

CAREER GUIDE

This manual is now your tool to help navigate to whatever it is you're looking for in your next career. Don't let your next job wait any longer; it's time to take action today.

*You're on your way
to a better future*

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Introduction

Entering the job market in today's economy can be overwhelming and exhausting to say the least. Searching for a career is a journey that almost every American will eventually embark on, and many will change careers multiple times during their lives, which is why it's important to continue the learning process. Booker T. Washington put it best when he pointed out "Excellence is to do a common thing in an uncommon way." Everyone is trying to better their career or to just simply find a job, and you will need to excel above the rest to stand out in today's economy.

This is why we have developed a career guide packed full of information that will help lead you through one of the most stressful yet fulfilling times of your life. Each section was thoroughly constructed for you to reference during every step of your journey towards a better career.

Now let's get started...

Career Interest Assessment

Fileforunemployment.net not only helps users to file for unemployment online, but also provides helpful information on landing a new job. You can't live on unemployment benefits forever and the earlier you start searching for a new job the better. Before you begin your search for a new job you must assess what you want to become. Below is a checklist of career assessment questions that can identify what career paths might fit best for you.

Did I enjoy my previous job?

Think of your last job and weigh out the likes and dislikes. Take out a piece of paper and make a list. Which list is longer? If you can think of more dislikes than likes it might be time to search for a new type of job.

If you find that you liked your last job, then you need to begin the networking process of finding a new opportunity within that industry.

Make note of what you did and did not like about your previous job. This is another important factor in deciding whether to change career paths. For example, if you disliked your previous job because of your boss this does not necessarily mean you hated the job itself, but the people you worked with. In this case staying in the current industry is still a viable option.

Once you make a list of likes and dislikes from your previous job, you should have a better idea on whether you want continue working in that particular industry or make a career change.

What are my hobbies/interests?

Incorporating a hobby or something you are passionate about into a job search is a great way to land your dream job. Think of the activities you enjoy most and search for various companies and organizations that cater to those interests. Be realistic with turning a career into a possible job. For example if you enjoy playing a baseball, you probably won't make it to the majors, but this does not mean you can't find a job within the sports industry. There are many employment opportunities that incorporate sports. Once you list out your hobbies you can then begin to search for possible jobs involving them.

What are my strengths and weaknesses?

It's good to understand where your employment strengths and weaknesses are. Start by making a list of things that you are skilled at. After this make a list of things you struggle with. Look at attribute you listed for both lists. Try to translate each of these skills into a possible job. For example, if you are very social and enjoy going out with friends you should look for jobs that require people skills. This might seem fairly simple, but many people look for jobs that do not complement their skill set.

How to Build a Better Résumé

Header/Contact info

1. Name – this part might seem simple, but people still make mistakes even on this part. Make sure to write out your actual name. We recommend not using any nicknames. The only exception is a shortened name i.e. Robert to Rob is ok. We also recommend putting your middle initial if you have a fairly common name. For example change John Smith to John D. Smith.
2. Address – Include the address of where you currently reside, whether it be yours, a friends, or family member. Keep this in mind especially if you are applying for a job that is not in your city or state.
3. Phone number – make sure you put a phone number where you can be contacted at any time. Your cell phone is probably your best bet. Make sure that your voicemail sounds professional and has your name on it. It's probably time to get rid of any obnoxious music that plays when someone is trying to call you. You can put that back on once you land the job.
4. E-mail address – Most employers keep in touch via e-mail now so it's important you include an e-mail address you check often. You should also have a professional sounding e-mail address. The e-mail address should have some variation of your name. For example j.smith22@gmail.com not studmuffin89@gmail.com
5. Format – Your header should stand out the most out of all the content on your resume. The biggest font on your resume should be your name. You can use some creativity when choosing the font characteristics for your header. Do not over exaggerate use discretion when choosing the style.

Objective

6. Length - Employers skim through most resumes. They do not read each resume in full detail the first time through. Therefore, it is important to keep your objective 1-2 short sentences long.
7. Content – Your objective should emphasize what skills the job requires, along with what skills you have already developed in past experience. Don't be too specific about what you are looking for, but also don't be overly broad. In other words, keep it simple and to the point. You should summarize your top attributes when writing your objective.

Work History

8. General Content - You should include the name of the company you worked for, contact information including address and phone number, title, and dates you worked there.
9. Dates - Like with all aspects of resume there is great debate on the dating of employment history. We recommend listing employment I chronological order. Even if you have gaps in your employment history, posting jobs out of chronological will raise a lot of questions. You should be upfront with your employment history. You can address any concerns during an interview.

10. Bullet points – each bullet point should contain a quick 1-2 sentences your job responsibilities and how you were successful at them. You should write more than just what you did at a job. Use numbers whenever possible to highlight your success. For example, if you were in charge of people write down how many people you managed. This can make you stand out amongst a group of other resumes.
11. General Rules- You should exclude jobs that are from over 10 years ago and if you're young enough any jobs from high school, and Salary information.

Education

12. Your education should always be included on your resume. Any college or university you've graduated should be present. If you attended multiple universities you should include the one you received a degree from. You can also include any trade or technical school you've attended.
13. GPA- you should include your GPA if it was above a 3.2., otherwise leave it off.
14. Honors and awards - if you received any honors, awards or mentions make sure you include these in the education section.
15. Major and minor- List all of the areas studied, majors, minors, etc.

Editing and Proofreading

16. Check and double check - You should read through your resume countless times before you submit it. Your resume must be flawless. Some employers will throw away a resume if they see any errors.
17. Assistance- Ask your friends and family to read through your resume. It's always a good idea to get another pair of eyes to ensure there are no mistakes.

Unity/Structure

18. Appearance- Use italics, bold, and underline to separate each section and create structure. Make sure all sections match. For example if you end each bullet point with a period make sure all bullet points contain periods at the end. Also, make sure your resume is no longer than one page.
19. Action Words-start each bullet point with an action word. Display your vocabulary skills by using various phrases. Do not use the same word over and over again. Use a thesaurus to find multiple words with one meaning.

Exclusions (information not included on your resume)

20. Age
21. Marital Status

References

22. References should be separate from your resume. Type out a list of references on another piece of paper. Bring this sheet with you to each interview in case it is requested.
23. Your references should not be personal (i.e. family and friends). Include references from other employers or authority figures.

Job Search Strategies

Searching for jobs can be overwhelming. Simply looking through job search sites such as Craigslist or Monster.com and applying for various jobs can be ineffective without proper preparation. Searching for a job requires organization. When you begin your search you should have a general idea of what you are looking for. For example, you should know what industry you want to go into. This will help narrow your search results.

Thousands of new positions are posted every day to various job sites. In order to find a job that best fits your skill set you need to organize what you're searching for. Many job search sites allow users to filter their search results based on various criteria. Below is a list of the various criteria

- 1) Location
- 2) Industry
- 3) Category
- 4) Posting Date
- 5) Career Level
- 6) Years of experience
- 7) Education Level
- 8) Job type

You should begin to look through your past employment experiences and match them up with each of these fields. This will help to ensure you apply for a job that fits your past experiences, ensuring a higher chance of employment. For example if you worked in the retail industry in your past employments you should look for other jobs in that industry. You should also make sure to browse by years of experience. If you worked in a particular industry for over 5 years you should search for postings that require that amount of experience.

What to look for in each job posting:

Most job postings online have descriptions of the responsibilities and what they are looking for in a potential candidate. These descriptions are imperative in your job search. Read through these descriptions and make note of what they are saying. Make sure that you have the qualifications they are looking for. You should also make sure that all the responsibilities and qualifications listed are highlighted on your resume. For example if a position says they are looking for a candidate who is efficient with Microsoft excel, check your resume to make sure that qualification is located within your resume. This tactic will ensure you make it through the filtering process. If one qualification is not met on your resume they might dismiss you as a potential candidate. Most importantly think about whether the job sounds right for you. If the job description sounds like something you wouldn't enjoy doing, then it's probably not a good choice to apply for that position.

Once you have searched through various jobs it is now time to organize the jobs you want. We recommend you rank each job 1-15 with 1 being the job you want most. Make sure your resume is tailored more towards the top 5 jobs. Make note of where each company is located. This will help you in the future when you get called in for an interview. If you are unable to commute to the specified location, then that particular job might not be a good fit. If a location is out of your range you should take it out of your top 15 listings and replace it with another job posting. Once this process is complete you can begin to apply for each position

Before searching for jobs you should go through this list and write down what you are looking for within each field. The more specific you make your search results the better chance you will have of finding the right job. You should never apply to more than 15 jobs at a time. This will help you keep track of what jobs you've applied for and make the follow up process easier.

How to Network

It's not always about what you know, but who you know. Getting a job takes a lot more than just applying to the position. Many of the jobs listed on sites like monster and Careerbuilder have thousands of people applying to just one position. Networking can be defined as the process of interacting with individuals, groups, and/or organizations to gain insight and information on various career opportunities. This does not mean going up to someone and asking for a job. Proper networking requires finesse and certain know how. Below we will go over basic networking tactics

1. Make a list of all your friends, family, and past co-workers
2. Find their various contact information
3. Beside each contact write down what their profession

This list is your starting point for networking. Think of this list as a tree, for each contact you have they have possible contacts within their network. You might not necessarily find a job through your best friend, but maybe they have a cousin in a field you are interested in. Begin talking to each of one of your contacts listed. Remember you are not asking any of your contacts for a job. You are trying to get information from them. Start by telling them what kind of job you are looking for. Ask them if they know anybody in that particular field that you can speak with.

After you've spoken with all of your contacts you should have a list full of more people to connect with. Go through the list of new contacts you were given and start the process all over again. Call each new contact, introduce yourself and tell them who gave you their information. Let them know why you are calling. Tell them you are looking for a new job and you heard they might have insight on getting a job within their industry. Below is a list of questions you can ask each perspective contact

- 1) How did you get involved in your current job?
- 2) What advice would you give to someone looking for a job in that particular industry?
- 3) Do you know anybody who might be hiring for jobs in your particular field?

These are just basic questions that can get the conversation started. Remember your goal is to not necessarily getting a job from them, but networking and finding more contacts. The most important thing to remember about networking is it can happen anywhere with anyone. You might be at a party with friends and there could be someone who works for in the field you are interested in. It is important to keep your eyes and ears open. Networking is great for getting an edge on the competition.

What to do When Changing Careers

If you are beginning the journey to a new career path you will need the right tools and resources to set yourself up for success. In order to get started you should begin research on the qualifications for each job you are interested in. For each career path selected review the following qualifications checklist

1) What education level is required?

- High school diploma
- Bachelor's degree
- Associates degree
- Specialized degrees

One of the hardest aspects of changing careers is receiving the required education. This can also be the most costly. This will also give you an estimate on the amount of time it will take to get a job in that given career. Just because you do not have the required amount of education does not mean you won't be able to change career paths. If requirements are not meant then you must decide whether to go back to school or search for another option.

2) How many years of experience are required?

In order to change careers you have to start fresh. This means you are now perceived as an entry level employee. Make sure the job you find is entry level based with less than 1 year of experience required. In some cases you might be able to translate some of your past experiences towards a new path.

3) What is the entry level salary?

This is very important in planning for future finances. Sometimes in order to change careers one has to take a pay cut. If you have to take a pay cut in order to change careers then you have to plan accordingly. You might have to change some of your spending habits and cut various living expense. Salary level should not be the only deciding factor when choosing a new job. You might not make as much the first year you work, but research the industry to see what the level of pay is after 5 years' experience. In most cases this number is considerably higher.

There are various government grants and financial aid programs that can assist you in your journey. For more information on government grants [click here](#).

How to Have Your Best Interview

Successful interviews require organization and preparation. It's important to understand what the interviewer is trying to accomplish during the interview process in order to succeed in an interview. Interviewers are trying to determine if the possible candidate will not only be good fit for the position, but also if they will be successful. They accomplish this by analyzing a candidate's knowledge, strengths, weaknesses and past experiences. Interviewers will then take this analysis and compare it with past employees who filled the open position both successful and unsuccessful. This will enable them to gauge how well a new candidate will perform in the open position. Every interviewer will be unique in their approach, but most interviewers tend to follow a certain method during the interview process. This method is called the targeted approach method. In this approach an interviewer analyzes a candidates experience and potential through a series of questions. These questions can be organized into 3 categories

- Open ended
- Behavior Based
- Situational

Open ended – Future

Open ended questions are questions that can focus on the position and what role a candidate will play in the company or organization. Most open ended questions are used to understand the candidate's motivation for wanting that particular position.

Examples of open ended questions:

- Where do you see yourself in 5 years... 10 years?
- What are you looking for in your next job?
- What do you think makes good manager?

Questions like these help employers understand what a candidate is looking for in their future endeavors. Candidates who show drive and motivation for their future are viewed as desirable attributes.

How you should answer:

It is important you reveal your goals and expectations clearly. Make sure each goal is achievable and measurable. Try to keep your personal goals out of the answer such as getting married having kids. Stick to professional goals and expectations.

Behavior Based – Past

Behavior based questions are questions concerning a candidate's past behavior. The purpose of this questioning technique is to determine whether past experiences will determine future success. Employers are trying to find out in more detail about a candidate's past work experiences

Examples of behavior based questions:

- Describe a time when you had to manage a conflict between two people
- Tell me about an experience when you had to handle an angry customer or friend.

How to answer behavior based questions:

Before you go to an interview you should think of some past situations where you overcame a problem or some kind of diversity. It doesn't matter the exact situation you should be able to spin the situation towards most behavior based questions. When answering these questions you should start by describing the situation, the actions you took, and how you were successful.

Situation Based – Present

Situation based questions are hypothetical questions. These questions determine what actions a candidate would take in a possible on the job scenario. Interviewers are looking to see how you will react in a given situation. The interviewer's main objective is to determine your problem solving skills through knowledge, past experiences and intuition.

Examples of situation based questions:

- What would you say to a client if one of their shipments was late?
- How would you try and convince a customer to stay with our company if they threatened to leave?

How to answer situation base questions:

The most important part of answering situation based questions is to describe your thought process in detail. Make sure you describe why you are making each description. This will help the interviewer understand your exact thinking process and gauge your problems solving skills better.

If there are multiple interviews, make sure to follow- up after each interview. For the first round interview, it's appropriate to send an e-mail thanking whoever interviewed you for their time, in this e-mail make sure to once again express your interest in the position and the company. After the second or third round interview it's appropriate to send a hand written thank you note addressed to the person(s) who interviewed you. This shows that you took the extra initiative to write out a note, which makes you stand out above other potential candidates.

If you are offered the job, don't accept it right on the spot. It's best to ask for a few days (3-4) to consider the offer before accepting.

Landing a Job through Social Networks

Social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter have increased in popularity over the past few years. Like all new trends come new opportunities to capitalize. Many job recruiters are using these social networks to find new talent. These networks are not only used to find current job seekers, but those who are not even searching. As the younger generation gets older recruiting through social networks will only become more popular. HR departments are starting to integrate their technology with various social networking sites. In some cases job postings are automatically posted to a company's social networking web page. Career sites such as Careerbuilder are posting new positions to social platforms as well.

The two most popular social sites for recruitment are Facebook and LinkedIn. What are the differences? Facebook is targeted to more entry level jobs or those who recently graduated or are about to graduate. LinkedIn is viewed as a more professional network. It is said that LinkedIn has more than 80 million members in more than 200 countries. Users are encouraged to post their past and current employment experiences. Users also have the ability to write recommendations about their peers on their network. Essentially LinkedIn is one big networking event. Instead of going to a networking mixer at a physical location, recruiters can browse various industries and competitors for talent.

What attracts recruiters the most to LinkedIn is the high caliber talent on it. As opposed to traditional job sites such as Monster.com, recruiters have more control over the candidates they view. In order to view another user's profile one has to request to become their friend. This allows a better filter for recruiters. They can view the potential job candidate's profile and decide whether the user would be a good candidate for their company. Searching for talent is also a lot easier. Recruiters can look through their competitor's network and try to recruit talent from them. The use of keyword searches aids employers to search for industry related keywords. Using keywords such as marketing, accounting, or human resources can allow recruiters to see which users have worked for those industries, narrowing down the potential candidates. These keywords are matched with a user's profile and past experiences.

Not only do employers use social networks to find talent, but also perform background checks on potential hires. As mentioned before employers can look through a candidate's references. These recommendations are viewed highly because candidates can't change their liking. This provides an honest recommendation to the employer.

These background checks might be a positive aspect for recruiters, but it can have negative effects on potential candidates. There have been many examples of people not getting hired because of what they post on social sites. Employers will be able to view any status updates, pictures, and affiliations a user posts to their social profiles. For example some people post personal pictures of themselves doing various incriminating acts. When employers see these photos it depicts the potential candidate in a negative light. Fortunately, this mistake is easy to avoid. Both Facebook and LinkedIn have privacy options that allow users to limit what other users can view on their profile. Users can specify what they would like shown to the public. For example, a user can specify that they only want their contact and employment history visible to users who are not friends with them. When one is actively seeking a job they should make sure their social profiles are professional and do not contain any discriminating content on them. Below is a list of helpful tips you can do to spruce up your social profile and increase your chances of being spotted by an online recruiter.

- First off if you are not on Facebook or LinkedIn then you should start now. It's easy and free all you need is an email address.
- We recommend that you only put your e-mail address for contact information for security reasons.
- Make sure to fill out past employment information on both your Facebook profile and LinkedIn. Include all of your responsibilities you performed at each job. You should treat this similar to your Resume. [Click here](#) for resume help.
- Set your Facebook privacy settings so that only your friends can see pictures of you. Even if you don't take incriminating pictures of yourself. Others can tag you in pictures you weren't even aware were being taken, better safe than sorry.
- Search for groups in the industry your trying to find a job in. For example if you are looking for a job at a particular company and look to see if they have a Facebook page. Become of fan of their Page. Look through who else is a fan of theirs. You can view their profiles and find out if they work for the company. This is a great way to get your foot in the door and network with people that work at the company.. You can also use this method on LinkedIn. By searching for the company or industry you want to work for, you can find different people who work for the industry or company. This is a great starting point for networking.

Conclusion

Since you have officially made it to the end of the packet, you have hopefully gained some useful knowledge on how to more efficiently search for your next job or career path. It takes more than just motivation and hard work to land a job in today's job market; it takes skill and technique. The points that were reviewed in this kit are meant for you to reference as questions arise regarding your career or future career. By taking the time to review this information you have already brought yourself one step closer to finding the job you have been searching for, and eventually being a stronger candidate in an interview process.

You are a unique individual with a variety of talents and resources that will make you a valuable asset to an organization. Even though searching for a job can bring moments of doubt and despair, try to remember that you now have the necessary tools to put you on the right career path. Don't waste any more time being passive in the job market, it's time to move full speed ahead.

Good luck with your future career!

Additional Online Resources

Glassdoor- www.glassdoor.com

Glassdoor is your free inside look at jobs and companies. Salary details, company reviews, and interview questions — all posted anonymously by employees and job seekers.

WetFeet- www.wetfeet.com

Find company profiles, entry-level jobs, and up and coming industries. The site is tailored to new college graduates, or those starting a career in a new field.

Monster- www.monster.com

One of the web's largest recruiting sites. Find thousands of relevant articles on resume advice, job-hunting guidance, career planning tips and more.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics- www.bls.gov/oes

The BLS is a Federal Agency that collects essential statistics on a range of economic and employment topics. Browse the database for general information on wages, trends, and job growth in your area.

LinkedIn- www.linkedin.com

A Social Network for professionals to showcase their experience and career choices. Find other professionals in your field to connect with, get a referral from someone in your network, and learn about available jobs. This site is used as a professional tool, and is growing rapidly with over 80 million members.