Pens and a notebook

☐ Copy of job posting

☐ Any materials requested by the interviewer

☐ Name, title, phone number, and email of interviewer contact

# Doing the Research

Before you go on a job interview, it's important to find out as much as you can about the company. Company research is a critical part of interview preparation. It will help you prepare to answer interview questions and to ask the interviewer questions. You will also be able to find out whether the company and the company culture are a good fit for you.

These days, even getting past a job interview phone screening is tough. But once you've got your foot in the door for that first face-to-face interview, it's critical to have significant knowledge about a company so you can make a good impression on a potential employer.

Your company research shouldn't come from a quick Google search or fast glance at the latest news. It's important to gather important information and understand how to use the company information to your benefit.

In addition to the company website, where should people look to conduct company research?

Use LinkedIn. LinkedIn company profiles are a good way to find, at a glance, more information on a company you're interested in. You'll be able see your connections at the company, new hires, promotions, jobs posted, related companies, and company statistics.

Use Social Media. Check Facebook, Google+ and Twitter. Like or follow the company to get updates. You'll find information you may not have found otherwise.

Ask people who work there. If you know someone, or can network with one of your connections to speak with a current employee of the company to learn more about them and how they operate from someone with firsthand experience.

**Should you take the time to research employees who you might know?** Go on LinkedIn and see if you are connected to anyone who has worked or currently works at the company, and if you are call them beforehand and ask some questions. When you're at the interview, and it's appropriate, you can say "I'm actually connected to so-and-so who works in (name the department) through a friend."

**Is there a downside when it comes to doing company research?** People do research and feel like they need to showcase that information, so doing too much research can actually work against you. Do not ask questions that would reflect on the company negatively or put the company on the spot. For example: "I read an article on how many of your employees are upset about their pay. What do you intend to do about that?"

**So what's the best way candidates can use the research they've done in the interview?** You do want to point to research you've done or make a positive comment about an accomplishment the company has made. You do not want to make a negative comment in the interview or say that you would have done something differently, unless they ask. Learning about the company is also great for tailoring your interview examples and highlighting commonalities between you and the company, and areas where your expertise could be useful.

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**Should you Google the person you're interviewing with to learn about their background?** Researching the interviewer can be a tricky matter. If you're comfortable with your ability to research information and connect with a person without coming across as creepy, then it can certainly be of benefit. Unless you're confident of your abilities to do this, then it's suggested you stick to company research.

Also, if you find no connecting points, you might be tempted to use the information you find there to draw assumptions and make connections that don't exist.

**What should you do if you're interviewing with a smaller company, that does not have a significant web presence?** If you can't find any information on the company, you can say something like "I'm really intrigued by the company and I'm really excited to learn more." People love to talk about where they work. Taking a look at the company website is good enough in this case. You can say "I'm normally able to do some research about a company." That is totally acceptable and can be a great conversation starter and connecting point. Once they start telling you about the company, you can say "I worked on something very similar" and point to your experience.

**Don't forget**: Take some time, in advance, to ask around in your network to see who you know and who can help give you an edge over the other interview candidates.

Investigate *before your* Interview

# Dressing for the Interview

**Check out the company culture:** When deciding what to wear on a job interview, you should first take into consideration the culture of the company you are interviewing with, and dress accordingly. Are you

interviewing with a company where the employees wear suits or do they wear t-shirts and jeans?

**Nothing too fancy, nothing too casual:** A suit is not always the best choice to wear on a job interview. If you show up wearing a suit and tie and all the employees are wearing shorts and flip-flops, you will look out of place, feel uncomfortable and give off the wrong energy. The same is true of the opposite. If you show up wearing shorts and flip-flops to a company that wears professional attire, you will be just confirming that you don't fit into the company.

**Match the interviewer:** If you want to get the job, your choice of what to wear on a job interview should match or be slightly dressier than the normal work attire of the company. For example, if the normal work attire of the company is business casual, it's okay to wear a suit to impress. If the normal work attire is casual, it's okay to wear a business casual outfit to impress as well. Appropriateness is the most important factor on what to wear on a job interview.

After you decide whether a professional, business casual, or casual outfit is the most appropriate for your interview, here are some guidelines you will want to stay within when deciding on the right outfit. The key is to wear clothing that you feel comfortable and look great in, while at the same time matching the corresponding dress code of the company. That way you'll give off great energy and your true personality will shine through.

**Here are the guidelines:**

1. Make sure your clothes are neatly pressed. Nothing gives away the lack of attention to detail more than wrinkled clothing.

2. Make sure your clothing fits properly. If your pants or sleeves are too long or something is too loose or too tight, you'll look and probably feel awkward.

3. Don't wear flashy jewelry. You'll want the interviewer to pay attention to you, not your bling.



4. Dress according to the season. Don't wear a stuffy turtleneck sweater in the middle of the summer.

5. Don't wear perfume or aftershave. You never know if your interviewer is allergic and this isn't a good way to find out.

6. Make sure you have a nice, clean haircut and make sure any facial hair is well-groomed.

7. Avoid articles of clothing with loud, busy prints. It's best to wear solid colors that flatter your skin tone.

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8. Don't overdo your makeup. Wear natural colors and avoid heavy eyeshadow, eyeliner and bright colored lipstick.

9. For pants outfits, make sure you wear a belt that matches the color of your shoes.

So, congratulations on getting the interview! Now you know exactly what to wear to the interview so you can get the job.
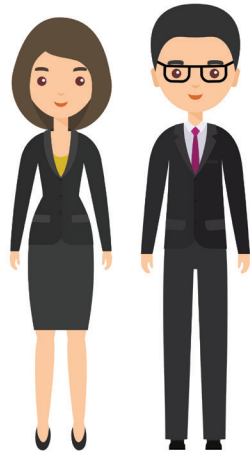
| Business | Semi Formal | Formal |
|----------|-------------|--------|

| Business Casual | Casual | Ultra Casual |
|-----------------|--------|--------------|
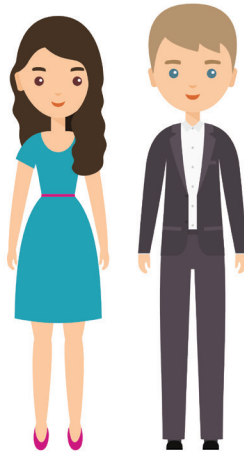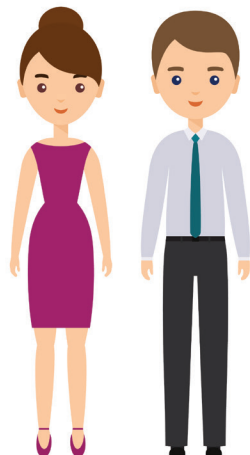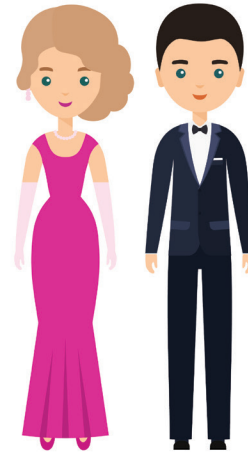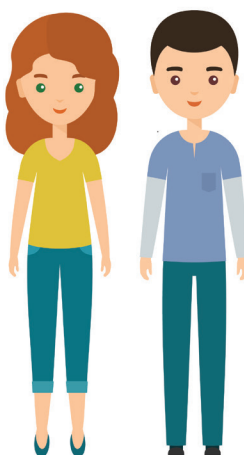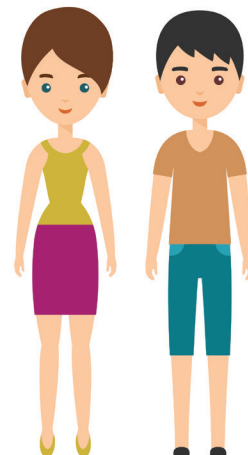
# Types of Interviews

## The Behavioral Interview

This Behaviorial Interview uses specific types of job interview questions to assess how you have behaved and handled situations in the past. A behavioral-based interview examines previous performances and successes at work. This is an indicator of how you will behave in the future, should you be hired. This type of interviewing is most often seen in technology, finance, and healthcare sectors.

<u>What You Should Do</u>:

**Prepare real-life success stories.** Behavioral questions tend to focus on themes such as leadership, teamwork, conflict, and problem-solving. Take your cues from the job description and choose a few real-life examples that would be appropriate within each of these themes and write them down beforehand.

**Use the STAR method to respond**. Your stories and examples should include the <u>situation</u> you were in, the <u>task</u> you had to carry out, the specific <u>actions</u> you took, and the <u>results</u> you achieved. Using this method will allow you to show your detailed thought process to the interviewer.

## The Group Interview

Group interviews are usually reserved for sales roles, internships, or other positions in which the company is hiring multiple people for the same job. How do you catch the hiring manager's eye when you're part of the group?

<u>What You Should Do</u>:

**Be yourself.** The landscape of professionalism is changing across the country, and employers want people who aren't afraid to bring the positive attributes of their personality to the office. Stay loose, and let the real you shine through.

**Provide unique examples and accomplishments.** Highlight specific accomplishments and share the stories behind them. Ask questions of the interviewers that show you're interested in them as people. This will help you and create a positive, real relationship.

**Be polite, confident, and knowledgable.** Focus on being polite and friendly with everyone—not just the hiring team. Along with skill set and qualifications, the hiring team's also looking at your ability to behave under pressure, work with others, and demonstrate confidence.

**Show up early.** Make sure you're the first one there. Chances are you will get some one-on-one face time with the interviewer.

**Do your research.** Go to the interview knowing something about the company and maybe even the staff. It shows you're detail-orientated and ready to go the extra mile.



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## The Job Fair Interview

Many employers will send representatives to job or career fairs. In these fairs, companies set up booths in an area and provide information about their business while collecting resumes.

<u>What You Should Do</u>:

**Treat this as a formal interivew, although it may not seem like one**. Since these events are fast-paced, prepare a short speech about your background and skills to deliver if you have the opportunity to converse with a potential employer.

**Carry resumes with you.** This way you can ensure that potential employers have something to remember you by after the fair. Keep your phone charged so you can collect contact information and, if appropriate, connect with prospective employers on professional networking sites.

**Leaving a lasting impression with prospective employers**. The key is to keep moving forward in the hiring process, so make sure to follow up with your interviewers. Within 24 hours of your interview, email or call your interviewer, and thank them for the opportunity.

**Reiterate your interest in the company.** End by expressing your interest in staying in contact with them. Indicating your wishes for future contact will show that you're dedicated to success with their company.

## The Lunch Interview

Has your potential employer suggested an interview over a meal? That's a good sign—it usually means they want to learn a little more about you and how you act outside of the office.

<u>What You Should Do</u>:

**React to your mistakes.** In interviews, your reaction to mistakes are more important than the mistakes themselves. Acknowledging a mistake in a way that feels comfortable removes a layer of tension.

**Order the right food.** This includes: food that is eaten with a fork. Don't order things that are known for getting stuck in your teeth, like spinach, broccoli, seeds, or blackberries.

**Don't stare at the menu.** Check out the menu online before getting to the restaurant. This way you can order with confidence and be left with awkward silence.

**Compare plates.** If there's a lot less food on your plate than the interviewer's plate, you're talking too much. If there's a lot less food in front of him, you're not talking enough.

**Don't Overindulge.** If the interviewer's ordered an alcoholic beverage and you'd like a drink, then order one. If you don't drink (or if you just don't want one), then order something else. However if the interviewer orders another round, don't do the same.

# The Phone Interview

A phone interviewl is usually a first-round screening to see if you're a fit to interview in person. You'll want to prepare just as you would for a traditional interview, with a few adjustments for the phone format.

**What You Should Do:**

**Prepare a phone interview cheat sheet.** Phone interviews offer an advantage that in-person and video interviews lack: Your interviewer isn't looking at you and can't see what you have in front of you. So you can use notes!

**Demonstrate good speaking and listening skills.** Have a conversation with the interviewer, listen and engage when questions are asked, don't read off a script, just prepare a few key points ahead of time.

**Sit or stand up straight and smile.** Just because the interviewer can't see you, doesn't mean that can't get a sense of your energy over the phone. Smiling can be heard in your voice, as can exhibiting good posture -- You'll sound more confident and energetic.

**Put company research to use.** Identify at least three things that make you enthusiastic about working for this employer and summarize them in a few words for your cheat sheet. Try to make at least one of them about the work the company is doing and how you want to contribute.

**Ask questions.** Prepare a few question that are based on the role, team, company, or where you are in the application process. Maybe you want to know more about a project or recent expansion. This shows you've done your homework.

# The Traditional Interview

This is the scenario you'll face most often: You sit down with a solo interviewer and answer a series of questions designed to help them figure out if you're the right candidate for the job.

**What You Should Do:**

**Prepare answers to commonly asked interview questions.** This will help you articulate why your a good fit for the position.

**Demonstrate good speaking and listening skills.** During the interview it is important to display good speaking and listening skills. Speak clearly and confidently and avoid slang. It is okay to take a little time to think about a question before answering.

**Sit or stand straight, and look the interviewer in the eye**. Avoid fidgeting, slouching, or looking down. When the interviewer is speaking, listen carefully without interrupting, and pay close attention.

**Take notes on anything you want to remember or ask about later.** Maintain eye contact and nod, or use other nonverbal cues to indicate that you are paying attention and understand.

**Put company research to use.** Most company websites have a page that explains their vision and mission or a page shares the most recent news about the company. This is a great place to find talking points for the interview.

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## The Working Interview

In some industries—writing, engineering, or even sales—you may be asked to complete an actual job task as part of the interview. Basically, your interviewers don't want you to tell them you can do the job, they want to see it.

<u>**What You Should Do**</u>:

**Understand the goal of the excercise.** Don't be afraid to ask questions like, "can you help me understand how the assignment will be evaluated?" "How long will the assignment take?" "Are you looking for details or the big picture?"

**Ask questions.** You have every right to ask for additional information when asked to do an assignment for employment. You should not be expected to start from scratch. If the company doesn't have the information you're requesting, then do your best.

## The Virtual Interview

Virtual interviews are becoming more common, and should be taken just as seriously as a face-to-face interview, and often many of the same tactics to prepare can be used.

<u>**What You Should Do**</u>:

**Test your technology.** Check your internet connectivity before the interview, and confirm your camera and microphone are working properly. If its not your local Kentucky Career Center - Bluegrass office offers interview space, as does most your local public libraries and adult education centers.

**Set the scene and minimize distractions.** Find a room with optimal lighting, one that is tidy, and minimize background noise.

**Sit down prepared.** Have your notes near you or pulled up on a screen ready to go. Also print out a copy of your resume, so that you don't forget key talking points.

**Monitor your body language.** Since you can't shake the interviewer's hand via video, you will want to show your eagerness in your body language by sitting up straight, smiling, and keeping the camera at eye level.

**Dress the part.** Just because you are be interviewing from home, you shouldn't look like it. This means to dress entirely in professional clothing, not just on top with pajama bottoms or worse, because you think it won't be seen.

# In Conclusion

To prepare yourself for any interview is to take pieces of each style to build confidence and to practice. Practicing your answers to various questions and styles will put you at ease when you're sitting in front of the hiring manager.

**What Your Should Do:**

**Practice, Don't Memorize.** Avoid memorizing each response, so you don't sound overly rehearsed and insincere. It's easy to tell if you aren't being genuine, so it's a good idea to run through a few practice rounds. It may feel awkward, but you'll be in a safe place to make mistakes and learn from them, so you're better prepared for the real thing.

The Kentucky Career Center - Bluegrass also offers interview training and mock interview assistance. They can run through common interview questions with you and offer tips for responding.

**Keep things simple.** Don't feel like you have to give a long-winded answer if the question doesn't warrant it. Be clear and concise.

**Communicate confidence by sitting up straight and smiling.** Employers are more likely to remember what you said if you maintain eye contact, so keep your focus on the camera when talking, not on the image of the hiring manager. Practice this!

**Dress appropriately for the interview.** Professional clothing will show you're serious about the position. Dress as you would for an in-person interview. Professional clothing will show you're serious about the position and make you feel confident, as well.

**Make a Connection.** Don't be afraid to have a short aside about a common interest. The recruiter might enjoy the break from the routine questions they have to get through. Sharing that connection with an interviewer can be the difference between you and equally qualified applicant.

It's not easy to connect with everyone, but it's a crucial part of an interview. You want the interviewer to be able to remember a personal story you told or a common interest you share. This is the best way to prevent yourself from blending in with the other applicants.

**Be Yourself.** A key task for a recruiter is determining whether you would be a good fit for the company's culture. Give them a positive reason to remember you and how you and organization may be a good fit.

**Immediately Follow Up.** Send an individual thank you email to everyone you met within 24 hours of the interview. Taking the time for this small gesture will show you value their time and provides the opportunity re-highlight the strengths you bring to the role, or share any additional information you need to add.

If there was something specific that you shared as a common interest, mention that in the email -- but be brief. Keep the email concise; you want your note to leave a lasting impression, not immediately end up in the trash.

FINAL NOTE: BE PREPARED.

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# Answering Interview Questions

**Common Questions and How to Answer Them**

1.   Tell me about yourself.

     This question is simple, but people don't seem to prepare for it.

     Here's the key to answering it: Don't give your complete history, employment or personal . Instead, give a pitch or elevator speech. Talk about your employment highlights in a way that is concise and compelling and that shows exactly why you're the right fit for the job.

     Break your answer down into three parts: 1. Briefly describe your current or most recent position, try to highlight one big accomplishment. 2. Include how you got there and relevant experience. 3. Finally, in with why this new role and why its a good fit for you.

     Example: "Well, I was a team leader at Smith Automotive, where I handled training new employees and ensured production numbers were met. Before that, I worked as a line production worker, where I was ranked highest producer for three months straight. And while I really enjoyed the work that I did, I'd love the chance to continue up the ladder and show my skills in other ways."

2.   How did you hear about this position?

     Employers like to track how new candidates learn about their open positions. If someone recommended you for the position, be sure to refer to them by name and share how you know them.

If the person referring you is a former coworker then add to your credibility by explaining why they thought you'd be the good fit.

If you found the position yourself, explain why you are the right hire and identify values you share with the company and their mission.

Lastly, if you were recruited, explain why you agreed to apply. Even if you weren't familiar with the organization prior to being recruited, be enthusiastic about what you've learned and honest about why you're interested in moving forward with the process.

3.   What type of work environment do you prefer?

     Be sure to get informed on the culture of the organiztion before you interview. This will be the difference between a job you can stick with and a job that makes your miserable. Your preference should should be similar to the company (if it doesn't, it is probably not the job for you). For example, you may find on the company's website that they prioritize teamwork and precision. Those are key words you can mention in your answer to this question.

     If the interviewer tells you something about the company that you didn't uncover in your research, like, "Our culture appears very serious and siloed, but in reality, we are a family-friendly company that recognizes employee satisfaction achieves success," try to describe how your work ethic matches that of the organization's.

     Example: "That sounds great to me. I like fast-paced work environments because they make

me feel like I'm always learning and growing, but I really thrive when I'm collaborating with team members and helping people reach a collective goal. I want to love my job, but I am a dedicated worker because of my family."

4. How do you deal with pressure or stressful situations?

The employer wants to know that you ability to stay calm under pressure and that you won't crumble under stress if things get tough. This is a highly prized talent.

If it's a skill you're developing, acknowledge that and include the steps you're taking to respond better to pressure in the future.

Example: "I know stressful situations happen, and I have learned to navigate them in my career. I think I get better at it with as time goes on. For example, while working on a production deadline at my last employer things were not going according to schedule with my team. Instead of pointing fingers, which doesn't help anything, my first reaction was to take a step back and figure out some strategies around how we could we solve the problem at hand and meet our deadline.

There was a time early in my career where I may have defaulted to panicking in that situation, so being calm and thinking things through was definitely a step forward and helped me approach the situation with more clarity."

5. Do you prefer working on a team or alone?

Your answer should honest and, if you have done your research, it will match the companies culture. Quick tip: most work enviorments support some team aspect.

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Even work-from-home jobs sometimes require regular collaboration. When you answer this question, highlight the best traits of your personality and how they fit the job requirements listed in the description.

Example: "They both have their advantages, I do well with a team to strategize with, get diverse opinions from, and reach out to for feedback. But I am comfortable and can produce work quickly when working independently. I value collaborating with my teammates to come up with the best ideas, but when it comes to producing an end result, I am capable of doing it completely independently."

6. When you're balancing multiple projects, how do you keep yourself organized?

   Your potential employer wants to know that you use your time and energy to stay productive and efficient. They're also need to know your have a system for staying on track with the work beyond the company's schedules and workflow plans. Be sure to emphasize that you adhere to deadlines and take them seriously.

   Prepare for your interview by thinking of a specific time when you've had multiple projects or deadlines and what you did to stay on track. Talk about the importance and urgency of the projects you were working on and how you got them done on schedule. Explain how you remain organized and focused on the job in front of you.

   Example: "I've juggled projects at my last job where I have my own production numbers to meet, while I mentor new hires. I prioritize my tasks to stay on track. I've found it really helps me get what needs to be done first, and it holds me accountable for the more repetitive day-to-day tasks I'm responsible for."

7. What did you do in the last few years to improve your knowledge?

   This question may come up as a result of the pandemic. Employers want to know how people used their time, but know that you don't have to feel scared about answering this question if you didn't spend your time brushing up on skills or taking courses. We learn from any experience we have.

   If you spent time honing your professional skills, you might say the following.

   Example: "The extra time on my plate really allowed me to think about my future career. I took some online courses to learn and watched a lot of tutorials to improve my leadership."

   If you chose to work on your personal development, you could say something like the following.

   Example: "Like most people I had lost my job during the pandemic, so I decided to spend my time on things I love. I got back to learning how to play the guitar and gardening. It has been really great for my mental health and productivity."

8. What are your salary expectations?

   Before you walk in for your first interview, you should already know what the salary is for the position you're applying to. Check out websites such as Glassdoor, Fishbowl, or Vault.com for salary information. You could also ask people in the field by reaching out to your community on LinkedIn.

   Employers will ask this question because every position is budgeted, and they want to ensure your expectations are consistent with that budget before moving forward.

Remember that it's often better to discuss a salary range rather than a specific number during the interview and leaving room for negotiation. It's better to quote a slightly higher number because it's easier to negotiate downward than upward. As a general rule, do not bring up the salary until your interviewer does.

Example: "Based on my skills and experience and on the current industry rates, I'm looking at a salary around $_____" (then fill in with your desired salary range and rationale).

9. Are you applying for other jobs?

Interviewers want to know if you're genuinely interested in this position or if it's just one of your many options. They want to know if you're their top choice. Honesty is the best policy. If you're applying for other jobs, say so. You don't have to necessarily say where you're applying unless you have another offer. You can mention that you're actively looking for offers if your interviewer asks.

Example: "I've applied to a couple of other places, but I am really looking forward to this position because…"

10. From your resume it seems you have a gap in your employment. Would you like to tell us why that was?

This is a lot less important than it used to be, but employers still want to know if you weren't working, why not? Again, it's important to be honest. If you were taking care of a family member during illness, if you were ill yourself, or if there was issues like incareration or recovery, let your interviewer know that your gap year wasn't about procrastinating. Provide a short explanation of why you took the time, then focus on what came out of it that made a positive difference for your future.

Example: "Last year my grandmother got very ill and I was the only one who was available to take care of her. Taking care of her actually helped my develop so many new skills I became very detailed oriented, having to manage her Doctors appointments and medication schedule. I also learned a lot about communication, communication with insurance companies, with hospitals, pharmacies, and family.

To make a winning impression, you'll need to answer each question with skill, but practicing first really helps. Practicing will allow you to appear confident, helping position you as the ideal candidate when the competition is tough.

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# The STAR Response for Success

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The STAR method is commonly connected with behavioral-interviewing, but it is an excellent way to respond various types of interviews. Due to the organized manner the responses are framed. The STAR method discusses the specific situation, task, action, and result of the situation you are describing.

**S**ituation: Describe the situation that you were in or the task that you needed to accomplish. You must describe a specific event or situation, not a generalized description of what you have done in the past. Be sure to give enough detail for the interviewer to understand. This situation can be from a previous job, from a volunteer experience, or any relevant event.

**T**ask: What goal were you working toward?

**A**ction: Describe the actions you took to address the situation with an appropriate amount of detail and keep the focus on YOU. What specific steps did you take and what was your particular contribution? Be careful that you don't describe what the team or group did when talking about a project, but what you actually did. Use the word "I," not "we" when describing actions.

**R**esult: Describe the outcome of your actions and don't be shy about taking credit for your behavior. What happened? How did the event end? What did you accomplish? What did you learn?

Make sure your answer contains positive results. Make sure that you follow all parts of the STAR method. Be as specific as possible at all times, without rambling or including too much information. Be sure to end your response with the results, forgetting the response is a common mistake when job candidates attempt to use STAR, so practice

organizing your thoughts as you prepare for an interview. Obvioiusly, do not include examples that do not paint you in a positive light. However, keep in mind that some examples that have a negative result (such as "lost the game") can highlight your strengths in the face of adversity.

**Same Star Response:**

Situation (S): One of the new hires I was mentoring was having a problem keeping his production numbers up and it was causing a problem.

Task (T): I knew I needed to get the numbers back up to meet the minimum or he was going to lose his job.

Action (A): During break I asked him if he was having any issues with his equipment. He mentioned that one of the buttons on his machine was sticking and it was causing a drop in speed because he had to push it multiple times before it would work.

Result (R): After hearing that, I called out maintenance to take a look at the machine and they ended up replacing the button.  Once the button was replaced that guy was one of our top producers and our team got recognized for our production numbers the next month.

**How to Prepare for a Behavioral Interview:**

• Recall recent situations that show favorable behaviors or actions, especially involving course work, work experience, leadership, teamwork, initiative, planning, and customer service.

• Prepare short descriptions of each situation; be ready to give details if asked.

- Be sure each story has a beginning, middle, and an end, i.e., be ready to describe the situation, including the task at hand, your action, and the outcome or result.

- Be sure the outcome or result reflects positively on you (even if the result itself was not favorable).

- Be honest. Don't embellish or omit any part of the story. The interviewer will find out if your story is built on a weak foundation.

- Be specific. Don't generalize about several events; give a detailed accounting of one event.

- Vary your examples; don't take them all from just one area of your life.



STAR Interview Method

Situation

Task

Result

Action

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# Follow-Up Contact

## The Thank You Email

You've just finished an interview for a job opportunity you're really excited about. You know you should send a thank you note to your interviewers, but you're not sure what to write.

Here's some advice on what to say — and not to say — in your message, along with sample emails. I'll also cover why writing a thank you note is something you should do, even if it feels like a formality. Let's start with what to write in your note.

**How to Write a Thank You Email**

Your email should be short, sincere, and sent within 24 hours of your interview.

1.  Preparing for the thank you note starts during the interview. Jot down notes when you're interviewing. Write down your interviewer's name, what you discuss, and a few key words to trigger your memory, so you can make your follow-up message more meaningful.

2.  Address the email to the person who interviewed you and make sure you spell their name correctly. If their name is Christopher and they asked you to call them Chris in the interview, it is okay to call them Chris in the email. If you interviewed with multiple people, it's a good practice to send each person a brief message as well.

3.  Briefly highlight your draw to the organization. Mention an aspect of the conversation in the interview that was interesting or share something to help them remember what your interview in particular.

4.  Share your interest in the job opportunity.

5.  Thank the person for their time and consideration.

6.  Offer to answer any questions.

**What to Avoid in Your Thank You Email**

If you don't want to leave the interviewers with a bad impression, avoid these three common mistakes.

*   Adding too much detail

    Remember that the intention of the message is to say thank you, not to pick up where your interview left off. When you say too much you run the risk of appearing desperate or like you weren't prepared for the interview.

*   Making requests

    People are busy. Avoid requesting anything that creates additional work. You want to show your interviewer that you're easy to work with.

*   Typos

    Always review your email for grammar and spelling before sending. This is an example of your communication.

**Sample Thank You Email Templates**

Use the samples below to get started, but make sure you customize them to fit your needs.

Sample 1

Subject: Thank you

Hi Maria,

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me today and sharing some of the innovative ways your company works as a team.

From our conversation, I understand that the pace is fast, the work is top-notch, and as hard as you work, you all have a great time doing it together. People's care for their work and their coworkers did not go unrecognized, the sense of community was amazing.

I also understand you are looking for a person who can hit the ground running, does not need hand-holding, and is fun to work with. I am confident I am that person.

If you have any questions or want to continue our conversation, please feel free to reach out at any time.

I look forward to being in touch.

Best,

Sample 2

Subject: Thank you

Dear Mr. Cassidy,

I want to thank you for taking the time to meet with me today to discuss the production team lead position at Cascade Fasteners. I appreciate you sharing the history behind your family business and that you care for every customer as if they were your own family.

From our conversation, I understand that maintaining the legacy of top-notch service is your priority, and you are looking for team leaders who want to continue that legacy for years to come. As I shared, I have a young family of my own, and I am looking to put down roots with an organization that I can be proud to work for. I am excited about the possibility of joining your team.

If you have any questions or want to continue our conversation, please feel free to reach out at any time.

Sincerely,

Sample 3

Subject: Thank you

Hi Chris,

It was great speaking with you yesterday about being a possible fit for your team. I appreciate the welcoming tone of everyone I met and what it might be like working at [company name]. It seems like an amazing team with a lot potential. I am excited about the possibility of working with you. If you have any questions or want to continue our conversation, please reach out at any time.

I look forward to being in touch.

All the best,

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**Why Is It Important to Send a Thank You Note?**

Beyond it being a nice gesture, there are multiple benefits to sending a follow-up message after an interview.

- It creates a positive connection with the interviewer(s).

  No matter how well your interview went, many hiring managers squeeze multiple interviews into their busy schedules. A thoughtful message helps you leave a lasting positive impression after the interview is over.

- It helps you stand out from the crowd.

  Investing the time to send a thank you increases your chances of standing out from other applicants. One study found that only one out of four candidates sent thank you messages after their interviews, yet 80% of HR managers said those messages were helpful when reviewing candidates.

- It's an opportunity to demonstrate your professionalism and people skills.

It's one thing to tell an interviewer you're detail-oriented and work well with others — it's another to show them. A well-crafted and timed thank you message illustrates your follow-up, your ability to capture the meeting's essence in writing, and that you understand the importance of expressing your appreciation for others.

- It confirms your interest in the job.

  Hiring managers understand that candidates may be interviewing for multiple jobs at the same time. Busy themselves, leaders don't want to invest time in a candidate who is not invested in the role they're hiring for. A thank you message confirms that you're both interested and excited about the role and worth following up with.

You may send your message and get a response in minutes, or you may never hear back at all. Either way, investing 15 minutes to express your appreciation may be the difference between getting the job or getting lost in the crowd.

If you're about to send a second or third interview follow-up email, keep your tone calm and professional. Writing a rude message or showing frustration won't make the process go any faster, and it could even cost you the job.

Use a positive tone, tell the employer that you're checking for status updates and you're excited to hear feedback when they have a chance, and then conclude by saying something like, "Thank you for your time. I look forward to hearing back when you have a chance."

Here are some word-for-word samples you can copy…

Sample Follow-Up Emails After an Interview

First Follow-Up Email:

Hi <NAME>,

I hope all is well.

I'm following up to see if you have any status updates regarding the <JOB TITLE> position that I interviewed for on <DATE>.

I'm excited to hear about the next steps, and the role seems like a great fit for my background based on what I learned! Any updates you can share would be great.

Thanks so much,

<YOUR NAME>

If you send this, wait five business days for a response. If you don't receive a reply at that point, then it's time to send a second email…

Second Follow-Up Email After No Response:

Hi <NAME>,

I hadn't heard a reply to my last email so I wanted to check back in to see how the interview process is moving on your end.

Are there any updates you can share regarding the <JOB TITLE> position? I'm still interested in the opportunity, and I look forward to hearing from you when you have any news to share.

Thanks so much,

<YOUR NAME>

Note: The follow-up email templates are best if you've already sent a thank-you email a day after your interview.

We can't go back in time though. So if you didn't send a thank-you note after your interview, you can write a follow-up email that also thanks the employer.

The basic interview follow-up steps above will still work, but we need to add one piece near the beginning of the follow-up email. After greeting the hiring manager or interviewer by their name, you should thank them for taking the time to interview you. Mention the specific date you spoke to remind them, too. For example: "Dear Jeff, thank you for taking the time to meet with me on August 10th."

Then you can use the same steps that we covered above for a regular interview follow-up email… Say you enjoyed learning about the position you discussed (be specific and refer to it by the job title), and then tell them you're

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eager for an update. Be clear and direct, and ask for an update. Finish by thanking them, and then conclude the email with your full name, just like the examples above.

Interview Follow-Up Email Combined with a Thank-You Email:

Hi <NAME>,

Thanks so much for taking the time to meet with me on Thursday to discuss the <JOB TITLE> position. I enjoyed our conversation and the information you shared about <specific topic> was interesting.

I'm following up to see if you have any updates regarding the position now.

I'm excited to hear about the next steps, and the role seems like a great fit for my background based on what I learned! Anything you can share would be great.

Thanks so much,

<YOUR NAME>

And for your future interviews, here is a thank-you email template for after your interview. Send this within 24 hours Try lunchtime of the following day:

**How Long Should You Wait After an Interview to Follow Up?**

- You should follow up five business days after your job interview if you haven't heard feedback from the employer. Or, if the employer provided an expected date for feedback after the interview, follow up one business day after that date has passed.

Hi <NAME>,

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me yesterday. I enjoyed our conversation about <SPECIFIC TOPIC>, and the <JOB TITLE> position sounds like an exciting opportunity for me at this point in my career. I look forward to hearing any updates as they're available, and don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Best regards,

<YOUR NAME>

For example, if the hiring team said that they would inform you about the next steps within three days of your job interview, wait four days, and then send a follow-up email.

The idea is… this will help you avoid looking too eager and desperate.

Note that you should also send a thank-you email within 24 hours of the interview. Don't use these follow-up templates to email the company a day after your interview; employers need time to make their decision. However, companies appreciate a brief "thank you" before they've even made a decision.

**What Else to Do While Waiting for Interview Feedback**

- Keep in mind that delays happen and the hiring process takes time. So the best thing for you to do while waiting for a status update is to apply for more jobs and try to get more interviews scheduled. You shouldn't stop doing this until you've signed a job offer! No matter how well you write your follow-up email, it isn't going to get a company to move its process faster, bypass delays, skip over other candidates, etc.

This is why you should keep applying for jobs until you've signed a job offer. No exceptions. Because you never know if a company is interviewing 10 other people, considering promoting an internal candidate, or any number of other things that could cost you the job even if your interview went well.

**"These Emails Seem Too Simple. Should I Add More?"**

*   Some job seekers ask whether the example emails are too brief. Simply put, no.  Follow-up emails should be short, professional and direct.

    Don't complicate your message. Give a polite greeting, be up-front and say what you want (an update on the hiring process), and then conclude your email politely without any unnecessary filler content.

    This type of follow-up email is your best shot at getting a prompt update after your interview without seeming pushy, desperate, etc.

    In all likelihood, the person you emailed will get back to you and apologize and say they're still working on a decision. Or there's a chance they have news to share and will update you as soon as they get your email.

    Either way, you reminded them you're waiting for news and still have interest in the position, which is the goal (employers aim to hire people that seem genuinely interested in the role, and they won't just assume you're interested after an interview if they don't hear from you!)

    If you want to know what else hiring managers look for when conducting interviews, read my list of job interview tips here. It'll help you understand the employer's mindset better and will give you a big advantage over the competition in your job search.

**What if the Employer Says They Don't Have Any Feedback Yet?**

*   In some cases, the hiring manager or recruiter will reply to your follow-up email and say they're still in the middle of the hiring process and don't have information about the next steps yet. At times, they'll be specific about what they're working on behind the scenes (for example, they might say that they're still working on getting the whole team together as a group to discuss various candidates) but often, they won't tell you the specifics.   Either way, Try responding with a brief email to keep the conversation alive and ensure that you stay in touch. By using the following email template, you give yourself an opening to follow up again if needed, too.

    Sample Email Response if Employer Says They Don't Have Any Status Updates:

Hello <NAME>,

Thank you for the information.

When would be an appropriate time for me to check back in?

I'm excited about the opportunity and want to stay in touch, but I know these things take time so I don't want to follow up too often here.

Any information that you can share about the process would be great.

Thank you,

<YOUR NAME>

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**What if the Company Hasn't Responded to Multiple Emails After the Interview?**

- If you sent the first and second follow-up emails from the samples provided earlier and still didn't hear back from the employer about your status as a candidate, here's what to do:

  First, make sure you've waited one or two days for a response to your most recent email (not counting weekends).

  Then, send a follow-up to the same person, replying to the same email you already sent and keeping the same email subject line.

  Sample Email Body:

  Hi <NAME>,

  I just wanted to follow up again, make sure you saw my last email, and ask whether you have any status updates regarding the <JOB TITLE> position that I interviewed for on <DATE>. I'm looking forward to hearing back about potential next steps when you have a chance. Thank you so much!

  Thank you,

  <YOUR NAME>

  Be Patient After This…

  If you still haven't gotten a response at that point, I'd be patient. There's a chance that an important person in the hiring process is on vacation, or that the person you've been emailing is extremely busy, sick, etc.

  It is recommended that you wait a minimum of 48-72 hours at this point, and in some cases, a full week is better to wait. Sending another follow-up sooner than this won't help you get the job. So try to focus on other tasks in your

job search while waiting to ask for an update again.

Once you do feel it's time to take things further, here's who to email and how to write the email…

Pick the next logical person in the company to email. For example, if you were emailing an HR person before, try the hiring manager or somebody in the department you've been talking to in your job interviews. Or vice versa; if you've emailed the hiring manager multiple times with no response, then try checking in with HR, a recruiter, or another relevant contact within the company.

Since this is a brand-new email thread, you'll need to write a subject line. Remember to keep it simple and use one of the example subject lines shared earlier in this section.

Follow-Up Email to Second Person in Company After No Response):

> Hi <NAME>,
>
> I'm writing to ask for any updates regarding the <JOB TITLE> position that I interviewed for on <DATE>.
>
> I emailed <NAME> last week and hadn't received any reply or updates, so I thought it made sense to ask you next.
>
> If/when you have any feedback you can share, please do let me know. I enjoyed learning about the opportunity and am looking forward to hearing feedback when your team has a chance.
>
> Thank you for your time and consideration,
>
> <YOUR NAME>

**How to Conclude Your Interview Follow-Up Email**

- In the sample emails above, you'll notice a mix of different ways of "signing off" and concluding the email. You can choose whichever option sounds natural to you, as some are more formal than others.

  Here's a complete list of good, reliable options for how to end your interview follow-up email (in order of more formal to less formal):
  - *Thank you for your time and consideration*
  - *Sincerely*
  - *Best regards*
  - *Thank you for your time*
  - *Thank you*
  - *Thanks for your time*
  - *Thanks so much*
  - *Thanks*

You can also decide whether to write your first and last name or just your first name. Choose based on your previous interactions with the hiring manager or employer, and what you feel fits with the industry and company culture.

**Two More Tips for Following Up**

- If you follow the advice above, you will have great emails to send after any interview… from a phone interview to a final stage in-person interview.

  However, there are also a few other tips that will make the process easier and help you get the job:

  Tip 1: If you're still not 100% confident about your emails after reading the information above, have a friend, family member or a staff member with the Kentucky Career Center - Bluegrass look at your follow-up email to give feedback.

  Tip 2: End each interview by asking when you can expect to hear feedback. Simply say, "When can I expect to hear feedback, and who will be in touch?"

  Sometimes it's normal for it to take one to two weeks for a response after your job interview. For example, maybe you were the first person they interviewed and they need to talk to a couple of other candidates before making a decision.

  This tip will save you a lot of stress because you'll know whether it's time to follow up or not, and you won't be worried if you've gotten no response after a couple of days.

  While you wait for feedback, you can read these signs your interview went well or badly.

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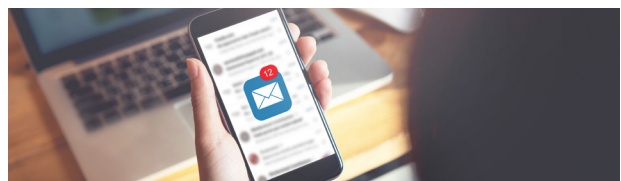
# Know Your Value When Getting the Job!

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Don't underestimate the importance of your abilities. During the job application and interview process, employers look for applicants who are able to clearly communicate they have abilities useful to their company and the ability learn new skills.

Teachable abilities or skill sets that are easy to quantify. Examples of hard skills include:
- Proficiency in a foreign language
- A degree or certificate
- Typing speed
- Machine operation
- Computer programming

These skills are often listed in your cover letter and on your resume, and are easy for an employer or recruiter to recognize.

Other skills are much harder to quantify, these "people skills" or "interpersonal skills" relate to the way you interact with other people. Examples of these skills include:
- Teamwork
- Communication
- Flexibility
- Patience
- Time management
- Motivation

**Skills Employers Look For**

While certain hard skills are necessary for any position, employers are looking increasingly for job applicants with particular employability skills. This is because, while it is easy for an employer to train a new employee in a particular hard skill (such as how to use a certain piece of machinery), it is much more difficult to train an employee in a employability or interpersonal skills (such as patience).

**Emphasizing Both Hard and Employability Skills**

During the job application process, you should be sure to emphasize both your hard and soft skills. This way, even if you lack a particular hard skill required by the company, you can emphasize a particular soft skill that you know would be valuable in the position. For example, if the job involves working on a number of group projects, be sure to emphasize your experience and skill as a team player and your ability to communicate with team members.

In the next section of this manual we will be reviewing how employability skills are the key to career success.

# Exercise 2.1: Preparing for the Interview

1. What are the three most important things to remember about preparing for an interview?

   1. _____

      _____

   2. _____

      _____

   3. _____

      _____

2. Name at six of the 10 things you should take with you to a job interview?

   1. _____   4. _____

   2. _____   5. _____

   3. _____   6. _____

# Exercise 2.2: Doing the Research

1. Explain why researching a company can help you during an interview.

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

# Exercise 2.3: Dressing for the Interview

1. In general, what is the appropriate dress for an interview?

   _____

   _____

2. Is wearing a formal suit always the safest "dress for success" attire?   ☐ Yes      ☐ No

3. What are the four types of dress codes for the workplace?

   ☐ A. Casual, Semi-Casual, Formal and Business Professional

   ☐ B. Smart Business, Business Professional, Semi Formal and Super Formal

   ☐ C. Casual, Business Casual, Business Professional and Formal

   ☐ D. Formal, Business Casual, Semi-Formal Business and Interview Attire.

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# Exercise 2.3: Dressing for the Interview

4. Why should you always dress to impress for an interview?

   _____

   _____

5. When going to an interview it is appropriate to wear what? Check all the apply.

   ☐ A. A man should wear a suit and tie.            ☐ D. A man should wear construction shoes.

   ☐ B. A woman should wear jeans and a collared shirt.  ☐ E. Males/females should wear dress shoes.

   ☐ C. A woman should wear a dress and jacket.     ☐ F. A woman should wear a pant suit.

# Exercise 2.4: Acing the Interview

1. Why is practicing for an interview valuable?

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

2. In your own words, explain the STAR method.

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

3. Pair off with a partner and take turns playing the role of an employer interviewing and an applicant at an interview, using the questions provided below:
   - Give an example of an occasion when you used logic to solve a problem.
   - Give an example of a goal you reached and tell me how you achieved it.
   - Describe a decision you made that was unpopular and how you handled implementing it.
   - Have you gone above and beyond the call of duty? If so, how?
   - What do you do when your schedule is interrupted? Give an example of how you handle it.
   - Have you had to convince a team to work on a project they weren't thrilled about? How did you do it?
   - Have you handled a difficult situation with a co-worker? How?
   - Tell me about how you worked effectively under pressure.

# Exercise 2.5: Acing the Telephone Interview

1. Nine tips to acing the telephone interview were given. List as many as you can remember.

   1. _____
   2. _____
   3. _____
   4. _____
   5. _____
   6. _____
   7. _____
   8. _____
   9. _____

2. Pick three that you consider the most important and explain why they could be key to a successful telephone interview.

   1. _____
      _____
      _____

   2. _____
      _____
      _____

   3. _____
      _____
      _____

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# Exercise 2.6: Acing the Video Interview

1.  Nine tips to acing the video interview were given. List as many as you can remember.

    1.  _____

    2.  _____

    3.  _____

    4.  _____

    5.  _____

    6.  _____

    7.  _____

    8.  _____

    9.  _____

2.  Pick three of the tips that you consider the most important and explain why they could be key to a successful video interview.

    1.  _____

        _____

        _____

    2.  _____

        _____

        _____

    3.  _____

        _____

        _____

# Exercise 2.7: After the Interview

1.  There are 12 tips to keep in mind after interview. List as many as you can remember.

    1.  _____

    2.  _____

    3.  _____

    4.  _____

    5.  _____

    6.  _____

    7.  _____

    8.  _____

    9.  _____

    10. _____

    11. _____

    12. _____

2.  Pick three that you consider the most important and explain why they could be key to landing the job.

    1.  _____

        _____

        _____

        _____

        _____

    2.  _____

        _____

        _____

        _____

        _____

    3.  _____

        _____

        _____

        _____

        _____

# The First Day

**Section III: Keeping the Job**

Congratulations. You've endured the interview process and you've been hired. Employment isn't a sprint though; it's a marathon. Now it's about embodying the habits of a good employee, which starts with being prepared and managing time well.

Here are some steps to make sure you have a successful first day.

1. **Plan out your route.**

   Avoid getting lost on the way to your first day at a new job by knowing the best way to get there. Practice driving there a couple of times at the same time you will be heading to work so you can time the drive and plan ahead for any potential traffic issues.

   *Find an alternate route.* You need to know more than one way to get to your new job in case you find yourself stuck in traffic or encountering an unexpected hangup. Search online maps before you leave the house to give you an idea of multiple ways you can try to get to your new job on your first day. Also, search for phone applications that can provide traffic updates.

2. **Lay out your clothes the night before.**

   For work you need to dress appropriately. Ask for your company dress code or try to think of what style the employees were wearing when you had your interview. If the company supplies uniforms and you haven't received yours yet, be sure to ask your company what you should wear on your first day. Knowing what you are going to wear to the first day at your new job will be one less thing for you to worry about. Be sure to have your outfit hung up somewhere safe to avoid pet hair or wrinkles before you leave

the house. Place the shoes you intend to wear where you can easily find them. Make sure they are clean and polished.

Ideally, you should wake up an hour to hour and a half earlier than the time you should leave.

Remember to have the average time you need to commute to your work in mind. You don't want to be late.

3. **Necessary items.**

   You may want to keep a purse or backpack ready. There are some certain items you need to be sure you have.

   Among these items: a small bottle of water, a small bag hygiene products (deodorant, sanitary products, hand sanitizer, cologne, toothpaste and toothbrush), your wallet (ID, driver's licence, credit cards and some cash for emergencies), cell phone along with a charger, a pen, a notepad, gum/breath mints. Remember, some employers will not allow you to bring bags into the work area, so be sure to ask your employer in advance. If not, find out if you will have a locker available or if you need to leave your bag in your car.

   Just pack whatever you need for a quick fix during the day.

4. **Take something non-perishable for lunch.**

   You want to be able to be flexible at lunchtime on your first day. You won't know what the refridgerator situation is or if your new coworkers will plan a lunch outing, so bring a non-perishable lunch that can sit for a later date. This way your new coworkers won't feel bad if you need to leave your packed lunch behind.

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5. **Make sure you have change for the vending machines.**

   If there is a refrigerator in the break room, bringing your own soft drinks will save money.

6. **Before helping yourself to coffee and/or danish, find out what the policy is.**

   Ask if communal food in the breakroom free or does everyone chip in?

7. **Put together a kit to keep in your desk.**

   Make sure it includes over-the-counter medication for headaches and digestive problems, and other emergency items.

8. **Keep your schedule open on the first day.**

   While getting settled it is best not to plan anything for after work. You want to be available in the event you are asked to stay late or are invited to out by your new coworkers.

9. **Turn your cell phone off or keep it on vibrate.**

   Make sure you follow the company's phone and internet usage policies.

10. **Leave yourself plenty of time.**

    Fill your car's gas tank the day before instead of stopping on the way.

    Even though you have practiced the route to your new job several times, you never truly know what you are going to find on your way to work on any given day. Tack on a few extra minutes to the anticipated drive time so you aren't stressed out about getting to work on time and can focus on doing your best on your first day.

11. **Have someone you can call to give you a ride should your car not start.**

    If you live on a city bus route, familiarize yourself with the schedule. Find out if the bus stops at or near your workplace.

12. **If you do find you are going to be a few minutes late because of a completely unexpected emergency, be sure to call and let them know.**

    Don't assume that a few minutes won't matter. Add the main number of your new workplace to your cell phone's contact list ahead of time. You can add other numbers as you learn them.

# The First Few Weeks

**Section III: Keeping the Job**

Your first day is over, it was probably spent doing paperwork, going through orientation, or taking a tour of the facility. Well, that is over and its time to get immerced in your new job and your first week of work will officially begin.

Whether it's your first position or your fifth, those first few days on the job can be more than a little intimidating. But with these key rules, you can get comfortable in your new surroundings, get up to speed quickly, and get off on the right foot with your new boss and co-workers.

Here are some do's and don'ts for success in your first week(s).

- **Do: Be a Sponge**

  One of your most important duties your first week is absorbing everything. Getting to know your company's culture, the working and communication styles of your teammates, the problem projects, office politics, and department or company-wide goals means that you'll be able to start your real work sooner (and be more effective when you do).

  So, maybe sign up for professional development classes and attend all the team and office meetings you can, even if you're not yet sure what's going on or they don't 100% pertain to your work.

  Also join in on the informal events. If you get asked to lunch, happy hour, or the office softball league (whether  as a participant or onlooker), say yes. It's a great way to meet people, and it shows that you're excited to be part of the team.

- **Don't: Overcommit Yourself**

  Do be careful, though, to balance your schedule—you want to have plenty of time to learn the ropes. The last thing you want is to look like you have too much to juggle, seem overwhelmed, or show up late to a commitment because you're stuck somewhere else.

- **Do: Ask Questions**

  As you learn about new processes, projects, and people, don't be afraid to ask questions. You need to get up to speed, and people will expect it from the new person on the team. Also take detailed notes about everything you learn, even if it seems simple. Your brain is going to be on overload this week, and writing everything down will make sure you don't have to ask the same question twice.

- **Don't: Be Afraid to Speak Up**

  At the same time, don't be afraid to contribute and add value—you do want to reinforce that you're the right person for the job! No, you won't know everything (nor should you act like you do!), but you can make suggestions in team meetings or brainstorming sessions, or ask questions like, "Has this been tried before?" And if you have a skill or ability that you've been hired to bring to the team, pipe up and share that knowledge. But be careful to read your audience. You don't want to come on like gangbusters or step on someone's toes.

- **Do: Offer to Help**

  There may be some down time during your first few days on the job as your boss and team adjust to having you there. But don't sit around

waiting for others to figure out tasks for you—volunteer to help your new teammates on a project. You'll show initiative, you'll build rapport with your boss and co-workers, and you'll learn about expectations, procedures, and how things are done.

- **Don't: Turn Down Help or Advice**

  If your boss or co-workers give you advice or offer to help you with a task or project, take them up on it—yes, even if you're totally capable of handling things yourself. It's a great way to bond with your office mates, plus you may get valuable insight into the company's expectations or a more efficient way to do the work you'll be given.

- **Do: Find a Mentor**

  It never hurts to have an experienced, knowledgeable, successful professional to bounce ideas off of and to be groomed by, but it's especially useful when you're the newbie. Look around. Who are the stars of the organization—the ones who radiate likability, confidence, and initiative? Introduce yourself, and pick their brains.

- **Don't: Rely Only on Your New Mentor**

  Undoubtedly, the people who make you feel most comfortable will become your go-tos as you navigate your first week. But remember the time it takes for people to help you out is time being taken away from their own tasks. Be sensitive to this by trying to figure things out for yourself first, asking a variety of people when you do have questions, and showing appreciation for everyone who helps you out.

- **Do: Keep Your Boss Informed**

  Throughout the week, ask for periodic meetings with your boss (instead of popping in their office for every question you have!). In addition to

getting their direction on projects and tasks, you should use this time to update the boss on what you're learning and who you're meeting with.

Ask questions like "Are there additional tasks I should be taking on or skills I should be learning?" and "Can you give me feedback on the project I just completed?" to show initiative, but also do a lot of listening, too. Your boss' feedback and insight is going to be one of your greatest resources at this point—after all, you're going to be spending the next weeks, months, and maybe even years working there, and learning how management thinks early on will serve you well.

- **Don't: Compare Everything to Your Last Job**

  Surely you could rattle off things you loved (or loathed) about your last job and how this position compares—but don't! You want to give yourself every opportunity to shine, and that means keeping your initial first week impressions to yourself. You're in a new place, and this is a new opportunity, so embrace it and move forward!



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# Employability Skills for Success

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Most employers look for certain skills and qualities in their job candidates, in addition to academic qualifications. Known as employability skills, these skills may not be job-specific, but they play an important role in improving your likelihood of success and value in the workplace. These skills can also have an impact on your ability to progress in your career.

In this section, we will explain the employability skills you need to increase your chances of getting the job you want.

**What are employability skills?**

Employability skills are transferrable skills that are useful in nearly every job. They involve the development of an expertise, knowledge base or mindset that makes you more attractive to employers.

Employability skills are also often referred to as employment skills, soft skills, work-readiness skills or foundational skills. They improve your performance, minimize errors, and promote collaboration with coworkers, enabling you to perform your role more effectively. Ultimately, the main benefit of having these traits is that they can help you stand out among other job candidates.

Certain employability skills are more sought after in specific industries.

**Examples of employability skills**

Employers have high regard for employability skills because they are much harder to teach than job-specific skills. Some employable qualities come naturally, while others must be developed.

You may already have some of these key employment skills, but you can work to improve those skills and develop new ones. Here are 10 common employability skills that employers look for:

1. **Communication**

   Communication is one of the most important employability skills because it is an essential part of almost every job. The communication process involves five elements: the sender, receiver, message, medium, and feedback.

   When these elements work together, you can deliver and understand messages clearly and efficiently, eliminating unnecessary misunderstandings and errors. Excellent communication skills make you more employable because they can enhance a company's productivity and efficiency and help prevent the waste of valuable time and resources.

   Being an effective communicator involves conveying your thoughts and ideas clearly to achieve certain outcomes, as well as listening to your coworkers' instructions, ideas and intentions.

   Depending on the job you want, you may have to be competent in several different types of communication, such as verbal, nonverbal, written, and visual. For instance, a customer-facing employee needs to have excellent verbal and nonverbal communication skills.

   The best way to improve your communication skills is to communicate as frequently as possible. Some activities that can help you develop better communication skills include:
   - Communicating on social media
   - Joining a local club
   - Practicing awareness of your facial expressions and other nonverbal cues.

**2. Teamwork**

Good teamwork skills refer to the ability to work harmoniously with your colleagues to achieve a shared goal. Teamwork skills such as collaboration can increase your hiring chances because you may be able to help a company reach its goals more effectively and efficiently.

These skills can also contribute to a more positive work environment. To become a great team player, you need to be comfortable working with people, take responsibility for your share of work, and contribute to team goals.

There are many things you can do to boost your teamwork skills, including:
• Volunteering to help coworkers
• Volunteering at al local organization
• Joining a sports team

**3. Reliability**

Reliability makes you more employable because it promotes trust between you and your employer. You are a reliable employee if you can consistently complete your tasks on time, deliver quality work, and make minimal mistakes. You must also be able to respond to inquiries and emails promptly and only make promises you can keep.

You can become more reliable by:
• Consistently meeting or exceeding your expected levels of work performance
• Creating schedules for your daily tasks and maintaining them
• Acknowledging your mistakes and making a conscious effort to avoid them in the future

**4. Problem-solving**

Problem-solving involves identifying key issues and their implications, having a clear understanding of problems, and determining the most effective solutions. For more complex problems, you need to know how to divide them into smaller parts that are easier to understand and more manageable.

Problem-solving skills can set you apart from other job candidates because they can help your potential employer maintain an efficient operational process and achieve objectives more efficiently.

If you're a good problem-solver, you can play an important role in troubleshooting issues, which can enable your team to overcome obstacles and solve complex problems. Depending on the position you are applying for, you may need a certain set of sub-skills to solve problems effectively, including research, analysis, and decision-making.

You can become a better problem-solver by:
• Undertaking research assignments and projects
• Participating in brainstorming sessions
• Regularly developing your skills by solving puzzles and playing games

**5. Organization and planning**

Being able to organize and plan effectively is important because it helps you and your employer save time, effort, and money by improving workflow. It ensures that assignments and projects are completed on time and prevents confusion and errors that can be costly to the company.

To be a good organizer and planner, you should be able to identify tasks, prioritize them, create schedules for them, and complete them on time.

You can develop organizational and planning skills by:
• Developing a timetable for your daily activities

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- Organizing an event
- Writing down your tasks and activities in a planner

**6. Initiative**

Taking initiative means recognizing a problem and solving it, preparing for a potential crisis by taking preemptive action, and taking advantage of opportunities and remember to keep a positive attitude.

It shows that you can think for yourself and take the necessary actions without being instructed to do so. As a person with initiative, you have a strong drive to succeed and a desire to keep improving yourself through continuous learning, which makes you valuable to any organization.

Employers consider initiative one of the key employability skills and value employees who possess self-motivation to complete tasks without being asked.

You can improve your ability to take initiative by:
- Approaching companies and other organizations to inquire about job opportunities
- Proposing changes to the policies or activities of a group you belong to
- Setting up a local club or fundraiser

**7. Self-management**

Self-management refers to the ability to perform job duties satisfactorily with little or no supervision. For higher-level employees, it also means delegating tasks to ensure you complete them on time. Additionally, self-managed employees can motivate themselves to deliver solid work performance consistently.

If you have good self-management skills, you can help your supervisor or manager save time and effort simply because you need minimal guidance and assistance from them. Also, being a self-motivated person means you may be less

likely to have productivity issues. These abilities can make you an appealing candidate to most employers.

You can develop self-management skills by:
- Asking for more responsibilities at work
- Creating schedules for certain activities and maintaining them
- Participating in volunteer work that allows you to work independently

**8. Leadership**

Employers look for good leaders because they can benefit organizations in many ways. As a leader, you play an important role in ensuring that your team shares the same vision as the company and works in unison with other teams and departments to achieve a common goal.

Additionally, you can develop strategies for achieving objectives, keep your team constantly motivated, and monitor work performance to produce better results for the company.

Leadership skills are important at every level. If you are seeking a managerial position, you need to be a good leader to motivate your team members. You can also benefit from having some leadership ability in entry-level positions because it may help you stand out and climb the ranks faster.

You can show leadership by directing and motivating your coworkers, setting objectives and goals for your team, improving work practices, and coaching your colleagues.

You can learn to become a better leader by:
- Attending a leadership course
- Starting a local group
- Reading about the habits of successful leaders, particularly those in your industry

**9. Learning**

Having strong learning skills means understanding new concepts and methods quickly, taking on new tasks, adapting to change, and having the tendency to improve your knowledge and skills continually.

Employees who have good learning skills may help employers fill challenging roles more quickly and reduce the cost of staff training. Good learners are especially desirable to companies that are at the forefront of innovation because they can help transition to new methods and technologies more smoothly.

You can increase your ability to learn by:
- Taking a course to improve your learning skills, such as a speed-reading, memory-boosting, or an accelerated-learning course
- Researching skills and activities related to your job, such as organizing, teamwork, or presentation skills
- Teaching yourself a new skill or hobby

**10. Technology**

Companies search for candidates with technical skills to help them use the latest technology and stay ahead of their competitors. Depending on your job, the technology skills you need may vary greatly, from word processing and sending email to video editing and using programming languages.

If you can grasp technology-related concepts and learn how to use new technologies quickly, you may be more attractive to employers. Technology skills are acquired through learning and practice.

Some of the ways to develop and improve technology skills include:
- Enrolling in a technology course
- Trying out new apps and technology in your daily life
- Staying up-to-date with the latest technology in your industry

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# Time Management is a Priority

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Whether in your personal life or in a professional setting, you've most likely encountered situations with a need for good time management. From time crunches to struggling with double booking family appointments, improving time management techniques in your life can pay off in big ways for everyone involved.

In this section we are going to look at  five key benefits of time management, and explore some time management strategies that can make you a stand out success in your career.

1. **Overcome Indecisiveness.**

   Try dividing specific tasks into blocks of time to accomplish them through the week. For larger projects, set your own deadlines to accomplish intermediate tasks as you work toward completing the overall project. Force yourself to make decisions and move on at a regular, predictable pace, this can prevent you from losing time overthinking small issues.

2. **Maximize Your Working Time.**

If you find yourself with only small blocks of time between meetings in which you can get things done, try approaching your day by making a checklist of tasks you expect to accomplish.

If you know you have a larger task at hand that requires more focused attention, block off time on your own calendar so your coworkers schedule meetings around it. Protecting your own time and maximizing your effectiveness during it are key to unlocking the benefits of time management in the workplace.

3. **Help Your Team Grow.**

If you are, or one day hope to be, in leadership role, one of the hidden benefits of time management is the opportunity to help your team members develop. When you delegate responsibilities, take care to not just put people in situations that maximize their existing strengths, also but give them tasks that take them out of their comfort zones as well. As your team members learn to successfully deliver results in an increasingly wide variety of scenarios, they will grow individually as professionals and strengthen your team as a whole.

4. **Care for Your Mind and Body.**

Strong time management means setting priorities and boundaries, and one of its key benefits is to improve the health of your mind and body. Try to protect time for personal care breaks that are important to you: Go for a walk, take time to prepare a healthy lunch in the morning, leave work in time to visit the gym. Your happiest and healthiest self is also your most productive, and taking care of yourself is not only good for you but for your company as well.

5. **Improve Your Work, Improve Your Confidence.**

Successful time management is not about getting more done; trying to just produce more can allow quality to slip in favor of quantity. Try setting goals that prioritize quality. One of the most significant benefits of time management in this sense is the effect this can have on your own confidence. When you produce work of a higher quality, you draw positive attention from your peers and supervisors, which in turn should lead to a more positive sense of your own capabilities and your value to the organization. All companies should strive to maintain high levels of employee confidence and positivity, and effective time management is a powerful way in which to do so.

Because of the value of time management, in the following section we are going to look at ten tips for mastering time management at work.

1. **Take a deep look at how you're currently spending your time.**

To optimize your personal time management, you first need to figure out where the time is going. Try tracking time for a week by listing daily activities. This will help:
- Determine how much you can accomplish in a day.
- Identify time drains.
- Focus on activities that provide the highest returns.

As you make your list, it will become obvious how much of your time is spent on unproductive thoughts, conversations, and activities.

The review will also provide a sense for how long certain types of tasks take you. This exercise

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can also help you determine the time of day when you are most productive — that way, you know when to work on your projects requiring the most focus and creativity.

2. **Create a daily schedule—and stick with it.**

This step is is vital for learning how to manage time at work. Try starting your day with an organized to-do list. Before you leave work for the day, create a list of the most pressing tasks for the next day. This allows you to get going as soon as you get to the office.

Putting everything on paper will prevent you from lying awake at night tossing and turning over the tasks running through your brain. Instead, your subconscious goes to work on your plans while you are asleep, which means you can wake up in the morning with new insights for the workday.

If you can't do it the day before, make sure you write out your list first thing in the morning. You'll find that the time you spend creating a clear plan is nothing compared to the time you'll lose jumping between tasks when you lack such a plan.

3. **Prioritize wisely.**

As you organize your to-do list, prioritization is key for successful time management at work. Start by eliminating tasks that you shouldn't be performing in the first place. Then identify the three or four most important tasks and do those first—that way, you make sure you finish the essentials.

Evaluate your to-do list and make sure you organized it based on the importance of a task rather than its urgency. Important responsibilities support the achievement of your goals, whereas urgent responsibilities require immediate attention and are associated with the achievement of someone else's goals. We tend to let the urgent dominate when we should really focus on activities that support our business goals.

**Try breaking down tasks and putting them into one of four quadrants, known as the Eisenhower Matrix:**

- <u>Important and urgent</u>: These tasks have important deadlines with high urgency—complete them right away.
- <u>Important but not urgent</u>: These items are important but don't require immediate action and should involve long-term development strategizing.
- <u>Urgent but not important</u>: These tasks are urgent but not important. Minimize, delegate, or eliminate them because they don't contribute to your output. They may result from the poor planning of others.
- <u>Not urgent and not important</u>: These activities hold little if any value and should be eliminated as much as possible.

4. **Group similar tasks together.**

Save yourself time and mental energy by trying to complete all of one type of to-do before moving on to the next. For example, create separate chunks of time for answering emails, making phone calls, filing, etc. Don't answer emails and messages as they come in, as doing so is distraction at its finest. Turn off your phone and email notifications to completely eliminate the temptation to check at an unappointed time.

5. **Avoid the urge to multitask.**

This is one of the simplest time management tips for work, yet it can be one of the hardest to follow. Focus on the task at hand and block out all distractions. It can be tempting to multitask, but it doesn't help. You lose time and decrease productivity when switching from one task to another.

6. **Assign time limits to tasks.**

Part of creating your schedule should involve setting time limits instead of just working until

they're done. To-do lists are great, but sometimes you might feel like you never check anything off.

If you're looking to set a steady pace to your workflow, try the Pomodoro Technique. It can help you check off your to-do list in 25-minute chunks by taking short breaks in-between and a longer break after completing four tasks. This balances focus with frequent breaks, reducing mental strain and maintaining motivation.

If the Pomodoro Technique doesn't work for you, try setting your pace with timeboxing. Timeboxing allows you to block out varied amounts of time equal to how long you estimate one task will take you. Once you've spent the designated amount of time on that task, move on to the next activity.

**7. Build in buffers.**

Research shows that regular breaks increase productivity, mental well-being, decision making, and memory. And skipping breaks can lead to faster burnout and more stress.

Make breaks a part of your schedule. When you finish a task, give yourself time to step away. Take mini breaks to recharge.

**8. Learn to say no.**

You'll never learn how to manage time at work if you don't learn how to say no. Only you truly know what you have time for, so if you need to decline a request in order to focus on more important tasks, don't hesitate to do so. And if you take on a project that is obviously going nowhere, don't be afraid to let it go.

Rather than doing a lot of tasks that yield little or no value, complete fewer tasks that create more value. Remember the 80/20 rule — 80% of your output comes from 20% of your inputs. Focus your efforts accordingly.

If you can't say no, delegate it. While delegating can be a hard skill to learn, it can work wonders

for your personal time management. You've put together a talented team, so determine the tasks you can pass on.

**9. Get organized.**

For effective time management, this tip needs to actually go on your to-do list. There are few things as frustrating as wasting valuable time looking for misplaced items. Not to mention how hard clutter can make it to focus.

Little things make a big difference. If you work in an office, create a filing system for documents. Unsubscribe to emails you no longer need. Automate repetitive tasks or processes where you can. Create systems for organizing and accomplishing tasks to increase your efficiency. With good organization, you only have to do it once, but you get the benefits forever.

**10. Eliminate distractions.**

Social media, web browsing, co-workers, text messages, instant messaging — the distractions at work can be limitless. A key to personal time management is being proactive about getting rid of them. Shut your door to limit interruptions. Close all tabs except the ones you are currently working on. Turn off messaging notifications and leave your personal phone calls for lunch.

You can do this step-by-step. Identify your top two distractions and focus on conquering those for a few weeks.

Better time management is about skills not hacks.

At the end of the day, no "pro-tip" or calendar tool will magically make your time management woes disappear if you don't have a foundation of good time management skills.

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# Communication in the Workplace

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Today, we're in almost constant contact with our coworkers. You might not put a lot of thought into saying "hi" to your coworker or sending a gif of a cat wearing pajamas to your team—and that's ok. Even though you're communicating at work, there's a difference between these types of messages and communication in the workplace.

**What does "workplace communication" mean?**

Workplace communication is any type of communication you do at work about work. This includes things like communicating about individual tasks, sharing project status updates, or giving feedback to managers or employees. Knowing how to communicate in the workplace is a key part of effective collaboration—because if you can't communicate clearly, then you risk miscommunication, confusion, or even unintentionally hurting someone's feelings.

Communication in the workplace can happen face-to-face, in writing, over a video conferencing platform, or in a group meeting. It can also happen in real time or asynchronously, which happens when you're communicating about work over email, with recorded video, or in a platform like a project management tool. Some examples of workplace communication include:

- Team meetings
- One-on-one discussions
- Receiving information
- Communicating about project status or progress
- Collaboration on cross-functional tasks
- Nonverbal communication

**What makes communication good?**

Now that you know what type of communication can be included in workplace communication, how do you start getting better at it? There are a few key notes of good communication that you can use no matter the type of communication it is. In particular, good communication:

- <u>Aims for clarity</u>. Whether you're sending a Slack message, drafting an email, or giving an off-the-cuff reply, aim to clearly communicate your message.
- <u>Seeks to solve conflicts, not create them</u>. The reason you're communicating is to solve a problem or promote effective collaboration on a project or task. Good communication in the workplace can allow your to provide feedback—but make sure the goal is to get to a better place than where you are now.
- <u>Goes both ways</u>. Every instance of communication in the workplace is an exchange of information—even if one person is only communicating nonverbally.

Clear, effective workplace communication can:

- Boost employee engagement and belonging
- Encourage team buy-in
- Increase productivity
- Build a healthy workplace and organizational culture
- Reduce conflict
- Increase retention

**Tips for more effective communication in the workplace.**

Effective communication in the workplace is all about where, how, and when you're communicating. Try these seven tips to become a stronger communicator.

1. **Know where and what to communicate about.**

   Communication happens in many different forms—face-to-face, email, instant message, and in work management platforms. To be most effective, make sure you're following communication guidelines and messaging about the right things in the right places.

Sometimes, knowing where to communicate is half the battle. Your company may have different communication tools — which makes knowing which tool to use all the more important.

When deciding which tool to use, ask yourself these questions. Which tool is appropriate for your question or comment? Do you need to communicate in real time, or is it ok to send a message? If you're not sure, ask a team member or manager where you should be sending different types of messages. It is important for everyone to be on the same page. For example:

- Teams
- Zoom
- Outlook
- Slack

**2. Build collaboration skills.**

Collaboration is the foundation of effective teamwork. In order to build strong team collaboration skills, you need to practice open and honest communication. This doesn't necessarily mean always agreeing on things—

knowing how to disagree and work through those differences is a key part of collaboration, too.

You can build good collaboration by communicating effectively — but knowing how to collaborate is a key component of strong communication. Essentially, this just means you'll have to practice improving both collaboration and communication skills over time. As you improve team collaboration, you'll get better at conveying information and opinions in a work environment. As a result, that honest communication will make collaboration feel more effortless.

**3. Talk face-to-face when you can.**

Perhaps the most tried-and-true way to avoid miscommunication is to talk face-to-face. If your team is virtual, speaking via video conferencing also works. Face-to-face communication is particularly important if you know a conversation is going to be difficult. Tone can be challenging to

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communicate through writing, so ideally you want your team member to be able to see your facial expressions and body language.

If your team is remote communicating, a phone call instead of a video conference can work as well. Video conferencing fatigue is real, and it can make collaboration and communication particularly difficult for remote teams. Communicating over the phone reduces some of the visual strain, while still giving you the ability to hear your team member's voice and tone.

**4.   Watch your body language and tone of voice.**

Communication isn't just about what you say—it's also about how you say it. Make sure you aren't crossing your arms or coming off as curt. Oftentimes, your body language may have nothing to do with the current situation—maybe you're tired or stressed about something in your personal life. But your team members, who might not have that context, could see your actions and assume you're angry or upset about something. Particularly for hard conversations, try to relax your body language and facial expressions to avoid giving off any unintentional cues.

**5.   Prioritize two-way communication.**

Listening is just as important to communication in the workplace as talking. Part of being a collaborative team member is listening to other people's ideas instead of just trying to put your own ideas out there.

There are two common types of listening: listening to reply and listening to understand. When you listen to reply, you're focusing on what you're going to say next, rather than what the other person is saying. With this type of listening, you risk missing key information or even repeating what the other person just said.

Instead, try to listen to understand—that is, listen to what the other person has to say without

thinking about how you're going to reply. If you do think of something you want to say, jot it down so you can go back to listening to understand, instead of trying to remember the thing you want to say next.

**6.   Stick to facts, not stories.**

"Facts vs. stories" is a technique recommended by co-founder of the Conscious Leadership Group, Diana Chapman. In this case, "facts" are things that have actually happened—things that everyone in the room would easily agree on. A "story," on the other hand, is your interpretation of the situation.

For example, let's say your manager gives you live feedback during a small team meeting. That is a fact. You weren't expecting the feedback, and you feel like your manager shared the feedback in the group—instead of saving it for your 1:1—because they're dissatisfied with your work. This is a "story" because you have no way of knowing if this is true or not.

Stories are inevitable—we all create stories from facts. But try to separate stories from facts, and avoid acting on stories until you're able to validate them. For example, in this case, you might want to talk to your manager during your next 1:1 and ask why they shared feedback in a team meeting.

**7.   Make sure you're speaking to the right person.**

Effective workplace communication is as much about who you're talking to as it is about what you're saying. Poor communication often occurs when you're talking to the wrong people, or trying to share information in the wrong setting.

To avoid this, make sure the right people are in the room or receiving the message. If you aren't sure who that would be, go through an exercise to identify any important project stakeholders who might be missing.

**5 tips to build leadership communication skills**

If you're a leader, you have the power to set and establish communication conventions on your team. Strong communication can build healthy company culture, trust among your employees, and break down silos between cross-functional teams. Here's how:

1.  **Address any underlying changes.**

    Before you start improving your team's communication skills, ensure there are no underlying issues that keep everyone from communicating honestly. Does everyone feel comfortable talking openly? Is there anything that might make a team member feel like they can't be their full selves?

    One of the most valuable things you can do as a leader is to make sure your employees feel comfortable showing up to work as their whole selves (or as much of themselves as they want to bring). Whether that means voicing disagreements, talking about their passions outside of work, or being honest about what type of communication works best for them— make sure to understand each team member's needs, and ensure they're being met in the team environment.



2.  **Frequently ask for feedback.**

    If you don't ask for feedback on your communication style, you may never get it. Even though communication in the workplace impacts every other interaction, team members might not immediately think of it as something to provide feedback on. By asking your employees for feedback on your communication style, you can continue to improve and develop clear communication strategies for your team.

3.  **Understand team communication styles.**

    Another effective way to build communication with your team is to ask them how they want to communicate. Communication preferences shouldn't be a secret—or a guessing game— and knowing off the bat if your team members prefer video conferences or phone calls, early morning meetings or afternoon jam sessions, can help you create an environment where they can thrive.

    Important questions to ask include:
    *   Are they an early bird or a night owl?
    *   Do they like structured meetings or prefer free-flow brainstorming sessions?
    *   Do they do their best thinking out loud, on the spot, or on paper?
    *   What personality type do they identify with: introvert, extrovert, or ambivert?
    *   Do they feel like they know their team members, or would they prefer more team bonding activities?
    *   What type of meetings or tasks are most energizing for them?

4.  **Make time for team building or icebreakers.**

    Getting to know your team is a critical part in knowing how to communicate with them. It's particularly important to make time to get to know your team outside of a workplace setting. Icebreaker questions can help bring an element

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of personality and fun to every meeting, so consider starting with a light chat before diving into your meeting agenda.

5. **Set the tone.**

Remember: the way you communicate and collaborate will impact your entire team. It's up to you to set the standard for open and clear communication in the workplace. Once you set and communicate this standard, your team will follow suit.

Every few months, make a note to check back in on how everyone is feeling about team communication. Are there any habits that have cropped up in the last few months that you want to cull or encourage? Regularly thinking about how your team communicates—instead of "setting and forgetting" your team practices—can help you be more intentional about your communication methods.

**More types of workplace communication**

Most discussions about communication in the workplace assume the "workplace" is in person. But, there are a variety of ways to communicate across different locations—from global offices to remote teams. Most communication best practices still apply to any type of team, but there are a few additional considerations and best practices you can use to help team members truly connect.

- **Distributed teams**

Distributed teams work across multiple national or global offices. These teams might span different time zones and languages, and each office will have its own culture and habits. Don't expect each distributed team to communicate in the same way—in fact, one of the advantages of distributed teams is the variety of thought you're exposed to by working with teammates from all over the world.

If you work on a distributed team, it's critical to over-communicate so that team members in different time zones and offices stay in the loop. Make sure to document everything in a central source of truth that team members can access when they're online, and look for a tool that updates in real-time so no one has to slow down due to information lag.

Keep in mind that time zones might affect how people come to a conversation. Try to schedule meetings when everyone is available, or offer recordings and notes if team members can't make it. It's also critical to double check that the right people are in the loop, and that they aren't just being left out because they're in a different office than the majority of your team.

- **Online coworkers**

If you're working with a virtual team, it's critical to establish where you're going to communicate and how frequently. Knowing exactly what each communication tool should be used for can help team members feel connected—even while they're remote.

Remote team members can feel siloed and disconnected from one another, so consider doing an exercise with your entire team about preferred communication habits. Some team members might love cold calls, while others might prefer scheduled meetings with clear agendas. Because team members have fewer chances to interact in person, it's critical to establish these preferences as a team, so you can keep the communication channels open.

Finally, make sure to bring team members in for regular team bonding events. Whether you're doing icebreaker activities at the beginning of every meeting or scheduling some time to just chat at the end of each week, dedicated team time can help team members connect no matter where they're dialing in from.

- **The cherry on top of effective workplace communication.**

  The last component of clear communication is having a central source of truth for all of your communication and work information. Using a centralized system like a work management tool can help you coordinate work across all levels of your team. Learn more about how work management makes project coordination and communication easier in our introduction to work management article.

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# Types of Communication

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Communication is arguably one of the single most important aspects of businesses and organizations. A company may have an exceptionally fine product or service, but without effective communication, consumers may be unaware of its existence or the level of quality. Similarly, the mission, vision, and objectives of an organization may be compelling, but to be effective, leaders must communicate these frequently and passionately to their employees. A common barrier to effective communication is the lack of it. For example: mistakenly believing that others have understood certain nuances or read particular actions as a given when, in fact, they have not.

When delivering unpleasant news to employees, managers can make mistakes in communication by avoiding the conversation altogether or not understating the issue at hand. Leaders earn respect when they treat their workforce as partners in communication. Effective communication involves both speaking and listening. Since words do not always convey the intended message, a good practice is to check for understanding at key intervals to ensure that the communication is on track.

There are a myriad of reasons why organizational communication is essential, and we will explore ways that leaders can use communication effectively. This section will look at strategies that can be used to help decrease and overcome many of the common workplace communication barriers. Awareness of how perception, culture, channel, and language can create barriers is a first step. For example, it is important to recognize and acknowledge when someone has a different perception than yours because perception absolutely matters. How an individual chooses to communicate also matters. Email is not the appropriate channel for all communications despite its ubiquity.

Besides focusing on communication in this section, there will also be discussion of various individual and organizational decision-making models. Knowing our own preferred style of decision-making helps us assess how we may be able to work more effectively within our organizations. For example, if an individual typically uses an intuitive decision-making model, but works in an organization that is driven by analytics, there likely is going to be a problem with fit unless the individual recognizes that data will be needed to support key decisions made at the organizational level. This can become even more complicated when we are working across cultures, such as in global organizations. Given the globalization of so many work environments of the 21st century, we will also examine how culture can influence both communications and decision-making.

There are three types of communication, including: verbal communication which involves listening to a person to understand the meaning of a message, written communication in which a message is read, and nonverbal communication which involves observing a person and inferring meaning. Let's start with verbal communication, which is the most commonly known form of communication.

**Verbal Communication**

Verbal communications in business take place over the phone, by video conferencing, or in person. The medium of the message is oral. Let's take a printer cartridge scenario as an example. The message is being conveyed from the sender (the manager) to the receiver (an employee named Bill) by telephone. Let's look at how the same message can travel successfully from sender to receiver.

While the process may be the same, high stakes communications require more planning, reflection,

and skill than normal day-to-day interactions at work. Examples of high stakes communication events include asking for a raise or presenting a business plan to a venture capitalist. In addition to these events, there are also many times in our professional lives when we have crucial conversations, which are defined as discussions, in which not only are

**EXAMPLE OF GOOD VERBAL COMMUNICATION:**

Manager *(speaking on the phone)*: "Good morning Bill!"

*(By using the employee's name, the manager is establishing a clear, personal link to the receiver.)*

Manager: "Your division's numbers are looking great."

*(The manager's recognition of Bill's role in a winning team further personalizes and emotionalizes the conversation.)*

Manager: "Our next step is to order more printer toner cartridges. Would you place an order for 1,000 printer toner cartridges with Jones Computer Supplies? Our budget for this purchase is $30,000, and the printer toner cartridges need to be here by Wednesday afternoon."

*(The manager breaks down the task into several steps. Each step consists of a specific task, time frame, quantity, or goal.)*

Bill: "Sure thing! I'll call Jones Computer Supplies and order 1,000 more printer toner cartridges, not exceeding a total of $30,000, to be here by Wednesday afternoon."

*(Bill, a model employee, repeats what he has heard. This is the feedback portion of the communication. Feedback helps him recognize any confusion he may have had hearing the manager's message. Feedback also helps the manager hear if she has communicated the message correctly.)*

the stakes high, but also the opinions vary and emotions run strong. One of the most consistent recommendations from communications experts is to work toward using "and" instead of "but" when communicating under these circumstances. In addition, be aware of your communication style and practice being flexible; it is under stressful situations that communication styles can become the most rigid.

**Written Communication**

In contrast to verbal communications, which are oral, written business communications are printed messages.

Examples of written communications include memos, proposals, e-mails, letters, training manuals, and operating policies. They may be printed on paper or appear on the screen. Written communication is often asynchronous.

That is, the sender can write a message that the receiver can read at any time, unlike a conversation that is carried on in real time. A written communication can also be read by many people (such as all employees in a department or all customers). It's a "one-to-many" communication, as opposed to a one-to-one conversation.

There are exceptions, of course: A voice mail is an oral message that is asynchronous. Conference calls and speeches are oral one-to-many communications, and e-mails can have only one recipient or many.

Normally, a verbal communication takes place in real time. Written communication, by contrast, can be constructed over a longer period of time. It also can be collaborative. Multiple people can contribute to the content on one document before that document is sent to the intended audience.

Verbal and written communications have different strengths and weaknesses. In business, the decision to communicate verbally or in written form can be a powerful one. Each style of communication has particular strengths and pitfalls. When determining

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whether to communicate verbally or in writing, ask yourself: Do I want to convey facts or feelings? Verbal communications are a better way to convey feelings. Written communications do a better job of conveying facts.

Picture a manager making a speech to a team of 20 employees. The manager is speaking at a normal pace. The employees appear interested. But how much information is being transmitted? Probably not as much as the speaker believes. The fact is that humans listen much faster than they speak.

**Nonverbal Communication**

What you say is a vital part of any communication. Surprisingly, what you don't say can be even more important.

Research shows that nonverbal cues can also affect whether or not you get a job offer. Judges examining videotapes of actual applicants were able to assess the social skills of job candidates with the sound turned off.

They watched the rate of gesturing, time spent talking, and formality of dress to determine which candidates would be the most socially successful on the job. Research also shows that 55% of in-person communication comes from nonverbal cues such as facial expressions, body stance, and

tone of voice. According to one study, only 7% of a receiver's comprehension of a message is based on the sender's actual words, 38% is based on paralanguage (the tone, pace, and volume of speech), and 55% is based on nonverbal cues (body language). To be effective communicators, our body language, appearance, and tone must align with the words we're trying to convey. Research shows that when individuals are lying, they are more likely to blink more frequently, shift their weight, and shrug.

**Listen Up and Learn More!**

A different tone can change the perceived meaning of a message. See the table below for how clearly this can be true. If we only read these words, we would be left to wonder, but during a conversation, the tone conveys a great deal of information.

Now you can see how changing the tone of voice in a conversation can incite or diffuse a misunderstanding. For another example, imagine that you're a customer interested in opening a new bank account. At one bank, the bank officer is dressed neatly. She looks you in the eye when she speaks. Her tone is friendly. Her words are easy to understand, yet professional sounding.

"Thank you for considering Bank of the East Coast. We appreciate this opportunity and would love to

| CHANGING YOUR TONE CAN DRAMATICALLY CHANGE YOUR MEANING | |
|---|---|
| **I** did not tell John you were late. | Someone else told John you were late. |
| I did **not** tell John you were late. | This did not happen. |
| I did not **tell** John you were late. | I may have implied it. |
| I did not tell **John** you were late. | But maybe I told Sharon and Joseph |
| I did not tell John **you** were late. | I was talking about someone else. |
| I did not tell John you **were** late. | I told him you still are late. |
| I did not tell John you were **late**. | I told him you were attending another meeting. |

explore ways that we can work with you," she says with a friendly smile.

At the second bank, the bank officer's tie is stained. He looks over your head and down at his desk as he speaks. He shifts in his seat and fidgets with his hands. His words say, "Thank you for considering Bank of the West Coast. We appreciate this opportunity and would love to explore ways that we can work with you," but he mumbles his words, and his voice conveys no enthusiasm or warmth.

Which bank would you choose? The speaker's body language must match his or her words. If a sender's words and body language don't match—if a sender smiles while telling a sad tale, for example—the mismatch between verbal and nonverbal cues can cause a receiver to actively dislike the sender.

Following are a few examples of nonverbal cues that can support or detract from a sender's message.

**Body Language**

A simple rule of thumb is that simplicity, directness, and warmth conveys sincerity. Sincerity is vital for effective communication. In some cultures, a firm handshake, given with a warm, dry hand, is a great way to establish trust. A weak, clammy handshake might convey a

lack of trustworthiness. Gnawing one's lip conveys uncertainty. A direct smile conveys confidence.

1. **Eye Contact**

   In business, the style and duration of eye contact varies greatly across cultures. In the United States, looking someone in the eye (for about a second) is considered a sign of trustworthiness.

2. **Facial Expressions**

   The human face can produce thousands of different expressions. These expressions have been decoded by experts as corresponding to hundreds of different emotional states. Our faces convey basic information to the outside world. Happiness is associated with an upturned mouth and slightly closed eyes; fear with an open mouth and wide-eyed stare. Shifty eyes and pursed lips convey a lack of trustworthiness. The impact of facial expressions in conversation is instantaneous. Our brains may register them as "a feeling" about someone's character. For this reason, it is important to consider how we appear in business as well as what we say. The muscles of our faces convey our emotions. We can send a silent message without saying a

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Openness vs. Defensiveness

Expectancy vs. Frustration

Readiness vs. Boredom

Evaluation vs. Suspicion

Self-Control vs. Nervousness

Confidence vs. Insecurity

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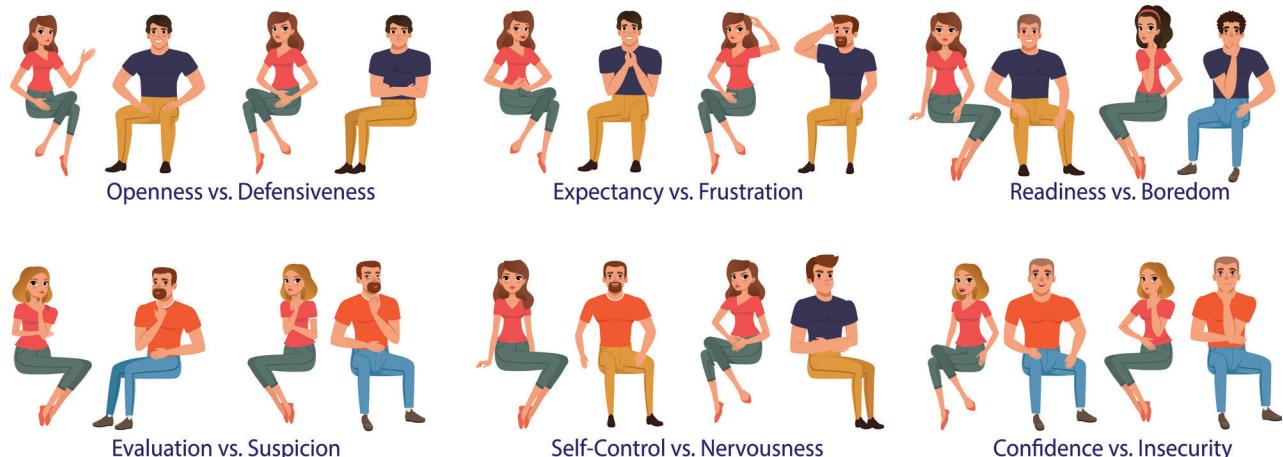
word. A change in facial expression can change our emotional state. Before an interview, for example, if we focus on feeling confident, our face will convey that confidence to an interviewer. Adopting a smile (even if we're feeling stressed) can reduce the body's stress levels.

3.  **Posture**

    The position of our body relative to a chair or other person is another powerful silent messenger that conveys interest, aloofness, professionalism, or lack thereof. Head up, back straight (but not rigid) implies an upright character. In interview situations, experts advise mirroring an interviewer's tendency to lean in and settle back in a seat. The subtle repetition of the other person's posture conveys that we are listening and responding.

4.  **Touch**

    The meaning of a simple touch differs between individuals, genders, and cultures. In Mexico, when doing business, men may find themselves being grasped on the arm by another man. To pull away is seen as rude. In Indonesia, to touch anyone on the head or to touch anything with one's foot is considered highly offensive. In the Far East and some parts of Asia, Americans, as we have noted above, place great value in a firm handshake. But handshaking as a competitive sport ("the bone-crusher") can come off as needlessly aggressive both at home and abroad.

Social

Personal

Intimate

0 to 10 inches

1.5 to 5 feet

5 to 7 feet

Defensive

Open vs. Closed Stance
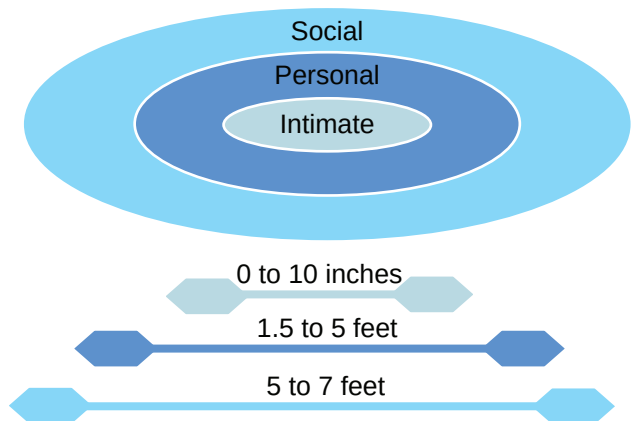
5.  **Space**

    Anthropologist Edward T. Hall coined the term proxemics to denote the different kinds of distance that occur between people. These distances vary among cultures. The chart above outlines the basic proxemics of everyday life and their associated meaning.

| GUIDE FOR WHEN TO USE WRITTEN VERSUS VERBAL COMMUNICATION | |
| --- | --- |
| **Use Written Communication When:** | Use Verbal Communication When: |
| Conveying Facts | Conveying Emotion and Feelings |
| The message needs to be part of a permanent file | The message does not need to be permanent |
| There is little time urgency | There is time urgency |
| Does not need immediate feedbacl | Needs immediate feedback |
| The ideas are complicated | The ideas are simple or can be made simple with explaninations |

**6. Distance between speakers is partially determined by their intimacy level.**

Standing too far away from a colleague (public speaking distance) or too close to a colleague (intimate distance for embracing) can thwart an effective verbal communication in business.

**Communication Channels**

The channel, or medium, used to communicate a message affects how accurately the message will be received. Channels vary in their "information-richness." Information-rich channels convey more nonverbal information. Research shows that effective managers tend to use more information-rich communication channels than less effective managers. The figure below illustrates the information richness of different channels.

Information channels differ in their richness.

The key to effective communication is to match the communication channel with the goal of the message. For example, written media may be a better choice when the sender wants a record of the content, has less urgency for a response, is physically separated from the receiver, and doesn't require a lot of feedback from the receiver, or when the message is complicated and may take some time to understand.

Oral communication, on the other hand, makes more sense when the sender is conveying a sensitive or emotional message, needs feedback immediately, and does not need a permanent record of the conversation.

Like face-to-face and telephone conversations, videoconferencing has high information richness, because receivers and senders can see or hear beyond just the words that are used—they can see the sender's body language or hear the tone of their voice. Handheld devices, blogs, and written letters and memos offer medium-rich channels, because they convey words and pictures or photos. Formal written documents, such as legal documents and budget spreadsheets, convey the least richness, because the format is often rigid and standardized. As a result, the tone of the message is often lost.

| Information Channel | Information Richness |
| --- | --- |
| Face-to-Face Conversation | High |
| Videoconferencing | High |
| Telephone Conversation | High |
| Emails | Medium |
| Handheld Devices | Medium |
| Blogs | Medium |
| Written Letters & Memos | Medium |
| Formal Written Documents | Low |
| Spreadsheets | Low |

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**Business E-mail Do's**

1. DO use a subject line that summarizes your message, adjusting it as the message changes over time.
2. DO make your request in the first line of your e-mail. (And if that's all you need to say, stop there!)
3. DO end your e-mail with a brief sign-off such as, "Thank you," followed by your name and contact information.
4. DO think of a work e-mail as a binding Communication.
5. DO let others know if you've received an e-mail in error.

**Business E-mail Don'ts**

1. DON'T send or forward chain e-mails.
2. DON'T put anything in an e-mail that you don't want the world to see.
3. DON'T write a message in capital letters—this is the equivalent of SHOUTING.
4. DON'T routinely CC everyone. Reducing inbox clutter is a great way to increase communication.
5. DON'T hit send until you've spell-checked your e-mail.
6. DON'T use exclaimation points in your e-mail.

The growth of e-mail has been spectacular, but it has also created challenges in managing information and increasing the speed of doing business. Over 100 million adults in the United States use e-mail at least once a day. Internet users around the world send an estimated 60 billion e-mails each day, and a large portion of these are spam or scam attempts. That makes e-mail the second most popular medium of communication worldwide, second only to voice. Less than 1% of all written human communications even reaches paper these days. To combat the overuse of e-mail, companies such as Intel have even instituted "no e-mail Fridays." During these times, all communication is done via other communication channels. Learning to be more effective in your e-mail communications is an important skill. To learn more, check out these business e-mail do's and don'ts.

An important, although often ignored rule when communicating emotional information, is that e-mail's lack of richness can be your loss. As we saw in the chart above, e-mail is a medium-rich channel. It can convey facts quickly. But when it comes to emotion, e-mail's flaws make it a far less desirable choice than oral communication — the 55% of nonverbal cues that make a conversation comprehensible

to a listener are missing. Researchers also note that e-mail readers don't pick up on sarcasm and other tonal aspects of writing as much as the writer believes they will.

The sender may believe that certain emotional signifiers have been included in a message. But, with written words alone, those signifiers are not there. This gap between the form and content of e-mail inspired the rise of emoticons—symbols that offer clues to the emotional side of the words in each message. Generally speaking, however, emoticons are not considered professional in business communication.

You might feel uncomfortable conveying an emotionally laden message verbally, especially when the message contains unwanted news. Sending an e-mail to your staff that there will be no bonuses this year may seem easier than breaking the bad news face-to-face, but that doesn't mean that e-mail is an effective or appropriate way to break this kind of news. When the message is emotional, the sender should use verbal communication. Indeed, a good rule of thumb is that more emotionally laden messages require more thought in the choice of channel and how they are communicated.

**Direction of Communication Within Organizations**

Information can move horizontally, from a sender to a receiver, as we've seen. It can also move vertically, down from top management, or up from the front line. Information can also move diagonally between and among levels of an organization, such as a message from a customer service rep to a manager in the manufacturing department or a message from the chief financial officer sent down to all department heads.

**Organizational communication travels in many different directions.**

There is a chance for these arrows to go awry, of course. In large organizations the dilution of information as it passes up and down the hierarchy, and horizontally across departments, can undermine the effort to focus on common goals. The organizational status of the sender can impact the receiver's attentiveness to the message. For example, consider the following: A senior manager sends a memo to a production supervisor. The supervisor, who has a lower status within the organization, is likely to pay close attention to the message. The same information conveyed in the opposite direction, however, might not get the attention it deserves. The message would be filtered by the senior manager's perception of priorities and urgencies.

Requests are just one kind of communication in business. Other communications, either verbal or written, may seek, give, or exchange information. Research shows that frequent communications with one's supervisor is related to better job performance ratings and overall organizational performance. Research also shows that lateral communication done between peers can influence important organizational outcomes such as turnover.



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# Diversity & Inclusion in the Workplace

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Diversity and inclusion, more commonly known as D&I, is gaining popularity in the everyday workplace. Businesses are becoming increasingly inclusive by developing D&I policies at every level.

Incorporating diversity and inclusivity isn't a trend or just one person's opinion. It is a reflection of a changing world that seeks to include all people. More businesses are embracing it because its seen as a driving force of growth, revenue, and profit. It reflects the desire for both employee and customer satisfaction.

**What is Diversity?**

Diversity is defined as the full spectrum of human differences. It refers to unique characteristics in people along the lines of gender, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, ethnicities, race, geographical location, culture, class, physical ability, etc.

Diversity in the workplace refers to an organization's workforce being comprised of people those different backgrounds.

Diversity can be of many types. Let us have a look at what these are.

**The Different Diversity Types in the Workplace**

There are different types of diversity in the workplace. While some are visible to the world, others are much more internal. Some can be controlled and changed, and still, others remain the same.

Here are the different types of diversity dimensions that you will find in any workplace:

- Internal
- External
- Organizational
- World View

1. **Internal Diversity Types:**

Internal Diversities are the various diverse factors that a person is born into or belongs to. In most cases, a person has no control over changing these diversities. These include factors like:

- Race
- Ethnicity
- Cultural Diversity
- Age
- National Origin

2. **External Diversity Types:**

External Diversity is those diversities or characteristics related to a person; however, they are not born into it. In other words, these characteristics can be changed or modified by a person. External diversities include:

- Education
- Religion
- Citizenship
- Experiences
- Skills & Interests
- Geographical Location
- Socioeconomic Status
- Relationship Status

3. **Organizational Diversity Types**

Organizational diversities are the different diversity factors that pop up in any organization or workplace. The different types of Organizational Workplace Diversity are:

- Work Location
- Department
- Level of Seniority
- Job Function
- Management Status
- Socioeconomic Status

4. **World Views**

World View Diversity is precisely what the term suggests: the difference and diversity in people's world views. Our unique experiences, knowledge of history, beliefs, political philosophies we

subscribe to, etc. can shape our world views. World view diversity might include the following:

- Political Beliefs
- Knowledge of History
- Cultural Events

**What is Inclusion?**

The Society for Human Resource Management defines 'Inclusion' as "the achievement of a work environment in which all individuals are treated fairly and respectfully, have equal access to opportunities and resources, and can contribute fully to the organization's success."

Inclusion in the workplace means ensuring that every employee feels included and a part of the team. An inclusive workforce will feel valued, seen, heard, and respected. Consequently, you will notice a boom in innovation, higher cooperation, and increased employee engagement.

**Difference Between Diversity and Inclusion**

It is said that the first step in creating a diverse and inclusive culture is acknowledging the fact that diversity and inclusion are two different concepts.

Companies must not confuse diversity with inclusion. Although paired together, and talked about together, both the terms are not synonymous, and one does not automatically imply the other.

Diversity without inclusion will not amount to any significant change in the company culture and employee experience. For instance, a company might hire African Americans, or women of color to create ethnically diverse teams. But unless and until their opinions, perspectives, and experiences are taken into account while making decisions and policies, inclusion is not being fostered.

**The Risks of Confusing Diversity with Inclusion**

If the company you work for mistakes diversity for inclusion, it attracts a myriad of risks. Here is a brief discussion of a few of them:

- In the absence of psychological safety, employee engagement will be a bare minimum, and they will hardly succeed professionally.
- Compromising on inclusion will mean that employees will not feel free to participate in the decision-making process actively, and hence, business performance will suffer.
- Suppose your company hires a diverse workforce but fails to make them part of the team. A sense of alienation and negative feelings towards the company will take hold. Thus, the diversity policies might backfire if they are not balanced well with inclusion policies.

| Diversity |
| --- |
| <ul><li>Refers to the differences in social, racial, cultural, socioeconomic backgrounds, geographical locations, age, interests, physical and mental abilities, etc.; that make individuals unique.</li><li>The concept of bringing different people together in the same place.</li><li>Achieved when recruiters aim toward heterogeneity and fight any biases in the hiring process.</li></ul> |

| Inclusion |
| --- |
| <ul><li>Refers to the conscious efforts, behaviors, policies, and norms to make every person feel seen, heard, and valued with their unique differences.</li><li>The strategies and methods that help diversity work in an organization.</li><li>Achieved when all members in an organization feel psychologically safe and included.</li></ul> |

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### How Can You Support Diversity and Inclusion as an Employee?

1. Know the diversity goals and vision of your organization and their connection to the overall business objectives. Commit to the process by understanding how diversity impacts your role, and how your role impacts the success of the diversity initiative.

2. Participate in employee engagement surveys and respond as openly and honestly as possible. Finding an internal champion with whom you can comfortably express concerns and/or elicit advice can be instrumental in supporting your efforts.

3. Actively engage in the diversity effort. Take part in or start an Employee Resource Group, or volunteer to chair or serve on committees that organize diversity-related events and activities. Consider becoming a mentor, mentee, or part of a co-mentoring relationship. These activities require a commitment of time, but represent a valuable opportunity for personal and professional development.

4. Become culturally competent. Take the time to learn about different cultures, races, religions, and backgrounds represented by your colleagues. Ask your coworkers to share some of the customs and practices associated with their cultures. Become familiar with diversity-related terms and, if you err, apologize and ask for help.

5. Treat people in a way they wish to be treated rather than the way you wish to be treated. Common social activities and practices that are comfortable for you may not be comfortable for everyone. Do not tell offensive jokes that may alienate those who are different from you — even if they are not present at the time. Most importantly, be respectful always. Diversity exists everywhere — not just in the office. Take these diversity principles into your community and your home.

6. Drive positive change in the organization. Be a spokesperson for diversity issues that are not necessarily your own. Any organization will find it difficult to ignore the powerful voice created when groups representing different diversity dimensions unite.

7. Welcome ideas that are different from your own, and support fellow teammates. The creativity that comes with diversity can help you generate new ideas or improve a process already in place. It can also make work more interesting, engaging, and fun.

8. Understand the diversity elements you personally bring to the organization. Diversity comes not only in the form of culture, race, and gender but also includes elements such as socio-economic background, education level, geographic location, sexual orientation, thought, and many others. Each of us brings to the table a lifetime of experiences and knowledge. Each of us is different and adds value to the organization because of these differences.

9. Commit to continuous improvement. Be willing to learn, accept feedback, and listen to the concerns of those around you. Even the most enlightened individual can find opportunities for growth.

10. Communicate and educate. Diversity work is a journey, not a destination. It takes time, patience, and perseverance. Be tolerant of coworkers who do not yet appreciate the value of diversity or who may not always behave respectfully. Often, negative behavior comes from ignorance rather than malice. A willingness to educate can go along way.

# Conclusion: Know the Value of Employability Skills!

To get, and keep, a job you typically need a variety of technical skills. Dentists need to know how to fill cavities. Secretaries need to type 100+ words per minute. Accountants need to be certified. Beyond the technical skills, though, which dentist do you go to? The one who is pleasant and takes time to answer your questions; or the one who treats you like a number in a long line of numbered mouths? Which secretary do you retain when times are lean? The one whose attitude is positive and upbeat, and who is always willing to help; or the one who is inflexible and has a hard time admitting mistakes? Likewise, think about accountants. The one who has a great work ethic and encourages his colleagues is the one who will, most likely, excel in his position and organization.



In these situations, and all the others like them, it's the employability skills that matter.

While your technical skills may get your foot in the door, your people skills are what will open most of the doors to come. Your work ethic, your attitude, your communication skills, your emotional intelligence and a whole host of other personal attributes are the skills that are crucial for career success.

Employability skills can make you a leader. Problem solving, delegating, motivating, and team building are all much easier if you have good interpersonal and employability skills. Knowing how to get along with people – and displaying a positive attitude – are crucial for success.

Most employers no longer dismiss the value of those types of skills, and are willing to train in the technical skill if the foundation is there. That means organizations expect people to know how to behave on the job and assume that everyone knows and understands the importance of being on time, taking initiative, being friendly, respecting coworkers and their differences and producing high quality work. Employers have learned that they can not assume employability skills are universal.

That can work to your benefit, when you understand that it is important to focus as much on employability skills training and development as you do on traditional hard skills. Not the least of which is nonverbal communication, so practice nonverbal cues such as tone of voice or body language and expect success.

# Exercise 3.1: The First Day

1. There were 12 tips to make sure your first day at a new job goes well. Name as many of them as you can remember.

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

# Exercise 3.2: The First Weeks

1. Name as many tips as you can remember to help you breeze through your first few weeks at work.

_____
_____
_____

2. Which one(s) do you consider the most beneficial and why?

_____
_____
_____

# Exercise 3.3: Employability Skills for Success

1. What are employability skills and why are they vaulable for career success?

_____
_____
_____

2. What do you consider your strongest employability skill and why?

_____
_____
_____

3. What is your weakest employability skills and how can you improve it?

_____
_____
_____

# Exercise 3.4: Time Management as a Priority

1.  Why is time management such a valuable tool for success?

    _____

    _____

    _____

2.  Provide at least four of the five benefits of time management.

    1. _____    3. _____

    2. _____    4. _____

3.  From the examples given, or from your own experience, identify at least one time waster you have been guilty of, and something that can be done to fix it.

    _____

    _____

    _____

4.  From the list of time management tips, what is at least one time saver that you can adopt to help you with time management.

    _____

    _____

    _____

# Exercise 3.5: Communication in the Workplace

1.  What are some traits of good communication?

    _____

    _____

    _____

2.  What are some tips for effective communication in the workplace?

    _____

    _____

    _____

3.  Name at least four of the five tips for building leadership communication skills.

    1. _____    3. _____

    2. _____    4. _____

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# Exercise 3.6: Types of Communication

1.  Name and give examples of three types of communication?

    1. _____
    2. _____
    3. _____

2.  Draw a line to the cooresponding meaning behind the tone of each sentence.

    **I** did not tell John you were late.                                  I told him you still are late.

    I did **not** tell John you were late.                                  I may have implied it.

    I did not **tell** John you were late.                          I told him you were attending another meeting.

    I did not tell **John** you were late.                                  I was talking about someone else.

    I did not tell John **you** were late.                            Someone else told John you were late.

    I did not tell John you **were** late.                               But maybe I told Sharon and Joseph

    I did not tell John you were **late**.                                    This did not happen.

3.  Name at least four of the six areas of body language that were identified in this manual.

    1. _____        3. _____
    2. _____        4. _____

4.  Of the nine information styles provided, what is your favorite and why?

    _____

    _____

    _____



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# Exercise 3.6: Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace

1. Based on the section you studied, in your own words, define diversity.

   _____

   _____

   _____

2. Based on the section you studied, in your own words, define inclusion.

   _____

   _____

   _____

3. Name some things that you can do, as an employee, to support a diverse and inclusive workplace.

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____



**Section III: Keeping the Job**