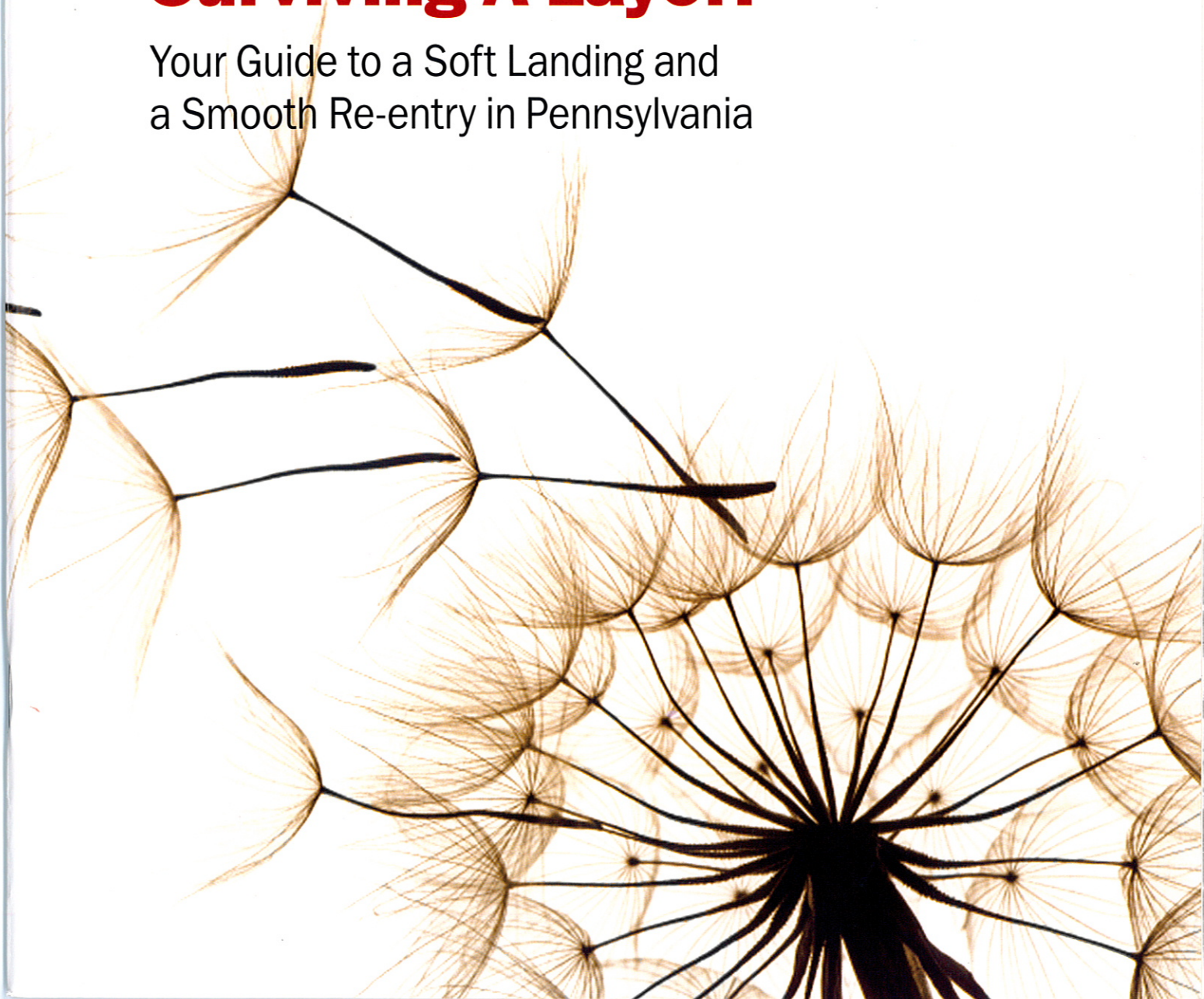


It's not your fault · How to tell your family · Take time to heal · How to pay your bills when you have no paycheck · Career change · The "hidden job market" · How to write a resume · 13 ways to get a job interview · How to impress a hiring manager · 50 interview questions to expect, with answers · 17 questions to ask · How to follow up · Starting Over

Surviving A Layoff

Your Guide to a Soft Landing and
a Smooth Re-entry in Pennsylvania



Surviving A Layoff

by Harry Dahlstrom

Surviving A Layoff

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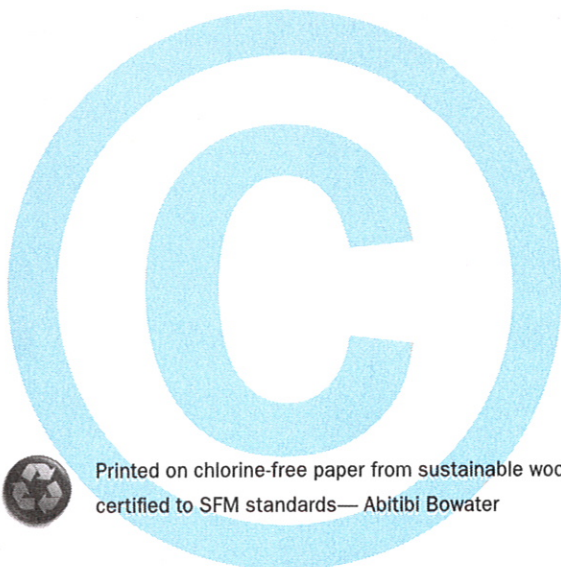
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It's not your fault

You didn't do anything wrong. Losing your job because you were laid off is not your fault. Don't confuse a layoff with a firing. They are two different things.

Q. "What's the difference between a firing and a layoff?"

Firings remove people. Layoffs remove positions.

People who are fired usually did something to deserve losing their job— theft, chronic absenteeism, or refusing to do the work.

People who are laid off did nothing wrong. Their job ended, usually because there wasn't enough work, the plant closed, or because the job or shift was abolished.

Q. "What if I handled the news badly?"

Everybody takes the news differently. Some clam up and say nothing. Some plead and beg. Some sob and cry. Some get angry and say things they later regret. Some are glad and can't wait to start something new.

The person who told you that you were being laid off is a professional. He or she knows that losing a job is traumatic and that people react emotionally, not rationally. They try not to take your reaction personally.

After a week or so, if you still feel guilty about how you reacted when the manager gave you the news, consider sending her a short note. Simply say that you were surprised by the news and that you became emotional. Say that you regret taking out your feelings on her.

A short, hand-written apology says more about your character than all the tears and cursing of that emotionally charged meeting.

Between January 2008 and January 2012, the United States averaged 1,819 mass layoffs affecting 179,000 people each month.

—U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Q. "How am I going to tell my family?"

Say it clearly. Try not to be dramatic or timid.

You might say, "I have sad news about my job. I've been laid off. The layoff is effective today and the decision is final."

Stress that you were laid off, not fired, and that the decision is final.

Layoffs are emotional and you'll want to talk about it. So, explain what happened—who laid you off, where they did it, what they said, how they said it, how you felt, and what you said to them.

Mention the names of the other people who were laid off with you, as well as those who were not, and how everyone felt.

Introduce some hope. Tell your family that lots of people find new jobs in a few months and their earnings are often as much or more than their previous jobs.

Plus, if you were burnt out by the kind of work you've been doing, now is a great time to look into a new line of work.

Q. "How am I going to make ends meet?"

Try not to worry about your finances today. Put it off for a day or two. Later, we'll show you how to handle your bills until you get on your feet again.

Q. "I'm a wreck over this."

Each of us lives in a "comfort zone." A comfort zone is an emotional place. It's a place where your work, your coworkers, and the demands of your job are routine and comfortable.

Suddenly, your "comfort zone" has been smashed and you can't fix it. You're in a mild state of shock.

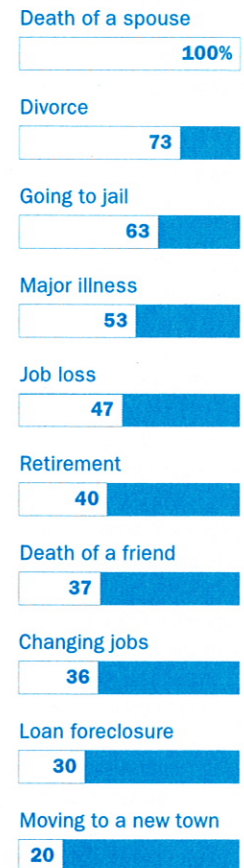
As you can see from the chart on the right, losing your job is stressful. It's right up there with learning that you have a serious illness.

Most of us will need a few weeks to heal and get back on our feet. Those who were deeply wounded by the layoff might need a few months to heal.

During this healing time, each of us will experience four different emotions. Turn the page—we need to talk about them.

COMPARING LIFE'S MAJOR STRESSES

If losing your spouse is the greatest stress, how do other stressful situations compare? Here's a partial list:



Source: Journal of Psychosomatic Research

Take time to heal

People react differently to losing their job. Some can shrug it off as if nothing happened. Some need time to grieve. A few are so wounded, they may need a little help.

Q. "I'll be okay. I just need some time."

Time is important in the grieving process.

Q. "Grieving process, what's that?"

Whenever we lose something that's important to us, we grieve. Grieving is an emotional process that helps us cope with our loss. It has four basic stages:

- **Shock.** A disbelief that this has happened to you.
- **Anger.** A feeling that you have been wronged.
- **Mourning.** A sadness and longing for what is gone.
- **Acceptance.** The eventual desire to get

on with your life.

Q. "Shock. I was shocked by the layoff. I didn't see it coming."

Most people can handle the shock. It usually wears off in a few days.

But, some have difficulty with it and do irrational things.

Some escape by going on huge spending sprees or taking expensive vacations when they should be conserving their finances. Others rush to return their new TV, car, or furniture and cancel the debt.

Try not to make any important decisions for a few days. Instead, give the shock a few days to wear off. Try to relax for a few days. Do the things you love to do. Spend some time with your family. Take a day trip. Read a novel. Clean the garage. Get away from "the job."

911

If you have thoughts of hurting yourself or hurting someone else, pick up a phone and dial 911. Help is only a phone call away.

Q. "Anger. Do I have a right to be angry?"

Yes, you do. Anger is a natural emotion. Once the shock of losing your job wears off, you're going to feel it.

In your anger, you may fantasize about punching the boss in the nose, filing a lawsuit, or writing a letter to the newspapers.

Fantasizing is one thing. Following through is another.

Keep in mind, that you are going to need another job. If you file a frivolous lawsuit, write libelous letters, or assault someone—it could haunt you for decades. Background checking is big business these days. Future employers will learn about your mischief and they will shun you.

Instead, find a good sounding board. A sounding board is someone who will listen to your complaints—over and over again.

Don't use your spouse, parents, or kids as a sounding board, though. They'll get sick of it.

The best sounding boards are people who have also lost their jobs. Find those fellow victims. Get together, scream, shout, cry, and vent that anger together.

Q. "Mourning. I'm going to miss my friends."

So give them a call or meet them for lunch. Stay in touch.

Don't forget those other people who were laid off with you—the grumpy lady who ran the copier, the funny guy who worked in payroll, and that kid with the tattoos who taught you all those computer tricks.

Get in touch with them too. Tell them you were thinking about them. Ask how they're

doing. Feed them some encouragement. You'll feel good for reaching out and they'll think you're special because you cared.

Then, try this—send two hand-written notes, one to your old boss and the other to the CEO of the company. Thank them for your old job and all the great things you learned there. Add a short personal story about an opportunity you were given and what it meant to you.

When you need a reference for a new job, that note will speak volumes about your character.

Q. "Acceptance. How long will it take for me to get over all of this?"

Everybody's different. Some experts think most of us need several weeks to cycle through the grieving process.

But, if you still have difficulty coping with daily life two weeks after losing your job, you may be suffering from clinical depression.

Clinical depression is a serious but treatable illness. Some of the symptoms include: low energy, poor appetite, can't sleep, feeling worthless, feeling hopeless, can't concentrate, blaming yourself.

If you have several of these symptoms two weeks after losing your job, call your doctor.

Q. "Right now, my biggest worry is money."

Okay, let's talk about money. Flip the page.

ON THE HOME FRONT

This is a touchy subject. Like it or not, here it is.

Some men who lose their jobs become jealous of their working wives. They no longer see themselves as breadwinners. So, they belittle their spouses and minimize the importance of their jobs.

Then too, some wives become resentful of their unemployed husbands. They see themselves single-handedly supporting the family and it can seem overwhelming.

When you're itching for an argument, get out of the house and go for a brisk walk. A brisk walk can calm the frustration, physically as well as emotionally. You might also call a laid-off friend and tell them how you feel. They know what you're going through and they're usually willing to listen.

Women who lose their jobs cope better than men. They are less likely to resent their working husbands.

Jealousy almost always stems from a lowered self-esteem. That is, not thinking you're very important.

The best way to handle jealousy is to talk about it. Find out what's expected of you, what's expected of them, and create some "temporary roles."

Then, make an effort to show respect for the other person and how they might feel.

How to pay your bills when you have no paycheck

Money. Here's a subject that really scares unemployed people. Now, before you panic, take a deep breath and relax. We're going to walk through your money problems and show you a few things you might not know—things that could make your hard times a bit more bearable.

Q. "Where do I start?"

The first thing you need to do is to sign up for unemployment-insurance benefits from your state.

Q. "Oh, I'd be embarrassed to sign up for benefits."

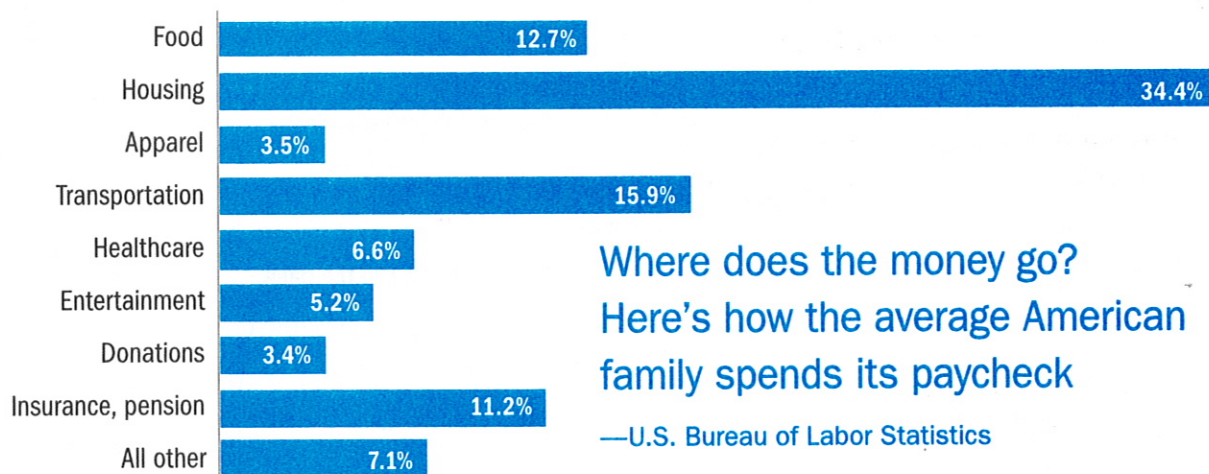
Don't be. The government requires employers to buy unemployment insurance for their employees. This insurance provides a financial cushion for employees who lose their jobs.

It's insurance, not a handout. Your employer paid for this insurance. Don't be embarrassed about signing up.

Q. "How do I file a claim?"

Each state has different rules for eligibility. So, call your local benefits office and ask how to file a claim. You can find their telephone number by Googling "unemployment insurance" and your state's name. Or, look in the "Business Section" of your telephone book. They're listed under your state's name: "Massachusetts › Employment › Unemployment Insurance."

When you call, the benefits agent will ask a few questions to see whether you qualify to receive benefits. So, have the following information handy—your Social Security Number or alien registration number if you are not a citizen, your last day of employment, your employer's



name and address, and the reason you are no longer working.

Q. "How much money will I get?"

It depends on how much money you earned while working and how long you worked. Plus, each state pays different amounts and the amounts change year to year. The benefits agent will explain how much you are qualified to receive when you register.

Keep in mind, though, these benefits are only a financial cushion—they will not replace your full paycheck.

Q. "I don't even know how much money I'll need every month."

Use the worksheet on the right to tally up the numbers. It's as easy as 1...2...3...

Q. "What if I don't have enough income to make ends meet?"

Then, you'll have to dip into your savings.

So, remember that emergency fund with three-months pay that you stashed away for a rainy day? Well, it's raining. You're going to need that money to make ends meet.

Huh? You never got around to creating that emergency fund?

You have four options:

1. Reduce your spending and live within your new means.
2. Find extra money to reduce your cash gap.
3. Ask your creditors to reduce your bills until you find another job.
4. Get help from a non-profit credit counselor.

For details, turn the page—

REVIEW YOUR FINANCES

1. Add up your monthly income

Unemployment Benefit	\$	_____
Spouse's Paycheck		_____
Other Income		_____
Total Income ¹	\$	_____

2. List your monthly expenses

Figure what you spend monthly for each of the following items. On credit cards, list your current minimum monthly payment.

Rent or Mortgage	\$	_____
Heat		_____
Light		_____
Phone		_____
Food		_____
Clothing		_____
Insurance		_____
Taxes		_____
Auto Loan		_____
Credit Card		_____
Credit Card		_____
Credit Card		_____
Other Loan		_____
Donations		_____
Medical, Healthcare		_____
Transportation		_____
Entertainment		_____
Other		_____
Total Expenses ²	\$	_____

3. Establish the gap

Subtract your Total Expenses from your Total Income to see whether you have a positive or a negative cash flow.

Total Income ¹	\$	_____
Total Expenses ²		_____
The Cash Gap	\$	_____

1 REDUCE YOUR SPENDING

Go frugal

Turn off the lights and the TV when you're not using them. Put a full load in the washer/dryer. When it's cold, set the thermostat to 68° and put on a sweater. In the summer, use a fan when it's hot. If you find a great price on gasoline—fill up your car's gas tank.

Stop carrying your credit cards

Pay with cash. Can't part with your credit cards, try this: Fill a one-gallon plastic container with water. Put all your credit cards in the container of water. Put the container in the freezer. Freeze your spending.

Plan a weekly meal menu

Prepare a list of the foods you'll need for that menu. Clip discount coupons from the newspapers and store circulars. Did you know we throw away over \$100 a month in discount coupons? Shop aggressively for the best price and bring only enough cash to pay for the things on your list. Buy the store brands. Before you get to the checkout counter, put back 10 percent of the things in your basket—especially snacks, beverages, and prepared foods.

Stay away from restaurants

We spend about 13 percent of our total income on food. Almost half that amount is spent in restaurants, snack bars, vending machines, and fast food joints. Eat at home or brown-bag a lunch.

Stay away from the malls

Americans visit some kind of a mall at least twice a week. A lot of us have the notion that shopping is some form of entertainment—it's not. If you have to go to a mall, bring a list of the things you truly need and bring only enough cash to buy what's on your list.

Trim your entertainment

Americans spend a lot of money on entertainment each month—movie rentals, cable TV, sports, hobbies, toys, and lottery tickets—just to name a few. Cut back until you find a new job.

HOW TO CUT THE FAT OUT OF YOUR SPENDING

Here's a more detailed list of personal expenses. Figure what you spend monthly on each item. Then, cut the fat and create a spending plan you can live with while you're out of work.

	Old Habits Enter your average monthly spending for each item	New Cuts How much could you cut from each item every month	New Spending Subtract New Cuts from Old Habits to find your new spending limit
Groceries	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
Dining Out	_____	_____	_____
Rent/Mortgage	_____	_____	_____
Household	_____	_____	_____
Heat	_____	_____	_____
Electricity	_____	_____	_____
Telephone	_____	_____	_____
Clothing	_____	_____	_____
Medical	_____	_____	_____
Barber, Beauty	_____	_____	_____
Entertainment	_____	_____	_____
Gifts	_____	_____	_____
Auto Loans	_____	_____	_____
Auto Gas, Tolls	_____	_____	_____
Public Transit	_____	_____	_____
Credit Card	_____	_____	_____
Credit Card	_____	_____	_____
Credit Card	_____	_____	_____
Other Loans	_____	_____	_____
Insurance	_____	_____	_____
Taxes	_____	_____	_____
Education	_____	_____	_____
Savings	_____	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____	_____
TOTALS	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____

2 FIND EXTRA MONEY TO REDUCE THE CASH GAP

Collect old debts

Stop and think—does anyone owe you money? If someone owes you money, now is the time to ask for it. If they don't have the cash to repay you, put them on a time payment plan. Get them to make weekly or monthly payments to you until the debt is repaid.

Turn unwanted things into gold

Take a walk through your home and take an inventory of the things you no longer need or use—baby furniture, old kitchen set, golf clubs, air conditioner, power tools, stereo equipment, cameras, musical instruments. Look through your closets, basement, attic, garage, or storage space too. Run an ad on eBay or in the classified section of your local newspaper and unload those unwanted things for cash.

Turn stuff into gold

If you have boxes of stuff that aren't worth the cost of advertising, have a yard sale or a sidewalk sale. People are always willing to spend a few bucks on books, clothes, hand tools, toys, dishes, lamps,

fans, appliances, and anything else of small value.

To pull in the paying customers, wait for a nice weekend, pile the stuff outside where people passing by can see it, and hang a "yard sale" sign out front and at the street corners.

Unload the family jewels

Do you have valuables that you'd like to sell? If you have jewelry, a coin collection, silver service, a gold watch, antique furniture or rugs—have them appraised. After you get the written appraisal, ask the appraiser to recommend the best way to sell the item.

If the items have strong sentimental value, offer them to your relatives first.

Change your lifestyle

Are you living beyond your means? Are your home, your car, or your dining habits leaving you broke? A smaller home, a smaller car, and more home-cooked meals could leave you healthier, wealthier, and wiser.

HOW TO CASH IN ON YOURSELF

1. Do you have a talent or skill?

Can you give music lessons, write resumes, take wedding photos, draw or illustrate, decorate cakes, tutor students, create web sites, network computers, sew or do alterations?

What talents do you have that people or local businesses might need?

2. Do you have any free time?

You don't need a special talent to make extra money on your own. Lots of people are looking for someone to do odd or routine jobs—babysit, run errands, check on an elderly relative, prepare a meal, clean things, move things, fix things, pull weeds, detail the car, or walk the dog. Did you know that dog walkers in a big city can earn \$15 an hour?

What services could you offer?

3. Now, bring in the paying customers:

- Put a classified ad in your local newspaper.
- List your service in local online bulletin boards, like Craigslist.org.
- Distribute flyers to homes and businesses in your area.
- Hang flyers on the bulletin boards at supermarkets, places of worship, and community centers.
- Leave a flyer beneath the windshield wiper of cars parked on the street.
- Ask friends to refer you to their friends and employers.

3 CALL YOUR CREDITORS AND ASK TO HAVE YOUR BILLS REDUCED

Job loss is a real crisis

Your creditors know how devastating a job loss, illness, divorce, or a natural disaster can be. Don't feel embarrassed or ashamed about losing your job. The layoff was beyond your control. What does matter is how you handle your hardship. If you inform your creditors early on, and ask for help, they'll work with you. But, if you say nothing and force them to come looking for you, then they'll be less sympathetic when they learn about your hardship.

Call your creditors before they call you

Call all of your creditors: credit cards, auto loan, landlord, mortgage company, heat, light, phone, taxes—everybody. On your monthly bill, look for a statement like, "Billing Inquiries" or "Billing Errors." There should also be a toll free telephone number listed. Call that number and ask to speak with the credit manager.

Tell how much you can afford to pay

Don't let the credit managers set the amount that you must pay each month. Instead, tell them how much you can afford to pay. Use the worksheet on page 10 and figure what you can pay.

Everybody gets nervous

If you get nervous when talking to a credit manager—STOP. Take a deep breath—tell the manager that you are very nervous and that you've never asked for anything like this before. That will often bring a smile to the manager's face and she'll become more sympathetic.

Not a negotiator?

If you don't feel comfortable calling each of your creditors and negotiating a reduced monthly payment, you might ask a friend or a relative to call for you. But, if you don't want them to know all the details of your finances, ask a credit counselor for help. See page 13 for more information about credit counselors.

Important note

You need housing, heat, light, and food to survive. You need a telephone and a car to find a job. If money gets terribly tight and you cannot pay all your bills—pay those bills. Call everybody else and explain that they'll have to wait.

HOW TO TALK TO YOUR CREDITORS

Take the offensive: Call your creditors before they call you. Work out a reduced payment program. Before you call, be sure to have your current statement, account number, a pen, and paper handy. Be friendly, courteous, but businesslike. Here's a script you can use:

1. Introduce yourself

"Good morning, Ms. Cashhold. My name is Bill Debt. Thank you for taking my call."

2. Get down to business

"Ms. Cashhold, six weeks ago I lost my job. I'm behind on my payments to you."

3. Ask for help

"I need some help. Could we arrange a special payment program until I get on my feet again?"

4. Prepare to negotiate

"I'm sorry, but I can't afford to pay that amount."
"I have several other creditors that I'm also calling this morning. I can afford to pay you \$50 a month. That's half my usual payment. At that rate, I can afford to make ends meet and you'll receive a steady monthly payment. In a few months, I should have another job and I'll resume making my full payments."

5. Get an agreement

"Thank you Ms. Cashhold. Yes, I understand. My credit privileges are suspended until I return to work. Until then, I'll pay \$50 a month. You will call periodically to check on my employment status."

6. Thank the creditor

"Thank you for working with me, Ms. Cashhold. Please send me a written confirmation of our agreement."

4 GET HELP FROM A NON-PROFIT CREDIT COUNSELOR

You don't have to be in debt to get help from a credit counselor

But, if you are in debt, the sooner you call a credit counselor the better off you'll be. Sadly, too many people wait too long and the only option left is bankruptcy. So, if you lost your job, if you survived a natural disaster, if you went crazy and bought something you cannot afford—call a credit counselor. You'll be amazed at what they can do to help you.

Credit counselors are good listeners

A good credit counselor will listen to your story. She'll encourage you to talk and get things off your chest. She'll ask lots of questions. She'll tell you about other situations where people faced the same problems you face. She'll tell you what they did—what worked and what didn't work. She'll help you figure out a plan. She'll help you put that plan into action. She'll become your coach, your cheerleader, your friend.

Depending on your situation, credit counselors can—

- Create a plan that lets you live within your means
- Rebuild your reputation with your creditors
- Stop the collection calls

and legal notices

- Reduce your monthly payments
- Reduce your interest rate
- Waive late fees
- Re-age your account so that it's not in default
- Consolidate all your bills into one payment
- Offer motivation, education, & encouragement
- Prevent bankruptcy

Counseling is surprisingly affordable

Counseling from a non-profit agency is usually free to the needy. The not-so-needy might be charged \$75 for a one-hour counseling session.

Creditors prefer to work with a counselor

Over the years, credit counselors have built up solid relationships with local creditors. The counselors have a history, a track record, and a reputation that creditors trust. If a counselor calls a creditor on your behalf, it says that you are serious about taking control of your bill—and that's good enough for most creditors.

HOW TO CHOOSE A CREDIT COUNSELOR

All credit counselors are not the same. Some businesses masquerade as credit counselors but they're really selling debt consolidation loans, bankruptcy services, or debt negotiation programs.

Where to find a credit counselor

- The U.S. Bankruptcy Court maintains a list of their approved credit counseling agencies at—www.usdoj.gov/ust
- The National Foundation for Consumer Credit maintains links to their member agencies at—www.nfcc.org
- The Association of Independent Consumer Credit Counseling Agencies maintains links to their member agencies at—www.aiccca.org
- The Better Business Bureau can tell you if an agency has a history of consumer complaints—www.BBBonLine.org.

Call three agencies. Compare services and fees

Here are some questions to ask—with straight answers:

- Is your agency a non-profit organization? (Yes.)
- Is your agency licensed? (Yes.)
- Are your counselors certified or enrolled in a certification program? (Yes.)
- Will I receive a thorough financial interview, a written evaluation, a best-case solution, and education to help prevent future financial problems? (Yes.)
- How long will the session take? (About an hour.)
- What is the cost of the session? (About \$75.)
- Are there any monthly fees for joining a DMP—Debt Management Program? (About \$50 a month.)
- What if I can't pay your fees? (No one has ever been turned away due to an inability to pay.)
- Do you also offer affordable workshops, classes, or free educational material? (Yes.)
- Are your employees paid more if I sign up for certain services, such as a DMP? (No.)
- Would I get a written contract with free information about services, payment terms, total cost, and the time needed to achieve results? (Yes.)

This could be a good time to consider a new line of work

After losing their jobs, a lot of people think about switching to a new line of work. Whether you're happy with your current line of work or not, it's nice to know you have other options.

Q. "What kind of work should I switch to?"

First, you don't have to switch careers at all. If you're happy with the work you do, or if it's impractical for you to change careers, stay put. But, if you've ever wondered whether you are more suited to a different kind of work, now is the time to check.

Q. "Where do I start?"

• **Start with your wish list.** What kind of job excites you? What kind of job would you like to do if you could start your life all over again?

• **Think about your hobbies and interests.** Could you turn something you love into a new career?

• **Think of the things you can do.** Do you have a special talent, skill, or ability that you could turn into a career?

• **Think about the special knowledge you have.** Could you apply anything you know to a new career?

• **Think of the people you know.** Does someone have the kind of job that you'd like to have?

Q. "I'm not sure about any of those."

Would you like a more scientific approach to selecting a career?

Log onto a computer and Google, *career tests* in the search box.

These career tests ask about 30 multiple-choice questions. They analyze your answers and come up with a personality profile. Then, they match your profile to several career fields that go well with your personality type.

Most of the tests are free, so give them a try. The results can be very interesting. One caution, however—no test is totally accurate. Take several tests and use the results only as a guide.

The Standard Occupational Classification System includes over 840 separate occupations in the United States

—U.S. Department of Labor

Q. "If I find a career that interests me, how can I learn more about it?"

First, flip to pages 16 and 17 in this book and get the scoop on the typical wages, demand, and training for that occupation.

Then, visit www.dol.gov. That's the U.S. Department of Labor's web site. Click on "Occupational Outlook Handbook." There, you'll find detailed job descriptions on hundreds of different occupations.

Once you've zeroed in on a career that excites you, go out and talk to people who work in that occupation. The idea is to learn what they like and dislike about their work.

To find someone who works in that job, talk to your friends, relatives, teachers, preachers, politicians, beauticians, barbers, realtors, police officers, business owners, or a counselor at your state's One Stop Career Center. You can find your local office by Googling "One Stop Career Center" plus your state's name. Or you can visit, servicelocator.org.

Ask if they know someone who works in the job you want. Then, ask if they would call that person and set up a telephone meeting for you.

Q. "Is this for real—do people really get together and talk about their jobs?"

You bet they do. It's called "informational interviewing" and it's one of the best ways to learn about the real job.

Q. "What kind of questions should I ask this person?"

When you meet, be friendly and inquisitive. Here are some questions you might ask:

- How did you get into this line of work?
- What are your duties and responsibilities?
- What skills are needed to do this job?
- Tell me about your typical day at work.
- What do you like most about what you do? Why?
- What do you dislike most about what you do? How do you cope?
- What do employers really look for when hiring?
- Who are the major employers?
- Does the future look healthy for employment in this field?
- Any advice for someone looking for a first-time job in this field?

After the meeting, be sure to send a short thank-you note to the person you met as well as the person who introduced you. These people might become important contacts when you begin searching for a job.

WHAT ARE THE PROS AND CONS OF YOUR NEW CAREER?

Will you enjoy the work for the mere pleasure of doing it?

YES ☐ NO ☐

Will the work be interesting enough that problems become challenges instead of frustrations?

YES ☐ NO ☐

Is the product or service you'll offer needed, worthwhile, and reputable?

YES ☐ NO ☐

Are the people you'll work with and the customers you'll serve, the kind of people you'll be proud to be associated with?

YES ☐ NO ☐

Will you feel respected for the work you do?

YES ☐ NO ☐

Will you make a comfortable wage and be able to provide your family with the things they want and need?

YES ☐ NO ☐

Are there opportunities for personal and professional growth in this field?

YES ☐ NO ☐

Is this a growing occupation with a good outlook for employment? (see pages 16 and 17)

YES ☐ NO ☐

Wages & Demand for America's Top 175 Occupations

Jobs are created in two ways, by replacement and growth. Replacement: These are job openings to replace people who have left or changed jobs. Replacement accounts for about 7 out of every 10 hires. Growth: These are job openings created when a new business starts up or an existing business expands. Growth accounts for about 3 out of every 10 hires.

Education & Training Codes	
LHS	Less Than High School
HS	High School Diploma or Equivalent
PS	Postsecondary Non-Degree Award
SC	Some College, No Degree
AD	Associate's Degree
BD	Bachelor's Degree
MA	Master's Degree
DPD	Doctoral or Professional Degree

Thousands Employed, Full-Time in 2010	Job Openings Created by Growth, 2010-2020, in Thousands	Job Openings Created by Replacement, 2010-2020, in Thousands	Typical Education Requirement	Median Annual Wage, in Thousands (half the workers earn more, half earn less)
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Architecture & Engineering Occupations				
Civil Engineers	263	51	53	BD
Electrical Engineers	154	11	37	BD
Industrial Engineers	204	13	45	BD
Mechanical Engineers	243	21	79	BD
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports & Media Occupations				
Actors	67	3	17	SC
Coaches & Scouts	243	71	62	HS
Graphic Designers	279	37	87	BD
Musicians & Singers	176	18	43	HS
Photographers	140	18	13	HS
Public Relations Specialist	258	58	69	BD

Roofers	137	24	29	LHS	\$34	Medical & Health Services Managers	303	68	74	BD	\$84
Education, Training & Library Occupations						Property Managers	304	18	64	HS	\$51
Elementary School Teachers	1477	249	324	BD	\$52	Sales Managers	342	40	100	BD	\$99
Kindergarten Teachers	179	33	46	BD	\$49	Social & Community Service Managers	134	36	29	BD	\$58
Librarians	156	11	40	MA	\$55	Office & Administrative Support Occupations					
Middle School Teachers	642	108	141	BD	\$52	Bill & Account Collectors	402	57	79	HS	\$31
Postsecondary Teachers	1756	306	280	DPD	\$62	Billing & Posting Clerks	505	100	88	HS	\$32
Preschool Teachers	457	114	118	AD	\$26	Bookkeeping & Accounting Clerks	1898	259	209	HS	\$34
Secondary School Teachers	1038	72	284	BD	\$53	Customer Service Representatives	2187	338	622	HS	\$30
Self-Enrichment Education Teachers	253	53	39	HS	\$36	Data Entry Keyers	235	-16	41	HS	\$27
Special Education Teachers	223	47	66	BD	\$52	Dispatchers	185	34	36	HS	\$35
Teacher Assistants	1288	191	291	HS	\$23	Executive Secretaries & Assistants	1236	156	166	HS	\$44
Food Preparation & Serving Occupations						File Clerks	185	-9	49	HS	\$25
Bartenders	503	46	175	LHS	\$19	Hotel, Motel & Resort Desk Clerks	228	25	91	HS	\$20
Bussers & Barbbacks	397	18	147	LHS	\$18	Human Resources Assistants	157	18	44	HS	\$37
Combined Food Prep & Servers	2882	398	749	LHS	\$18	Insurance Claims & Policy Clerks	248	22	74	HS	\$35
Cooks, Fast Food	530	-19	113	LHS	\$18	Legal Secretaries	233	8	31	HS	\$42
Cooks, Institution & Cafeteria	405	50	86	LHS	\$23	Loan Interviewers & Clerks	183	-6	34	HS	\$34
Cooks, Restaurant	915	118	195	LHS	\$22	Medical Secretaries	509	210	68	HS	\$31
Cooks, Short Order	174	9	38	LHS	\$20	Office Clerks, General	2951	490	522	HS	\$27
Counter Attendants	446	27	323	LHS	\$18	Payroll & Timekeeping Clerks	187	27	39	HS	\$36
Dishwashers	510	36	233	LHS	\$18	Postal Service Mail Carriers	317	-38	103	HS	\$54
Food Preparation Workers	814	84	293	LHS	\$19	Receptionists & Information Clerks	1049	249	317	HS	\$25
Hosts & Hostesses	331	14	232	LHS	\$18	Secretaries & Administrative Assistants	2032	119	272	HS	\$31
Waiters & Waitresses	2260	196	1128	LHS	\$18	Shipping, Receiving & Traffic Clerks	688	2	175	HS	\$28
Healthcare Practitioners & Technical Occupations						Stock Clerks & Order Fillers	1787	21	444	LHS	\$21
Dental Hygienists	182	69	36	AD	\$68	Tellers	560	7	231	HS	\$24
EMTs & Paramedics	227	75	46	PS	\$30	Personal Care & Service Occupations					
Licensed Practical & Vocational Nurses	752	169	200	PS	\$40	Amusement & Recreation Attendants	261	37	150	LHS	\$18
Medical & Clinical Lab Technicians	161	24	31	AD	\$36	Childcare Workers	1282	262	404	HS	\$19
Medical & Clinical Lab Technologists	169	19	33	BD	\$56	Fitness Trainers & Aerobics Instructors	251	60	41	HS	\$31
Medical Records Technicians	180	38	36	PS	\$32	Hairdressers & Cosmetologists	628	98	120	PS	\$23
Pharmacists	275	70	70	DPD	\$112	Nonfarm Animal Caretakers	189	53	41	LHS	\$20

Writers & Authors	146	10	38	BD	\$55	Pharmacy Technicians	334	108	58	HS	\$28	Recreation Workers	339	64	55	BD	\$22
Building & Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance Occupations						Physical Therapists	199	77	24	DPD	\$76	Production Occupations					
Janitors & Cleaners	2310	246	436	LHS	\$22	Physicians & Surgeons	691	168	137	DPD	\$166	Out, Punch & Press Machine Operators	184	5	13	HS	\$29
Landscapers & Groundskeepers	1152	241	203	LHS	\$23	Radiologic Technologists & Technicians	220	61	34	AD	\$54	Electrical Equipment Assemblers	183	-10	26	HS	\$29
Maids & Housekeeping Cleaners	1427	112	240	LHS	\$19	Registered Nurses	2737	712	495	AD	\$65	Helpers, Production Workers	395	34	66	LHS	\$22
Business & Financial Operations Occupations						Veterinarians	61	22	12	DPD	\$82	Inspectors, Testers, Sorters & Weighers	416	33	91	HS	\$33
Accountants & Auditors	1217	191	261	BD	\$62	Healthcare Support Occupations						Laundry & Dry-Cleaning Workers	225	2	42	LHS	\$20
Claims Adjusters & Investigators	280	8	72	HS	\$59	Dental Assistants	297	92	62	PS	\$33	Machinists	370	32	68	HS	\$39
Compliance Officers	217	32	27	BD	\$59	Home Health Aides	1018	706	132	LHS	\$21	Meat, Poultry & Fish Cutters & Trimmers	166	26	48	LHS	\$22
Financial Analysts	236	54	50	BD	\$74	Massage Therapists	154	31	25	PS	\$35	Packaging & Filling Machine Operators	337	13	55	HS	\$25
Loan Officers	289	41	74	HS	\$56	Medical Assistants	528	163	81	HS	\$29	Printing Press Operators	200	-3	39	HS	\$34
Management Analysts	719	157	117	BD	\$78	Nursing Aides, Orderlies & Attendants	1505	302	194	PS	\$24	Team Assemblers	953	52	189	HS	\$27
Market Research Analysts	283	117	75	BD	\$61	Installation, Maintenance & Repair Occupations						Welders, Cutters, Solderers & Brazers	337	51	90	HS	\$35
Personal Financial Advisors	207	66	24	BD	\$64	Automotive Body & Related Repairers	153	28	37	HS	\$38	Protective Services Occupations					
Purchasing Agents	284	15	76	HS	\$57	Automotive Technicians & Mechanics	723	125	187	HS	\$36	Correctional Officers & Jailers	475	25	83	HS	\$39
Community & Social Service Occupations						Bus & Truck Mechanics	242	35	53	HS	\$41	Firefighters	310	27	85	PS	\$45
Child, Family & School Social Workers	296	58	70	BD	\$40	HVAC&R Mechanics & Installers	268	90	48	PS	\$43	Police & Sheriff's Patrol Officers	664	55	194	HS	\$54
Clergy	231	41	39	BD	\$44	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	287	62	55	HS	\$45	Security Guards	1036	195	165	HS	\$24
Guidance & Vocational Counselors	281	53	61	MA	\$53	Maintenance & Repair Workers	1289	142	237	HS	\$35	Sales & Related Occupations					
Healthcare Social Workers	153	51	36	MA	\$47	Telecom Equipment Installers & Repairers	195	28	31	PS	\$55	Cashiers	3363	250	1526	LHS	\$19
Mental Health Counselors	120	44	25	MA	\$38	Telecom Line Installers & Repairers	161	22	29	HS	\$51	Counter & Rental Clerks	420	51	96	LHS	\$22
Rehabilitation Counselors	130	37	27	MA	\$32	Legal Occupations						Insurance Sales Agents	412	90	94	HS	\$47
Social & Human Service Assistants	384	106	83	HS	\$28	Judges & Magistrates	34	3	7	DPD	\$119	Parts Salespersons	204	33	74	LHS	\$29
Computer & Mathematical Occupations						Lawyers	728	74	138	DPD	\$113	Real Estate Sales Agents	368	45	83	HS	\$40
Computer Programmers	363	44	84	BD	\$71	Paralegals & Legal Assistants	256	47	36	AD	\$47	Retail Salespersons	4262	707	1252	LHS	\$21
Computer Support Specialists	607	110	160	SC	\$46	Management Occupations						Sales Reps, Wholesale & Manufacturing	1430	223	337	HS	\$52
Computer Systems Analysts	544	120	103	BD	\$78	Administrative Services Managers	254	37	63	HS	\$78	Securities & Financial Sales Agents	312	48	86	BD	\$70
Information Security Analysts	302	66	44	BD	\$76	Architectural & Engineering Managers	177	15	35	BD	\$119	Telemarketers	291	22	62	LHS	\$22
Network & Computer Systems Admins	347	97	58	BD	\$69	Chief Executives	370	15	97	BD	\$165	Transportation & Material Moving Occupations					
Software Developers, Applications	521	144	54	BD	\$88	Computer & Info. Systems Managers	308	56	47	BD	\$116	Bus Drivers, School or Special Client	461	56	89	HS	\$28
Software Developers, System Software	392	127	41	BD	\$94	Construction Managers	523	87	33	AD	\$84	Bus Drivers, Transit & Intercity	186	28	36	HS	\$36
Construction & Extraction Occupations						Education Administrators, K-12	236	23	67	MA	\$87	Driver/Sales Workers	407	42	81	HS	\$23
Carpenters	1002	196	212	HS	\$40	Education Administrators, Postsecondary	146	28	41	MA	\$84	Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	1605	330	319	HS	\$38
Cement Masons & Concrete Finishers	145	50	23	LHS	\$35	Farm, Ranch & Agricultural Managers	1203	-96	235	HS	\$61	Industrial Truck & Tractor Operators	522	62	148	LHS	\$30
Construction Laborers	999	212	80	LHS	\$29	Financial Managers	527	46	97	BD	\$104	Laborers & Material Movers, Hand	2068	319	661	LHS	\$23
Electricians	577	134	155	HS	\$48	Food Service Managers	321	-11	59	HS	\$48	Light Truck or Delivery Drivers	856	126	170	HS	\$29
Operating Engineers	349	82	81	HS	\$40	General & Operations Managers	1767	82	328	AD	\$94	Packers & Packers, Hand	677	58	194	LHS	\$20
Painters, Construction & Maintenance	391	72	85	LHS	\$34	Industrial Production Managers	150	14	35	BD	\$87	Refuse & Recyclable Material Collectors	140	28	42	LHS	\$33
Plumbers, Pipefitters & Steamfitters	420	108	121	HS	\$47	Marketing Managers	178	24	52	BD	\$113	Taxi Drivers & Chauffeurs	240	47	30	LHS	\$22

Show the employer that you have the “right stuff”

To help find the best person for the job, most hiring managers create a “job description.” A job description is a document that defines the work that the new hire will perform. It includes specific skills, responsibilities, and qualifications. The job description is a yardstick. Anyone who applies for the job is measured against it. So, what’s the right stuff for your occupation? Don’t guess. Find out. Here’s how—

Let’s take it from the beginning.

I’m sure you know what a *comedy writer* does. So let’s use that occupation in the following example.

1. Name the job you want.

“Radio Talk-Show Comedy Writer”

2. List the requirements of the job.

“Create humorous observations, stories, satire, and banter to stimulate caller involvement”

3. Select the first job requirement from your list.

“Create humorous observations”

4. Give an example of when you performed it.

“Created a list of job-hunting blunders”

5. Add details.

“Created a top-10 list of job-hunting blunders for a Labor Day radio broadcast”

6. Repeat.

Repeat for each of the remaining job requirements on your list.

On average, there are 4.2 job hunters for every job opening.

—U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Q. "Where can I find the job requirements for my occupation?"

- Easy. Visit several large job sites like CareerBuilder.com, Monster.com, Hotjobs.com, or LinkedIn.com.
- Do a search for your occupation and read a dozen different help-wanted postings for your occupation.
- In each help-wanted posting, look for a statement like, "The ideal candidate will be able to..." That's where the employer lists the half-dozen or so important requirements for the job.
- Make a list of the five or six most common job requirements. Write them down. That's the stuff today's hiring managers are looking for.

You can also dig out the requirements from the U.S. Department of Labor's *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, at www.bls.gov/oco/

Q. "What kind of examples should I give for the job requirements?"

Think about the *projects* you've worked on—at work, school, military, volunteering, even home projects. Your best examples will come from the projects you worked on.

Q. "How much detail should I include?"

Keep it simple. Mention the important facts. Whenever possible, include numbers to describe the size, money, time, effort, or result of what you did. Numbers impress people because numbers are specific.

Now, you try it—

1. Name the job you want

2. List the job requirements

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____

3. Select the first job requirement from your list

4. Give an example of when you performed it

5. Add details

6. Repeat for each additional job requirement.

Congratulations!

You just turned the job requirements into your accomplishments. Employers are impressed by accomplishments. They show that you are the kind of person who gets things done.

SUBSTITUTE SKILLS

If you don't have one of the needed job requirements, offer a substitute.

A substitute shows that you have similar knowledge. Similar knowledge shows that you can learn the requirement quicker than if you had no knowledge of the requirement.

For example, if you have no sales experience, talk about your fundraising accomplishments. If you have no interior decorating experience, show pictures of the decorating projects you created at home. If you have no public speaking experience, talk about the PowerPoint presentations you gave in high school or college.

Reach into other areas of your life to find those substitute skills—home projects, school, hobbies, sports, volunteering.

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 what a great catch you are.

Q. “What can I 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 it into the hands of as many hiring managers as you can. If a hiring manager likes what she sees in your resume, you could get invited to a job interview.

Q. “What if I’m not a good writer?”

That's okay. Writing your resume will be easy. You already did the heavy thinking in the last chapter. All that's left to do is type it up. At the end of this chapter, you'll find sample resumes and a fill-in-the-blanks guide to help you create your best resume ever.

Q. “Tell me, do hiring managers actually read all of the resumes they receive?”

No. They only read the ones that pass a quick glance.

Q. “What do you mean by a quick glance?”

Some hiring managers receive dozens of resumes a week. A few receive hundreds. When a resume comes across their desk, they give it a quick glance.

If the resume offers clear examples showing that the person can do the work described in the job description (see page 18), the hiring manager will give it a closer look.

Q. “Is there some official format or design for a resume?”

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

Seventy-five percent of hiring managers say they prefer a chronological resume that lists your most recent job first.

—Career Journal

suggestions. But, most people do include the following topics in their resumes—

1. Your contact information

Tell employers where they can reach you.

At the top of the page, type your full name, mailing address, telephone number with area code, and email address.

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)."

3. Your education

Start with your most recent school or program.

On the first line, give the name of your diploma, degree, or certificate (BS in Business).
On the same line, give your date of graduation.

If you haven't graduated, give your major (Business Major), plus your beginning and ending dates of enrollment.

On the next line give the school's name and city/state address.

On the third line list any classes or activities you took that would help you in the job that you want.

Repeat for additional schools.

4a. Work experience

Start with your most recent employer.

On the first line, give your job title plus your

beginning and ending dates of employment.

On the next line give the employer's name and city/state address.

On the next five lines, list the job requirements with examples from your past (see page 19).

Repeat for additional employers.

4b. No work experience

Instead of a "Work Experience" section, create a section titled, "Accomplishments."

On the first line in this section, name one of the job requirements.

Under that job requirement, offer two or three substitute examples from school, sports, volunteering, or other life projects to show what you achieved in that area (see Substitute Skills on page 19).

Repeat for each additional job requirement.

5. Your skills list

Create a section called "Skills."

Then, simply list the names of any important tools, devices, programs, procedures, skills, licenses, and systems that you can operate or perform.

6. Additional information

Create a section called "Additional Information."

This is a great place to mention any special talents, awards, languages, work habits, or personality traits that might interest the hiring manager.

WHY YOU NEED A SKILLS LIST IN YOUR RESUME

Having a skills section in your resume can be important. Many large employers download the resumes they receive into a database. A database is a computer file that can hold millions of resumes and job applications.

Databases are searchable. That means, if a hiring manager searches her database for "Final Cut" or "Avid" the computer will pull up only the resumes of people who have that film-editing software in their resumes.

So, if you want the computer to pull up your resume, make sure you include the names of all the important tools, programs, and systems you can operate or perform.

USE ACTION WORDS

Certain words evoke confidence and authority. When offering examples of past job requirements, be sure to start each sentence with an action word, like:

Achieved...
Assembled...
Assisted...
Built...
Cleaned...
Completed...
Convinced...
Created...
Delivered...
Designed...
Developed...
Equipped...
Established...
Experienced...
Guided...
Handled...
Learned...
Led...
Maintained...
Managed...
Operated...
Organized...
Performed...
Planned...
Produced...
Programmed...
Reduced...
Repaired...
Served...
Set up...
Sold...
Supervised...
Taught...
Trained...
Wrote...

A sample resume

Bea Hopeful
4 Hereiam Drive, Mytown, US 11111
Tel: (222) 333-4444 · bhopeful@hardworker.com

GOAL

Seeking full-time position as a commercial photographer

EDUCATION

Associate's Degree, 06/2009

Shutterbug School of Photography, Cornea Vista, US
Classes included Photoshop, Lighting, Portraiture, Rights/Licensing

Diploma, 06/2006

Aperture High School, F-Stop, US
Contributed 72 images for yearbook, including candid and action shots

WORK EXPERIENCE

Photographer, 08/2009 to present

Krash Software, Virus City, US,

- *Web site:* Assisted marketing department in the creation of web site. Contributed photos for mood-setting home page plus 90 product selections
- *Product Catalog:* Suggested a new design format that increased telephone orders by 5% in 30 days. Catalog is revised quarterly, 48 pages, 90 product items
- *Packaging:* Developed six photo concepts for a new-product packaging campaign. The selected prototype sold 40 million units
- *News Stories:* Contributed corporate photographs for news stories printed in major trade magazines and national newspapers
- *Employee Recognition:* Created "People at Work" exhibit containing two-dozen, poster-sized photos of employees at work, displayed in the corporate lobby, updated monthly

Photographer's Assistant, 08/2006 to 06/2009

Gigabyte Computers, Motherboard, US,
Prepared sets, props, and lighting for catalog and advertising photo shoots

SKILLS

Mamiya, Hasselblad, Nikon, Canon, natural light, lightbox, flash, strobe, product staging, Photoshop, Aperture, InDesign, Quark, Wordpress, Dreamweaver, Mac and PC

ADDITIONAL

- Enjoy creative brainstorming with technical, editorial, and marketing teams
- Friendly, enthusiastic, good sense of humor

Worksheet

Your full name
Your address, city, state, zip code
Your phone and email

GOAL

Give the job you are seeking

EDUCATION

Give your diploma or degree and the date of award

Give the school's name and city/state address

• List several courses you took

Repeat for additional schools or training

WORK HISTORY

Give your job title with beginning and ending dates

Give your employer's name and city/state address

• Give a job requirement, with an example

• Give another job requirement, with an example

• Give another job requirement, with an example

• Give another job requirement, with an example

• Give another job requirement, with an example

Repeat for additional employers

SKILLS

Name the important tools, devices, procedures, programs, systems, and licenses you can operate or perform

ADDITIONAL

Mention any special talents, abilities, or awards

BASIC RESUME WRITING TIPS

- Use standard 8.5" by 11" white paper
- Keep a one-inch margin on all four sides of the page
- Avoid fancy fonts like outline, script, or other difficult-to-read styles
- Keep sentences short and to the point
- Bold or CAPITALIZE important headlines so they stand out
- Single space within sections
- Double space between sections
- Use bullets (•) at the beginning of a list
- Whenever possible, use numbers to show the size, volume, time, money, effort, or result of the projects you worked on
- Proofread for spelling and factual errors

13 proven ways to get a job interview

Before you can get a job offer, you have to get a job interview. 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's how—

1. Make a list of all the people you know who work in the same field or occupation as you

Reach out to them. Ask if they could help you get a job interview where they work.

This is called networking—people connecting through other people.

Don't be shy about asking for their help. Some experts say you are 10 to 50 times more likely to be hired if you have an employee connection.

In fact, most employers prefer to hire the friends of their workers. Eighty-eight percent of hiring managers say it's their best source for recruiting above-average candidates. 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 also have a special advantage over an outsider. Your inside friend can tell you about the hiring manager—her interviewing style, her management style, the issues she is most concerned about, the type of person she wants for the job, questions she is likely to ask, and the best way for you to ask for the job.

And here's an added bonus: Unlike answering a help-wanted ad or a job posting, where dozens 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:

- Call a friend. "Hi, Betty. It's Duncan."
- Ask for some help. "I'd like to apply for a job as a (baker) at Bundt. I know that you work there. Would you mind if I mentioned on the job application that you and I are friends?"

Eighty percent of all job openings are not advertised. Since friends of employees and other insiders usually fill these unadvertised job openings, they are often referred to as the "hidden job market."

—CNNMoney, Workforce Management

- Ask for information about the hiring manager. "Who is the (bakery) manager at Bundt? Is she the person I should send my resume to? What's she like?"
- Ask for a special favor. "Could I ask a favor? Would you mind giving my resume to Ms. Pillsbury and putting in a good word for me?"
- Show your gratitude. "Betty, thank you so much. If I get a job interview, I'll bake you a dozen dinner rolls."

2. Use email or social media to connect with your other friends

Ask for their help too. Keep your message simple. Tell what kind of job you are looking for and the city where you want to work.

How to get started:

- Explain what you want. "Looking for a job as a (roofer) in the (Boston) area. Do you know any roofing contractors?"
- Wait for someone to respond. "Tev, thanks for answering my message!"
- Ask for a favor. "Tev, you said your cousin is the manager at Fiddler's Roofing. What's she like? Would you give her my resume and put in a good word for me?"
- Thank your friend. "Thanks so much Tev. I'll email my resume to you right away."
- Spread the word. Always ask your friends if they'll forward your message to their friends. If your 30 friends talked to their 30 friends, you could have 900 people sending you tips, referrals, and introductions.

3. Connect with your connectors

Connectors are people who know lots of other people. They have large networks of friends, relatives, and contacts. Connectors include teachers, preachers, politicians, beauticians, barbers, realtors, police officers, business owners, and other people you know.

Talk to as many connectors as you can. You'll be surprised who can make a phone call and set up a job interview for you.

How to get started:

- Call a connector. "Hi, Dunkin. It's Buck. I'm one of the morning customers at your coffee shop."
- Ask for some help. "Dunkin, you know lots of people. Do you know the manager over at Espresso Corporation? I'd like to apply for a (bean grinder's) position over there."
- Ask for a favor. "Holy decaffeinated! Would you give her my resume? Would you mind asking if she would give me an interview?"
- Show some gratitude. "Dunkin, thank you so much. If you can help me line up a job interview at Espresso, I'll buy a coffee and a jelly donut every morning for a month!"

4. Facebook and LinkedIn

Facebook and LinkedIn are not only great places to connect with friends, classmates, and colleagues— they are also great places for recruiters to connect with you.

Lots of employers use Facebook and LinkedIn to recruit people. When they spot someone with the skills they want, they start a conversation. Conversations can lead to job interviews.

It's a slow process. But then, you're not hunting them, they're recruiting you.

WHERE ARE THE JOBS?

Did you know that the average American changes jobs every 4 years?

Some transfer to new positions, some get promoted, some get fired, some quit, some retire.

When people move to a new job, they leave behind a job opening—and employers move quickly to fill those vacancies.

Despite the high unemployment numbers of 2010 and 2011, employers still hired around 4 million people every month, mostly to replace those who changed jobs.

Replacement jobs, that's where the jobs are.

How can you get recruiters and hiring managers to notice you?

How to get started:

Search Facebook and LinkedIn for “groups” that are interested in your industry or your occupation. Join the conversation—hiring managers and recruiters are listening in. You can get noticed by participating and being active. Here are four ways to become active:

- Ask questions about the news, tools, procedures, projects, people, or companies in your industry.
- Answer other people's questions when you have information or an idea to share.
- Offer advice, tips, and comments on interesting topics.
- Recommend blogs and links that might be of interest to the group.

5. Do you have a top-ten list of employers?

Visit their web sites and see what kind of job openings they have.

How to get started:

- Start with your favorite employer. Visit their web site and navigate to their employment page or career page.
- Look through the job postings. Apply only for the jobs you are qualified to do. When you find a job that interests you, bookmark that web page so you can find your way back to it later.

- Next, call your friends. Ask if they know any mutual friends who work inside that company. Dig. You are 50 times more likely to get a job if you know an insider.
- When you find an inside friend, ask if you could list him as a friend on your job application.
- Then, ask if he would give your resume to the hiring manager and put in a good word for you.
- Thank your friend for his help and friendship.
- Then, move on to the next employer on your top-ten list and repeat the process.

6. Answer some help-wanted advertisements

Job boards like Monster.com, CareerBuilder.com, and HotJobs.com are popular ways to find job openings.

But don't stop there—check your area's online newspapers for help-wanted ads and read the help ads posted on Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn too.

How to get started:

- Again, apply only for the jobs you are qualified to do.
- Submit a clean job application. Don't let misspellings, wrong numbers, missing information, and information typed in the wrong spaces disqualify you.
- Attach a cover letter with your job application and boost your chances of getting a job interview. Writing your cover letter is fast and easy with AIDA—see the details on pages 30 and 31.

7. Mail a letter and ask for a job interview

Suppose you want to work for SawBuck Bank. Why not send them a letter and ask for a job interview?

Now, suppose you want to work for any bank. Why not pull together a list of all the banks in your area and send each of them a letter asking for a job interview? You could do this with the employers in your industry too.

How to get started:

- Log onto 411.com or YellowPages.com. Type your industry (Banks) and zip code in the search fields. The search will bring up a list of all those businesses in your area—including addresses, telephone numbers, and web addresses.
- Keep your letter short and simple. See “How to write a cover letter” on pages 30 and 31.

8. Call a hiring manager and ask for a job interview

Hiring managers get lots of letters, resumes, and job applications. They respond quickly to the top candidates. But, the rest of us have to find a way to stand out and get noticed.

How can you stand out? Easy. Just pick up the phone and give a manager a call. It says that you have guts and that you really want to work for her company.

Now, before you pick up the phone, here's something you need to know. The hiring manager is usually the manager of the department where you want to work. In sales, it's the sales manager. In maintenance it's the maintenance manager. At a small business, it's usually the owner.

To get the hiring manager's name, call the business and speak to the receptionist who answers the phone. Don't be shy, lots of people ask for this information and the receptionist will be glad to give you the hiring manager's name and telephone extension.

How to get started:

- Call the manager and introduce yourself. “Good morning, Ms. Cuspidor. My name is Den L. Floss. I'm a (dental assistant).”
- Say something friendly. “Thank you for taking my call.”
- Give your reason for calling. “Ms. Cuspidor, last week I sent you a letter with a copy of my resume. I wanted to follow-up and see if you received it.”
- Prepare for the unexpected. “Oh, I'm sorry to hear that you didn't receive it. I was hoping to schedule an appointment to learn about the career opportunities in (dental assisting) at your office.”
- Ask for an interview. “Would it be possible for you to spare a few minutes to explore those opportunities with me—perhaps one day next week?”
- Prepare for the put-off. “Oh, I do understand. A lot of employers have hiring freezes this time of year. But those hiring freezes can't last forever.”
- Sell yourself. “I'd like to be the first on your list to be considered when your hiring freeze is lifted. I think you'll be impressed with my skills and accomplishments.”
- Wrap it up and confirm the date. “Excellent. That's Tuesday afternoon at 2:20. Thank you so much, Ms. Cuspidor. I really appreciate your taking the time to talk with me and fitting me into your busy schedule.”

CREATE A SIMPLE JOB-HUNTING PLAN

Every employer is not hiring today. You have to knock on a lot of doors to find the ones that are.

Here's a simple plan that takes only an hour or two a day. Give it a try and see how many job interviews you get.

- Apply to five employers every day. That's 25 employers a week, 100 a month. Use a good mix of all 13 ideas in this chapter.
- Now, you may not get a job interview the first week or so because it takes time for employers to respond.
- But, after two weeks, your phone should start to ring.
- When you begin to get job interviews, don't stop applying to five new employers every day. Stick with your plan right up until the day you accept a job offer.
- If you do stop, your flow of interviews will dry up in about two weeks. Then it will take you two more weeks to get the pipeline flowing again.

9. Look for some "Now Hiring" signs

One of the easiest ways to get a job interview is to look for "Now Hiring" signs on business buildings, doorways, and billboards.

How to get started:

- Walk into the shop, store, or office. Smile, and ask one of the employees if you can fill out a job application. Say: "Hi, I saw your 'Now Hiring' sign. May I have a job application, please?"
- Ask a few questions to show your interest. "Which jobs are available? What are the duties of a (yodeler)? Which days and hours are available?"
- Get an inside referral. The best way to get a job is to get someone who works inside the company to put in a good word for you. So, while you're in the office, ask the employee if someone from your neighborhood, school, or former employer works there.
- If you know the insider, call him when you get home. Mention that you applied for a job where he works. Ask if he could give your resume to the hiring manager and put in a good word for you.
- If you don't know any insiders, contact your friends and relatives. See if they know an insider who might be able to help.

10. Attend a job fair or a company open house

Where can you meet dozens of hiring managers, face to face, all in one day, all in one place? Simple. Go to a job fair or a company open house. Managers are standing there, waiting to meet you.

To find an event in your area, Google *Job Fair*, *Career Fair* and *Company Open House*. Also, check for open-house announcements in the help-wanted section of your Sunday newspapers. And, check with your school's career center and your state's One-Stop Career Center to see if they're planning a job fair (see page 29).

How to get started:

- At the job fair, walk up to the employer's table or booth. Make eye contact with the recruiter, smile, and say hello. Offer your handshake and introduce yourself.
- Deliver your "sales pitch" from page 35. Then, answer the recruiter's questions and ask some follow-up questions.
- Offer the recruiter a copy of your resume.
- Ask how you can schedule a job interview.
- Be sure to ask for the recruiter's business card.
- Thank the recruiter for speaking with you, smile, and offer your handshake.
- When you get home, send the recruiter a thank-you note. All of her contact information is on her business card.

11. Sign up with a temporary employment agency

Temporary employment agencies are match makers. They bring together employers that need help and job hunters who need work.

Working for a temp agency is a great way to get your foot in the door at a good company. You'll learn new skills, gain experience, make contacts, and build references. Every year, about 9 million people find work through employment agencies—and 79 percent are placed in full-time positions.

How to get started:

- Google "Employment Agencies" for a list of agencies in your area. You might also ask your friends if they've ever worked with an employment agency. Maybe a friend can recommend a good agency.
- Call the agency and ask to register for employment. The agent will ask a few questions about your skills. If you are a good fit for the agency, the agent will ask you to come in for a meeting.
- During the meeting, the agent will go over your resume and ask questions about your skills and abilities. For some occupations, like secretarial or graphic design, the agent may ask you to take a skills test to measure your abilities.
- The agent will also ask about your needs. Do you want to work for a large company or a small one? How far are you willing to commute? Do you want a full-time job, part-time job, or seasonal work? What hourly wage do you expect?
- The agent will then try to match you to one of their employer clients.

12. Visit your school's career center

Many employers are loyal to local schools and regularly post job openings with the school's career center.

Career centers have good working relationships with company recruiters and hiring managers. Visit your school's career center and speak with a counselor. Ask if the counselor could give you an introduction to a recruiter, a hiring manager, or a former graduate.

Once you have a contact person's name, send a letter or email and introduce yourself. Use the cover-letter format on pages 30 and 31. Then, follow-up with a phone call and ask for a job interview.

Also, while you're in the career center, be sure to ask if they are planning any career fairs.

13. Visit your state's One-Stop Career Center

Your state government operates a number of One-Stop Career Centers. These One-Stops are open to the public and provide job listings, referrals, career counseling, job-hunting workshops, and job fairs.

One-Stops also have people who work closely with hiring managers and recruiters for local businesses.

Talk to a counselor at your local One-Stop. Ask if the counselor could give you a referral to the hiring managers at your favorite companies.

Then, send each company a letter and resume. A few days later, follow up with a phone call and ask the hiring managers for a job interview.

To find a One-Stop Career Center in your area, visit, www.ServiceLocator.org or Google "One Stop Career Center."

DON'T GIVE A HIRING MANAGER AN EXCUSE NOT TO INTERVIEW YOU

If you have a weird email address or personal web page, like NakedRunner@PDQ.com, get a new address with a mature name for your job hunt.

If you have embarrassing photos, statements, or language on a message board or a personal web page, remove them.

If your telephone-answering message isn't short and friendly, redo it.

If you are planning to contact several different hiring managers at the same company, don't.

If you're thinking about hiring a resume distribution service to e-bomb thousands of employers, save your money.

If you are thinking of applying for jobs that you aren't qualified to do, don't waste your time.

How to 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.

Q. "Does everyone send a cover letter with their resume or job application?"

No. Most people don't include a cover letter. And that's why you should send one. It shows that you're different. It shows that you are serious about the job and you cared enough to write.

Q. "Do I have to create a new letter each time I apply to a different company?"

Yes and no. You certainly want all employers to feel that you are writing to them personally. But, you can recycle paragraphs and include them in most of your letters.

Q. "Whom should I address my letter to?"

This is important—the hiring manager is usually the manager of the department where you want to work. If you want a job

in human resources, send your letter to the human-resource manager. If you want to work in maintenance, send your letter to the maintenance manager. At a small business, send your letter to the owner of the business.

Q. "How do I get the manager's name?"

If you are getting a referral from a friend, ask your friend for the hiring manager's name. When writing, address your letter and envelope to that manager by name and title (Ms. Iva Joboffer, Office Manager). Make sure the manager's name, title, and address are accurate and spelled correctly.

If you are writing to a company and you don't know the manager's name, call the company and ask for it. The receptionist who answers your call will be glad to give you the information you need.

If you are answering an advertisement or job posting that gives no contact person's name

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

—National Association of Workforce Development Professionals

or no company name, address your letter to *Hiring Manager*.

Q. "How long does my cover letter have to be?"

Keep your cover letter short and simple. One page is perfect.

Q. "Could you help me write my letter?"

You bet. But first, I'd like you to meet AIDA.

Q. "Who's AIDA?"

The folks who write professional sales letters use a magic formula. It's called AIDA. That's short for—Attention, Interest, Desire, Action. AIDA sells billions of dollars worth of goods and services every year. If it can work for business, it can work for you. So, let's use AIDA to convince a hiring manager to give you a job interview.

1. Attention

In the very first paragraph of your letter, grab the hiring manager's attention simply by telling her why you are writing. Below are several solid reasons for writing to a hiring manager. Adapt the ONE that works best for you.

- "I would like to apply for the (sous chef's) position I saw advertised in..."
- "My friend, (Frieda Friendly) works in your department. She recommended that I write to you."
- "I stumbled upon your website. Wow. I'd like to interview for a position with your firm because..."
- "I (shop at your store) and..."
- "I would like to learn about the career opportunities for (mechanics) at your (shop)."

2. Interest

In the second paragraph of your letter, rouse the manager's interest by explaining what makes you special. Here are a few examples. Adapt the ONE that works best for you.

- "I have three-years experience as a..."
- "I worked on the (Slingshot) project at (David's) and..."
- "I just graduated from school and..."
- "I have three (special abilities) I can bring to the job..."
- "I have an idea I'd like to discuss with you..."

3. Desire

If you are responding to a help-wanted advertisement or a job posting, be sure to talk about the job requirements the ad says are important. Otherwise, create a desire for the hiring manager to meet you by offering THREE solid accomplishments.

- "I am very familiar with..."
- "I know how to use..."
- "I also have experience with..."

4. Action

Ask the hiring manager for a job interview. Adapt ONE of the following that works best for you.

- "I would like to interview for your (nursing) position. Please call. You can reach me anytime on my cell phone at (555.666.7777)."
- "I would like to interview for your (nursing) position. I hope you won't mind if I call in a few days to see that you received my (resume or job application) and hopefully to schedule an interview."

WHEN RESPONDING BY EMAIL

Some help-wanted advertisements will ask you to email your resume and a cover letter to the employer.

Here are a few general tips. But, always follow the employer's instructions.

If the advertisement gives you a contact person's name (Ms. Smith) or a job code (CBP11), type it in the "Subject" box of the email. This will ensure that your email gets routed to the proper hiring manager within the company.

If the advertisement does not include a contact person's name or a job code, type the advertisement's job title, (Carnival Barker's Job) in the email's "Subject" box.

Unless the employer tells you otherwise, copy and paste your letter into the body of your email. Include your resume as an attachment.

Follow the employer's instructions and attach your resume as a Word document, text file, or PDF.

To create a text file or PDF in Microsoft Word, go to: File > Save As > Format > Plain Text (or PDF).

A sample letter using AIDA

► Your name and contact information	Pat Perfect One Pluperfect Way Anytown, US 12345 (111) 222-3333 pat@email.com
Date ►	December 31, 20xx
► Hiring manager's name and address	Ms. Karin K. Boom, Owner New Day Demolitions, Inc. 55 Nowhiring Highway Anytown, US 12345
Job Code ►	Re: Job Code 5678, from the <i>Blabbermouth</i>
Salutation ►	Dear Ms. Boom:
Attention ►	I would like to apply for your Office Receptionist's position, which I saw advertised in Wednesday's edition of the <i>Blabbermouth</i> .
Interest ►	Ms. Boom, I can offer you three years of experience as a receptionist. I have a cheerful helpful personality, and I have a good memory for names, faces, voices, and telephone numbers.
Desire ►	• I am familiar with most telephone systems, fax machines, email, plus both Apple and Microsoft operating systems. • I have hands-on experience with QuickBooks, Microsoft Word, Excel, and appointment scheduling software. • I also have experience as a bill collector. If the need arises, I would be happy to make collection calls or field difficult or awkward inquiries.
Action ►	I would love to interview for this position. I hope you'll call. You can reach me anytime on my cell at (111) 222-3333. When you do call, please understand that the child's voice on my voice-mail greeting is not my voice! I look forward to your call.
Closing ►	Sincerely,
Signature ►	Pat Perfect
Printed name ►	Pat Perfect

Worksheet

Your name

Your address

Your city, state, zip

Your phone number

Your email address

Today's date

Manager's name and title

Department's name

Company's name

Address

City, state, zip

Re: (Job code, if listed in an ad or job posting)

Dear (Mr. or Ms.):

(Get the manager's attention)

(Rouse the manager's interest)

(Create a desire to meet you)

- ---
- ---
- ---

(Ask the manager to take action)

Sincerely,

Your Signature

Pat Perfect

Prepare for the hiring manager's phone call

If a hiring manager likes what she sees in your cover letter, resume, or job application, she'll give you a call. During that call, she will review the job requirements and ask a few questions about your background and availability. If the manager thinks you are a good fit for the job, you'll get invited to a face-to-face job interview.

Q. "What should I say when the hiring manager calls?"

First of all—always assume that every phone call you receive is a hiring manager's call. Answer every call with a professional greeting. You don't want to embarrass yourself by saying something awkward. So, answer each call with a short, friendly greeting, such as:

"Good morning, this is Ken Dooit."

Q. "Suppose I can't answer when the hiring manager calls?"

If you cannot take calls, set your voice mail to answer on the third ring and be sure to replace any silly or unfriendly voice messages with something like this—

"Hi. You've reached Ken Dooit. At the tone, please leave your name, phone number, and a brief message. I do check my messages often

and I'll return your call as soon as possible. Thanks for calling."

Q. "What should I say when I return the manager's call?"

When returning the hiring manager's call, you might say—

- "Good afternoon, Ms. Hireyou.
- My name is Ken Dooit.
- I'm returning your phone call.
- I applied for a job as an (astronaut)."

Q. "What kind of questions will the hiring manager ask?"

The hiring manager called you because she believes you might be one of the top choices for the job. But, before she invites you to a face-to-face job interview, she'll ask a few questions over the phone—*just to be sure*. Here are a few common questions she might ask you—

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

—Wall Street Journal

- Are you currently employed? Where?
- What is your job title?
- How long have you been working there?
- What are your duties and responsibilities?
- What job skills do you have?
- What do you like most about your job?
- Do you get along with your supervisor?
- Why are you leaving?
- When are you available to begin work?
- Why do you want to work for my company?
- What motivates you to do a good job?
- What are your career goals?

Q. "Got any telephone tips?"

Be friendly and smile, even on the phone. Your voice projects a personality.

Speak slowly and clearly. Nervous people tend to rush and they can be difficult to understand.

Don't chew gum, eat food, or sip a beverage while talking. The hiring manager will hear it and it's rude.

Try not to say, "No problem," "Uh-huh," "Like," or "Ya know." They can become annoying.

Be willing to accept the hiring manager's interview schedule, even if you have to reschedule the cable guy.

Confirm the date and time of the interview by repeating it back to the hiring manager—"That's Thursday the 13th at 3:13..."

Thank the hiring manager for showing an interest in you—"Ms. Hireyou, thank you so much for this opportunity. I look forward to meeting you on (Thursday). Bye."

Q. "Earlier, you said I should apply to 25 employers every week. So tell me, how do I keep track of all the hiring managers who might call?"

Easy. Create an information packet for each company you apply to. You create packets simply by stapling together a copy of the cover letter and resume you sent to the hiring manager, notes from a friend who works at the company, your notes from the company's website, and if you answered an advertisement, include a copy of the advertisement too.

You might also write a short summary and attach it to the front of each packet for quick reference. Be sure to include:

- The company's name
- The hiring manager's name
- What the company does
- Which job you applied for
- The date you applied for the job
- The job requirements
- Why you want to work there
- Three good reasons why the manager should interview you

Arrange your packets in alphabetical order, by company name, and put them in a folder. Keep the folder near your phone. When an employer calls, you'll be able to find your notes quickly. You'll also be able to talk intelligently about who they are, what they need, and how you can help them.

CREATE A 15 SECOND SALES PITCH

A sales pitch is a short speech. It's a 15 second "sound bite" that sells you to hiring managers—and anyone who can help you get a job interview.

A good sales pitch includes your name, your occupation, your accomplishments, your goal, and your USP (unique selling point)—a USP is what sets you apart from the competition.

Spend some time thinking about your sales pitch. Here's a good example to go by—

"Hi, my name is Mason Stone."

"I've been an apprentice stone mason for the past year, and I've learned both wet and dry masonry."

"I've built walkways, terraces, retaining walls, and patios for residential customers. They've been very happy with my work."

"As a matter of fact, my boss said I'm not only one of her best workers—I'm also one of her best sales people. Customers seem to like me and they ask for my advice. My ideas have helped create some very happy customers, and lots of extra work for my employer. Now I'm looking for a full-time junior masonry job."

Find three people who will give you a “positive recommendation”

You are a good worker. You give more than the minimum. You show up everyday and you're never late. You're easy going and everybody likes you. That's great, but the hiring manager wants proof. She wants to talk to three people who can vouch for you.

Q. “Who should I include as references?”

Most hiring managers want three reliable references. Specifically, 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, teachers, coaches, coworkers, customers, 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.

Q. “Am I supposed to ask before offering someone's name as a job reference?”

Yes. Always ask. Those 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 the reference is not eager to recommend you.

Q. “How do I ask someone to be a reference? What do I say?”

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

Eighty percent of employers said they regularly conduct reference checks.

—The Society for Human Resource Management

When you do ask, don't just ask for a recommendation. Ask for a "positive recommendation."

You might say, "(Elmer), I'm applying for work as a (ballerina). I would like to list you as a reference. Would you be able to give me a positive recommendation?"

Most people are flattered when asked. They'll be happy to give you a good recommendation and they'll say so.

Others might not be interested in singing your praises. So, listen to their voice. Notice their body language. What does your gut tell you? If you don't think they'll give you a good recommendation, don't use them.

Q. "I know my former boss won't give me a good recommendation. Do I have to list him as a reference?"

Could you ask your boss's boss for a recommendation instead?

Q. "Maybe I should just tell the hiring manager that my boss and I didn't get along."

The manager will admire your honesty.

Here's a big tip—never badmouth a former boss. It screams that you are a troublemaker.

Instead, put a positive spin on a negative situation. Try this: "(Elsie) was the most demanding boss I ever worked for. We had our moments. But, I learned more from her than anyone I've ever worked for. I'm sure, someday, I'll probably miss her."

Q. "Should I list my references on my resume?"

No. Your resume will pass through lots of hands— friends, friends-of-friends, connectors, and probably a few people you might not even know. You don't want the names of your references to fall into the wrong hands. So, keep them off your resume. Another thing, if you put your references on your resume, you are inviting hiring managers to call your references before they've even met you.

Instead, list your references on a separate sheet of paper. Include each person's name, address, phone number, employer, job title, and best times for the hiring manager to call. Hand your list of references to the hiring manager during your job interview.

Q. "Should I send my references a copy of my resume?"

Yes. Don't let them struggle to remember who you are and what you did on the job.

Once someone agrees to give you a positive reference, refresh his or her memory of you. Send a copy of your resume plus a list of the projects or assignments you worked on together. Be sure to include your duties, responsibilities, accomplishments and any other information that might help them give you a good recommendation.

QUESTIONS A HIRING MANAGER MIGHT ASK YOUR REFERENCES

- Were you Helen Hopeful's immediate supervisor?
- What was Helen's job title?
- What were her dates of employment?
- What was her salary?
- What were her duties and responsibilities?
- What were her most significant accomplishments?
- Did Helen receive any promotions or awards?
- What was Helen's attitude toward work?
- What was her level of energy at work?
- Did she get along with her coworkers and managers?
- How often was she late or absent?
- What were her job strengths?
- In which skills does Helen need improvement?
- Why did Helen leave the job?
- If possible, would you rehire her?
- Is there anything I didn't ask you that I should have asked?

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.”

Q. “Okay, but what if I’m not one of those loud, back-slapping types?”

Just be you. Here are a few ideas that everybody can use.

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.

51%

If you’re a little shy, or quiet, you’re not alone. Introverts outnumber extroverts, 50.8% to 49.3%. More men are introverts (54.1%) than women (47.5%)

—Fortune

Show respect for the manager's position

Address the manager as Mr. or Ms., unless they ask you to call them by their first name. Once you're in the manager's office, don't sit down until you're invited to sit. Be sure to look at the manager whenever she speaks.

Show some curiosity

Ask for a short tour of the workplace before the interview begins. Look around. Ask questions about the cool things you see. Talk shop—ask what the manager thinks of the latest software, the newest gadget, or the hot new trend in your industry.

Have a sense of humor

We are drawn to happy, optimistic, humorous people. When appropriate, offer a clever quip, a one-liner, or an interesting tale. Keep it short, positive and upbeat. Don't forget to chuckle at the manager's attempts at humor.

Think, "Can do"

If a manager says you don't have a certain skill or enough experience, don't just shrug your shoulders. Most managers want to see whether you'll fight for what you want or whether you'll just give up.

So, tell the hiring manager that you're a quick learner, a hard worker, and that you always deliver more than what's expected. Let her know that you will become one of the best employees she will ever hire.

Let your body language do some talking

Sit up straight. Sit near the edge of the chair with both feet on the floor. Visualize your ideas and use your hands to illustrate what you

mean. Look the manager in the eye. Use facial expressions to emphasize important points.

Show a little empathy

Empathy means that you understand how the other person feels. When the manager talks about an important issue, look at her eyes to show that you are listening, use facial expressions to show that you understand, and ask for details to show that you care.

Have a reason for wanting to work there

Visit the company's website and Google the company name for news. Find out who they are, what they do, and why you want to work there.

Participate in the conversation

The interview should be a 50/50 conversation. Don't be a motor-mouth who never stops talking. And don't be a zombie who hardly says a word. Listen. Ask questions. Give generous answers.

Become a storyteller

You probably have a great reason for choosing your line of work. When the manager asks, "What made you decide to become a (puppeteer)?"—tell your story. Include lots of detail and use body language to bring your story to life.

TRY A LITTLE MIRRORING

Mirroring is a body-language dance where you copy the hiring manager's actions. It creates a bond. It says, "we're in sync."

Mirroring is not new. Everybody does it. If you smile at someone, they'll usually smile back. Like the smile, most mirroring is unintentional. But, if you are aware of mirroring, you can boost its effectiveness.

Here are some simple mirroring tips:

- When the hiring manager smiles or frowns, you should smile or frown too.
- If the manager uses hand gestures to add emphasis, you should use hand gestures when you want to add emphasis.
- If the manager sits up straight or leans toward you, you should sit straight or lean too.
- If the manager speaks quickly or slowly, you should match her pace when speaking.
- If the manager uses special job-related words or technical terms, you should use them too.

How to ace your 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.

Q. "What's the first question the manager will ask?"

Most managers will lean back in their chairs and say, "Can you tell me a little about yourself?" They know that this kind of friendly question will put you at ease and get you talking.

Q. "What's the manager looking for?"

Although the interview will be informal and friendly, the manager will be looking for some serious stuff. All of her questions are designed to answer three important issues: First, can you do the job? Second, will you do the work? Third, are you friendly and cooperative?

Q. "Is the manager trying to eliminate candidates?"

Yes.

Q. "Who is the hiring manager trying to eliminate?"

The manager wants to weed out—

- People who need too much time to get their feet on the ground, become productive, and pull their own weight
- People who won't put in an honest day's work
- People who constantly need someone to check their work
- People who give only the minimum effort and have to be told when to do everything
- People who frequently call in sick, arrive late, leave early, refuse overtime, and constantly ask for pay raises
- People who might quit and walk out when they are needed most
- People who are chronic complainers
- People who are arrogant, conceited, rude,

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

—Robert Half Recruitment

pushy, antagonistic, or moody

- People who show no pride in their work, appearance, or behavior
- People who steal, lie, or cheat
- People who would embarrass the company

Q. "Do all managers ask the same questions?"

No. All interviews are different. Each manager has her own style. But, there are some routine questions you can expect.

On page 44 you'll find a list of 50 common and behavioral questions, plus suggestions on how to answer them.

Q. "What's the best way to prepare for an interview?"

Role play. Get a friend to play the manager and practice until all the kinks are worked out. Come up with an honest, automatic answer for each of the routine questions. And don't be shy about selling yourself—you have a lot to offer.

Q. "What do you mean by—sell myself?"

Most people don't get the job because they don't sell themselves.

Sell yourself. When the manager says, "Tell me about yourself," talk about your accomplishments, skills, and abilities—NOT your childhood, family, hobbies, or your latest vacation.

Sell yourself. Show what you can do for the employer. You know which skills and requirements the manager's looking for. So, explain what you have to offer.

Sell yourself. Participate in the conversation. Use examples or stories to

explain what you mean. Look the manager in the eye. Use your hands to illustrate what you mean. Smile. Add a little humor when you can.

Sell yourself. Most people won't say whether they want the job or not, so make sure you do.

You might say, "Ms. Hireme, I'm a fast learner. I try to give more than what's expected. I'm easy to get along with. I like what I see here—and I want this job."

Q. "What kind of questions should I ask the manager?"

Hiring managers want to hear intelligent questions—questions that show you're looking out for your own welfare and happiness.

Below are some suggested questions you might ask the manager. Add a few more questions of your own to the list.

Type up your list and print a copy. It's okay to bring your printed list of questions into the interview with you.

Ask your questions, one at a time. The manager will see that you put some real thought into your questions and that you came prepared.

Questions to ask—

- "What attracted you to this company?"
- "Would you describe a typical workday and the things I would do?"
- "Which duties or responsibilities are most important for this job?"
- "What are the major challenges the new hire will face in this job?"
- "How will I be trained or introduced to the job?"

BE PREPARED FOR A STRESS INTERVIEW

At some point during an interview, the manager might suddenly seem to dislike you. She may turn cold, distant, and unfriendly. Her questions may seem harsh, personal, even insulting.

Don't get upset if you should meet such a manager. There's a reason for this treatment. The job you seek may have lots of pressure, stress, and short deadlines. Before a manager offers this job to anyone, she'll want to see if you can take the heat.

How will you take the heat? Will you blow your top? Will you argue? Will you get angry? Will you cry? Or, will you try to deal with it calmly?

If you let the heat get to you, you'll never get the job. No manager wants a hot-head or an emotional basket-case working in a high-pressure department.

So, when the heat mounts, play it cool. Stay calm. Be polite. Be diplomatic. Smile. The manager is testing you.

- "How long should it take for me to get my feet on the ground and become productive?"
- "Can you describe the ideal person for this job?"
- "What are the department's goals for the year?"
- "How do my skills compare with other candidates for this position?"
- "Who are the key people I'd be working with and what do they do?"
- Which employee do you rely upon most? What does he do and what makes him unique?
- "How would I get feedback on my performance?"
- "If hired, would I report directly to you, or to someone else?"
- "Has the company had a layoff in the last few years?"
- "Please explain the opportunities for promotion or advancement in this department."
- "How soon do you plan to fill this job?"
- "What could I say to convince you to offer me this job?"

Q. "Are there questions I should not ask?"

Don't ask any questions about salary, wages, holidays with pay, paid sick days, personal days, or time off. You're looking for a job, not a vacation.

Instead, wait for the manager to ask what kind of wage or salary you expect. Then, ask the manager what the standard wage is for someone with your skills and experience. This way, you're forcing the manager to throw out the first figure.

Q. "Tell me, should I ask for the job if I want it?"

Absolutely. Most people never tell the manager whether they want the job or not. This leaves the manager guessing. If you want the job, look the manager in the eye and tell her you want it.

Q. "What if the manager won't give me an answer?"

Offer a deal.

Q. "What do you mean by a deal?"

The lifeblood of business is *the deal*. So, use *the deal* to land the job you want. Offer a 30-day trial period to prove that you can learn the job quickly. It's a gutsy move.

If the manager looks interested, stick your neck out even further—ask her to take you on as an “independent contractor” for 30 days. This means that you would be given a 30 day contract to do the job. At the end of the contract, you must leave, unless the manager offers you a job.

Don't make idle offers, though. The manager just might take you up on it.

Q. “How will I know when the interview is over?”

The manager will usually ask if you have any final questions. Then, she'll stand up and thank you for coming.

Thank the manager for taking the time to talk with you. Offer your handshake. If the manager says that she'll make a decision within the next week or so, ask if you could call to inquire about that decision.

SO, HOW'D YOU DO IN THERE?

Grade your interview with this easy scoring system:

- 1 = Needs much more work
- 2 = Just OK— room for improvement
- 3 = Total win

Did you look your best?

1 2 3

Did you show enthusiasm and a positive attitude?

1 2 3

Did you review your skills and show the manager that you are a good fit for the job?

1 2 3

Did you look your interviewer in the eye and speak clearly?

1 2 3

Were your answers clear and to the point?

1 2 3

Did you offer examples to show that you are a hard worker and that you deliver more than the minimum?

1 2 3

Did you answer tough questions without stumbling or getting flustered?

1 2 3

Did you ask questions to learn more about the company and the job?

1 2 3

Were you polite and respectful throughout the interview?

1 2 3

Did you ask for the job?

1 2 3

Add up your score. A perfect score is 30. Work on those areas where you need improvement. Think of every interview as practice for the next one.

Fifty questions to expect during your job interview

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

Give your 15-second sales pitch from page 29. 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 pages 18 and 19. Use your fingers and count off the job 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?"

Toot 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,

20. "What salary were you paid on your last job?"

Tell the truth.

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, scuba diving, or any other sport that might be dangerous. 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 signed up for a stand-up comedy class to help get over the jitters."

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 and benevolent. "I'm no athlete, but I did run a 5 kilometer road race in under 45 minutes—and I raised over \$1,000 in pledges for a favorite charity. I'm proud of that."

36. "If you were told to report to a supervisor who was a woman, a minority, or someone with a physical disability, what problems would this cause for you?"

"I don't see any problems. I genuinely like people. I'm easy to coach and I'm easy to work with. For example..."

37. "Tell me what would you do if one supervisor told you to do something, and another supervisor told you not to do it?"

The manager wants to see how you would handle a dilemma. Try this: Think about what would happen if you did act, and what would happen if you did not act. Write down the pros and cons of each. Make a decision.

38. "Tell me about a time when you broke the rules."

Sometimes it's necessary to break the rules. Just make sure your reasoning and judgement are sound.

39. "Can you tell me about a time when a supervisor was not pleased with your work?"

The manager wants to know how you react to criticism. Here are a few tips to keep in mind when preparing your answer: Top employees see criticism as a learning experience, not a reprimand. They listen without arguing or becoming defensive. They learn what needs to be done differently. They agree to the changes and implement them. They follow up by asking the supervisor for a new critique of their work. They also regain their enthusiasm and confidence quickly.

40. "Tell me about a time when you were swamped with work and how you handled it."

The manager wants to know how you prioritize your time. Experts suggest you start by making a list of all the tasks you need to do today. Next, arrange those tasks from most important to least important. Then, select the task which is most urgent. Start there.

41. "Please tell me about a time when you showed initiative at work."

Initiative is not about working harder. Initiative is about doing more than what your job requires. For example: Taking on a new responsibility without being asked, coming up with new ideas to make the job easier or better, taking a class or reading a book to learn a new skill, or noticing a problem on the horizon and taking action to correct it.

42. "Describe a difficult decision you had to make."

The manager wants to know about your decision-making skills. Here's a basic decision-making formula: Define the problem, learn what others did in similar situations, list the pros and cons for each option, then choose the best option.

43. "Tell me about a time when you failed."

Everybody fails. What's important is the lesson learned from the failure.

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. How did you feel about being laid off?

Don't bad-mouth your old employer. Admit that you miss the job and the people. Say that you are grateful for the opportunities and the skills you learned there.

13. How long have you been looking for a job?

"A few weeks. I wanted to spend some time with my family. Now I'm ready to get back to work."

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. "Have you ever been convicted of a crime?"

It's not illegal to ask this question if it has a bearing on the job you are seeking. A bank, for example, wouldn't want a convicted embezzler working in the vault. If you have a conviction, admit it. Explain what happened. Acknowledge that you made a huge mistake. Tell what you've done to make amends. Ask for a chance to prove yourself.

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.

29. "Who did you ask to serve as personal references and why did you choose them?"

"I chose a good mix—a former boss who can tell you about my skills and job performance—a coworker who can tell you about the hard work and extra effort we put in as a team—and a former coach who can tell you that I'm not only a good team player, I can work independently and I always complete my share of the work."

30. "What are the three things you look for when considering a new job?"

The things that make people happiest at work are not always about money and benefits. Experts say that the following things are often more important: being appreciated, having respect, being trusted, taking on new challenges, having a good boss, working with people you enjoy, and making a difference.

31. "How are you unique?"

Try this: "I'm a quick learner, a hard worker, I'm easy to coach, and I always deliver more than what's expected. I could be one of the best employees you'll ever hire."

▶ The following include some behavioral questions. Behavioral questions help the manager see how you might act or behave in certain situations.

32. "Tell me how you keep a positive attitude when the job gets stressful?"

Here's how positive people stay positive: They know that attitude is a choice. They choose to plan ahead and schedule the time needed to get things done. They choose to be around other positive people. They choose to laugh and have a sense of humor. They choose to be friendly and helpful to everyone. They choose to offset negative thoughts by looking for the positive points.

33. "Please tell me about a time when you had to motivate a coworker."

Some of the best motivational tools include praise and encouragement, giving a helpful demonstration or example, explaining the rewards of the job, and brainstorming for better ways to do the job.

34. "Can you tell me about a goal you set for yourself?"

The manager wants to know if you set goals. People who set goals are more productive than those who do not set goals. The best goals are specific, measurable, and plausible. For example, "I want to pay off my \$1,000 car loan in six months," is a better goal than, "I want to pay off my car loan quickly."

35. "Describe a problem you faced and how you solved that problem."

Think of something related to work, school, sports, or volunteering. Tell it as a story. The manager wants to see how you: 1). Define the problem, 2). Identify options and, 3). Decide on a solution.

Keep these tips in mind when planning your answer. Describe the event, describe the goal you hoped to achieve, describe the failed outcome, explain what went wrong, and explain the lesson learned from the failure.

44. "Describe a time when you had to work with a difficult person."

The manager wants to see how you interact with moody, lazy, or obnoxious people. Ideally, you are a peacemaker who tries to resolve conflicts. When provoked, you have a private talk with the person. You remain pleasant. You explain how the behavior makes you feel. And you try to reach an agreement with the culprit.

45. "Please tell me about a time when you were disappointed."

The manager isn't so much interested in what happened, but what you did about that disappointment. Try something like this. "When I didn't get the promotion—I was surprised and hurt. But, I swallowed my pride and congratulated the winner—she earned that promotion. The next day, I reviewed my work performance. I redoubled my efforts, and I haven't missed a promotion since."

46. "Tell me about a project you worked on."

The manager wants to know about your role in the project, specifically what you did. Begin by describing the project and the project's goal. Then, describe the team you worked with, specifically your duties, your responsibilities, your contribution, and any new skills you learned. Finally, tell whether the project met its goals.

47. "Tell me where you expect to be 5 years from now?"

Try this: "It's hard to tell where anyone will be five years from now. But, I am looking for a company where I'll be appreciated, trusted, and able to make a difference. I want to work with people I enjoy, people who challenge me, and a good boss who's not afraid to tell us we did a good job. I think your company might be the one I'm looking for. That's why I'm here today."

48. "Are there any questions I didn't ask, that I should have asked?"

This is a great time to bring up any special skill, ability, or accomplishment that wasn't discussed.

49. "Okay, you've got one minute to convince me that you're the best person for this job. Begin."

Do it in only 30 seconds and you'll make a big impression. Start by delivering your 15-second sales pitch. Then, spend 15 seconds explaining why you want to work for this company. End by asking for the job.

50. "Do you have any questions for me?"

On page 41, you'll find a list of questions to ask the hiring manager. Add a few questions of your own to the list.

Four things you need to do after each job interview

When you get home, send the manager a thank-you note. Two days later, mail the manager a special letter. A week after your interview, pick up the phone and give the manager a call. Then, stay in touch with that hiring manager.

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 a 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 as soon as you get home from the interview. Mail or email it within 24 hours so the manager will remember you.

Now, if you decide that you don't want the job, be professional and send the manager a note. Thank her for her time. Say that you've decided to seek employment elsewhere. Ask that she remove your name from consideration. Be nice. Be professional. Managers move from company to company and they also know each other.

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

Fifty-five percent of job hunters send the hiring manager a thank-you note after a job interview.

—Vault.com

them with a friend or look for a solution online. Come up with a few suggestions. Then, send the manager a short letter explaining your ideas.

Your suggestions don't have to be brilliant, just good. The point is, the manager will see that you were the only one who made an extra effort to win the job offer.

Send this "idea letter" a few days after your thank-you note, but before you follow-up on the telephone.

3. Call the manager

A week after your interview, call the manager to see if she's made a decision. It shows that you're the kind of person who gets things done—even if the task is unpleasant. Use the calling script on the right.

4. If you didn't get the job—stay in touch

Every other week or so, send every hiring manager you know a short note and another copy of your resume. Let them know that you are still available and that you are still interested in working for them.

Remember, jobs open up all the time. Some people decline job offers. Other people don't work out and management replaces them. Those job leavers create job openings. Sometimes jobs also open up in other departments as well. Some managers are eager to refer good applicants to other hiring managers.

So, stay in touch. The idea is to become the first person they think of when something new opens up.

CALL THE HIRING MANAGER AND SEE IF YOU GOT THE JOB

Call the manager and introduce yourself.

"Good morning, Ms. Hireu. This is Emma Goetter. I wanted to call and thank you for meeting with me last week about your (lion tamer's) position."

Ask if the manager has made a decision.

"I'm very interested in that position and I thought I might follow-up to see if you've made a decision."

If you got the job—

"Really? Yikes! Hey Ma..."

"When would you like me to start?"

"What time should I report?"

"Where should I report?"

"Whom should I report to?"

"What do I need to bring with me on the first day?"

If the manager hasn't yet made a decision, ask—

"Am I still a candidate for consideration?"

"I really want this job. Would you consider giving me a trial period to prove myself?"

If she needs time to think it over, ask—"Would it be okay if I call back on Friday?"

If you didn't get the job—

Don't beg, don't lose your cool, and don't close any doors. You might say—

"Gee, I'm sorry to hear that."

"Ms. Hireu, I'd like to thank you for your time and consideration. It was a pleasure to meet you and to learn about your company."

"If the person you chose for this job becomes unavailable, please feel free to call me. I'd be happy to come in for another interview."

Tips for starting over—

Your first few weeks on the new job are a settling-in period. It's a chance to learn the ropes and become familiar with the job. A key part of this settling-in period is to become accepted by the other workers—to fit in, make friends, and feel part of the team. Here are some tips to help break the ice:

1. Show that you're friendly

When you meet someone new, offer your handshake, smile and introduce yourself. Remember names. Ask questions to get the conversation moving. Be a listener.

2. Be flexible

As the new kid on the block, you'll probably get stuck with those tasks everyone else dislikes. Show that you're mature enough to handle it. It says that you respect their seniority.

3. Show initiative

When you're finished with a task and you have some free time, don't stand around waiting for people to tell you what to do. Ask someone if you can give him or her a hand with their work. Everyone will see that you're a team player.

4. Show that you can be counted on

Show up for work on time every day. Stay until quitting time. Finish your work on time. Volunteer to work late if they need an extra hand.

5. Don't fake things

If you don't know how to do something, don't try to fake your way through it. You'll lose respect, which could be hard to rebuild. Instead, ask someone to show you how the boss wants it done.

6. Obey the rules

Learn the written as well as the unwritten rules and follow them. They may seem silly at first, but you don't want to step on any seniority or territorial toes. Make friends, not enemies.

7. Admit your mistakes

Everybody makes mistakes—especially when they're new on the job. If you make a mistake, admit it. It shows that you can be trusted.

8. Hold your ideas

Don't try to change things right away. Keep your eyes and ears open, but keep your mouth closed, especially the first month.

9. Solve your own problems

Don't be a pest. Don't keep running for help every time you have a small problem. Try to figure some things out yourself.

10. Find a role model

Watch the boss and try to figure out which of the workers she relies upon most. Model yourself after that person.

*Best wishes,
Harry Dahlstrom*

10 Tips to Make Your Layoff Easier

- 1 **Don't feel guilty about being laid off.** A layoff is not a firing. You did nothing wrong. Future employers know that, "lack of work," is the main reason people are laid off.
- 2 **Tell your family.** Tell them as soon as you get home. You might say, "I have sad news about my job. I've been laid off. The layoff is effective today and the decision is final."
- 3 **Acknowledge the emotions of losing your job.** You may feel waves of anger and sadness following your layoff. These emotions are common and usually pass after a week or so. But, if you are still grieving after two weeks, talk to your doctor. You may have a touch of depression, which can be treated. If you have thoughts of hurting yourself, or hurting someone else, call 911 right away. Help is only minutes away.
- 4 **Relax and do the things you love to do.** Try to get your mind off, "the job." Spend time with people you enjoy. Take a day trip. Volunteer. Take a class. Learn to play a musical instrument.
- 5 **Sign up for unemployment benefits.** Contact your state's Unemployment Insurance office to see if you are qualified to receive payments. Google, *Unemployment Insurance (plus your state's name)* for office locations and requirements.
- 6 **Extend your health-care coverage.** Ask your former employer about the rules and costs for extending your health-care coverage under the COBRA plan.
- 7 **Conserve your money.** Hold a family meeting. Ask for ideas to cut unnecessary spending. Get everyone to agree on a spending plan— and stick to that plan.
- 8 **Call your creditors.** Mortgage, rent, auto loan, insurance, utilities, credit cards, taxes— call them all. Explain that you have been laid off. Ask if you could go on a reduced monthly-payment plan until you find another job.
- 9 **Work on your resume.** Read some help ads and job postings to see which skills today's hiring managers really want. Build your resume based on the skills today's employers need.
- 10 **Line up some job interviews.** Ask friends and relatives if they could help you get a job interview where they work. Also, visit the web sites of your favorite companies and apply for jobs through their employment pages. Apply for jobs advertised in newspapers and posted online. Sign up with an employment agency. Attend some job fairs.



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