

Learn how employers hire so you'll know what they need and want  
Create a resume showing you are the solution to the hiring manager's needs  
How to answer 50 tough interview questions with ease

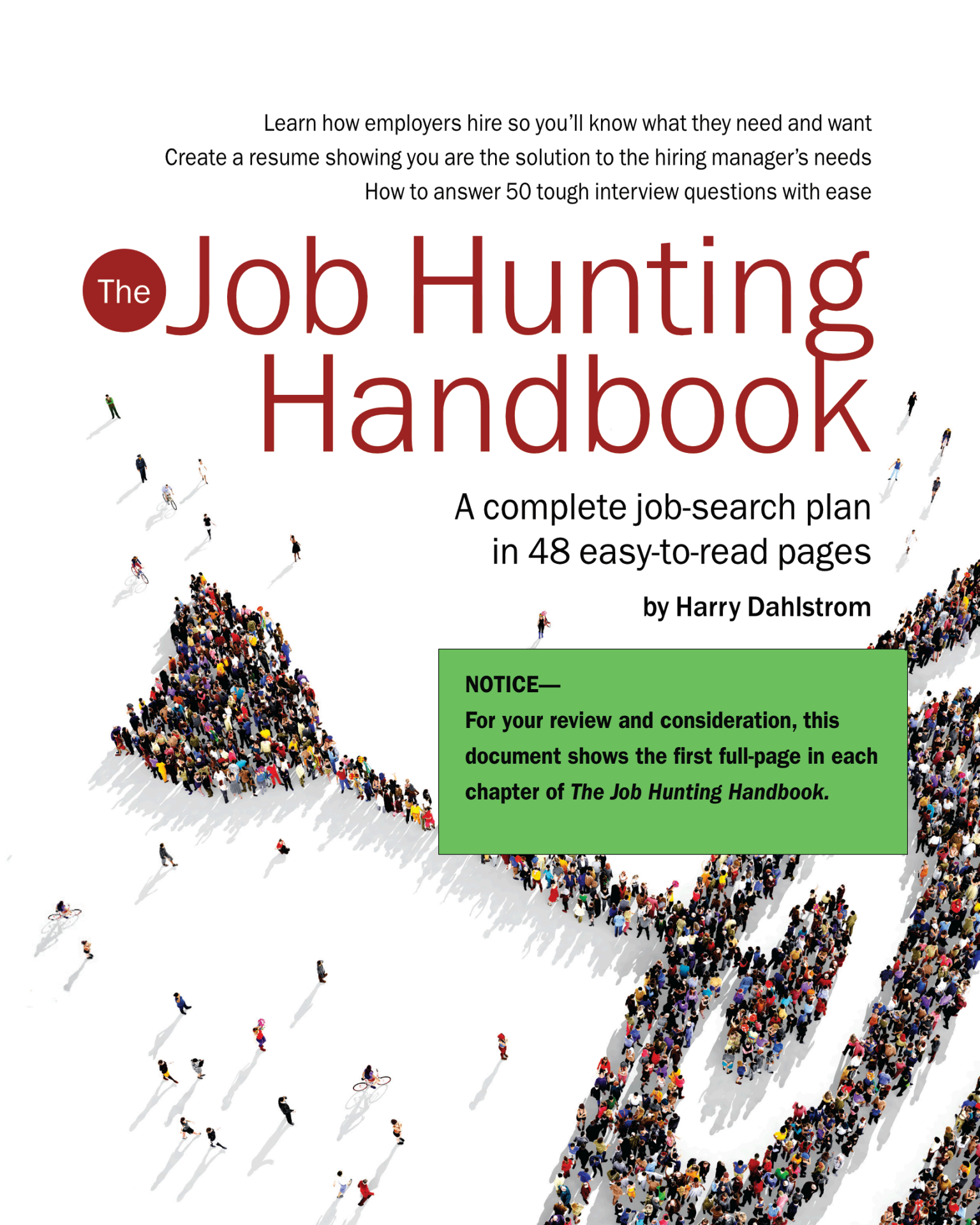
# The Job Hunting Handbook

A complete job-search plan  
in 48 easy-to-read pages

by Harry Dahlstrom

**NOTICE—**

**For your review and consideration, this document shows the first full-page in each chapter of *The Job Hunting Handbook*.**



## True or False

**1 Most job hunters spend three or four hours each day looking for work.**

False. Most job hunters spend 1.6 hours a day looking for work.

**2 The best way to get a job is to ask your friends to recommend you for a job opening where they work.**

True. The second-best way to get a job is to apply for jobs listed on an employer's own website. The third-best way is to apply for jobs posted on job sites like Indeed, LinkedIn, Careerbuilder, and Monster.

**3 Most job hunters find new jobs during the first month of their job hunt.**

False. In December 2024,

- 31.2% found new jobs within one month
- 28.9% found jobs within three months
- 17.6% found jobs within four months
- 22.4% needed more than five months

**4 Most Americans change employers after 4.1 years.**

True. But workers aged 45 and older tend to stay nearly twice as long.

**5 Hiring managers prefer to hire the friends of their employees.**

True. Friends and relatives of employees are the highest rated source of new hires.

**6 Hiring managers spend about 16 minutes reading each of the resumes and job applications they receive.**

False. Most hiring managers are looking for five or six key requirements. In less than one minute they can tell whether a person is qualified to do the job or not.

**7 Hiring managers interview one or two people for each job opening.**

False. Most hiring managers interview five or six people for each opening.

**8 Employers hire over 5 million new people each month.**

True. In 2024, employers hired 66-million people. That's an average, 5.5 million new hires a month.

**9 Small businesses hire more people than large businesses.**

True. Fifty-five percent work for small businesses. Twenty-six percent work for medium sized businesses. Nineteen percent work for large businesses.

**10 The average American worker earns more than \$1,000 a week.**

True. In December, 2024, the average American worked 34.3 hours per week at \$35.69 per hour and earned \$1,224.17, before taxes.

Sources • 1 CareerBuilder • 2 Jobvite • 3 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics • 4 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics • 5 Jobvite • 6 CareerBuilder • 7 Jobs2Web • 8 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics • 9 U.S. Census Bureau • 10 U.S. Employment Snapshot



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# **The Job Hunting Handbook**

Harry Dahlstrom

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Be sure to download the **FREE**, "US Employment Snapshot" at [www.DahlstromCo.com](http://www.DahlstromCo.com). It has current data on employment and unemployment by industry and occupation.

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# Welcome to the American job market.

The American job market is one of the most exciting marketplaces in the world. It's a place where millions of people compete for work. It's a place where careers are launched, where fortunes can be made, and where dreams can come true.

## Is there a job out there for you?

Of course there is. As you can see from the bar chart below, American employers hired 67 million new people last year. That's an average 5.6 million new hires each month.

## You will have competition.

Lots of people have been waiting patiently for the economy to improve so they can look for new or better jobs. There could be dozens, even hundreds, of people competing for every job opening you want.

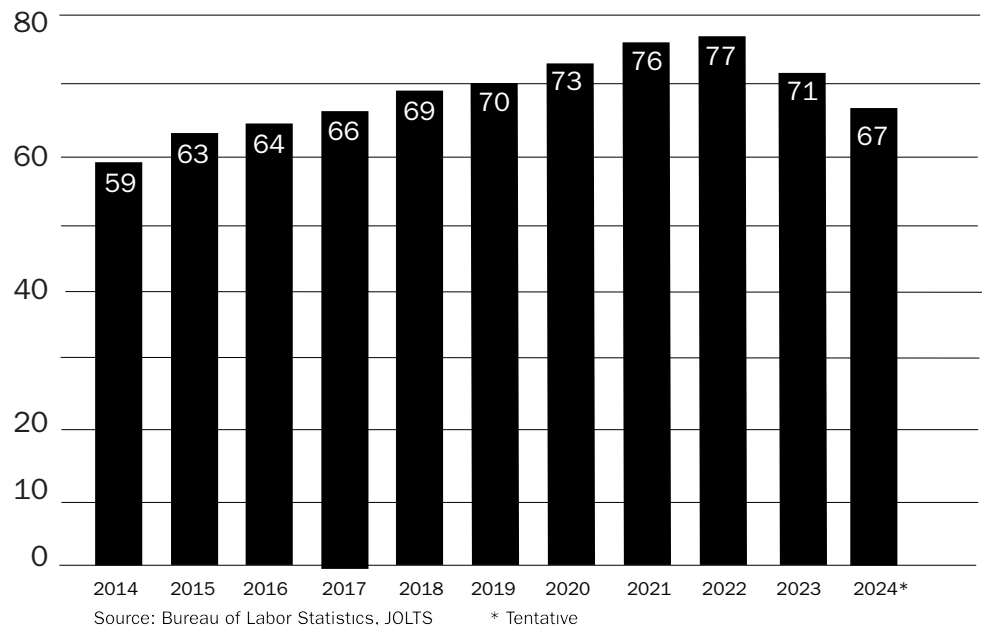
## But don't let the competition frighten you.

Most job hunters are not very organized. They don't have a plan. Too many people think job hunting means sitting in front of a computer, filling out a dozen job applications, crossing their fingers for luck, and waiting for an employer to call them. For most, no one ever calls.


## What if the job market should change and employers stop hiring?

Even during the worst recessions, it's amazing how quickly a hiring freeze will thaw when the right person starts chipping away at the ice.

Annual hires, in millions of people



# Job openings and wages for the 200 largest U.S. occupations, through 2033



**Occupational Data**

- 1 Occupation titles
- 2 Employment 2023, in thousands
- 3 Employment 2033, in thousands
- 4 Average annual job openings, in 000
- 5 Median annual wage, in US dollars
- 6 Typical entry-level education

**Educational Levels**

- NF No formal education required
- HS High school diploma or equivalent
- PS Post-secondary education, non degree
- SC Some college, no degree
- AD Associate's degree
- BD Bachelor's degree
- MD Master's degree
- DP Doctor or Professional degrees

1 2 3 4 5 6

Preschool teachers	528.5	551.8	61.4	\$37,130	AD	Parts salespersons	267.9	271.2	29.7	\$36,860	NF
Kindergarten teachers	122.7	121.8	13.3	\$62,690	BD	Retail salespersons	3,810.1	3,814.7	552.5	\$33,680	NF
Elementary school teachers	1,441	1,430.4	93.2	\$63,680	BD	Insurance sales agents	547.6	581.0	47.1	\$59,080	HS
Middle school teachers	640.0	635.3	41.4	\$64,290	BD	Securities, commodities	513.8	547.9	41.0	\$76,900	BD
Secondary school teachers	1,071.4	1,064.5	64.0	\$65,220	BD	Sales representatives	1,060.6	1,137.0	146.8	\$54,550	HS
Special education teachers	475.2	491.6	38.0	\$59,610	BD	Sales, wholesale, manufacturing	1,356.1	1,366.1	120.0	\$65,630	HS
Self-enrichment teachers	370.1	382.8	46.1	\$45,330	HS	Real estate sales agents	430.7	438.7	36.4	\$54,300	HS
Librarians	134.8	143.4	14.7	\$59,050	MD	Telemarketers	85.2	66.8	8.0	\$34,480	NF
Teacher assistants	1,380.3	1,435.7	153.9	\$26,970	SC						

## Office, Administrative Support

Bill, account collectors	196.5	177.8	17.0	\$44,250	HS
Billing, posting clerks	449.0	451.3	45.3	\$45,590	HS
Bookkeeping, accounting, auditing	1,663.8	1,579.9	174.9	\$47,440	HS
Payroll, timekeeping	160.3	136.2	12.8	\$52,240	HS
Tellers	350.3	298.8	27.3	\$37,640	HS
Customer service	2,954.6	2,805.8	365.3	\$39,680	HS
File clerks	87.2	73.9	8.3	\$38,130	HS
Hotel, motel, resort desk clerks	271.3	290.2	45.9	\$30,790	HS
Loan interviewers, clerks	206.1	201.2	16.3	\$47,380	HS
Human resources clerks	104.2	99.2	10.5	\$47,710	AD
Receptionists, information clerks	1,054.5	1,048.8	137.8	\$35,840	HS
Dispatchers	215.4	215.7	19.6	\$46,860	HS
Postal service mail carriers	316.7	307.1	21.9	\$56,330	HS
Shipping, receiving, inventory clerks	848.7	784.2	71.6	\$39,780	HS
Stock clerks, order fillers	2,056.6	2,091.3	279.5	\$25,700	HS
Executive secretaries	516.1	517.2	52.6	\$70,310	HS
Legal secretaries, assistants	154.2	146.3	18.1	\$50,680	HS
Medical secretaries, assistants	768.9	810.1	82.4	\$40,640	HS
Secretaries, assistants	1,982.3	1,976.2	214.4	\$44,280	HS
Data entry keyers	163.9	122.8	11.6	\$37,790	HS
Insurance claims, processing clerks	271.8	261.3	22.3	\$46,900	HS
Office clerks, general	2,645.8	2,498.2	284.6	\$40,480	HS

## Art, Design, Entertainment, Sports, Media

Graphic designers	267.2	273.8	21.1	\$58,910	BD
Actors	76.0	79.5	8.6	\$0	SC
Coaches, scouts	307.1	334.0	41.8	\$45,910	HS
Musicians, singers	169.3	172.8	20.4	\$0	HS
Public relations specialists	308.0	327.2	27.1	\$66,750	BD
Writers, authors	150.7	158.4	15.1	\$73,690	BD
Photographers	151.1	156.9	13.7	\$40,760	HS

## Healthcare Practitioners, Technicians

Pharmacists	337.7	355.9	14.2	\$136,030	DP
Physicians, surgeons	756.8	812.2	28.5	\$208,000	DP
Registered nurses	3,300.1	3,497.3	194.5	\$86,070	AD
Physical therapists	259.2	296.0	13.6	\$99,710	DP
Veterinarians	88.2	105.0	4.3	\$119,100	DP
Clinical laboratory	344.2	362.5	24.2	\$60,780	BD
Dental hygienists	219.8	243.5	17.9	\$74,820	AD
Radiologic technologists	227.8	241.0	13.3	\$73,410	AD
Emergency medical	262.1	280.8	19.9	\$34,320	PS
Pharmacy technicians	463.9	497.2	47.4	\$40,300	HS
Licensed practical nurses	657.8	674.7	54.0	\$59,730	PS
Medical records	215.5	238.6	16.8	\$40,350	PS

## Healthcare Support

Home health aides	831.8	1,136.6	140.8	\$24,200	HS
Massage therapists	147.1	173.2	22.8	\$55,310	PS
Dental assistants	376.5	408.0	54.9	\$46,540	PS
Medical assistants	783.9	901.9	119.8	\$42,000	HS

## Construction, Extraction

Carpenters	923.1	961.6	76.5	\$56,350	HS
Cement masons	211.8	210.3	15.2	\$50,720	NF
Construction laborers	1,401.2	1,516.6	133.1	\$45,300	NF
Operating engineers	468.0	487.6	41.5	\$56,160	HS

## Business & Finance

Chief executives	313.9	331.1	23.0	\$206,680	BD
General operations managers	3,630.1	3,840.5	320.8	\$101,280	AD
Marketing managers	389.1	420.8	34.8	\$157,620	BD
Sales managers	584.8	619.1	48.6	\$135,160	BD
Administrative services managers	300.2	322.0	28.1	\$96,180	HS
Computer, information systems	613.5	720.4	54.7	\$169,510	BD
Financial managers	837.1	975.3	75.1	\$156,100	BD
Industrial production managers	230.1	236.7	17.1	\$116,970	BD
Farmers, ranchers, agri. managers	856.6	842.9	88.5	\$83,770	HS
Construction managers	520.9	568.5	45.8	\$104,900	BD
Education, K-12 administrators	316.6	315.0	20.8	\$103,460	MD
Education, postsecondary administrators	216.4	222.7	15.2	\$102,610	MD
Architectural, engineering managers	210.2	221.8	15.0	\$165,370	BD
Food service managers	393.6	399.5	44.5	\$63,060	HS
Medical, health services managers	562.7	723.3	61.4	\$110,680	BD
Property, real estate managers	467.1	482.2	37.8	\$62,850	HS
Social, community service managers	199.5	215.9	17.8	\$77,030	BD

# Learn how employers hire so you'll know what they actually need and want.

Hiring new employees is tricky. First, it's expensive. It costs employers about \$4,000 to recruit and train each new person. Second, finding someone with the right skills and personality can be also be difficult. Sometimes dozens, even hundreds, of people can apply for each job opening. Here's the process that hiring managers use to find the best candidates.

## 1. The hiring manager begins the process by reviewing and updating the job description.

A job description is a document that explains the duties needed to perform a job. Every job has a job description.

The hiring manager will rely on that job description when writing help-wanted advertisements, reading resumes, screening job hunters, and conducting job interviews.

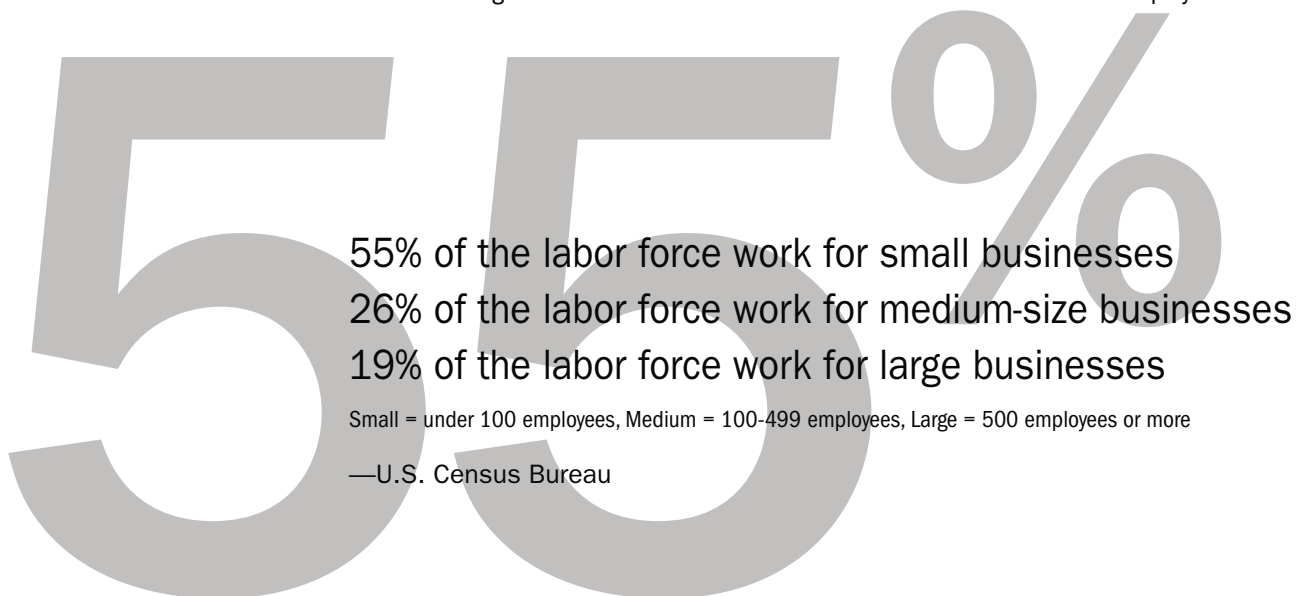
You might say that the job description is a yardstick. Anyone who applies for the job is measured against it.

## 2. The job opening is announced.

Most hiring managers will announce the job opening to their employees first. They know that some employees might want to apply for that job opening themselves.

Other employees might know some outside friends who would be a great fit for that job opening. These friends of employees are a hiring manager's favorite source for above-average applicants.

It's often said that 60 to 80 percent of all job openings are never advertised to the public. That's because current employees and friends



# Show employers that you have the “right stuff.”

Every occupation has certain requirements. Carpenters must know how to read building plans. Sales people must know how to close a sale. Customer-service people must know how to work with difficult people. Managers must know how to motivate people to get the job done. So, what’s the right stuff for your occupation? Don’t guess. Find out. Show that you have the technical skills employers are looking for. Here’s how—

**Let’s take it from the beginning—**

I’m sure you know what a portrait photographer does. So, let’s use that occupation in the following example:

**1. Name the job you want.**

- Portrait photographer

**2. List the requirements of the job from the help-wanted ad.**

- Capture the personality of the person.
- Set up the equipment for the photo shoot.
- Create the setting to get the best shot.
- Position and coach the subject.
- Schedule appointments to view photo proofs and sell photo packages.

**3. Select the first requirement from your list.**

- Capture the personality of the person.

**4. Give an example of when or where you performed it.**

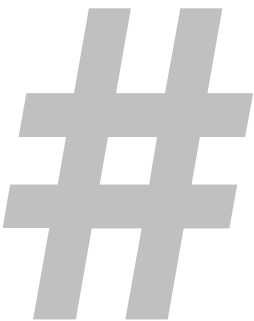
- Intern photographer, Snapshot Studio.

**5. Add some details showing what you did.**

- Six-month internship review: “Pleasant and helpful. Works well with difficult clients.”

**6. Repeat steps 3, 4, and 5 for each additional job requirement on your list.**

• • • •



“Lack of technical skills,” is the number-one reason employers have trouble filling job openings

—Manpower

# Use the “right stuff” to build a powerful resume.

Looking for a job? Then, you need a resume. Your resume is your calling card, your advertisement, your brochure, your flyer. It’s a one-page handout that shows you have what the hiring manager needs and wants.

## What can you do with a resume?

Mail it. Email it. Post it online. Ask friends to give it to their managers. Hand it out at job fairs. Give it to employment agencies.

The idea is to get your resume into the hands of as many hiring managers as you can. If a hiring manager likes what she sees in your resume, you’ll get invited to a job interview.

## What if you’re not a good writer?

That’s okay. Writing your resume is easy. You completed all the heavy thinking in the last chapter. All that’s left to do is type it up.

## Is there an official format or design you must follow?

No. There is no official format for writing your resume. You can set up your resume any way

you like. Feel free to change, modify, expand, ignore, or simplify any of the following suggestions. But, most people do include the following topics in their resumes—

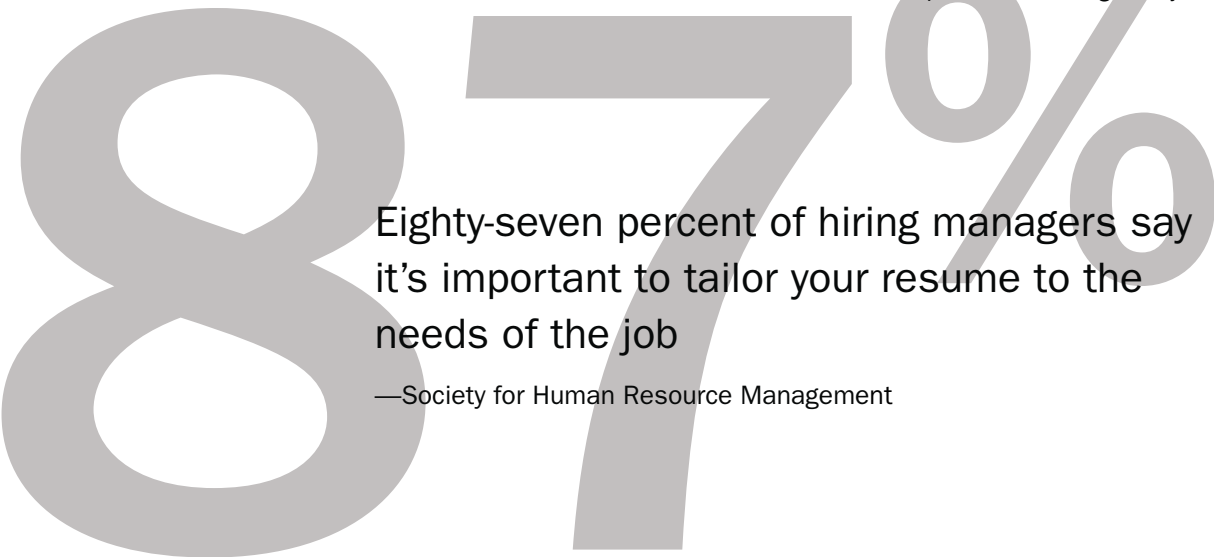
### 1. Your contact information

Tell employers who you are and how they can reach you. At the top of the page, type your name, address, phone, email, and maybe a link to your blog, LinkedIn, or Facebook site. See page 29 before adding your media site.

### 2. Your goal

In one short sentence, tell what kind of work you want:

- “Seeking full-time position as a dragon slayer.”
- If you have little or no experience, say that you are, “Seeking a full-time, entry-level position as a dragon slayer.”



Eighty-seven percent of hiring managers say it’s important to tailor your resume to the needs of the job

—Society for Human Resource Management

# Seven ways to get job interviews.

The job interview is your chance to sit down, face-to-face, with a hiring manager and convince her that she should hire you instead of someone else. How do you get a job interview? Here are some tips.

## • **Employee referrals**

Ask anyone you know, “How’d you get your job?” Most will tell you, “A friend helped me get a job where she works.”

When an employee recommends, or refers, a friend for a job, that’s known as an employee referral.

Hiring managers like to hire the friends of their trusted workers. Nine out of ten hiring managers say it’s their best source for recruiting above-average people. Friends are so valuable, some employers will pay a finder’s fee to an employee who brings in a new hire.

As the friend of an employee, you’ll have some special advantages over an outsider. Your inside employee knows when a coworker is about to leave the job. She knows when the team is short-

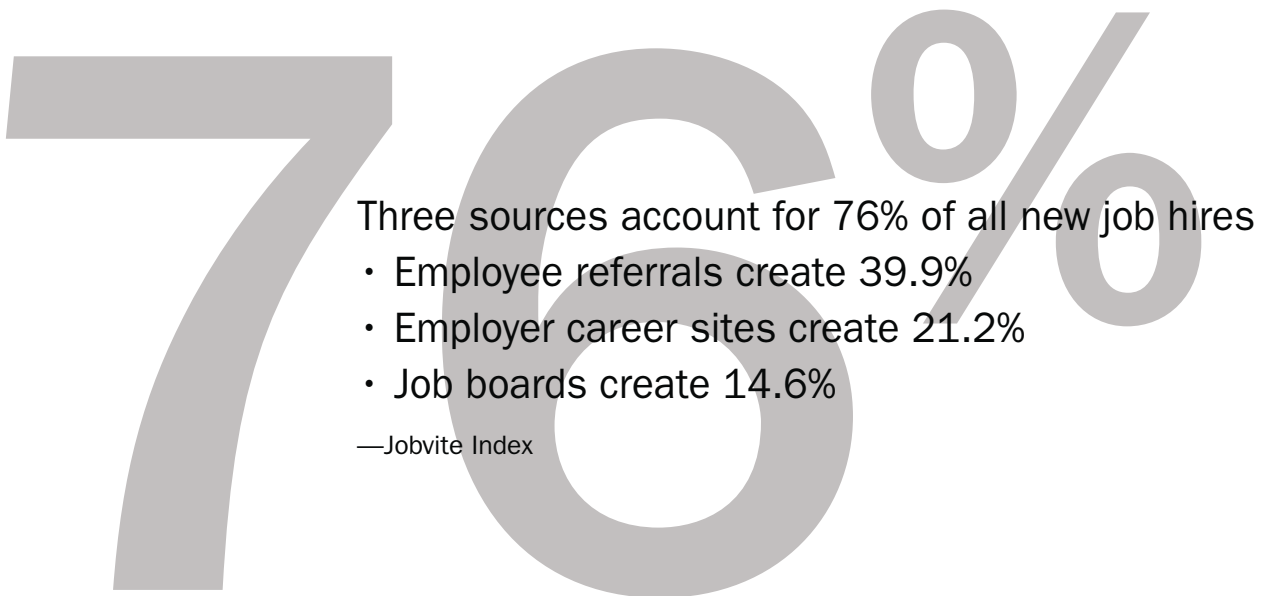
handed and needs help. She knows when the manager is planning to hire someone new.

Your inside employee can also tell you about the hiring manager—her interviewing style, the issues she is most concerned about, the type of person she wants for the job, the questions she is likely to ask, and the things you can do or say to impress the manager.

And here’s a bonus—unlike answering a help-wanted advertisement where dozens, or even hundreds of people might compete for the job, it’s not uncommon for friends to be hired with little or no competition at all.

### **How to get started:**

Make a list of all the people you know who work in the same field or occupation as you. Create that list from your phone contacts, social media, family, friends, relatives, neighbors, and even your old



## Let AIDA help you write a better cover letter.

A cover letter is a personal letter that you send with your resume or job application. It's the first thing the hiring manager sees when she opens your envelope or email. It's your hello, your smile, your chance to create a rapport, your reason for writing.

### **Not everyone sends a cover letter with their resume or job application.**

And that's why you should send one. It shows that you're different. It shows that you want the job, that you are serious, and that you took the time to write.

### **Send your letter to the proper person.**

Send your letter to the hiring manager. The hiring manager is usually the manager of the department where you want to work. If you want a job in sales, send your letter to the sales manager. If you want to work in maintenance, send you letter to the maintenance manager. At a small business, send your letter to the office manager or the owner of the business.

### **How can you get the hiring manager's name?**

If you are getting a referral from a friend, ask your friend for the hiring manager's name and address. Send your letter to that manager by name and title—Ms. Iva Joboffer, IT Manager. Make sure the manager's name, title, and address are accurate and spelled correctly.

If you'd like to write to a company but you don't know the manager's name, call the company. The receptionist who answers your call will be glad to give you the information you need.

If you are responding to an advertisement or job posting that gives no contact person's name, address your letter to, "Hiring Manager." Be sure to include the box number or job code if one is given in the advertisement.



Eighty-six percent of executives said cover letters are important when evaluating job candidates

—National Association of Workforce Development Professionals

# Get ready for the hiring manager’s phone call.

You found a job opening and applied for the position. Now, if the hiring manager likes what she sees in your resume, she’ll give you a call. Don’t underestimate the importance of this phone call. It’s actually a screening interview. The purpose of the call is to decide whether to invite you to a face-to-face job interview or not. Here are six tips to help you pass the screening and win an invitation to the interview.

## 1. Have a professional greeting.

You never know when an employer might call, so answer every phone call with a professional greeting. Sure, your friends will laugh when they call and hear you say, “Hello. This is Ken Dooit. How can I help you?” But the hiring managers will love it.

Also, record a new phone message. Something short and professional like this, “Hello. This is Ken Dooit. I’m not able to answer the phone just now. Please leave your name, number, and a brief message. I do check my messages often. I’ll return your call as soon as possible. Thank you.”

## 2. When they call you, most hiring managers will ask if this is a convenient time to speak with you.

Managers know that you have a life. If you’re at work, driving your car, or sitting in the dentist’s chair, it’s okay to arrange another time to talk.

When you return the manager’s call, choose a place where you’ll be free from noise, interruptions, and where your cell phone has good reception.

You might say, “Good afternoon, Ms. Hireyou. My name is Ken Dooit. I’m returning your phone call. I applied for your job opening as a tight-rope walker.”

## 3. Prepare and rehearse like this is a real interview.

Because it is. If you bomb this screening interview, you won’t get the face-to-face interview or the job offer.

Your telephone conversation with a hiring manager could last between ten minutes and an hour

—*Wall Street Journal*

## Find three people who will give you a positive recommendation.

You are a good worker. You give more than the minimum. You show up every day and you're never late. You're easy going and everybody likes you. Well, that's great. But the hiring manager wants proof. She wants to talk to three references—three people who can vouch for you.

### **Who should you include as references?**

Most hiring managers want three reliable references—from people not related to you. Ideally, they want the name of your current boss—but NOT if that boss doesn't know that you're looking for another job. In that case, they'll want the name of your previous employer.

Other good references might include former supervisors, coworkers, customers, teachers, coaches, and prominent people who know you. Prominent people might include an attorney, a banker, a doctor, a member of the clergy, or a local business owner who knows you.

### **Always ask before offering someone's name as a job reference.**

People who agree to serve as references almost always give a better recommendation than those who are not asked.

Those who are NOT asked are often caught off guard. They might struggle to remember who you are, what you did, and when you worked for them. To a hiring manager, this hesitation might sound like your reference is not eager to recommend you.

### **How to ask someone to be a reference.**

Call or visit them. Don't ask by text or email. You need to see each person's face or hear their voice when you ask.



Ninety-two percent of organizations do  
conduct background checks

—The Society for Human Resource Management

## How to fill-out a job application.

On the next few pages, you'll find questions commonly asked on most job applications. Use these pages to create a "copy sheet" with accurate dates, names, addresses, and numbers. Later, when you fill out a real job application you won't struggle to remember the facts. You can simply copy the information from these pages.

If you haven't completed the company's standard job application yet, you'll be asked to complete one before your job interview begins.

The application is part of the paperwork. It's a record that shows you applied for a job. It's also a legal document— you are asked to sign a statement giving the employer permission to check the facts in your application.

The way you complete the application makes a statement about the kind of worker you are.

A complete, accurate, and neat application says that you take pride in your work.

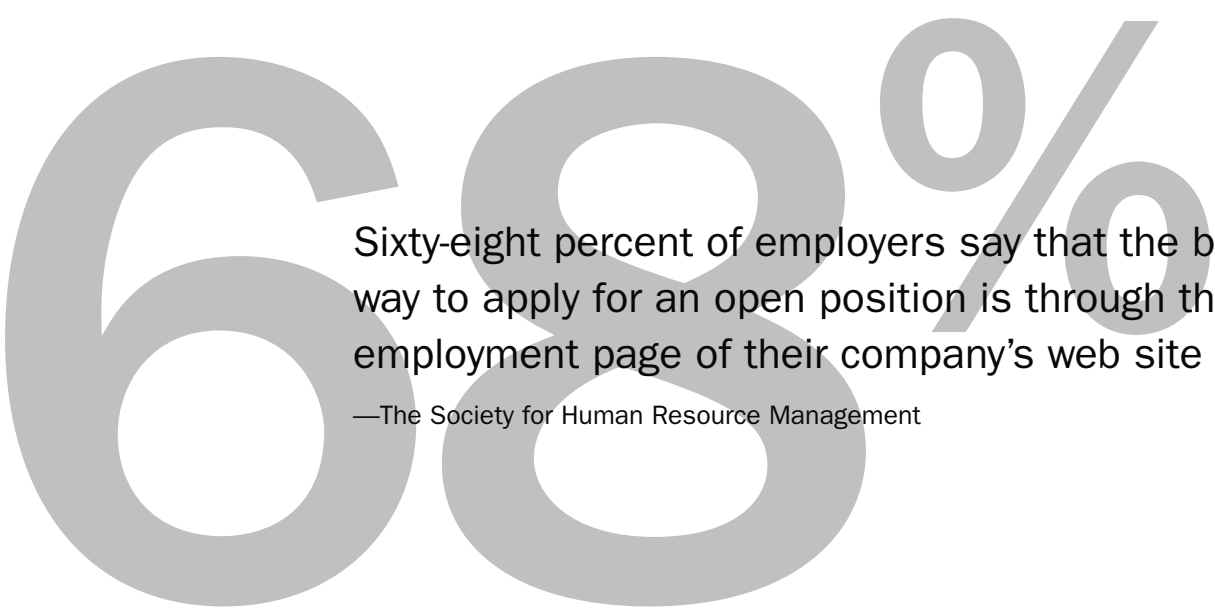
Missing information and information entered in

the wrong spaces, says that you didn't follow the instructions.

Misspelled names, partial addresses, wrong telephone numbers, and missing dates, say that you came unprepared.

Exaggerations make a statement about your truthfulness. When sitting across from the hiring manager, you don't want to be put in the awkward spot of having to admit that you embellished some of your answers.

Read the application carefully before you start. If you don't understand a question, ask for help. If a question does not apply to you, write "Not Applicable," or "N.A." in the space.



Sixty-eight percent of employers say that the best way to apply for an open position is through the employment page of their company's web site

—The Society for Human Resource Management

## What to wear to a job interview and why it matters.

Think about this—when you meet someone new, you size him or her up. In about a minute, you can decide whether or not you like that person. Well, hiring managers are good at sizing people up too. They see lots of job applicants and they can tell in a flash who will fit in and who will not. In a job interview, the goal is to show that you fit in. And the first thing a hiring manager will notice is how you look. Here's how to make a good, first impression:

### **Start with a good night's sleep.**

Employers expect to meet someone who is enthusiastic, energetic, and excited to be there.

### **Shower.**

It will help you look sharp, alert, and healthy.

### **Shampoo your hair.**

One of the first things the manager will look at is your hair. It makes a huge statement about your overall hygiene and cleanliness.

### **Brush your teeth.**

Get the manager to remember your ideas, your skills, your personality—not what you had for breakfast. Brush, floss, and use a mouthwash.

### **Use deodorant and an antiperspirant.**

The manager will think that you're as cool as a cucumber. Rub a little on your hands and you'll have a smooth dry handshake too.

### **Use eye drops.**

Get the red out and let your eyes twinkle.

### **Trim your nails.**

Guys, long fingernails are a turn off. Most hiring managers will notice when they reach to shake your hand. Ladies, hiring managers won't be impressed if long nails prevent you from doing the work.

Right or wrong, people do make assumptions based on the way we dress. In 3 to 5 seconds, they make judgements about our confidence, character, income, and personality

—Psychology Today

## Enthusiasm, the key to a great interview.

Hiring managers agree—enthusiasm separates the winners from the losers. It can be more important than experience. “Give me someone who’s enthusiastic and motivated,” explained one manager, “someone who’s alert and alive... someone who’s interested in what we do here... someone who’s excited about coming to work for me... someone who wants to help me as much as I want to help them.”

### **You don’t need to become one of those loud, back-slapping types.**

Just be yourself.

### **Plan to arrive ten-minutes early for your interview.**

It shows that you are excited to be there. Hiring managers are clock-watchers. They’ll notice.

### **Be extra courteous.**

Say hello, smile, and be friendly to everyone you meet. You can bet that the manager will

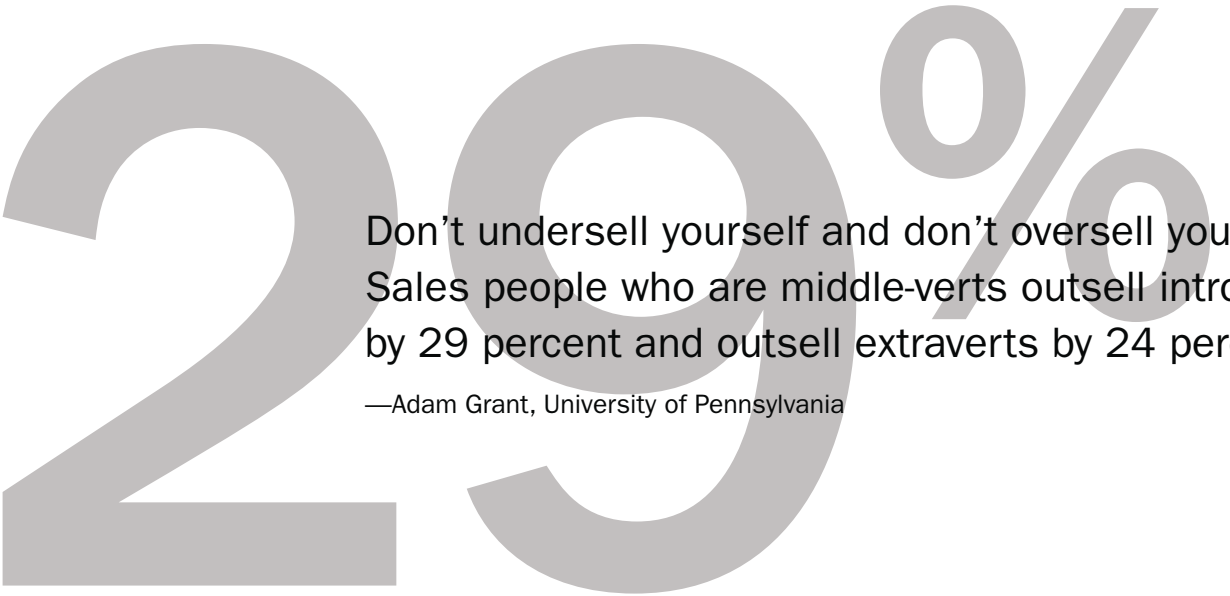
ask what they thought of you, after you’ve left the building.

### **Offer a professional greeting.**

When you meet the manager, stand up straight, look her in the eye, smile, extend a firm handshake, and say, “Ms. Joboffer, thank you so much for taking the time to interview me for your cat-herding position.”

### **About that handshake. . .**

Engage the full hand, palm to palm. Grip firmly to show that you mean it, but don’t crush. Look the other person in the eye. Smile. Pump two or three times. Release.



Don’t undersell yourself and don’t oversell yourself. Sales people who are middle-verts outsell introverts by 29 percent and outsell extraverts by 24 percent

—Adam Grant, University of Pennsylvania

## Navigate your way through a job interview.

Managers are expert interviewers and they know that you're going to be nervous. To help you relax and feel comfortable, they'll conduct the interview as if it were a casual, friendly conversation. Now, each manager has her own style and personality. There is no set format to a job interview. But there is a beginning, a middle, and an end. So, let's walk through the interview from beginning to end and see how it unfolds.

### • Your arrival

Come prepared for each interview. Don't wing it. Visit the company's website. Know who they are, what they do, and have a good reason why you want to work there.

When you first arrive, check in with the receptionist. Smile and introduce yourself. You might say, "Hi, my name is Luke Atmenow. I have a 4:14 appointment with Ms. Ida Hireyou in the Maple Syrup Department. When you have a moment could you please let her know that I'm here? Thank you."

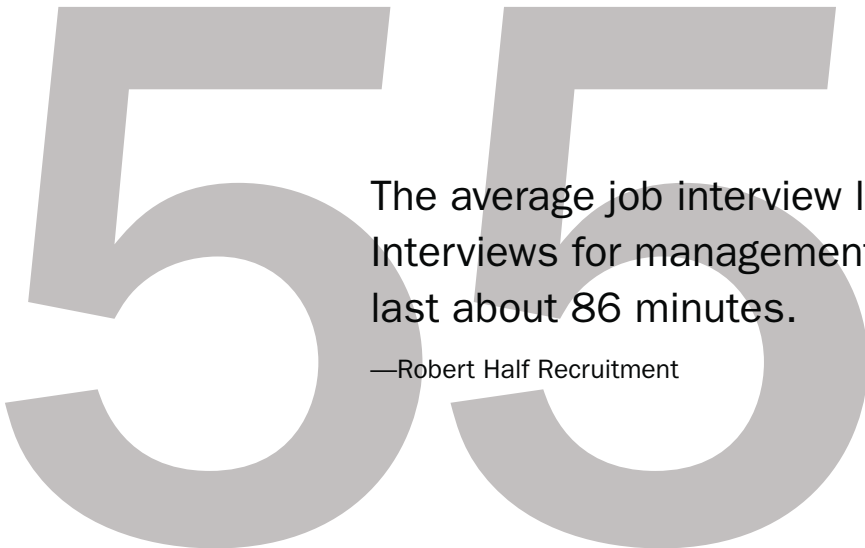
If you're wearing a winter coat or a raincoat, ask where you can hang your coat. Don't bring it into the interview with you. You'll look

awkward carrying it. Plus, carrying a coat gives the impression that this is a quick meeting and you'll be in and out in just a few minutes. Besides, what will you do with it once you're in the hiring manager's office? It's best if you hang your coat in the waiting room.

After checking your coat, visit the rest room. Check your hair, teeth, clothes and turn off your phone. Some hiring managers say they would not hire someone who took a cell call during a job interview.

Oh, while you're in the rest room, try this. Lock yourself into a stall. Then, strike the Superman pose. You know, feet apart, standing tall, hands on your hips, gazing upward. Hold that pose for two full minutes using your watch. You could walk into your interview feeling like you could change the world.

Seriously. A Harvard psychologist, Dr. Amy



The average job interview lasts about 55 minutes. Interviews for management-level positions last about 86 minutes.

—Robert Half Recruitment

# 50 questions to expect during your job interview.

## 1. "Can you tell me a little about yourself?"

Give your 15-second sales pitch from page 23. After you've given your sales pitch, hand the hiring manager a fresh copy of your resume plus your typed list of references. Next, this is important—ask for the hiring manager's business card. That business card will have all of the manager's contact information, including her email address and direct phone number. You'll need this information so you can stay in touch with the hiring manager after the interview is over.

## 2. "Tell me what you know about my company."

Before you go on the interview, be sure to visit the company's website. Get an overview of the company's key products and services. Google the company name for news. Find out who they are, what they do, and why you want to work for them.

## 3. "Why did you decide to become a snake charmer?"

Tell your story. Include lots of detail and use body language to bring your story to life. Add a touch of humor when appropriate.

## 4. "What skills or requirements do you think are needed for this job?"

Refer back to page 11. Use your fingers and count off the requirements: 1... 2... 3... 4... 5...

## 5. "What motivates you to do a good job?"

Money is not a good answer. Instead, try this: "Having responsibilities and getting a pat on the back when the job is done right."

## 6. "Why is customer service so important in business today?"

"Customers who receive helpful service from friendly employees are more apt to come back again and again. They are also more apt to tell their friends about us. Good service means more business."

## 7. "Why should I hire you instead of someone more qualified?"

Foot your horn. Tell the manager that you have more than good skills to offer—you're a team player, you're not afraid of hard work, you're a quick learner, you're reliable, you give more than just the minimum effort, and—you want to work for this company because...

## 8. "Did you ever have a disagreement with your boss?"

Answer "yes" and you're a troublemaker, answer "no" and you're a wimp. Find the middle ground: "Sure we disagreed. But we worked well together. For example..."

## 9. "Tell me about the toughest boss you ever worked for."

Never badmouth a former boss, it says you're a troublemaker. Instead, turn

a negative into a positive. "That would be Mr. Gray. He was a demanding, detail-driven perfectionist. But, I learned more from him than anyone I've ever worked with. For example..."

## 10. "What salary or wage are you looking for?"

Get the manager to throw out the first figure. Ask, "What salary or wage do you usually offer someone with my skills and abilities?"

## 11. "Tell me about your current (or last) job."

Give the company's name and what they do. Give your job title. List your duties and responsibilities. Explain your accomplishments.

## 12. "Why are you leaving that job?"

Job stagnation, demotions due to downsizing, or simply having made a poor choice are all good reasons.

## 13. "What will your manager say when you give notice that you're leaving?"

Explain why you'll be missed. Don't give the impression that they'll be glad to be rid of you.

## 14. "Did you enjoy school?"

The manager wants to know if you enjoy learning and whether you might benefit from a training program.

## 15. "In school, which course did you find most difficult?"

The manager wants to know if you have perseverance: "My first term in history, I got a D. My study skills were all wrong, so I joined a study group. By second term I pulled it up to a B and kept it there."

## 16. Did you participate in any school activities?"

School activities show that you're sociable. They show that you enjoy being part of a group and that you can work with other people. This is important in the work place.

## 17. "Do you plan to continue your education?"

Adding to your education says that you want to grow and prosper, professionally as well as personally.

## 18. "What do you hope to get out of this job?"

Try this—"A reasonable paycheck, responsibility for doing something that matters, a say in how my work is done, recognition by my coworkers for being good at what I do, and a pat on the back from the boss for doing a good job."

## 19. "Last year, how many days of work (or school) did you miss? How many days were you late?"

This will tell the manager whether you're going to show up for work on time

every day. If you've missed more than a few days, have some good explanations ready.

## 20. "What's your favorite book or movie? Why?"

Stay away from controversial issues.

## 21. "As a youngster, what did you do to earn your own spending money?"

Baby-sitting, lemonade stand, newspaper route, shoveling snow, mowing lawns, and other jobs show early signs of ambition and a respect for work.

## 22. "What do you do to relax after work?"

Don't brag about auto racing, bungee jumping, chain-saw juggling, or any other dangerous activity. They suggest a likelihood of injury and an absence from work. Instead, mention something wholesome like athletics, a hobby, a project, traveling, or entertaining friends.

## 23. "Are you at your best when working alone or in a group?"

"Both. I enjoy working as part of a team and I can work independently to get my share of the work done. For example..."

## 24. "Would you rather be in charge of a project or work as part of the team?"

"Either. I'm not afraid to take responsibility and I'm not afraid to roll up my sleeves and pitch in."

## 25. "Have you ever been fired from a job?"

Everybody gets fired from a job at least once in their lifetime. And don't be afraid to tell the truth if it was your fault. Fessing up says that you are a responsible, mature adult. Explain what happened. Explain what you learned. Explain what you would do differently if the same situation happened again.

## 26. "Tell me about your strengths."

From page 11, you know the five or six requirements needed for the job you want. Choose your strongest job requirements and offer examples to show how you excelled.

## 27. "What are your weaknesses?"

Choose one or two weaknesses that are not part of the job requirements. Be sure to include an action point to show what you did about each weakness. For instance, "I'm terrified of public speaking. I get so nervous I start to shake. So, I took a stand-up comedy class to help get over the jitters—and entertain my friends."

## 28. "Tell me about your favorite accomplishment."

A personal touch works well here, such as your marriage, birth of a child, or helping someone in need. You could also offer something both personal

# The art of the follow-up.

When you get home from your job interview, send the manager a thank-you note. Two days later, send the manager an *idea* note. A week after your interview, pick up the phone and give the manager a call.

## 1. Send a thank-you note.

Most job hunters do send thank-you notes. You should send them too.

Keep in mind that businesses are formal. Manners are important. Thank-you notes are expected. Managers look for these things.

Keep your thank-you note brief.

- Thank the manager for meeting with you and mention the date and job title you interviewed for.
- Say that you want the job.
- Give one or two solid reasons why the hiring manager should offer you the job.
- Offer the manager a thirty-day trial period to prove yourself.
- Say that you'd like to call in a week or so to see if she's made a decision.

Write your thank-you note and send it off within 24 hours of the interview while the manager still remembers you.

## 2. Send an idea note.

Now, here's something hardly any of your competitors will try:

During your interview, the manager asked if you had any questions for her. You said, "Yes, what are the major challenges the new hire will face in this job?"

Now, think about the manager's answer. If the problems are not confidential, discuss them with a friend or look for a solution online. Come up with a few suggestions. Then, send the manager a short note explaining your ideas.

Your suggestions don't have to be brilliant, just



Sixty percent of hiring managers say it's important for a job hunter to send a thank-you note after a job interview

—Society for Human Resource Management

## The Short Course.

People change jobs all the time. Some quit, some transfer to other departments, some are fired, some retire. Employers are always looking for good people to hire. Even during the worst recessions, it's amazing how quickly a hiring freeze will thaw when the right person starts chipping away the ice.

### **Show employers that you have the right stuff.**

Read some help-wanted ads for your occupation to see which skills and requirements today's hiring managers want. Then, create a job application, resume, cover letter, and sales pitch that offer what most employers are looking for.

### **Make a list of all the people you know who have jobs in the same field or occupation that you want to work in.**

When filling job openings, nine out of ten employers prefer to hire the friends of their trusted employees. Reach out to your friends who work in your field. Ask if they would give your resume to their hiring managers and put in a good word for you.

### **Contact five new employers every day.**

Every employer is not hiring today. You have to knock on a lot of doors to find the ones who are. So, in addition to contacting friends who work in the industry where you would like to work, apply for jobs posted on employer websites, as well as those listed on job sites like Indeed, Careerbuilder, ZipRecruiter and LinkedIn. Then, attend some job fairs, sign up with a temporary employment agency, and check the job listings at your school and state job centers.

### **If a hiring manager likes what she sees in your resume or job application, she'll give you a call.**

During this phone call, she will ask a few questions about your background and availability. If the manager thinks you are a good fit for the job, she'll invite you to a face-to-face job interview.

### **Managers are expert interviewers, and they know that you'll be nervous.**

To help you relax and feel comfortable, they'll conduct the interview as if it were a casual, friendly, conversation. But, you need to be prepared. Dress appropriately. Be respectful. Have a sense of humor. Show some enthusiasm. Have a good answer for each of the 50 questions a hiring manager might ask. If you want the job, be sure to ask for it while you're still in the manager's office.

### **When you get home from your interview, send the hiring manager a thank-you note.**

A few days later, follow-up with a short letter offering an idea, a clarification, or an insight into something discussed during your interview. A week after the interview, call the hiring manager to see if you got the job.

### **If you get the job—Congratulations!**

### **If you didn't get the job, here's a tip.**

Continue to contact five new employers every day. Plus, stay in touch with all the hiring managers you have met. Once or twice a month, send those managers a fresh copy of your resume, plus a short note to let them know that you are still interested in working with them.

### **Keep in mind that jobs open up all the time and a gentle persistence can pay off.**

The idea is to become the first person they think of when something new becomes available.

Best wishes, **Harry Dahlstrom**