



CAREER FORWARD

THE TOOLS YOU NEED TO START MOVING

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INTRODUCTION

You're ready to move forward. You have the skills, the experience, and the drive to take that next step in your career. All you need now is the right opportunity.

So now what?

This guide will provide you with what you need, from effective networking to closing the deal on a job offer.

THE FINE PRINT:

Some of the suggestions here may seem obvious, but résumé and job-search mistakes can happen at all professional levels. Taking the time to review this guide will help you avoid blunders and make your search a success.



01

NETWORKING OPENS DOORS

Who you know matters, and so does having a strong professional network—because your contacts may lead to more options and opportunities.

Consider the following when networking.



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NETWORKING OPENS DOORS

- **Explore every angle.** People have different styles of networking. Use what's best for you, but get out of your comfort zone, too. Don't be afraid to reach out to circles of friends, colleagues, social networks, and professional organizations alike.
- **Plan ahead.** Don't waste your contact's valuable time. If you are serious about a career change, make your intentions known early on. Telling your contact that you are just "thinking" about a change might not be enough to motivate them to help you.
- **Bring your A-game.** Make sure your career portfolio is up to date. That includes your most recent résumé, online career profiles, talking points, and contact information.
- **Be genuine.** Mention the names of people who referred you. Take the time to get to know your new contact's background, knowledge, and expertise. Showing interest in others will make them interested in you.
- **Share the wealth.** Networking isn't always about finding a job. Look at initial conversations with contacts as an opportunity to share ideas and information—and consider that your expertise could possibly help them, too.
- **Get social.** Social networking is a major force among professionals. Join the networks that are most relevant to you, develop a strong profile that highlights your skills and experience, and include a professional photo. Regularly monitor your profiles and reply promptly when someone reaches out to you.
- **OMG! Don't 4get 2 B professional!** Avoid using texting lingo, slang, symbols, and abbreviations in your online communication with contacts. Write as if you are speaking to the person face-to-face. This is a simple and effective way to convey professionalism.
- **Follow up.** It's your responsibility to follow up on leads. Should anything turn into a new job, remember to send your contact a thank you note. It's a professional courtesy that may help you even more down the road.



02

UNDERSTANDING THE RECRUITER RELATIONSHIP

We often hear advice on how to deal with potential employers, but we rarely hear about how to effectively work with our job search advocate—the recruiter.

The following guidelines will help you make the most of the relationship.



02

UNDERSTANDING THE RECRUITER RELATIONSHIP

- **Start out on the right foot.** Sell yourself to a recruiter during the first meeting just like you would in an interview. The recruiter needs to feel good about representing you.
- **Be honest.** Tell the truth about your career goals, personal needs, and salary requirements so your recruiter can take this critical information and present you in the best possible light. Tell them if you're working with another recruiter simultaneously. A knowledgeable recruiter knows it's realistic for a candidate to work with more than one representative.
- **Have patience.** It takes time for a recruiter to deliver the best results. Even if the perfect job isn't available right away, trust your recruiter to be the first to know when an opportunity is right.
- **Know that recruiters have the inside track on openings.** Your recruiter may have a job for you that you can't find anywhere else. Submitting your résumé through a recruiter sometimes is the only way to get your foot in the door, putting you far ahead of the competition.
- **Communicate.** If you get your own interview with a company, let your recruiter know. It will heighten urgency for the recruiter to call a few competing companies, which could spur urgency for those companies to interview you as soon as possible. In the process you might also get valuable information on fair compensation, which your recruiter can leverage as they continue to search out the best opportunities.
- **Follow up and keep in touch.** Share your interview experience with the recruiter. Keeping the lines of communication open helps maintain a positive relationship with your recruiter.
- **Referrals.** Tell your recruiter about other people you know who may be a good fit for a job. Again, you're building a valuable relationship with your recruiter while helping others in their job search.



03

IMPRESS WITH YOUR RÉSUMÉ

Your résumé makes an impression that can determine whether or not you will be invited for an interview. Your goal is to craft a powerful document that shows off your accomplishments, experience, skills, and strengths.

Consider the following guidelines.



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IMPRESS WITH
YOUR RÉSUMÉ

- **Position yourself.** Including an “objective” on your résumé is outdated. Companies want to know what you can do for them, not the other way around. Begin your résumé instead with a strong positioning statement that describes what you have to offer. Example: “Highly accomplished marketing executive with more than 10 years experience developing multi-million dollar product lines.”
- **Organize** with simple categories: Professional Experience, Education, Certifications, Associations.
- **Be relevant.** List your experience and dates of employment in reverse chronological order, and then only for the past 10 years unless you feel that certain experience prior to that is critical in helping you get a new position.
- **Describe companies.** Unless the company is very well-known, include a description with size, industry, location, and any other notables. Never include negative information or your reason for leaving a former employer.
- **Showcase accomplishments** with bullet points while also succinctly summarizing your daily tasks. Keep descriptions short and streamlined. Avoid company lingo or acronyms.
- **Show measurable results.** “Increased yearly profits” is vague. “Developed new direct mail campaign resulting in more than \$4 million in yearly sales” is specific and demonstrates a measured result of your abilities.
- **Use action words.** Action words/verbs (e.g., developed, designed, championed, initiated, established, executed, managed, organized) promote a powerful individual. Omit personal pronouns. Replace “I accomplished” with “Accomplished...”.
- **Make it easy on the eye.** Keep it clean, simple, and professional. Avoid multiple fonts, font sizes, and complicated formatting. Limit it to two pages, using white or off-white paper.
- **Proofread.** Read your résumé and then read it again. Have a friend review it for mistakes. A misspelled word can ruin your chances for an interview.
- **Be truthful.** False or misstated information can take you out of the running.



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IMPRESS WITH YOUR RÉSUMÉ

- **List education, certifications, and associations last.** These are important, but not more than direct experience. Leave out anything personal such as hobbies or awards that have no professional relevance.
- **Create an electronic version.** Employers may need your résumé in several different formats. Although most accept Microsoft® Word or PDF versions, it's good practice to have a plain text (TXT or RTF file) version on hand for job posting purposes.
- **Include keywords in electronic version.** Your résumé may be placed in keyword-searchable databases that use software to search for specific keywords that relate to job activities. Always include keywords related to the specific industry. Use words repeatedly mentioned in the job title and description.



03

IMPRESS WITH
YOUR RÉSUMÉ

Special circumstances/types of résumés

If you are a recent college graduate with little experience:

- Highlight skills and experience that are important to the job you are applying for (e.g., classes, volunteer efforts, internships, professional organizations).
- Try a functional résumé rather than a chronological one, listing your skills and accomplishments first and putting less emphasis on your previous positions and dates of employment. Rather than having a section called “Work experience,” consider using functional sections that highlight skills. Example: “Research experience,” “Network installation skills,” or “Project management skills.” Then list a brief work history near the end of the document.

If you are changing careers:

- Consider using a functional résumé, which allows you to highlight transferable skills.

If you have gaps in your work history:

- Use your cover letter to explain how you’ve kept your skills up-to-date through temporary/contract assignments, volunteer work, professional development courses, etc.

If you’ve had several temporary/contract positions:

- List temporary/contract positions in reverse chronological order, just as you would full-time positions.
- If you worked with a staffing company, use its name as your employer, grouping all of your assignments together.

Listing your GPA:

- Academic accomplishments become less significant as work history develops, so don’t include your GPA if you’ve been working for a few years.
- An exception: If you are a recent graduate with a high GPA or degree from a distinguished university, list this information near the top of your résumé.



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IMPRESS WITH
YOUR RÉSUMÉ

SAMPLE RÉSUMÉ ONE: CHRONOLOGICAL P/1

John Smith
123 Any Street
Anytown, AT 12345
Phone: (123) 456-7890
E-mail: jsmith@anymail.com

Summary of Qualifications

Experienced management professional specializing in financial analysis, planning, and budgeting. Demonstrated expertise in and dedication to developing innovative process improvements that positively affect company profitability with a consistent and documented record of creating positive organizational enhancements.

Representative Accomplishments

- Deep knowledge of asset management/wealth-development built through six years of business experience
- Created and implemented strategic planning and analysis process resulting in more than 200 enhancements to client organization
- Reduced labor costs by average of \$500 per month by cutting two days off monthly close schedule
- Commended by CFO for developing model for long-term forecast of accounts payable payments to determine cash requirements and timing of bank borrowing

Professional Experience

Investment, Inc. - investment and consulting firm

Finance and Administration Director 2005 - Present
Directed accounting, finance, and operations for the North American consumer division. Major accomplishments include:

- Drove improvement in operating profits for division resulting in \$80 million increase over the course of three years
- Led \$30 million acquisition of new operating unit resulting in a 25% increase in market penetration
- Implemented financial controls and managed \$1.5 million budget
- Drove implementation of the CST.2 Active Accounting System throughout branch offices resulting in increased efficiency and a \$1 million YOY reduction in expenses
- Reduced monthly receivable write-offs by \$556,000 by developing and implementing restricted credit policies for the lowest margin customers
- Designed executive management, financial, and operational reporting for more than 100 branches

Planning Company, Inc. - publicly held capital management company

Senior Financial Manager 2002 - 2005

Co-managed \$5 - 10 million in domestic equities for private individuals. Selected securities, valued portfolios, traded equities, and built personal customer relationships. Developed valuation models and analytical framework for the equity management service. Major accomplishments include:

- Allocated and oversaw \$50 million in corporate cash for a large public company, helping to build and maintain the relationship for more than 3 years
- Secured new client relationships that resulted in \$3.5 million in new business

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IMPRESS WITH
YOUR RÉSUMÉ

SAMPLE RÉSUMÉ ONE: CHRONOLOGICAL P/2

- Analyzed more than a 100 companies across various industries using traditional financial statement analysis, qualitative analysis, break-up, and comparative valuation methods
- Won contract offering investment services through 14 branches of a local bank
- Developed a rapidly growing brokerage clientele of 275 accounts. Products included mutual funds, stocks, bonds, individual and company retirement plans, insurance, and annuities
- Managed team of seven financial managers

Interactive Company, Inc. - Management Consulting and Registered Commodity Trading Firm

Senior Financial Analyst 1999 - 2002

Financial Analyst 1998 - 1999

Provided customized analysis, software, charting, and data for clients. Major accomplishments include:

- Expanded proprietary database to include numerous unique data sets, particularly in the cash commodity markets
- Created 20 new and innovative products to meet specific customer needs
- User liaison for billing system in place in 40 offices throughout U.S. New system showed decrease in overdue accounts resulting in 34% more billable revenue each month

Education

Master of Business Administration in Finance 2004

Any State University, Anytown, Any State

Bachelor of Business Administration in Finance 1998

Any State University, Anytown, Any State

Affiliations & Memberships

Board of Directors - Anytown Foundation

- Responsible for organizing and managing monthly and yearly financial records

Fundraising Committee Chair - Any Foundation

- Raised donation in excess of \$75,000
- Organized and managed fundraising efforts

SAMPLE RÉSUMÉ TWO: FUNCTIONAL P/1

03

IMPRESS WITH YOUR RÉSUMÉ

JOHN SMITH

123 Any Street, Anytown, AT 12345

Phone: (123) 456-7890

E-mail: jsmith@anymail.com

- QUALIFICATIONS**
- Executive-level, strategic marketing, and product development professional in the financial services industry
 - Advanced strategic marketing and promotions
 - Extensive direct-to-consumer and business-to-business experience
 - P&L management
 - Online and traditional product development
 - Budget administration
 - Recognized leadership and teambuilding

- EXPERIENCE**
- Strategic Marketing**
Significant accomplishments include:
- Generated \$41 million in annual organic growth with \$500,000 marketing investment through client-focused lead generation, advertising, and promotion efforts
 - Development and execution of vertical industry strategy resulting in annual division revenue increases of 38%
 - Increased depth of online product offerings, resulting in new account growth averaging 37% per year
 - Led expansion efforts by identifying and capitalizing profitable markets, increasing branch coverage by 25%
 - Led insurance investment group through intensive overhaul of sales and marketing approach that increased penetration into personal investing by 20% and division revenue by 23% in 2007
 - Improved online lead generation activity by 9,500 active leads each month
 - Worked directly with CEO to develop strategic marketing plan and determine corporate direction
 - Leveraged CRM data to develop models to identify customers at greatest risk of decline. Developed and implemented strategies to help retain key customers, resulting in consistent double-digit year over year growth for this segment
- New Product Development**
Significant accomplishments include:
- New product development resulting in more than \$200 million in additional yearly revenue
 - Developed premium account product for high-volume clients, which increased account penetration by 46% in the financial services market



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IMPRESS WITH
YOUR RÉSUMÉ

SAMPLE RÉSUMÉ TWO: FUNCTIONAL P/2

- Developed and introduced specialty product for the business-to-business market, which drove an additional contribution of \$80 million in the first year
- Enhanced existing offline products for the consumer market, improving margin by 24%
- Introduced more than 50 enhancements to existing online product, resulting in 200% more repeat visitors to consumer Web site
- Established formalized product life cycle management approach, resulting in 10% YOY growth in niche markets
- Generated comprehensive product plans to address challenges and exploit opportunities identified in product review

Leadership and Talent Management

Significant accomplishments include:

- Lead cross-functional teams responsible for new product development, product management, marketing, and promotions
- Motivated teams to regularly exceed targets and financial forecasts
- Built national team of 30 marketing professionals that drove sales growth an average of 34% at the branch level
- Identified and promoted key performers within the organization
- Retained marketing team at 95% over a five-year period

EMPLOYERS**Investing Company, Inc., Anytown, AT**

A publicly held investment firm with 200 locations worldwide
Vice President of Marketing 2005 to Present

Planning Company, Inc., Anytown, AT

A national financial planning agency with more than 100 locations nationwide
Director of Product Development and Marketing 2001 to 2005

Financial Investments, Anytown, AT

A boutique financial planning agency specializing in environmentally responsible investments
Marketing Manager 1999 to 2001
Associate Marketing Manager 1996 to 1999

EDUCATION**Master of Business Administration**

Any University, Anytown, AT

Bachelor of Business Administration in Accounting

Any University, Anytown, AT

04

THE EFFECTIVE COVER LETTER

The cover letter provides an additional opportunity to market yourself. It can establish you as a potential candidate and set you apart from other applicants.

Use the following template to help you write an effective cover letter intro, main body, and closing.



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THE EFFECTIVE COVER LETTER

COVER LETTER FORMAT:

Your name
Mailing address
City, State, and ZIP Code
Telephone number(s)
E-mail address

Today's date

Addressee's name
Professional title
Organization name
Mailing address
City, State, and ZIP Code

Dear Mr. (or Ms.) last name,

BEGINNING: Begin with a statement that establishes a connection with your reader, a probing question, or a notable quote. Briefly say what job you are applying for.

BODY: The body should be one to two short paragraphs that make relevant points about your qualifications. Do not summarize your résumé! Choose some qualifications that really target the position you are interested in, but fight the tendency to oversell at this point.

CLOSING: Your closing should initiate action by explaining what you will do next (e.g., call the employer) or instigate the reader to contact you to set up an interview. Always close by showing appreciation.

Sincerely yours,

Your signature (handwritten)
Your name (typed)

Enclosure: Résumé



04

THE EFFECTIVE COVER LETTER

SAMPLE COVER LETTER

John Smith
123 Any Street
Anytown, AT 12345
123-456-7890
jsmith@anymail.com

Today's date

Jane Smith
CEO
Any Company, Inc.
123 Any Street
Anytown, AT 12345

Dear Ms. Smith:

I read with interest your requirements for an account supervisor. I am interested in working for a dynamic and fast growing interactive marketing firm such as yours and have noted your progress since your company started in 2001.

In my position at Any Advertising, I was responsible for managing more than \$17 million in national advertising revenue along with developing and executing new online and offline initiatives designed to motivate consumer purchases and increase revenue. As the lead member of the account team, I was responsible for moving overall client retention from 76% to 92%, as well as growing several key verticals. I believe I can bring a high level of expertise and experience to your organization while making an immediate impact.

The attached résumé briefly outlines my experience and accomplishments. If it appears that my qualifications meet your current needs, I would be happy to further discuss my background in a meeting with you. I will be contacting you the week of September 1 to follow up and schedule a personal interview.

Sincerely yours,

John Smith

Enclosure: Résumé



05

NAILING THE INTERVIEW

No matter how impressive your résumé, a great interview can always increase your odds of landing the job.

The following are key elements of a great interview.



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NAILING THE INTERVIEW

Know yourself inside and out

- **Know how your skill set relates to the position.** An interviewer wants to see how your experience will translate into their environment. Be prepared to give examples.
- **Play to your strengths.** Identify areas where you think you will be able to offer value.
- **Don't ignore your shortcomings.** If you have a weakness, turn it into an advantage by describing it as an opportunity to improve your current skill set. Describe a situation in which you overcame this weakness in the past.
- **Give examples.** Be prepared to discuss specific situations where your contributions made a real impact. Think of a time when your contribution made a real difference.
- **Expand on your résumé.** Use the interview to expand upon your accomplishments or offer up new ones not highlighted on the résumé.
- **Know what you want.** Talk about your career goals, both long- and short-term. Your interviewer wants to know you're career-minded, not just looking for a job.



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NAILING THE INTERVIEW

Do your homework

- **Research the company, industry, and position** you're applying for. This shows that you're prepared and serious about getting the job. There are many resources for you to do your research. Check out your local library or do an online search. A company's web site will often have information on the history of the organization as well as the vision, mission, and business goals. If the company is publicly traded, annual reports and 10-Ks are an excellent source to get an overview of products, services, and financial statements.
- **Match yourself to the opportunity.** The question on every interviewer's mind is, "What can you do for us?" Give specific examples of how you will contribute positively to the company's mission, business goals, and job objectives.
- **Understand** the organizational structure and where the position fits in. This will help you form more relevant questions about your career path and demonstrate your interest in the job.
- **Know the company's competition,** and ask how the company differs. This demonstrates you already know who you'll be competing against if hired.
- **Make your interest known.** Tell the interviewer specifically about why this particular position, company, and industry appeals to you.



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NAILING THE INTERVIEW

All the right questions

The interviewer will ask work- and behavior-based questions about your past employment, your current position and responsibilities, and your long-term career goals. Focus on your professional accomplishments, and make your answers concise but informative. Don't go off on tangents or talk about your personal life.

Note: Remember that all the questions in this section are only samples, and variations will occur in the interview. You should expect, however, that at least three questions from each category will be asked during the process, and you should be prepared to use them as jumping-off points as the interview becomes more conversational in nature.

Below are some sample **work-related questions**:

- What are your long-term/short-term career goals?
- What are the most important qualities you look for in a company, position, and manager? Why are they important?
- Why are you seeking a change in employment?
- What would be your next position if you stayed with your current employer?
- Describe one of your greatest accomplishments in a previous position.
- Do you prefer a slow- or fast-paced environment?
- Would you rather be part of a group or lead it?
- How do you work under pressure?
- How would co-workers describe your strengths and weaknesses?
- What professional skills are you currently working to improve?
- Describe how others perceive you as a manager.
- Describe how you meet deadlines and goals.
- What are the keys to successful business relationships?
- What was the biggest challenge in a previous position?
- What is missing from your current employer?



05

NAILING THE INTERVIEW

Behavior-based questions

Employers frequently use behavior-based interviewing techniques to gauge an employee's past behavior and future performance. An interviewer isn't always looking for a success story. If you're asked about a situation that went wrong, describe how you dealt with it, what you learned, and what steps you took to create a positive outcome.

Below are some sample **behavior-based questions**:

- Tell me about a situation where you had to make a quick decision.
- Describe how you led a cross-functional team. What were the results?
- Describe a situation with a difficult customer and the outcome.
- Tell me about the best decision you made.
- How do you make sure you understand your customer's needs?
- Tell me about a time when you went the extra mile to support your team and how you did it.
- Describe a time when you were involved in a stressful situation but still got the job done.
- Tell me about a time when you had to deal with a conflict with a team member.
- Tell me about a time when you had to show leadership among your peers/team.



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NAILING THE INTERVIEW

Questions for the employer

It's just as important to ask as it is to answer during a job interview. By asking informed questions, you show the interviewer that you have a strong, proactive interest in the company and position. Following are some of the questions you could ask:

Company-focused:

- How would you describe the culture?
- Where do you see the company among the competition?
- What's the management style?
- Who thrives in this type of work environment?
- What makes you want to work here?
- What are the pros and cons of the company?

Department-focused:

- Where does this position fit in the organizational structure?
- What concerns are currently facing this department?
- Who would I be interacting with most in this position, and what are those individuals like?
- What is the culture of the department, and what types of personalities work well within it?
- How do your direct reports perceive your management style?



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NAILING THE INTERVIEW

Position-focused:

- Describe a typical day.
- What characteristics would the ideal candidate for this position possess?
- How is performance measured?
- What are the goals for this position?
- How important does management consider this position? Where does it fit in the priorities set for the organization as a whole?
- Who has been the best at this position and why?
- What areas of my background can I further clarify for you?
- How do you feel my experience and personality would fit in this position?
- What's the next step?



05

NAILING THE INTERVIEW

Coming to a close

The last impression you make is just as important as the first. The end of the interview is your final chance to let the employer know why you're the best person for the job. Tell them you feel positive about the position and working for their company. Ask how you stack up to other candidates who are qualified. Ask them if you can share anything else about yourself. State your appreciation for the opportunity to interview. Finally, thank them for their time and ask about next steps, when you can expect to hear back, and who to contact to get updated on the interviewing process.

The nitty-gritty

Certain aspects of an interview may have less to do with your qualifications, but still speak volumes to the kind of employee you will be. Consider the following tips to make a good impression from start to finish:

INTERVIEW ETIQUETTE:

- **Don't be late.** Factor in extra time for traffic and parking, and try to arrive about 10 minutes early.
- **Don't use your cell phone.** Turn it off or leave it in your car.
- **Treat everyone you meet as if they were the interviewer.** It shows your ability to respect everyone at the company.
- **Don't be fooled by a casual setting.** You're always interviewing, no matter who you're talking to or where you are. Don't ever drop your professional guard!
- **Save the money conversation for later.** Bringing up money sends the wrong impression about what you're after. Wait to discuss salary and benefits until the employer brings it up.
- **Toward the end, reiterate your interest** in the position, and ask about next steps.
- **Say thank you.** Show your appreciation for the opportunity and tell the interviewer you look forward to speaking to them again soon.

VERBAL COMMUNICATION:

- **Correctly pronounce** the names of all interviewers. Try to nail down difficult names before the interview, or ask for clarification at the beginning.
- **Listen carefully** and allow the interviewer to finish before responding. Don't be afraid to ask for clarification if you don't understand a question.



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NAILING THE INTERVIEW

- **Respond concisely.** Don't ramble.
- **Pay attention** to the non-verbal cues of your interviewer like body language and expressions so your responses do not make you seem overbearing or overconfident—but don't be tentative when sharing your skills and abilities.
- **Avoid inappropriate language.** Cursing or the use of slang can end an interview quickly.
- **Don't talk negatively** about your previous employers or coworkers. It makes you seem like a complainer, not a doer.

NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION:

- **Dress the part.** Professional dress is always appropriate, whether it's a large corporation or a casual online agency. Keep accessories, makeup, and cologne to a minimum.
- **Take notes of important information the interviewer shares.** It shows that you take the interview seriously.
- **Give a firm handshake.** It shows self-confidence.
- **Maintain eye contact.** If you don't, you'll appear insecure.
- **Use positive vocal qualities and facial expressions.** Keep your voice strong, steady, and confident and your facial expressions calm and composed.
- **Avoid overconfidence.** Maintain a careful balance between self-confidence and respect. Interviewers are looking for a team player, not a cocky self-promoter.



06

FOLLOWING UP

Your work isn't done when the interview ends. Take the following actions within a day to establish yourself as a front-runner.



06

FOLLOWING UP

CONDUCT A SELF-ASSESSMENT

How do you really feel it went? Focus on your own impression, and don't try to guess how the interviewer saw you.

- What were your strong points?
- Where did you fall short?
- How does the opportunity fit your goals?
- What did you like or dislike about the opportunity, the company, and the people?
- How interested are you in the opportunity since the interview?
- How does it compare to others you are considering?

INTERVIEW FOLLOW-UP

Following up with your interviewer is a critical step that can make all the difference.

- Send an e-mail, letter, or note to each interviewer to thank them for their time and state again your interest in the position. It should strike a good balance between gratitude and self-marketing. Briefly reiterate your strengths, why your skills are a good fit, and what you can do for the company. Refer to the sample letter provided on the next page.

- In the individual correspondences, emphasize one element of your conversation with each interviewer. This will help you stand out among other candidates.
- Call your recruiter to share your feedback. This will help the recruiter present you in the best light during discussions with the employer.



06

FOLLOWING UP

SAMPLE FOLLOW-UP LETTER:

Today's date

Jane Smith
CEO
Any Company, Inc.
123 Any Street
Anytown, AT 12345

RE: Interview Follow-Up

Dear Ms. Smith:

Please allow me to thank you for my interview on November 11, 2011.

During my interview, I discovered Any Company's unique mission, culture, and impressive accomplishments. I feel privileged to have had this opportunity to be considered, and look forward to learning even more about Any Company, the interactive marketing account management opportunity, and you.

Given my unique experience and qualifications, I am excited about the prospect of a career at Any Company. If I can facilitate your decision-making with additional information, then I would certainly welcome the opportunity to meet with you again.

Many thanks and sincerest regards,

John Smith



07

THE PROFESSIONAL EXIT

Once you've landed the job, you still need to make a professional exit from your current employer. The following guidelines will help you leave on good terms and maintain the positive relationships you built.



07

THE
PROFESSIONAL
EXIT

- **Prepare a resignation letter.** Express your gratitude for the opportunity, thank your manager, and compliment the organization and your colleagues. Indicate your last day, and mention that this decision helps you move your career forward. Refer to the next section on how to handle a counteroffer.
- **Withdraw from the job market.** Notify everyone who is actively involved in your job search, including recruiters and colleagues. Thank them for their time and assistance. Make sure any upcoming interviews are cancelled.
- **Remove your résumé from the Internet.** Your new employer shouldn't see your résumé still making the rounds. It could be perceived as a lack of commitment.

- **Connect with your current HR department.** Confirm your benefits grace periods and continuation provisions.

EXIT ETIQUETTE

- **Be graceful and professional.** This is not the time to burn bridges.
- **Give the standard two weeks notice.** Anything less is unprofessional.
- **Offer to train your replacement** so your essential duties are covered once you leave.
- **Leave a transition plan** to help your replacement finish open assignments.
- **Work as hard during your notice period** as you did on your first day. Don't miss work or come in late.

- **Thank your co-workers and supervisors,** and avoid making negative statements about colleagues. Don't gloat about your new opportunity.
- **Leave on good terms.** Don't air your grievances about issues you faced at work. You never know who you may be working with or for in the future.
- **Don't feel guilty about leaving.** Focus on the fact that you've got a better opportunity ahead.



07

THE PROFESSIONAL EXIT

SAMPLE RESIGNATION LETTER 1

Today's date

John Smith
Any Company, Inc.
123 Any Street
Anytown, AT 12345

Dear Mr. Smith:

Please accept this letter as my formal notice of resignation from Any Company, Inc., effective November 11, 2011. The associations I have made during my employment here will truly be memorable for years to come.

I trust the traditional two-week notice is sufficient to transition my responsibilities and to commence the process of identifying a replacement. I am happy to assist in the training and transition of my replacement.

Sincerely,

Jane Smith, IT systems engineer



07

THE PROFESSIONAL EXIT

SAMPLE RESIGNATION LETTER 2

Today's date

Jane Smith
Any Company, Inc.
123 Any Street
Anytown, AT 12345

Dear Ms. Smith:

Please accept this letter as formal resignation of my position as an IT systems engineer with Any Company.

Thursday, November 11, 2011, will be my last day of employment with the company.

I want to thank you for the opportunity to work with such an outstanding organization. I have enjoyed learning and growing within the organization, and I am proud to have been part of a dynamic team.

Sincerely,

John Smith, IT systems engineer



08

THE COUNTEROFFER DILEMMA

A counteroffer from your present employer may sound tempting, but a raise or new title rarely addresses the reasons you wanted to move on in the first place.

Consider the following important points when faced with a counteroffer.



08

THE
COUNTEROFFER
DILEMMA

QUESTIONS OF MONEY

- If your employer is enticing you with money, ask yourself why you are suddenly worth more now. Is it that your value increased overnight? Or is it that it is cheaper for your employer to give you a raise than to replace you immediately?
- Along those same lines, consider that your employer might just be buying time. That raise may not look so good if your employer is actively looking for your replacement. What happens when they find him/her? Especially if he/she is willing to work for less money?
- The raise you receive might be the same one you are due to receive during your next review.

- Even if you do not accept a counteroffer, do not use it to try and increase the salary you have already agreed upon with your new employer. This could change your new employer's mind about you very quickly.

QUESTIONS OF PERCEPTION

- Even if your employer makes you a counteroffer, it may mean they felt betrayed or even blackmailed when you announced your decision to leave. From now on, your every move will be scrutinized. You are out of the inner circle. Your chances of promotion just diminished, because most companies are unwilling to promote someone who was about to leave them. And if the company has a downturn, you may be one of the first to be let go.

- Accepting a counteroffer also affects your prospective new employer. You are, in essence, going back on your word and written agreement, and this will smear your name and trust with those involved in your search.

- Anyone who helped you secure the new position, including your recruiter, will likewise feel stung. This will make them much less inclined to help you in the future.

Just remember that you began your job search for very specific reasons. Chances are, a counteroffer does not address any of them, and within a year, you may very well be out of the company regardless. Stand firm and graciously decline a counteroffer, and embrace the new opportunity you have just earned for yourself.



09

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COMES IN

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