

Career Exploration

Written Materials

Record Keeping

Interviews

Job Offers

Where to Search

Winning Approach to Job Search Success

Published by
PJC Student Job Services
Providing Placement Assistance
for PJC Students and Graduates

PENSACOLA JUNIOR COLLEGE

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Winning Approach to Job Search Success: for PJC Students and Graduates

Before you begin your job search there are a few important things for you to consider:

- Career/Job Exploration
- Written Materials
- Record Keeping
- Where to Search
- Interviewing

JOB EXPLORATION—WHAT SUITS YOU?

What do you really want to do? What are you comfortable doing? What do you enjoy? For what kinds of jobs are you qualified? All of these questions need answering before you can begin a serious job search.

All too often many people get trapped in jobs they hate. They accept a position, just to earn a little money, where they know they won't be comfortable or enjoy working every day. Once they begin working, though, they find there is no time left to search for the job they really want.

For many people it is necessary to begin earning as soon as possible, no matter what. If you can afford to wait until you find exactly the job you want, you will be a lot happier in the end. But, many people really don't know exactly what they want. Do your homework before you get started.

You need a good understanding of what you want and for what you're qualified. Most career centers have activities to help you determine the career that best suits you. PJC's Career Connection certainly does. Take the plunge; do the job exploration. A good self assessment will help you begin the job search.

**TAKE THE PLUNGE!
VISIT CAREER CONNECTION**

• WRITTEN MATERIALS

• *Resumés*

• Any good job posted for the general public may reap as many as
• 100–150 applicants. With applicant numbers that high, employers
• typically try to disqualify as many applicants as possible. If an
• employer allows 20 seconds for each one, it will
• take more than an hour to get through a stack of
• 100 resumés. So, how long do you think the
• employer will spend on your resumé?

PREPARE, PREPARE, PREPARE!

• Usually employers feel obligated to treat each applicant equally,
• so they set up a time frame and follow it. If the resumé doesn't
• draw an employer's interest within 10 seconds, the resumé is
• disqualified. If your qualifications catch the employer's attention
• within that amount of time, another 10 seconds may be allocated.
• If the employer is convinced that you are a good candidate, your
• resumé goes in a "keeper" stack for further review at a later time.

• Interviewees are chosen from this keeper stack. Remember,
• hiring decisions are made from interviews, not from resumés.
• Interview decisions are made from resumés. Thus, you should
• build your resumé to accomplish one thing—to get an interview.

• Keep in mind that employers aren't necessarily looking for
• qualifications when they first pick up the resumé. Often
• they are looking for readability. Tied to readability, they look
• for errors in spelling, grammar and/or punctuation.

Employers aren't necessarily
looking for qualifications.

• If they find any, they can disqualify the resumé with a clear
• conscience. They know that out of 100 applicants, at least 10–20
• will have qualifications they can use, and display no mistakes or
• inconsistencies in their resumés.

• *More on readability*

• Employers look for "quick-read" resumés that pull the reader in
• with keywords, ample white space, proper use of bolding, and
• underlining and italics to make certain portions stand out or to
• show section breaks and/or breaks in thought. Often, quick-read
• resumés also employ bulleted sentence fragments that begin with
• action verbs. They are short, to the point and lack meaningless,
• inflated and/or exaggerated information.

For example, if an employer can see an organization's name, your job title, and then go straight down a bulleted list of action verbs, they may glean 90 percent of your work experience at the organization without reading any of the details to the right of the verb. After all, everything you do requires an action verb to describe it.

Warehouse Grocery Supply **November 1999 – May 2001**

Warehouse Manager

- Controlled inventory.
- Sold \$100,000 worth of aged seafood to cat-food manufacturer.
- Saved company \$5 on each produce purchase of \$1000 or more resulting in \$3 million net annual savings.
- Scheduled employee work shift/hours.

• If you are writing about a job where you presently work, use present tense verbs. If you are writing about a job where you no longer work, use past tense verbs.

Poor:	• Handled problem customers
Better:	• Resolved customer problems • Satisfied customer needs
Poor:	• Dealt with subordinates
Better:	• Managed subordinates • Supervised five coworkers

• Warning: there are certain verbs you should avoid using in any version (e.g.: handle, handled, deal, dealt).

• People don't like to be handled, and they don't like their things to be handled. They also don't like to be dealt with. Although these verbs are fine to use in normal conversation, they probably are not the best verbs for your job search.

People don't like to be handled.

Even if it is in an employer's sub-conscience, verbs such as these may lead to negative thoughts. You want only positive thoughts when you are considered

• for employment. Plus, these verbs are weak. You usually can think of stronger verbs to take their place.

• Sometimes you may want to use the employer's written job description almost word-for-word to describe what you've done or what you are capable of doing. Notice the preceding sentence says "almost" word-for-word. You still need to use action verbs to begin sentence fragments. More importantly, you don't want to present yourself in the third person. Do not make it sound like you are talking about someone other than yourself (e.g.: writes poems, supervises employees, performs duties, etc.).

• Keep resumés to a maximum of

• two pages. One page is more acceptable unless you have plenty of

Try to keep your resumé to one page.

• experience related to the specific job for which you're applying. If you have the experience to showcase, do so. If not, it is best to keep the resumé to one page.

• You probably already know that most resumés include a work and/or educational history. These subjects are usually most important, but resumés also can include such things as certifications/licensures, skills/abilities summaries, awards/scholarships, clubs/organizations/extra curricular or volunteer activities and any other information that you feel is important for employers to know.

• You can choose from several formats. You may want to use the most traditional:

- **Chronological format**—show dates (to and from), companies' names, job titles, etc., in chronological order. Begin with the most recent and go backward from there.

Example of a Chronological Resumé

Marty Dillahan

21 Smoke Lane
Long City, Florida 35555
(505) 555-5031

Objective:

To secure a position in law enforcement or security.

Education:

University of Plenty Mooresville, Florida
Associate of Science in Criminal Justice January 2001 - May 2005

- Bachelor's Degree in criminal justice expected May 2007
- Maintained B+ average while working full-time
- Minor: Psychology

Experience:

Long City Police Department Long City, Florida
Patrolman March 2000 - Present

- Patrol local neighborhoods on foot to ensure safety for residents
- Investigate crimes/accidents within city limits
- Provide trial testimony
- Work with State Police, DEA, and FBI on major cases

Personal:

- Long City (FL) Big Brothers of America, 1999 - Present
- Fraternal Order of Police, 1996 - Present
- Member, Police Athletic League
- Speak English, Seminole and conversational Spanish

References:

- Available upon request

You should choose the chronological format if:

- Your job history shows continuity and development.
- Your jobs show increasing levels of skill or responsibility, or your jobs are of at least the same skill level.
- You are staying in the same field, and your job target is in line with your current job.
- The names of your current or former employers add prestige.
- Your past job titles are impressive.
- Your career direction is very clear.

The chronological format may not be the best for you if:

- Your work history is spotty, and you have changed employers too frequently.
- You are changing career goals.
- You want to de-emphasize your age.
- You have been absent from the job market for a while.
- You are looking for your first job.

You also may choose:

- **Functional/Skills Based Format**—only highlights your abilities and does not focus on work history. This resumé does not include dates, places, and particular historical information.

Example of a Functional Resumé

Judy S. Hiller

(217) 555-5500

12 Peachy Way
Anywhere, GA 30309

Objective

Seeking an entry level position in retail sales

Education

The High School Anywhere, GA
General Diploma, Classes Included:

- Public Speaking
- Math
- Computers
- Professional Communication

Math Skills

- Maintained three-year "B" average in algebra and geometry
- Computed own 1040EZ tax return and received \$327 return
- Managed \$1000 investment earning an 8.7% annual return

People Skills

- Read to and play board games with elderly at Oaks Manor nursing home
- Maintained average but enthusiastic memberships in varsity sports teams
- Helped raise \$640 for Young Business Leaders' Club

Product Knowledge

- Sports and athletics
- Consumer electronics
- Auto and mechanical
- Music and video

Electronic Cash Registers

- Computer classes and programming personal VCR will help in training to use electronic cash registers

Personal

- Reliable – missed only two days of school during senior year
- Honest – returned \$25 check cashing error to bank
- Friendly – sports teams, clubs member, and community volunteer

Good reasons to choose the functional/skills based format include:

- You want to emphasize skills that were not in recent work experiences.
- You are changing careers.
- You are entering the job market for the first time.
- You are entering the job market after a period of absence.
- You have had a variety of different, unrelated job experiences.
- You have just completed training or education in a new skill area in which you are now seeking full-time employment.

Reasons not to use the functional/skills format include:

- You are applying for a job in a highly traditional field.
- You want to emphasize a career growth pattern.
- You have performed a limited number of functions in your work.
- Your most recent employers have been highly prestigious.

• Or you may choose:

- **Combination Format**—combines the chronological and functional/skills based formats. Combination formats usually work well for people with plenty of experience and marketable skills.

• *Example of a Combination Resumé*

Bill G. Bixel

1560 Green Bird Way
Gelding, Illinois 60481
(111) 222-3333

Objective Seeking an entry-level position in public relations.

Education Spin Style College Anytown, US
B.A. Communications 2005

Related Courses:

- Professional & Business Communication
- Desk Top Publishing
- Technical & Creative Writing

Writing Skills

- Wrote a 12-page user manual
- Wrote a 15-minute slide show
- Published three human interest stories
- Assisted in multi-media proposal

Computer Skills

- IBM
- Macintosh
- WordPerfect
- Microsoft Word
- Microsoft Draw
- Drop View
- HTML
- PowerPoint
- Windows
- GroupWise
- Adobe PageMaker
- Photoshop
- Paintbrush
- Quark Express
- Meeting Maker
- Microsoft Draw
- Scanners
- Netscape
- Eclipse
- FaxWorks
- WinZip
- WS_FTP
- 1stPlace 95
- Fetch

DTP Skills

- Designed more than a dozen flyers, three sales ads, and five newsletters with PageMaker, Photoshop, and Quark Express

Experience

Brick-N-Brak's Anytown, US
Sales Representative 1999 – Present

- Greet customers on the sales floor
- Provide information about current trends and styles
- Provide ideas and feedback to customers about the way they looked in various fashions

• **Cover Letters**

• Cover letters are sometimes called letters of application. Actually
• they are simple introductions to send along with your resumé.
• The cover letter tells the employer why you are contacting them.
• It also may further explain your qualifications. Most importantly, a
• letter of application should always ask the employer to schedule
• a time when you might meet in person.

• Although you may include more information about yourself and
• your qualifications, do not simply repeat what you have already
• stated in your resumé. Employers will not appreciate having to
• read the same thing twice.

• You should use the same heading as you use on your resumé (i.e.
• your contact information) on all your written correspondence,
• including the cover letter. Word placement, underlining, bolding,
• font-point size, etc. all must be exactly the same.

• **Example of Matching Headings**

Sherry Will (850) 555-5935	55 Some Place Somewhere, FL 32555
<hr/>	
<u>Education</u> School of Arts & Sciences <i>Dual Major: Art; Science</i>	Somewhere, FL 1999 – 2003
<u>Experience</u> Dagmar's HR Manager	

Sherry Will (850) 555-5935	55 Some Place Somewhere, FL 32555
<hr/>	
<u>References</u>	
Joe Bob CFO 123 Alphabet Ln. Somewhere, FL 32555	Elain Weeks CPA 3 Times Table Rd. Cool Beans, AL 33533

• If the employer has never met you in person, the heading acts as
• your face for him/her. Just as you would not walk into an office
• every day wearing a different mask and expect to be recognized;
• don't change headings, and expect the employer to recognize that
• the different written material is coming from the same person.

Show your motivation and enthusiasm.

Example of a Cover Letter

Mark Pointer
7685 Fluff Drive
Jakoba, FL 55555
(555) 555-5555

March 24, 2004

Mr. Jerry Rich
HR Manager
Chickn Lickn, Inc.
1423 Hwy. 4001
Berry Boo Hill, ND 75643

Mr. Rich:

Please accept the enclosed resume as application to your available district manager position. I was happy to see the position posted in the Jakoba News Journal.

You'll see from my resume that I have several years experience in managing one of your stiffest competitor's stores. What the resume does not show, however, is how much I thoroughly enjoy the steamed chicken business. My great grandfather was the first in my family to manage a steamed chicken business. Afterward, my grandfather and father both managed steamed chicken stores until they respectively retired from the business. So, you see, steamed chickens have always been a huge part of my life, and by now have nearly become a family tradition. I am very motivated and eager to get started.

Please contact me as soon as possible to schedule a meeting where we may discuss this mutual opportunity. I patiently await your call.

Sincerely,

Mark Pointer

Enclosure(s)

Invite action!

- Use a standard business format with one-inch margins. Left-hand justify everything following your heading/letterhead; skip a line or two before adding a date; skip another line or two before adding the employer's information (name, title and address), then leave four blank lines before beginning the actual letter; include a blank line between each paragraph; close your letter, then skip four lines within which you will hand write your signature followed by your typed name. Skip another line, and list your enclosures. See the following example.

Keep cover letters short and to the point.

In the first paragraph, introduce yourself, and let the employer know why you are contacting him/her.

- In the center paragraph(s), display any important information that the employer needs to know and isn't already included on your resumé. You may offer more detail about information that is on the resumé, but don't be redundant. Show your motivation and enthusiasm to get started in the job.

Ask the employer to contact you.

- In the final paragraph, without being cliché, thank the employer for his/her time and consideration. Then ask the employer to contact you for scheduling a meeting/interview. Do not simply allude to the fact that you will appreciate a call or contact. That's not good enough. Ask outright! Everyone might appreciate a call, but often only the people who actually ask for one will get it.

Invite action in the closing paragraph. Some people highlight their initiative by offering to telephone or by enclosing a pre-worded, self addressed and

- stamped postcard, so all the employer has to do is fill in the date, hour and place for an appointment. Making it easy for an employer to contact you may cut time and red tape, plus counteract a human tendency to procrastinate.

Prospecting/Letters of Inquiry

Sometimes job searchers use another form of cover letter—prospecting or letters of inquiry. Prospecting letters help bring applicant names and availability status to an employer’s attention. Simplified, prospecting/letters of inquiry ask employers to contact the letter writer with information about available positions and possibly even consider their qualifications. This venue is sometimes helpful for job seekers who are looking for work with a particular company or within a particular industry. These letters may even establish the beginning stages of an applicant’s job search network.

Reference Pages

Do not automatically send references.

Some people put specific reference names and contact information on the resumé. They use space that could be used for much more important information. A separate reference page is a much better idea. The reference page is not included as part of the resumé. It is just an addendum. Unless an employer (in the job posting or previous conversation) has asked to see references, do not automatically send them.

If references have not been requested by the time it is your turn to ask questions in the interview, then you should bring up the subject with the employer.

You will look conscientious and well prepared.

When references are requested, or when you bring them up, make sure that you have documented references ready to submit.

As a matter of fact, it is best to show up at the interview with at least 12 copies of your reference page. You never know how many people may be waiting to talk with you, but if you have a copy ready to pass to each of them, you will look very conscientious and well prepared.

Permission?

Make sure you have acquired your references’ permission to list them. Permission likely will lead to much better comments about you.

Use a simple format. Put your contact heading at the top of the page exactly as you did on all other written materials. Then list approximately three-to-six people who know you personally and who will speak well about your character.

Do not use family members.

Prospective employers already have access to your past employers; they are listed on the resumé. Friends, church leaders and past teachers tend to make good references. Do not use family members.

Most employers are savvy enough to know that family members are more likely to give good references whether deserving or not.

- For each reference, include the name, job title (if you know it),
- home address, home and work phone numbers, and e-mail address.
- If you do not have home addresses and phone numbers, use work information. Providing home information shows that you know the person well and that they trust you with their personal information.

Follow-up Letters

Follow up officially.

After conversing with prospective employers at career fairs, during calls of inquiry, or in personal introductions, etc., it is always a good idea to follow up with an official

letter. Try to remind the employer of circumstances

leading to your letter, and thank them for the possibility of help and/or consideration. Then reiterate your interest in working for them.

Thank-you Notes

This is another form of follow-up letter. On average, only one in 100 people will send a thank-you note to the employer after an interview. This may, however,

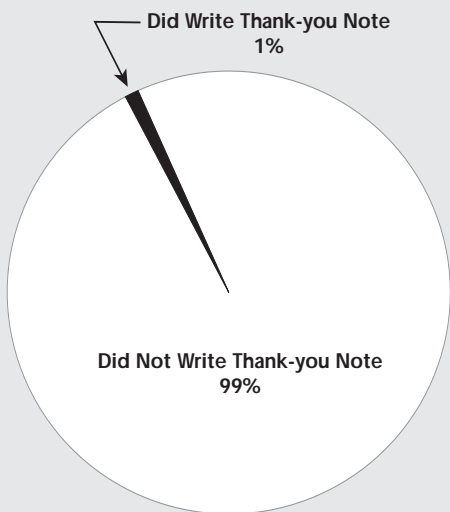
be a deciding factor in your consideration for the job. If an employer is considering two equally

Short and to-the-point.

qualified candidates, and suddenly a thank-you note arrives from one of them, that candidate now has shown initiative that the other candidate has not. The decision just got a little easier for the employer to make. Most will choose the candidate who has shown his/her follow-up abilities.

Like the cover letter, thank-you notes should be short and to-the-point. Usually one paragraph will suffice. Thank the employer/interviewer for making the interview as comfortable a situation as possible. Thank them for sharing any extra information with you that you did not already know. Reiterate your interest in the position, and thank them again for their thoughtful consideration. All of a sudden, after all interviews have taken place, your name pops back to the forefront.

If you really care about getting the job offer, you should care about getting your thank-you note to the employer as soon as possible after leaving the interview. That means getting the note into the mail within 48 hours. The longer the wait, the less impact/meaning the note will have. Do not, however, have a generic thank-you already typed to hand over immediately following the interview. That will do more harm than good.



One in 100 people will send a thank-you note.

Business Etiquette

Officially accept or reject.

One Final Polishing Technique

Status Inquiries

A status inquiry is yet another follow-up letter you may consider. After applying and interviewing, applicants are often given a hint as to when a hiring decision will be made. If two or three weeks pass after the interview, and you still haven't heard from the employer, you may want to write a letter inquiring as to your status of consideration. It is appropriate to complete this task either through letter or telephone.

Letters of Withdrawal/Acceptance/Rejection

If at any time in the application process you decide to withdraw your candidacy for a position, business etiquette dictates that you let the employer know as soon as possible. This is true especially when you accept a position. Let all other employers who may be considering you for employment know that you are no longer available.

Acceptance or rejection of positions usually happens initially through telephone or personal conversations. Still it is proper to officially accept or reject a position in writing.

If accepting a position, you should reiterate all the specifics (pay, hours, start date, benefits, etc.) in writing. If there are miscommunications they can be cleared up right away. It is definitely beneficial to have a documented record that you may refer to in case of future misunderstandings.

When rejecting a job offer, there is no need to give much detail about why you made that choice. As in all your correspondence, express your appreciation for the employer's time and consideration. DO NOT tell the employer that you received a better offer.

Paper

Although approximately 90 percent of written job search materials are submitted on plain, white copy paper, some will incorporate the distinct advantage of using a quality cotton bond paper. When you are looking for one last polishing technique to lift your job search materials over the top of all others, an extra two or three dollars doesn't seem like too much to pay for 500 sheets of paper, especially if you are applying for your dream job.

Light conservative colors are perfectly acceptable. Although flashy, neon colors will attract a lot of attention, it won't be the kind of attention you want. It is much safer to stick with light, airy colors like powder or granite blue, gray, taupe or ivory.

Try to find a paper of at least a 20 lb. variety with at least 25 percent rag content. That will add a special texture that employers definitely will notice. A slightly thicker, colored sheet is especially noticeable peeking out of a stack of plain white resumés.

Often, employers look forward to receiving special papers. They associate quality paper with a quality applicant well before they have a chance to review qualifications.

• *Special Characters/Graphics*

• As tempting as it is, (unless you are applying for a modeling or acting job) do not include a photo of yourself. Also, do not include humorous graphics on any of your job search materials.

• Don't you want to be taken seriously?

• Photos open the door for discrimination based upon your looks before you ever make it to the interview process. Do not lose consideration just because the employer doesn't like the way your photo turned out. By the same token, do not get hired into a job just because the employer likes the way you look and then find yourself totally unprepared/unqualified, or worse, sexually harassed. In the long run, you will be much happier when hired strictly on the basis of your merits and qualifications.

• Don't you want to be seriously considered for jobs when you apply? If the answer is yes, then why would you put a humorous graphic or cartoon on your resumé? Job hunting is a serious venture. It is not a laughing matter; do not help the employer laugh you out of consideration.

• **RECORD KEEPING**

• Where, when and with whom did you apply or interview? What was your impression of the job and employer after the interview? Questions such as these may be easy to answer within a couple of hours or even days after the interview, but not so easy weeks or months down the road. Often, though, it takes weeks or months after interviews have ended for employers to make hiring decisions.

• Wouldn't you like to remember

• which one you like best

• if you are offered

• three jobs within a

• couple days of each

• other, or which office staff seemed

• the friendliest or most proficient? Make sure you keep records

• that include the company name, address, telephone number,

• fax/e-mail/web address, contact's name and title, and the date you

• applied/interviewed or spoke with someone. Also, record any

• information that will have a bearing on your decision to take the

• job or not. Did you promise to check back or follow up at a later

• date? Have you learned any new or surprising information?

• Record it all in a manner that will give you easy access to the

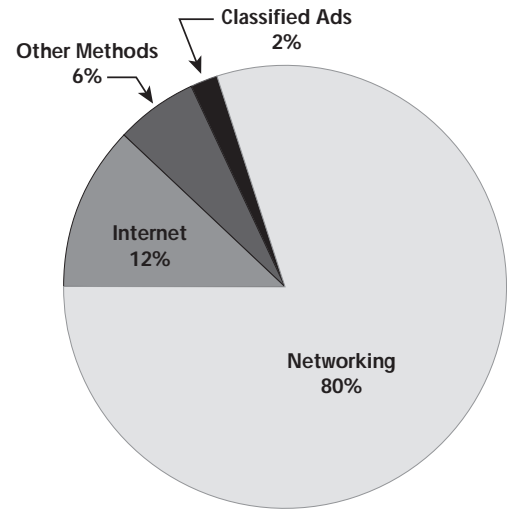
• information at a later date.

• Keep track of job interviews.

WHERE TO SEARCH

Networking

Approximately 75–80 percent of all jobs come from networking (people you know or people who know them). The absolute best way to find a job is to let everyone know (even if you are just meeting them) what kind of job you are looking for and what your qualifications are. They may have information about an available job that fits what you want. They may even enjoy a friendly relationship with a prospective employer and offer them a good recommendation for you.



Internet

Approximately 12–15 percent of all jobs are found on the Internet, and that number is growing almost as fast as technology. First you will have to find sites that post the types of jobs you want. For PJC students and graduates, that has already been done. From the Student Job Services home-page (www.pjc.edu/sjs), you will find links to some great resources.

At approximately mid-point on the SJS home page there is a bulleted list of links. The first link in the list, “PJC Works Online,” is possibly the best job posting resource for PJC students and graduates. Most employers who post jobs there are satisfied with the quality and quantity of applicants they get from the site. Since SJS services are completely free, employers do not usually feel the need to pay to have their jobs posted anywhere else. That cuts at least half the competition out of the picture when compared to public classified ads.

The bottom link in the bulleted list, “Job Search Links,” is another good resource. SJS controls the links on this page but not the job postings found through those links. SJS staff members are glad to point out which links will have local jobs posted.

Student Job Services
www.pjc.edu/sjs

Employment/Temporary & Government Agencies

• **Agencies**

• **Employment/Temporary Agencies**

• There are several different types of employment and temporary employment agencies that many people find useful. Some agencies are paid by the job seeker in advance for an opportunity to view exclusive job postings. Often, however, job seekers find that the job postings are not always as exclusive as the agency claims.

• Other agencies may provide assistance on a contingency basis. They provide job-search assistance for a contractual promise of a negotiated percentage of the employee's salary upon hire that often extends to several weeks or months thereafter.

• Temporary is yet another type of employment agency. Usually jobs found through temporary agencies are short lived.

• Employers do not want to hire a permanent person to fill in for a regular employee who is out on maternity leave, for example. Also, it is rare to find temporary employment that offers benefits such as paid medical expenses or sick leave.

• Temporary agencies are typically paid by the employer. Sometimes, if the temporary worker does an exceptional job, the employer will buy the worker's contract from the temporary agency. In this way, temporary jobs may become permanent employment.

• **Government Agencies**

• Most states offer job placement services, as well. These services are usually free to the job seeker and may lead to solid opportunities.

• You may be required to register with a state placement service if you are receiving state or federal unemployment benefits.

• Locally, the EscaRosa Career Centers in Milton, Pensacola and Century offer comprehensive job search programs. The counselors there are glad to help with advice on written materials, and they normally have more than 100 jobs posted for employers within the community.

• Also, federal agencies may offer some assistance for job seekers especially for the disabled and minorities. Most federal agency services are easily found using the Internet.

• **Publications**

• **Trade Magazines**

• Trade magazines are a good way to find work within a particular field. Many of the magazines will post available jobs as long as they are related to the topic of the publication. Most of the magazines, though, are widely distributed. Some circulate regionally, others throughout the nation or even the world. That means the jobs posted may require relocation. Graduates may get more use from trade magazines than currently enrolled students.

Trade Magazines & Local Newspapers

Local Newspapers/Classified Ads

Classified ads are sometimes tricky. Employers may think, “I’m going to have a job opening in about a month,” so they post the position and begin collecting applications/resumés. Who knows what will actually happen within a month or two? The job may never become available. Under those circumstances, the employer (with the best of intentions) may very well have wasted his/her money to post the ad as well as your time and efforts to apply.

Be wary!

Marketers also use classifieds. Be wary of ads that say no more than “send resumé” and give an address. Some may even reveal a job title: “customer service, send resumé.” What better way to get your name, phone number, address, and a whole list of information about you? Next thing you know someone is calling to interrupt your dinner and sell you a widget.

It is not the publisher’s fault. They have to take people at their word, and believe that there is an actual need for applicants.

Plus, classified ads bring the publisher substantial revenues and provide a needed community service.

More importantly, classifieds are where most people begin their job search. That is

why this is one of the worst places to

search. When it comes

down to real numbers, about two percent of all jobs come from classified ads. You are much better off focusing your attention in other places.

As you are looking through the classifieds, do not underestimate the possibilities within other sections of the newspaper. You may find great clues about available jobs in the “Money” section. Look for new companies just getting started in the area or expanding companies. They will need employees.

Sections such as “People on the Move” may also provide viable clues. If someone is moving to another job, there’s a good chance that their vacated position needs to be filled.

Look in “unlikely” sections in the newspaper.

Although not pleasant to think about, the “Obituary” section may lead to the same kind of clues.

Interview Types

- One-on-one
- Telephone
- Panel/Committee
- Group
- Stress

One-on-one Interviews

Telephone Interviews

Group Interviews

INTERVIEWING

Preparation

Research the company prior to the interview. Know enough about the company to discuss it intelligently and answer questions as honestly as possible.

Although most interviews are one-on-one, you need to be aware of and ready for other types if and when they arise.

Interview Types

- **One-on-one interviews** are typically separated into five phases. In the first phase the interviewer introduces himself/herself, shakes hands and offers the interviewee a seat. Phase two includes a little chit-chat to help the interviewee relax and begin to feel comfortable. Phase three is where the real questioning begins. Phase four is a time for the interviewee to ask questions, and phase five is time to summarize and say your good-byes.

- **Telephone interviews** are often used to screen applicants before personal meetings. For instance, if an employer is planning to fly interviewees in from out of town and/or pay hotel/eating expenses, telephone interviews help justify the expense beforehand.

Another example is attributed to employers who have multiple qualified applicants, but time to personally interview only a few. Telephone interviews are used to cull the applicant pool before personal interviews are scheduled.

Telephone interviews are easier since the employer cannot see you. You might be wearing pajamas and house slippers or sipping a glass of your favorite beverage. You may even read your answers word-for-word from a practice list. As long as you keep your composure the employer will never be the wiser.

There are also drawbacks in telephone interviews. Body language and facial expressions are missed. Abundant insights are gained when you have access to those types of cues.

- **Group interviews** are often conducted by employers looking to hire several people. They are especially beneficial when they need to express the same information to the group or find out how applicants will act in group situations. Observing applicants while they are grouped together may also help employers pick out the most outgoing, inquisitive, shy, or reserved from the group. Differing personality types are usually suited best for different jobs.

Stress Interviews

- **Stress interviews** are purposely set up to subject applicants to similar stresses that they might find in a particular job. Applicants interviewing for a customer complaint representative may be subjected to a loud, aggressive interviewer. Child care workers may interview in a room full of screaming children. The employer may even want to see you physically performing related tasks. If you have applied for a potentially stressful job, be prepared for a stressful interview.

- **Panel or committee interviews** are common for applicants of a highly responsible, professional position. In such situations, employers like to have the perspective of more than one person. The panel/committee will debate the positives and negatives of each applicant trying to find the best fit for everyone involved. Perhaps the person hired will need to work with people from different departments. In that case, it just makes good sense to have a representative from each department participate in the interview process.

Panel or Committee Interviews

Pay attention!

Simple Guidelines

No matter which type of interview you participate in, there are some simple guidelines that will help. Make sure you pick up on facial expressions and body language. There may be a whole lot said, yet unspoken. Pay attention! Pick up on any subtle cues whether expressed verbally or not. Also, watch the cues you express. For example, if you scrunch up your face when deep in thought, make sure the employer does not misconstrue that expression with dislike for him/her or the question. You may even want to watch yourself practice in the mirror.

If you are worried about getting too nervous in the interview, try to get as nervous as possible an hour-and-a-half before the interview. That will give you enough time to calm down before talking with the employer, and you will have burned off any extra adrenalin that may have caused problems otherwise. If you are still a little too nervous, try to use the extra energy to emphasize your eagerness for the job.

Arrive 10 to 15 minutes early. If you plan to arrive early, you will have a little extra time to work things out if something should happen to go wrong on the way (torn hose, being out of gas, waiting on a train, etc.). If you realize that you will be arriving late for the interview, call to reschedule, or find out if you still have a chance of interviewing five to 10 minutes later than originally planned.

When introducing yourself to interviewers, shake hands firmly, and greet them cheerfully. Maintain comfortable eye contact and really listen to what interviewers are saying.

Sample Questions You May Be Asked

1. Where do you see yourself in two years?
2. What are your long and short range goals and objectives?
3. What are the most important rewards you expect in your career?
4. Why did you choose the career you are pursuing?
5. How would you describe yourself?
6. What three words would your friends use to describe you and why?
7. What do you consider to be your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
8. Why should I hire you?
9. What makes you the best candidate for the job?
10. How do you define confidentiality?
11. What two or three accomplishments gave you the most satisfaction? Why?
12. Can you be demanding of your subordinates?
13. How long will it take you to begin making a significant contribution?
14. What is your strongest motivating contribution?
15. What do you do in your spare time?
16. Do you perform well under pressure?
17. What do you know about our company?
18. Are you willing to relocate? Does the idea bother you?
19. Describe a major problem you have had and what you have done about it?
20. What type of management style do you prefer?
21. Describe a situation where you positively influenced another person in a desired direction.
22. What is your most effective way to organize or plan a project?
23. Describe the most significant written document/report/presentation you have completed.
24. Give an example of when you conformed to a policy or guidelines with which you did not agree.
25. Tell me about the first and last times you were tasked to work in a team environment.

Try to appear relaxed. Speak slowly, and communicate clearly. Convey a positive attitude; be friendly; smile. Never accept an offer to smoke, drink, eat or chew gum during an interview. Do not talk about personal problems, and do not make excuses for what you lack. Concentrate on your positive assets and your ability to do the job.

Some sample questions that you may be asked are supplied in the sidebar. Practice answering them. You may even have a friend ask the questions and provide feedback about your answers.

Ask Questions Yourself

Be ready to ask some questions yourself. Interviews are not only for employers to interview you, but also for you to interview them. By submitting your resumé, you have shown interest in the position. That does not mean, however, that you will automatically accept the position if and when it is offered.

Most applicants will state that they do not have questions, or that their questions have already been answered. That is a big mistake.

If you have no questions, it may be misconstrued that you are not interested enough in the job to have at least one question. It is best to have job, company, or industry specific questions to ask. If you do not have any, at least be prepared with generic questions. In the sidebar on the next page are questions you can ask at any interview. Generic questions are better than none.

Never Speak Badly

Never speak badly of past employers. Instead, express gratitude for the opportunity to learn from them even if it was not a fun lesson. Your past employer may be a present friend of the prospective employer. Plus, that type of conversation/comment tends to bring negativity with it. Remember, we want every thought to remain positive.

Above all else, make sure that you dress appropriately.

Dress

The best interview attire depends upon the type of job for which you are applying. If unsure about what attire is appropriate, it is better to overdress. Your goal should be to reach a happy medium, not over or underdressed.

Questions You May Want to Ask

1. Would you like to see some references?
2. What is a typical day with your company like for someone in this position?
3. What is the appropriate attire for me to wear on a daily basis?
4. Are there casual days?
5. Is this a new position, or is someone vacating the position, and if so, why?
6. Is there room for advancement within the position?
7. Will you explain the typical path of advancement for an incumbent in this position?
8. Are your employees expected to follow a certain protocol, or is there an open-door policy?
9. To how many supervisors will I report?
10. Can you give me an approximation of when you will make a hiring decision?

Do Not Ask the Following Questions

1. When will I be eligible for a paid vacation?
2. What is your policy for habitual lateness?
3. How long until I can expect a raise?
4. How long until YOUR job is available?
5. Do you mind if I bring my children to work?
6. Do you mind if I smoke?
7. How often will I get breaks during the day, and how long do they last?

Simple Tips for What to Wear

- **For manual, blue collar jobs:**

Men should wear a nice pair of work slacks, a freshly pressed button down shirt and a freshly shined pair of hard sole shoes or work boots.

Women should wear a conservative colored work dress, not too flashy, approximately knee length and a closed-toe shoe with a low (about three-quarters to one-inch) heel.

- **For service jobs:**

Wear business-casual type clothes when interviewing for jobs such as orderly, nurse's aide, bus boy, stock clerk, waitress, cook, messenger, shipping clerk, etc.

For men, a sport shirt with collar, pressed slacks, dark socks and shined shoes work well. Ties are optional.

Women should wear a conservative colored dress or skirt and blouse. Dark colors (not black) or pastels are best. Best shoes have low to medium heels. Keep jewelry simple and minimized.

- **For semi-professional jobs:**

Men will do best with a clean white shirt and a conservative tie. A sport coat or suit is usually required. Make sure the tie is not too loud or out of place. Wide lapels are also best avoided. Dark socks and shined shoes are imperative.

Women need a suit, or tailored dress, medium heels and nylons. Use makeup, nail polish, perfume and jewelry sparingly.

- **For professional/executive jobs:**

This is where you pull out the three-piece suits. Your Sunday best or even better, if you have it, is called for in this interview. Men need a starched shirt, conservative tie, polished shoes and the best suit available excluding tuxedos.

Women need a tailored suit, medium heels and nylons. Conservative makeup, nail polish, perfume and jewelry are acceptable.

• *Hygiene, Fragrances and Jewelry*

• Hygiene is very important for any interview. Make sure you have recently showered, cleaned your nails, brushed your teeth or used a breath mint and combed, brushed or set your hair.

• If there is any possibility of your hair reaching your eyes or covering your face, tie it back. It is very distracting to keep pushing or flicking your hair around during an interview.

• Be very conservative with jewelry, deodorants, perfumes and colognes. Just because you enjoy a particular fragrance does not mean the employer will share the same feelings. Light fragrances are okay, but make sure you don't overwhelm the employer. If they suffer from asthma, too much fragrance may even choke them. You won't have a chance of getting the job if the employer cannot breathe when you are in a room together.

• Rows of bangle bracelets that rattle every time you move your arm will not win favors in an interview. The same goes for swinging or dangling earrings. It also won't help if an employer scrapes their hand on your four carat zirconium while shaking your hand.

• *Conclusion*

• **After the Interview**

• Remember to make wise use of follow-up letters and phone calls. Keeping good records will make this task much easier.

• When you accept a position, make sure you record the specifics about what time, day and location you are expected to begin work. Also, make sure that you adhere strictly to the schedule.

• If you decide you do not want a position, or you are told a position was awarded to another candidate, don't burn bridges behind you. Continue to treat the employer just as you would if you were planning to begin work with him/her. Indeed you still may.



Don't burn bridges.

• Often newly hired employees just do not work out. Maybe they were not as good a fit as they seemed at first, and after a couple of weeks they left the position. Under those conditions, if you were highly considered for the job, and you remain on good terms, it is likely the employer will call you with an offer.

• It also is possible that a similar position will open soon with the same employer, and they may have you in mind to fill it. Perhaps the employer has a friend in need of a good employee to fill a position with another firm, and will pass your information along.

• ***Recoil Possibilities***

• If you leave on bad terms,
• you will not stand a
• chance of being
• hired by them, ***ever***.

• As a matter of fact, the
• person who interviewed you may move to another place of
• business where you may apply. Under those circumstances, you
• can ruin your chances with other companies, as well. Never
• underestimate the recoil possibilities of treating anyone with
• less than the utmost respect.

Treat everyone with
utmost respect.

• ***Still Need Help?***

• The information in this booklet will help you get started. If you
• have specific questions, want more information, or need help
• with your job search materials, call the PJC Student Job Services
• office at (850) 484-1654 and schedule an appointment to speak
• with a counselor.

**STUDENT JOB SERVICES
(850) 484-1654**

NOTES

**PJC students can access PJC Works
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