

Guide to Getting a Social Work Job



Preparing You for Success

Table of Contents

Ensuring Your Value	3
Cover Letters	4
What Makes a Cover Letter Stand Out	4
Tips for Writing	5
Sample	6
Résumés	7
Tips for Writing	7
Formatting	8
Describing Your Experience	12
Samples	15
Interviewing	26
Researching the Organization	26
Types of Interviews	27
How to Prepare	28
Answering “Tell Me About Yourself”	29
Preparing Your Questions	30
Interviewer Pet Peeves	31
Following Up	33
Checklists for Before and After	36
NASW Resources	37

Ensuring Your Value

Invest in training programs

Use your time to participate in training programs to develop your skills and use your time earning continuing education units (CEU) to expand your knowledge.

Take advantage of the contingent workforce to build up your skills and experience

Use your free time wisely. Everyone in your class is graduating with a degree and at least one or two field placements. Start asking yourself: “why should an agency hire me over anyone else?” The way to build your skills and experience is to build your networks through informational interviews and through volunteering your time at an agency. You can also build your skills through your field placement. Look for ways to go to coalition meetings or ways to build your network during your field placements.

Recognize that value is in the eye of the beholder

Research what is of value to the organization you are applying to and format your résumé to reflect those values. You can research by looking at their website and the job description and by reviewing their industry publications. Take note of their terminology and key words and implement them into your résumé.

Recognize value is not about you but what the job seekers are looking for

You can create value by showing how you can deliver in a competitive environment.

Quantify and qualify job experiences on your résumé

It will add value to your résumé, particularly by using their key words in your résumé.

Format your purpose statement or objective to answer these questions:

Does this statement illustrate specific value I have created? Is the value I have created useful to my prospective employer? How? If you cannot make your purpose statement answer these questions then do not put it on the résumé. It will be a waste of space.

Cracking the New Job Market: The 7 Rules for Getting Hired in Any Economy
by R. William Holland

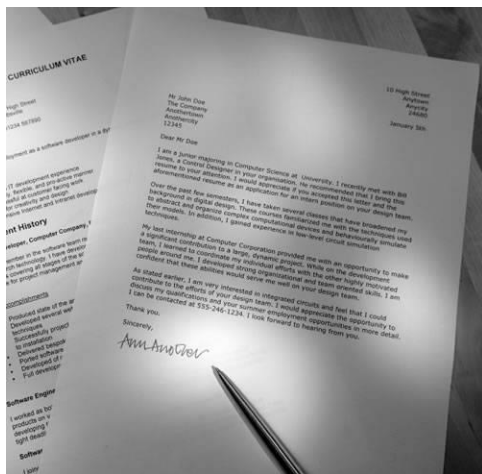


Cover Letters

What makes a cover letter stand out from the rest?

Anything being sent to a decision-maker should sell you, and not just state facts. When conducting a job search, your cover letter and résumé are in a pile for the decision-maker to review, one by one, along with a vast number of other documents submitted by other hopeful individuals. The odds that YOUR document is the very first one on the pile are about a zillion to one! This means the decision-maker has probably read X number of cover letters (and résumés) before reaching your set of documents. With that in mind, it's not recommended that you start the cover letter with the sentence used in so many other letters:

"Pursuant to your recent advertisement in the New York Times for the position of Staff Accountant, I am enclosing my résumé for your review."



B-O-R-I-N-G! Plus, the decision-maker probably just read this same (or very similar) sentence about five dozen times.

Remember, you want to GRAB the decision-maker's attention and SELL yourself to them.

Since the cover letter is designed to market you to potential employers, do not state the obvious. If the cover letter does not create a sense of excitement and entice the reader, it is a waste of your time for writing it and a waste of time for the reader reading it.

Keep track of how many times you use the words "I" and/or "my." After you write the letter, take a pen and circle all the

"I's" and "my's" in the letter: more than five? Then it is time to re-write some of the sentences.

Here is an illustration of how to do that: Instead of writing "I am looking for an opportunity for advancement with a new employer. My background is in retail management, and I feel well-qualified for the Store Manager position with your company", you can write, "A background in retail management and proven record of obtaining results as a Store Manager are key elements in qualifying me for consideration as part of your team."

Remember the purpose of the cover letter: to highlight your background in the right light, sell your skills and show the potential employer you are worthy of an interview. Explaining what you want throughout the letter does not tell the reader the benefit of what you can offer, which is imperative for you to be successful.

One of the techniques to use in cover letters is to pull out the top four or five achievements and mention them in bullet form with the letter. It serves as a wonderful focus point for readers' eyes and draws their attention immediately to your strengths. Here's a brief highlight in what would naturally be a longer cover letter:

*Recognized as a top-performer and dedicated professional, my record of achievements include: ·
Generating a 58 percent increase in new business during tenure as Regional Advertising
Manager · Boosting client media coverage to 50 and developing partnerships with previously
unsecured media contacts*

There are many ways to say things but, as you can see, some words have a stronger impact on readers than others. In cover letters, e-résumés and traditional résumés, you can change the reader's perception in a heartbeat by substituting various words or phrases for more traditional (and outdated) verbiage.

See the outline below:

Non-Aggressive Language

Worked closely with department heads
Helped produce \$3 million in sales
Helped new employees
In-depth knowledge of capital markets
Reduced expenses by 10%

Aggressive Language

Fostered relationships with department heads
Instrumental in generating \$3 million in sales
Aided new employees
Expertise in capital markets
Cut expenses by 10%

In short, aggressive writing makes you sizzle, while passive writing tells your "story." Remember your goal is to effectively market yourself, not to author your employment biography.

Tips for Writing a Cover Letter

- Keep it to one page unless you have quality experience to share.
- Be original, but also get to the point (writing that you wanted to be a social worker since age 6 or saying you want to help people is not original).
- Your cover letter should create a sense of excitement and entice the reader. Express personality.
- Talk about the work you have done and how those experiences directly relate to the job to which you are applying. Read that agency's strategic plan and talk about how you can help them reach their goals.
- Use wordage that resembles their mission statement, website or job description.
- Reiterate strengths and abilities that connect to outcomes.
- Do not use passive language. Change "Assisted department with" to "Actively participated in."
- Write a different cover letter for each job; tailor it to that specific job.

Sample Cover Letter

Based on a Referral

Date

Dear Ms. Glenn,

Susan Street, director of the Family Center, suggested that I contact you regarding your opening for a social worker at the Day Treatment Center. In May, I will be returning to Dallas and I have started searching for opportunities to work with at-risk children and families. I am eager to learn more about the social worker position at the Day Treatment Center.

In addition to having earned my MSW, I have training and experience in day treatment, pediatric social work and women's and children's services. At the day treatment program for the Children's Center in City, I handled assessments, participated in the treatment team and provided therapy for at-risk youth and their families. This experience expanded my skills in working with emotionally disturbed youth in a culturally diverse setting. Prior to my graduate work, I was the coordinator for an effective volunteer service and children's program for the Women's Shelter in City. In all these settings, staff members have complimented me for my work with families and children in crisis.

Susan Street highly recommended the Day Treatment Center. It is my understanding that your staff has initiated several programs that are considered models for working with culturally diverse populations.

Thank you for considering my application; my résumé is enclosed. You can reach me at home in the evenings at 111-222-3333 or at work on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 111-222-3333. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Name and Credentials

Résumés

What do employers look for in a résumé?

Essentially, employers look for what you can do for them. That is what they want to know. Your résumé should be reader-friendly— easy for the reader to find the names of companies, titles held and dates employed. He or she will pass over your résumé if time has to be spent hunting for this information. You cannot expect the employer to do ANY work; it all has to be accessible and right there.

On average, the employer will only spend 15-20 seconds reviewing the document. This will not sound flattering to the job seeker, but candidly, you are a product that you are selling to the reader. Just like in any other sales situation, you sell the sizzle, not the steak. Obviously, you will need the details to substantiate the claim, so have all the information available. What will create the sense of urgency is if you can demonstrate that YOU are the better product. This is especially important in soft markets.

The mindset is not to inform, but to showcase your skills and results, highlight what you've done for former employers and emphasize what you can do for a new company. This is where most people miss the mark. To get 'on the mark', understand the employer's perspective: "I'm the company, and I'm spending 'X' on you. What is my return on investment? How can you make my life better? How can you make the company more profitable?" That is what your résumé should scream to the reader. Why me and not one of the other 185 people whose résumés are sitting on the employer's desk.

Getting Started

There is no need for an objective unless it is specific to that job. Everyone's objective is to get a job in their field in which they want to work. It is usually a waste of valuable space.

List work experiences in reverse chronological order – most recent first.

Only go to 2 pages if you have quality work to include because an employer will only spend 20 seconds reviewing your résumé. Do not feel pressured to include every job – only what is relevant.

Stress accomplishments, not duties you were assigned. Think about the skills you want to highlight. What have you done on a job that distinguishes you from other social workers? Your résumé should read like a marketing pitch.

Use a thesaurus – initiated; achieved; executed; revitalized; streamlined; produced...

Use a professional e-mail and ensure your voicemail sounds professional in case they call.

Proofread, proofread, and proofread. Then ask your friend or field supervisor for feedback too!

Make sure to include a sheet of references when you submit your résumé. Do not use space on your résumé for "references available upon request." Everyone has references, and this is a waste of valuable space. A name on that list may jump out at that person and put you in the interview pile.

"Cracking the New Job Market: The 7 rules for getting hired in any economy" by William Holland

Formatting Your Résumé

Sections and Sample Headings

A résumé is usually chronological or functional or some combination of these forms. The one you choose will depend on your personal preference and the nature of your qualifications. A chronological résumé lists all employment and unpaid experiences in reverse chronological order. A functional one outlines experience according to skill areas and states an objective; this format is sometimes used when changing careers because it highlights abilities rather than particular job titles or dates. If you use a functional résumé, you should also prepare one with a chronological format in case an employer requests it. A combination format includes elements of both chronological and functional résumés, often according to personal preference and background; a combination résumé often includes an objective or a section called qualifications, accomplishments or skills.

Résumé content can be organized in many ways. Here is a sample list you can use that is most appropriate for your unique background.

New Graduates

Your most important credential is your degree. Therefore, put the education section at the top of the résumé after your objective, if you choose to use one, or after the summary or qualifications section if you are using a combination résumé. For a new graduate without job experience, your practicum will be your second key credential. A section on professional development that describes your leadership, affiliation, workshops, and so on can be used to demonstrate additional accomplishments and commitment to the field. If your extracurricular activities, volunteer or part-time work, or college honors are significant in terms of skill development or levels of responsibility, describe them. Try to keep your résumé to one page.

Career Changer

You want your mental shift – a commitment to your new career – to be evident on paper. If you are a career changer, you will want to state your objective and probably use a qualifications summary. Emphasize your social services experience, and put it early in the résumé. Without diminishing your accomplishments, streamline information on your previous career. Retain the major elements of your work, such as “supervised 25 people” and those elements related to your new goal “coordinated team-building exercises to reduce stress” and “experience with analysis, communication, and problem solving.” If community and social work professional activities are your strong suit, they should dominate your résumé. Take a look at your draft. If you were an accountant, homemaker, volunteer, nurse or teacher and are just beginning your social work career, what gets the most attention on your résumé? Your first occupation or the experience related to your new career? To which audience does your résumé speak?

If you are taking your traditional social work experience into a nontraditional arena, you also will need to demonstrate a commitment and potential for success in your new target career. In this case, you will convert social work-specific language into terms commonly used in your new field. You will also add to your résumé those elements that may not have special relevance to your current social work career, but

are important in your target arena. If you are looking at government opportunities, public service might be one of those items.

Experienced Social Workers

Your post degree experience and license (if appropriate) are now your most important qualifications. In a chronological format, professional experience should precede academic degrees; practicum experience will diminish in importance, if indeed you mention it at all. Professional development should focus on recent and major career accomplishments. Only outstanding college and graduate school awards and activities, such as Phi Beta Kappa or president of student council, will remain if at all. For clinical social workers and other direct practitioners, licensure and certifications are very important. In this case, add (LCSW) licensed clinical social worker or your state's equivalent and (ACSW) Academy of Certified Social Workers or any other professional credential you have behind your name, if appropriate for the work you seek. It is not uncommon for someone at the executive level to have a résumé several pages long.

Objectives and Summary Statements

If you choose to include an objective (See Résumé Tips section), there are a number of options to convey your message.

Key Words

A summary paragraph of key words or terms is recommended if your résumé will go into a database. Note that employers using some computer systems see only the keyword summary and only if it is in plain type (no boldface).

Objective, Job Objective, or Career Objective

A statement of your objective is optional if you are using chronological format. However, it is helpful to use it or a qualification summary in functional or combination résumés to explain your purpose. Write a brief objective. In one or two sentences you can include a job title, type of organization, skills to be used, and a particular interest area.

If you wish to use an objective, tailor your résumé each time you need it. At the same time, prepare a general résumé as a backup that can be used for unexpected opportunities that do not fit your objective. If you don't have a specific objective in mind, write a general résumé without a job objective and incorporate your job objective in the cover letter.

Professional Summary, Qualifications, Special Accomplishments

Select three to five statements representing your key accomplishments, experiences or skill sets that highlight your background and convey your message (see sample 8).

Skills

You can use this heading with any résumé format. Use it to highlight skill sets or to list those skills not stated elsewhere ("fluent in Spanish" or computer skills," for example). When used in functional

résumés, divide the skills section into two to four subheadings, such as direct practice, clinical social work, administration, management, program planning, research or fund-raising. Under each subhead describe your relevant experience in concrete terms.

Education

Education is a standard heading, although some social workers combine it with professional credentials. If you choose this combination, be sure that your credentials are easy to find. Employers skim résumés, so put your highest degree first. You can use initials (for example, MSW, BSW) or write out the words (Master of Social Work, Bachelor of Social Work). If you are moving, think about whether the name of your university or the name of your particular school of social work is more likely to be recognized and list them in that order.

If you are a student, do not list courses unless you need to show a connection between what you studied and the position. For example, you may be applying for a position that is not usually held by social workers and need to stress your knowledge of budgeting, statistics, policy analysis, and program evaluation. Usually, stating your concentration, method, and specialization or briefly indicating your academic emphasis is sufficient.

Experience

You have a number of options for listing your paid, training, and volunteer experience. Besides the headings listed below, you may be able to use descriptive headings, which tell a story and get attention. This works best for people whose types of experience fall into neat chronological sequences.

Professional Experience

If you have full-time experience in the field, list it in this section, which will go at the top of the résumé if it is post-degree experience and after the section on education if it precedes the degree. You might use the heading “professional experience and training.” This arrangement will work if your recent field training is more closely related to your job goal than your previous experience. A combined section of “professional and volunteer experience” is a practical choice when your volunteer positions are stronger than or equal to your work experiences or you are a student whose work and volunteer experience is important but secondary to accomplishments in practice.

Experience or Related Experience

These headings are alternative for people whose experience does not fall easily into another, more descriptive heading.

Professional Training

If you are a student without prior full-time work experience in the field, your best cards to play, second to your degree, are your practice experience. Set them apart in a section titled “professional training,” placed just after the section on education. This section should describe each field placement as if it was a job, and it should dominate the page. Use descriptive titles such as “social work intern” or “medical social work intern.” Many graduating students list field placements as professional experience; however, some employers prefer to see practice experience separated from full-time post-degree experience. The choice is yours as long as you make the context of the experience clear through position titles or headings.

Community Experience or Volunteer Experience

Volunteer experience can be an important asset in your search. You need to assess its importance, like that of all other information, to the position you are seeking. If you founded an organization, served as an officer on the board, had responsibility for a major project, or coordinated a team effort, you will probably want to describe these activities in detail similar to the way you describe your jobs if it is equal to or more important than your work experience. If you have extensive community work, consider the heading “community activities” or “public service.” Like titles for internships, use descriptive terms such as “special events volunteer” or “volunteer tutor,” especially if you combine volunteer work with other experience.

Leadership and Professional Development

For some social workers, professional and community leadership roles and other professional activities are among their most important assets. Here are a couple of alternatives for presenting them.

Professional Development

This heading is good for grouping additional items that indicate commitment, particularly to the profession. Use subheads such as presentations, publications, leadership, research, grants, affiliations or memberships, training, licensure or certification, language or computer skills, and community or volunteer work. These sections must be brief. If you have many presentations or publications, put them on a separate sheet.

If you are a direct practitioner, you have probably attended many in-service training sessions, workshops, and continuing education seminars. Do not list each of these on your résumé. You might give a very brief statement listing the topics, such as “1993-96” attended workshops on ethics, family-centered practice, and interventions with blended families.” If you completed an extensive training program by a recognized organization or expert and you have space, give the title, date, and location.

If your experience is extensive in one of these subheadings under “professional development,” it may warrant its own section in the résumé. Leadership is one example. If this is the case, you might consider using the headings that follows.

Leadership Development

If leadership is a strong asset for you, consider adding it to the heading “professional development” and lead off this section with your leadership roles. The same can be done with other subheadings under professional development.

Describing Your Experience

Regardless of which format or headings you choose, keep the following points in mind when describing your experience, including leadership positions and major community or professional activities.

Include Your Major Job Functions (Counseling, Training, Data Analysis) and Major Accomplishments

State specifically how you contributed to each project, service, program, or outcome. Use brief, uncomplicated verb phrases for résumés that will be read and not scanned. A verb phrase is a statement without a subject. Write “Organized local chapter,” not “I organized the local chapter.” For students, sometimes what was learned in a position is far more relevant to the objective than what was done. For example, maybe you had a job as an administrative assistant for a nursing home where you learned about insurance, regulations, and issues facing older adults and families. Try using a “learn” statement, for example, “Learned about alternative care options for older adults.”

Write for your Audience, and Use a Language Style Appropriate for Different Media



To convince a supervisor that you would make a good clinical therapist, use clinical social work terminology; psychosocial assessments, Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders (DSM), treatment planning, brief strategic therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, treatment evaluation, and so forth. Or, to get the attention of the assistant superintendent reviewing résumés for a school social work position use such terms as “multi-disciplinary team planning,” “group work,” “parent and teacher relationships,” “prevention programs,” and “at-risk children.”

If you are looking at positions not usually held by social workers, adopt the language of the role and organizations that you are considering.

If you are submitting your résumé to a database, whether on the Internet or not, you will need to shift from an emphasis on verb phrases to an emphasis on nouns. The nouns or terms such as policy analysis, project management, case management, and grant writing are key words used in searchable databases.

Consider the Knowledge You Gained on Politics, Cutting-Edge issues, Funding Streams, Political Feasibility, and the Use of Technology

Depending on your purpose, include specific experience with and knowledge of:

- Populations (older adults, young children, homeless families)
- Issues (job training, eating disorders)
- Methods (group work, community organizing, advocacy)
- Skills (data analysis, SPSS and other computer packages)

Quantify Your Accomplishments in a Way Appropriate to the Job You Are Seeking

Many authors of résumé books stress the importance of quantifying accomplishments, for example, “increased sales by 60 percent.” This approach is important for administrators of programs, managers of social services, and fundraisers. Quantifying accomplishments in direct practice can be difficult, even though there is now a greater emphasis on outcomes. Handle accomplishments in direct practice differently by shifting the emphasis. For example, “follow-up interviews indicated that interventions were still effective after three months” or “invited to give an in-service training session for the

multidisciplinary team.” Note that it is likely that even those in direct practice will increasingly need to be able to quantify results in the future.

Put All Experience within a Section in Reverse Chronological Order

Condense information on short-term or part-time jobs and other experiences into one statement: “1993-96 Held a variety of part-time, temporary, and summer jobs as a cashier in a retail store, assistant in a library, and data-entry clerk for an insurance company.” Do not list this information unless you need to demonstrate responsibility, account for time, or have limited experience.

Content Details

Keep the following details in mind as you prepare your résumé (or résumés):

- Your name should be in caps and boldface unless you are sending the résumé by e-mail or it is being scanned for inclusion in a database. Be sure that your telephone number is listed as well as an e-mail.
- Delete unimportant data such as the word “résumé” at the top of the page, high school information, and hobbies unless they spark conversation and you have space.
- Do not include reasons for terminating employment or personal information, such as marital or family status, gender, or age.
- A statement that says your references and writing samples are available upon request is not necessary. If interviewers want them, they will ask for them.
- If you are concerned about listing politically-sensitive subjects on your résumé, consider creating two résumés, or do not list these items at all.
- Do not include street addresses and names of supervisors. If they agree to be references, this information can go on a separate reference page independent of the résumé.

The Finishing Touches

Before you seek several opinions on your résumé, be sure that the content and visual presentation are balanced. Relevant experience should be the focal point or dominant section. After you prepare your draft, look at the amount of space you have allotted to each item. Do your related qualifications stand out more than the less-related position in which you spent more time?

Ask someone who has not seen your résumé to scan it in 30 seconds. Then ask him or her to summarize the key points. Are those the points you wanted to get across?

Check and recheck for spelling and grammar. Do not rely on your computer program's spell check feature. In addition to capitalizing or using boldface type for your name and headings, try doing the same with job titles or names of organizations. Do not overuse boldface, however, use it only for items that deserve emphasis.

If your descriptions are too wordy, do the following:

- Turn phrases into adjectives modifying nouns – use “a teen pregnancy program” instead of “a program addressing pregnancy among teenagers.”
- Break up long sentences (use phrases, not sentences).
- Delete information on lower-level skills and minor parts of the job.
- Remove “in-house” titles of programs and replace them with generic terms.

Social Work Career Development: A Handbook for Job Hunting and Career Planning
by Carol Nesslein Doelling

Questions to Help Write a Winning Résumé

To make it sell, answer the following:

- ✓ What are your two top job choices in order of preference?
- ✓ What skills do you enjoy using the most and want to highlight?
- ✓ What have you done on the job that distinguishes you from others in your field?
- ✓ What projects or teams did you lead or concepts did you introduce that had the most impact?
- ✓ What recommendations or contributions have you made that have been accepted or implemented?
- ✓ Have you quantified accomplishments in detail versus just listing them briefly?
- ✓ How will your unique work style benefit a potential employer?
- ✓ Have you used a personal e-mail address? (Yahoo or Gmail, not your work email)
- ✓ Is your résumé easy to read, with all contact information readily visible?
- ✓ Does it include up-to-date language and the buzzwords hiring decision-makers are looking for?
- ✓ Have you proofread it at least twice and had another person review it?
- ✓ Does it read like a marketing document that sells you, rather than a narrative of your work history?

Sample 1: Chronological Format for a BSW Student

JAMES TEAL

Present Address (until June 15, 2012)

Address
City, State Zip
Telephone

Permanent Address

Address
City, State Zip
Telephone and e-mail address

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Social Work, 2012, State College, Phoenix, Arizona
Dean's List, GPA 3.2/4.0, Major GPA 3.3

EXPERIENCE

Community Hospital, City, State

Social Work Intern, January 2011-present

Work directly with chronically mentally ill individuals. Assist clients with daily living skills, social and recreational skills, and employment needs. Conduct home visits. Co-facilitate a support group; led two sessions independently. Observe supervisor in individual client sessions. Developed a broad understanding of social policies, public and private service delivery, advocacy efforts, individual needs, and medical terminology related to this population. Complimented for efforts to integrate classroom knowledge and practice.

Stevens Foundation, Inc., City, State

Trainer (paid position), September 2010-present

Teach independent-living skills and provide support to people with developmental disabilities. As part of a team provide assessments and evaluations. Serve as liaison with local employers. Assist in preparing new trainers. Served on a committee that successfully expanded employment sites. Familiar with issues facing families, agencies, and employers.

Camp Frost, City, State

Lead Counselor (paid position), summer 2010

Supervised a staff of four counselors serving 40 children in a residential camp. Planned and monitored activities, safety, supplies and maintenance. Hired and trained two new counselors.

2006-2007. Held part-time and summer jobs in a hospital, retail store, and restaurant.

LEADERSHIP and VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Freshman Orientation Leader, State College, January-May 2010, August 2010

One of four students out of 20 applicants selected for the freshman orientation committee. Planned a weeklong series of events for 500 incoming students. Led a team of five volunteers, gave presentations to students and parents, and coordinated peer advising sessions.

Other volunteer work includes tutoring and organizing activities for a children's program.

Sample 2: Chronological Format for an Experienced BSW

MARIA GONZALEZ

Address

City, State Zip

Telephone & e-mail address

EDUCATION Bachelor of Social Work, May 2002, Magna cum Laude
University of South State, City, State
Dean's List, Honors Convocation, 4.0 GPA in Major, 3.9 overall

EXPERIENCE

Social Work Intern, 1/02-4/04
Social Services, City, State

- Introduced to probations, grant writing, volunteer programs, emergency shelter, and transitional-living programs, food and clothing services, FEMA and SHARE financial-aid assistance programs for families at risk of homelessness
- Conducted home visits; interviewed and built rapport with clients to assess needs
- Assisted clients in goal setting and conducted goal reviews
- Made appropriate referrals and followed up with clients and resources to evaluate the effectiveness of referrals
- Collaborated with employment counselor to overcome obstacles to clients' employment
- Participated in community case conferences to optimize services for a homeless population and reduce duplication

Resident Apartment Manager, 4/95-9/99
Management, Inc., City, State

- Managed a 352-unit bond-financed property with a 12-member staff
- Interviewed, hired, trained, motivated, supported, and evaluated staff
- Collaborated with HUD to ensure guidelines were being followed
- Collaborated with retained attorney to ensure landlord complied with the law regarding contracts and compliance procedures
- Prepared annual budgets and monitored monthly expenses
- Assessed community functions, made recommendations, and implemented change
- Assessed community's place in the market to create and implement appropriate marketing strategies
- Promoted community spirit through organized activities and a monthly newsletter
- Established and maintained detailed record-keeping procedures

Volunteer Service

Senior Home Improvement Project, City, State, summers 1997—1999

- Worked effectively as a team member to completely paint individual senior citizen's homes in one day

Theatre Company, City, State, 4/95-1/97

- Worked as a team member on set construction, props, lighting, sound, costumes, and special effects on 10 productions; required teamwork, quick problem-solving skills during performances, creativity with limited budgets, organizational and negotiation skills, and technical knowledge

Affiliations National Association of Social Workers
Beta Sigma Phi

Skills American Sign Language (minimal)

Sample 3: Combination Format for a BSW

JAMES TEAL

Address, City, State Zip
Telephone | E-mail address

SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

Oversaw planning for children's activities in an after-school program and a camp. Knowledgeable about child development and cultural diversity issues. Hired, trained, and supervised counselors for a residential camp.

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Social Work, 2012, State College, City, State

Dean's List, GPA 3.2/4.0, Major GPA 3.3

Studies included child development, family issues, and social policy. Wrote papers on child abuse, low-income family issues, and teen violence.

RELATED EXPERIENCE

Camp Frost, City, State

Lead Counselor (paid position), summer 2010

Supervised a staff of four counselors serving 40 children in a residential camp. Planned and monitored activities, safety, supplies and maintenance. Hired and trained two new counselors. Learned about the daily responsibilities of running a residential camp.

State College Volunteer Corps, City, State

Volunteer, Academic years 2009-2011

Tutored elementary school children in an after-school program. Organized and supervised athletic activities. Provided support and encouragement to children in the program. Became familiar with the needs and concerns of children living in the low-income community.

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

Freshman Orientation Leader, State College, January-May 2010, August 2010

One of four students out of 20 applicants selected for the freshman orientation committee. Planned a weeklong series of events for 500 incoming students. Led a team of five volunteers, gave presentations to students and parents, and coordinated peer advising sessions.

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

Community Hospital, City, State

Social Work Intern, January 2011-present

Assisted individuals with daily living skills, social and recreational skills, and employment needs.

Conducted home visits and co-facilitated a support group.

2006-2010. Held part-time and summer jobs in a center for people with developmental disabilities and in a hospital, retail store, and restaurant.

Sample 4: Chronological Format for a MSW Student

LISA DENTON

Address, City, State Zip
Telephone | E-mail address

EDUCATION

Master of Social Work, My University, City, State

Anticipated graduation: May 1997. Emphasis: Children and youths, and mental health care. Scholarship recipient, Student Council vice president, teaching assistant for family therapy.

Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, 2009, The College, City, State

Dean's List. Admitted to two honorary societies.

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

Children's Hospital, City, State

Medical Social Work Intern, September 1996-present

- Provide services on the neonatal and pediatric intensive care units.
- Handle back-up services for all units, including the emergency room.
- Complete assessments and discharge planning; deal with crisis.
- Provide emotional support to families; lead weekly parent support group.

Children's Center Day Treatment Program, City, State

Graduate Social Work Intern, January 1995-June 1995; Volunteer, July 1995-present

- Assess needs of emotionally disturbed youths with behavior and learning problems.
- Provide individual, group, and family therapy.
- Expand knowledge of community resources; make referrals.

WORK AND VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Family Center for Autism, City, State

Respite Provider, May 1996-August 1996

- Provided respite care for youths with autism; learned about developmental disabilities.

Women's Shelter, City, State

Volunteer Coordinator, May 1994-August 1995

Advocate, August 1993-February 1994

- Recruited, trained and supervised eight volunteers providing support for clients.
- Designed and implemented a children's program staffed by volunteers.
- Provided support and advocacy for clients dealing with the legal system.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Certificate in Play Therapy, The Institute, City, State, 1994

1994-1996 attended seminars on impact of domestic violence on children, divorce and children, crisis management, and fund-raising.

Sample 5: Functional Format for a MSW Student

LISA DENTON

Contact Information

OBJECTIVE Seeking a clinical social work position in a pediatric health or mental health care setting working with children, adolescents, and families.

SKILLS

Direct Services

- Provided medical services on the neonatal and pediatric intensive care units.
- Handled back-up services for all hospital units, including the emergency room.
- Completed assessments, dealt with crises; provided emotional support to families.
- Led weekly parent support group in a hospital setting.
- Provided individual, group, and family therapy in a day treatment center.
- Trained to handle crises and make appropriate referrals.

Program and Project Implementation

- Recruited, trained, and supervised eight volunteers for a women's shelter.
- Designed and implemented a children's program staffed by volunteers.
- Co-chaired a committee that held a successful orientation event for 130 students.
- Collected data for a study through interviews; used the SPSS computer package.

EDUCATION

Masters of Social Work, University, City, State

Anticipated graduation: May 1997. Emphasis: Children and youths, and mental health care. Scholarship recipient, Student Council vice president, teaching assistant for family therapy.

Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, 2009, The College, Town, State

Dean's List. Admitted to two honorary societies.

EXPERIENCE

Children's Hospital, City, State, Medical Social Work Intern, September 1996- present.

My University School of Social Work, Teaching Assistant for family therapy course, 1996.

Children's Center Day Treatment Program, City, state, Graduate Social Work Intern, January 1995-June 1995. Volunteer, July 1995-present.

Family Center for Autism, City, State, Respite Provider, may 1996-August 1996.

Women's Shelter, City, State, Volunteer Coordinator, March 1994-August 1995. Advocate, August 1993-February 1994.

Crisis Intervention Center, Town, State Hotline Volunteer, September 1993-August 1994.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Certificate in Play Therapy, The Institute, City, State, 1994

1994-1996 attended seminars on impact of domestic violence on children, divorce and children, crisis management, and fund-raising.

Sample 6: Combination Format for a MSW

MADALINE MATTHEWS

until July 15,2013

Address, City, State Zip

Telephone

E-mail address

after July 15,2013

Address, City, State, Zip

Telephone

EDUCATION

Masters of Social Welfare, University, Town, State, May 1997

Bachelor of Arts, Community Studies/Latin American Studies, University, 1994

Senior Thesis: "El Salvador: Critical Issues"

Honors/Societies: (Name of those *specific* to her interests)

PROGRAM SKILLS

Languages: English and Spanish

Computer: Excel, Microsoft Word, Geographic Information Systems

Program: Development, implementation, evaluation

Writing: Grant proposals, evaluation reports

AREAS OF POLICY STUDY/INTEREST

Policy Areas: immigration, international development, foreign policy, housing, HIV/AIDS

Interest: implications of policy for low-income persons at the local community level

Experience Abroad: Dominican Republic, Mexico, El Salvador, Panama, Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua

CIVIC AND COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE

International Projects, City, State

Latin American Program Intern, January 1997-May 1997

- Anticipated functions include evaluation of sustainable microenterprise projects in Guatemala, project development in Nicaragua, coordination of annual meeting for affiliated organizations in Central America, facilitation of relationships between City area public schools and development projects in Central America.

The Garden Project, City, State

Graduate Research Intern, community development/garden agency, July 1996-December 1996

- Evaluated survey results of urban gardening program aimed at stabilizing low-income neighborhoods. Coded and analyzed data.
- Wrote final report on survey results.
- Used computerized census data from Geographic Information Systems to create informational maps.

Pathways, City, State

Direct Service/Fund-raising Intern, January 1996-July 1996

- Applied Housing and Urban Development (HUD) low-income housing policies to HIV/AIDS client issues.
- Worked with various groups: tenants, neighborhood associations, and government agencies (HUD).
- Conducted client intakes and assessments for a low-income housing program.

Amigos, City, State

Tutoring Chairperson and Board Member, October 1995-June 1996

- Organized volunteer bilingual tutoring program involving 25 volunteers and 90 students from three local elementary schools.
- Collaborated with other board members on fund-raising events.

Refugee Committee, City, State

Project Coordinator, April 1995-April 1996

- Assisted refugees with applications for temporary protected status.
- Planned, fund-raised, and led committees for material-aid projects.
- Prepared and co-led a delegation to El Salvador.
- Organized City area speaking tour of Salvadoran psychologists.

County Immigration Project, City, State

Immigration Law/Rights Intern, March 1994-June 1995

- Translated client documents.
- Assisted lawyer in explaining rights to immigrants.

Amigos, City, State

Route Leader, Volunteer, September 1992-August 1993

- Trained new volunteers for summer projects in public health in Latin America.
- Supervised, evaluated volunteers during the summer in City, Mexico.
- Solicited funds for summer projects in public health for rural Latin America.
- Organized community members to carry out latrine construction in City, Mexico, cement floors in the Dominican Republic.

Mary School, City, State

Junior High Girls' Basketball Couch, January 1990-March 1990

- Led team practices and taught skills to team members with various abilities.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Senior Customer Service Representative, Sports, Inc., City, State, July 1995-July 1996

Assistant Manager, Mexican Food Restaurant, City, State, November 1994- May 1995
Supervised up to ten staff, communicated in Spanish

Bilingual Substitute Teacher for two school districts in State, September 1994-May 1995

Sample 7: Chronological Format for a MSW

ROCHELLE SMITH

Address

City, State, Zip

Telephone

E-mail address

Education

University, City, State

Master of Social Work, December 1996

Focus: Social and Economic Development, and Management

University, City, State

Bachelor of Social Work, Minor in Psychology, December 1993

Magna cum Laude

Community Development Experience

Rural Community Development Intern, September 1996 to present

Center for Community Development, City, State

- Provide Staff support to the *Pathways* team
- Assist in developing a proposal for a program designed to address rural poverty issues by making program and service information more accessible via the Internet
- Expand information and data on rural community resources for use on the Internet
- Use the Internet to research community resources and grant opportunities

Community Development Intern, Full-time, May 1996 to September 1996

Community Development Agency, City, State

- Gathered data, information, and necessary support for grant proposals
- Wrote components for grant proposals
- Worked on budgeting and fiscal management, community relations, marketing, planning, problem-solving, and board development
- Assisted in developing and implementing the *Enterprise Community* initiatives; completed site visits and written evaluations
- Collected and prepared data on economic trends and activities
- Expanded community resources information for the Community Information Network on the Internet
- Assisted in writing and publishing an issue of the program newsletter
- Researched topics on the Internet

Social and Economic Development Intern, August 1995 to March 1996

Social Ministry, Town, State

- Co-coordinated a Community Celebration
- Provided staff support in developing a Community Center at Smith Branch
- Co-developed a membership program, which the agency continued
- Provided staff support to the King Business Association
- Organized a commercial area clean-up involving five community organizations and 30 volunteers
- Researched building ownership for the King Business Association

Rochelle Smith, page 2

Direct Service Experience

Social Service Coordinator, Full-time, December 1993 to July 1995

Memorial Home, Town, State

- Managed a staff of social workers
- Assisted families and residents through the admission program
- Met with residents/family members on a regular basis and addressed problems as they arose
- Completed social history and progress notes on each resident
- Led the plan of care for each resident and participated in quality assurance
- Facilitated an Alzheimer's support group

Case Management Intern, August 1993 to December 1993

Regional Center; City, State

- Supported clients with developmental disabilities and mental retardation
- Engaged in social work practice with individuals, families, task groups, community resources, and team relationships
- Completed social history, assessments, and monthly reviews on clients
- Co-facilitated a support group for supportive employment workers
- Developed a community integration project for several individuals receiving residential services from Central Regional Center

Computer Proficiency Skills

- Microsoft Word
- WordPerfect
- Microsoft Excel
- SAS
- Internet

Sample 8: Functional Format for Experienced MSW

JENNIFER BLACK, ACSW, LCSW

Address

City, State, Zip

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

Ten years' experience in program development and community organization entailing start-up, promotions and fund-raising; all positions have been in management or leadership capacities. More than eight years of social service experience in clinical and administrative functions, including counseling, training, and supervision.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT/COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION SKILLS

- Successfully initiated Healthy Initiative, a comprehensive, multi-agency partnership providing health services and wellness education to four day schools serving 700 students; program is currently allocated a \$100,000 budget by The Hospital.
- Established first local intergenerational program at older-adult housing project; identified appropriate facility and participants and organized activities for more than five years.
- Planned elementary school fund-raiser generating more than \$1,000 in sales of projects created by students; recruited parents and vendors to donate time and services.

CLINICAL SKILLS

- Provided clinical services to people age 60 and older as part of multidisciplinary team in a hospital setting; treatment included initial assessment, therapy, and discharge planning.
- Conducted short- and long-term therapy for older adults and facilitated support groups for family members on issues concerning age.
- Supervised students working on Masters of Social Work degrees.
- Solely staffed senior citizen employment office by canvassing local businesses with needs matching applicants' abilities.

LEADERSHIP SKILLS

- Recently appointed to Older Adult Committee, The Foundation; assist in decision-making regarding grant appropriations.
- Serving on Board of Directors, Academy; provide guidance and direction setting for school policy and practices.
- Member of Advisory Committee, Healthy Initiative; recommend program enhancements and mediate difficulties.

WORK HISTORY

Primary Clinician, Community Mental Health Clinic, City, State	1985-1986
Clinical Therapist, Family and Children's Service, City, State	1981-1984
Social Worker, Vocational Service, City, State	1979-1980

EDUCATION

Master of Social Work, The University, City, State	1978
Bachelor of Science in Social Welfare, State University, City, State	1976

Sample 9: Chronological Format for Experienced MSW
Includes Keyword Summary for Electronic Scanning

MELISSA JONES

Address

City, State, Zip

Telephone

KEYWORDS

Child Welfare Policy Specialist. Social Policy Development. Policy Analysis. Regulation Development. Guidelines for States. Child Protective Services Supervisor. MSW, My University

EDUCATION

MSW, My University School of Social Work, City, State, 1983.

SOCIAL WORK and PSYCHOLOGY BS, The College, City, State, 1980.

EXPERIENCE

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, The Capital

Child Welfare Policy Specialist (March 1994-Present): Develop regulations, policies, procedures, and guidance materials related to child welfare services programs for the use of the state and federal staff; provide consultation to regional, central office, and state staff as well as other federal agencies in program areas related to child welfare services in group and individual conferences with other divisions, bureaus, and federal agencies.

COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES, City, State (December 1985-March 1994)

Child Protective Services Supervisor (January 1992-March 1994): Supervised the Sexual Abuse Treatment Services Unit staff of five, provided clinical and casework consultation regarding the treatment of sexual abuse victims and their families.

Foster Care Supervisor (March 1988-January 1992): Supervised a unit of seven foster care workers, provided casework/clinical consultation regarding family reunification and adoption preparation, provided policy/procedures training for new staff, managed the foster care supportive services budget, served as Foster Care Review Board liaison to coordinate monthly case reviews, monitored and reviewed cases for compliance with federal and state regulations, reviewed and edited all written documents such as court reports and case plans, handled crises in workers' absence, and supervised MSW student.

Interviewing

Get to Know the Company Before the Interview

Being prepared to win is critical to your job-search success, just as it is with most of life's challenges.

I know of a business owner who prefers to do all of his company's interviewing. He likes to ask prospective employees what they have done to prepare for the interview. His questions go something like this:

- Did you talk to anyone who works here to learn something about our company?
- Did you check with your school's placement office to see whether there were any graduates working here you could meet?
- Did you find any newspaper clippings on us at the library?

If the majority of the answer is "no," this employer feels that the individual will be an employment risk. His attitude is if you do not prepare to win at the interview, how well will you prepare to win on the job?

Then the employer expects a thank you letter, within 24 hours of the interview, telling him that the individual wants the job.

He expects the job candidate to be prepared for the interview and assertive enough to follow through and make the sale.

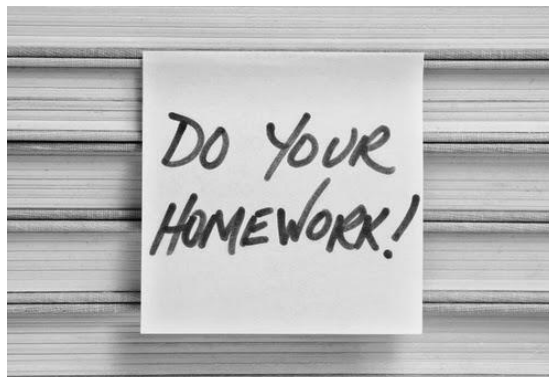
Michael Jordan is a world-class athlete with extraordinary talent. He was the first to arrive at practice and the last to leave. He knew that winning takes preparation.

He also scored on barely half of his field goal attempts, but his preparation gave him more opportunity than most players, and his follow-through put points on the board.

That same effort applies to your job search. If you want the job, you have to prepare to win it.

It takes no longer to prepare well for one interview than it does to blow five or six – and your scoring ration will be many times greater.

By Marvin Walberg Scripps Howard News Services



Types of Interviews

Initial Interview

This interview takes place on-campus, at the company (on-site), or over the telephone and usually lasts approximately a half-hour or less. The interviewer is trying to narrow the candidate pool so first impressions are extremely important during this interview. Some employers may make a hiring decision based upon this interview only.

On-Site Interviews

This interview is used to assess your “fit” with the organization. Interviews are offered to the most promising candidates and usually involve a good portion of the day. During such a visit, you may meet with one person or many people from a variety of departments. You will have the opportunity to discuss job responsibilities, your qualifications and interest, salary and benefits. This is an excellent opportunity for you to evaluate the job, atmosphere and people with whom you would be working.

Telephone Interviews

Many companies screen applicants over the telephone. How well you do will depend on your preparation for such calls and the impression you make. Here are some tips:

- ✓ Any calls during your search could be an employer. Answer the phone appropriately every time.
- ✓ Your greeting on your answering machine should be business-like.
- ✓ Express your pleasure at receiving the call, but don't act like you have won the lottery.
- ✓ Ask for a minute to turn down the stereo, close the door, and set the stage for privacy and quiet.
- ✓ Your voice is your only means to express energy and enthusiasm.
- ✓ Use pauses effectively – think about what you will answer or ask next.
- ✓ Don't hang up before you know the next step and thank the interviewer for calling.
- ✓ Get the interviewer's full name, title, and phone number.

Behavioral Based Interviewing

The basic premise of the behavioral-based interviewing is the best predictor of future behavior is past behavior in similar circumstances. Instead of asking how you would behave in a particular situation, the interviewer will ask how you did behave. Below are tips for preparing for one:

- ✓ Recall recent situations that show favorable behaviors (teamwork, initiative, planning).
- ✓ Be ready to describe the situation, your action, and the outcome or result.
- ✓ Be sure the outcome or result reflects positively on you even if the result itself was not favorable.
- ✓ Be honest. Don't embellish or omit any part of the story.

S Situation	Detail the background. Provide a context. Where? When?
T Task	Describe the challenge and expectations. What needed to be done? Why?
A Action	Elaborate your specific action. What did you do? How? What tools did you use?
R Results	Explain the results: accomplishments, recognition, savings, etc. Quantify.

'STAR' Technique to Answer Behavioral Interview Questions

Preparation

Practice

Practice makes perfect! Take the time to answer the questions you anticipate as well as ask the questions you have prepared. This might be the most important preparation step, even if it makes you feel ridiculous.

Dress

Avoid crazy colors or loud outfits. You can express yourself through your personality. Puffy hair, unnatural hair colors, crazy ties, excess makeup, and large jewelry can turn a potential employer away. Remember, first impression is key.

Notes

Take notes! It shows you are interested in them. Remember you are interviewing them too!

Homework

Never walk into an interview without doing your homework! It's not very difficult to do. Look up their website, search articles about the organization, or even seek out someone who is employed there.

Eye Contact - By maintaining eye contact with your interviewer you are telling them you are interested. Even when you take notes, make a point to make eye contact!

Speech - It is important to speak confidently and clearly. Speaking too quickly is a sign of nervousness and lack of preparation. Speaking too slowly accentuates the seriousness of the situation.

Distraction - Refrain from playing with your hair, cross and uncrossing your legs, flicking or tapping your pen, etc. You want them to focus on what you are saying, not what you're doing.

Body Language - Body language can tell a future employer a great deal about you. They can sense if you handle stress or communicate well. Slouching, fidgeting, etc. gives off the wrong message. Use your body language to your advantage by nodding your head or leaning forward to show your interest.

Sell Yourself - Prepare three main points that you want them to know about you and integrate them into the interview. If you never see the opportunity to fit these in, bring it up as you "recap" your main points at the end of the interview or integrate it into your thank you letter afterwards.

Male vs. Female Speech - From a very young age, men and women are taught to speak differently about themselves. For women, talking about your own accomplishments in a way that calls attention to yourself is not acceptable. This makes it very difficult for women to perform well in an interview. Make the time to practice speaking positively about yourself!

Ask Questions - Prepare a few questions to ask towards the end of your interview. This shows that you want to know more about them. One question you can always rely on is when the employer expects to make a decision regarding the job or the next interview. Another safe question to ask is what a typical day looks like and who will you be working closely with.

What to Say to “Tell Me about Yourself”

It’s finally happened! There you are, facing the interviewer at Company X, the company you are sure is perfect for you.

You are off to a great start. Then the interviewer hits you with the worrisome phrase: “Tell me about yourself.”

If you are like most people, this is an uncomfortable moment. Your mind races as you struggle to maintain that “in control” look.

What do you say? Where do you start? Even more important, when do you shut up?

The main message here is: don’t let your mouth flood the interview. More opportunities have been squandered than opportunities created by reverberations from that dangerous weapon – the automatic mouth.

So how should you handle the “tell me about yourself” request? First, and most obviously, you need to come prepared to answer this. Be brief! Use no more than three minutes. Some experts even talk in terms of a 30-second sound bite.

To be that brief you must have a very concise summary of three major areas: your historical background, present experience and contributions you can make to whatever company.

How to decide whether to use 30-seconds or three minutes? Your best guide here is the personality of the interviewer. If he’s been moving the interview along at a rapid clip, use the 30-second version. If he seems to prefer elaboration, take the full three minutes.

If you need to go the distance, the following is a simple approach to organize your information.

- **Step one** is background. Summarize your work history and education. Emphasize strengths and successes. Relate them in chronological order, and you will appear well organized. Refer frequently to your résumé for specifics to support the information. If you decide to include personal information, link it to the job you are seeking. For example, a description of volunteer work in a service club could help define you as a team player.
- **Step two** is your present and most recent position. Mention a couple of responsibilities you are interested in taking on in the job under discussion. If you are not working, talk about the energy you are putting into your job search.
- **Step three** is contributions you can make to this company. Recount the high points of information already provided as supporting evidence of your abilities.
- Point out that your contributions can help lift the company’s department to the next level. Don’t get too detailed. Give them a few tips of the icebergs instead. Let them ask you to reveal more – they will ask you to talk most about which areas interest them most.

And don’t try to figure out what they want to hear.



Do You Have Any Questions?

Surprisingly, the most common answer to this question is “no.” Not only is this the wrong answer, but it is also a missed opportunity to discover information about the company. It is important for you to ask questions – not just any questions, but those relating to the job, the company and the industry.

Be Prepared

What information do you need to decide whether to work at this company? Make a list of at least 10 questions to take with you to the interview. Depending on who is interviewing you, your questions should vary.

If you are interviewing with the hiring manager, ask questions about the job, the desired qualities and the challenges. If you are interviewing with the human resources manager, ask about the company, the department. If you are interviewing with management, ask about the industry and future projections. This is your chance to demonstrate your industry knowledge.

Timing is Important

You will have to use your judgment about the number of questions you ask and when to ask them. Think of this as a conversation. There will be an appropriate time to ask certain types of questions, like those about benefits and vacation. To be on the safe side, it is best to concentrate on the questions about the job’s responsibilities and how you fit the position until you get the actual offer. When you begin to think of the interview as a two-way process, you will see it is important for you to find out as much as possible about the company. Questions will give you the opportunity to find out if this is a good place for you to work before you say “YES.”

Possible Questions to Ask

- 1) Can you tell me what a typical day is like for someone in this position?
- 2) What type of training is given to new employees?
- 3) Who will be my manager and how much contact will I have with him/her?
- 4) What are the best aspects of the job? The worst?
- 5) What is the company culture?
- 6) Exactly what type of person are you looking for to fill this position?
- 7) How soon do you plan to fill the position?
- 8) What type of work/clients are you currently working on?

Scoring a Perfect 10 on Your Interview by Jeffrey Ory

Interviewer's Pet Peeves

You sit facing the interviewer, feeling like things are moving along nicely when all of a sudden the interview takes a drastic turn for the worse. What just happened? You may have hit one of the interviewer's pet peeves, one of those things that automatically triggers a negative response.

Here are seven of the most common peeves provided by experienced interviewers, along with some tips on how to avoid them:

Smells: Too Much of a Good Smell Can Be Bad

Pat Riley, author of *Secrets of Breaking into Pharmaceutical Sales*, has a pet peeve story to relate: "Preparing for an interview is not like preparing for a date. I had one interview with a woman who doused herself with perfume (the same perfume my ex-girlfriend used to wear) right before stepping into the small interview booth. The perfume was overpowering and brought back bad memories."

Communication: Too Little Leaves Interviewers Exasperated

"My number one interviewing pet peeve is an applicant who won't talk," says Steve Jones, a manager of client services at a software company in Dallas. "I try to ask open-ended questions and prod them for longer answers, but no luck. I've even mentioned to a few that I need more information so I can get an idea of where they're coming from – still no luck. I always end the interview saying, 'Now it's your turn to ask questions,' and still no luck; they don't have any. Oh well – next!" "Help me out here," says Jones. "Come prepared to answer questions and talk about yourself."

Communication: Too Much Can Be Too Much

"Candidates who ramble are the ones who get to me," says Dottie Bousquet of Resource Group Staffing in West Hartford, Connecticut. "Last week, I was interviewing a candidate and asked her one question. The candidate talked and talked and talked for 45 minutes straight. I was unable to stop her. I had to say, 'Let's wrap this up,' and I stood up while she continued to talk. I walked to the door of the office and opened it. She left, but continued to talk while walking out the door." The lesson? "Candidates should stay focused, and answer the question asked – in less than two to three minutes," advises Bousquet.

Lack of Focus: Results in Losing the Interviewer

"Typically, candidates are simply too intimidated by the process," says Mark Fulop, project director for a large nonprofit agency. "Relating the answer given to one question back with another – and asking clarifying or follow-up questions – shows me that the candidate is confident and thinking about the whole picture instead of enduring an interrogation."

Averting Your Eyes: One way to Avert an Offer

"People who do not make any eye contact during the entire interview" irritate Gwen Sobiech, an agency recruiter in West Hartford, Connecticut. "I realize some people are shy, but to never look at me once – they look down, around, everywhere, but not at me for the entire interview. I find that extremely annoying. I also tend to distrust someone who will not look at me when I've asked a question." If you are uncomfortable looking into someone's eyes, look at his "third eye," just above and between the person's two eyes.

Slang and Street Speak: Leave Them on the Street

“Poor communications skills really get to me,” says Robert Fodge of Power Brokers in Dover, Delaware. “What I mean by this is not merely their language fluency, but more about the use of language. Slang words and street speak just don’t have a place in most business environments. Also, candidates who say ‘um,’ ‘like’ and ‘uh’ between every other word lose my attention very quickly.”

Deception: Little Lies Leave a Big Impression

One major complaint among recruiters is when a candidate is not completely truthful; small lies are all too common in the world of recruitment. This includes not being completely forthcoming with relevant information, embellishing accomplishments, hiding jobs or leading the process on with no intention of ever following through. Building trust during the interview is key to getting an offer.

Scoring a Perfect 10 on Your Interview by Jeffrey Ory



Follow-Up

Thank You Note

Make an effort to write each person who interviewed you or who you interacted with a thank you note. This may include human resource representatives and secretaries. They will be impressed by your thoughtful note and will most likely mention the note to your interviewer. (So be sure to make each note different.) Each time you can get your name in front of your interviewer the more likely you are to get the job.

Voicemails

Listen to your voicemail as if you were a potential employer. Does it sound professional? Is it appropriate for all people? If not maybe you need to make a few changes. Also, make sure to check your messages. They could be trying to contact you to invite you in for an interview or even offer you a job!

References

Your references are your cheerleaders. Be sure they know you have given their name and numbers out too and who may be contacting them. Even if they don't call it is good to keep in contact with your references and maintain that relationship.

Initiative

As mentioned before, ask your interviewer when they are planning on making the decision or expect the next round of interviews to occur. Following up with a phone call to inquire the status of the open position is acceptable. It shows initiative and interest, but use your common sense and don't overdo it. Take cues from the person you are contacting and keep in mind that they are busy.

The Power of a Simple Thank you Note



A simple thank you note after a job interview can wield considerable power and influence, and reflect very favorably on your candidacy for the position. Why? Several reasons:

By sending a thank you note, you show your interviewer common courtesy and respect.

Unfortunately, in our busy and often impolite world, we simply do not acknowledge each other's time, efforts and commitments. So in sending a thank you note, you tell your interviewer in no uncertain terms that you appreciate the time he/she has given you. After all, he/she had to give up part or all of the day to be with you, and expend effort learning more about you and what you have to offer.

So few job applicants send thank you notes that you automatically stand out if you do.

It is shocking, but the majority of job applicants fail to send thank you notes after their interviews. Why? Who knows? But the bottom line is that you wind up in a position to shine simply by putting forth the effort of sending a note. Strange, but true.

A thank you note gives you an opportunity to reiterate points you made during your interview.

Have you ever left an interview wishing you had more strongly emphasized a certain skill or experience the employer seemed to be looking for? A thank you note gives you the chance to do just that. After using the first paragraph of your note to thank your interviewer, you can use a brief second paragraph to touch again upon the key points you made in your interview. You can also use a similar strategy to clean up any interview rough spots you might have had – i.e., to expand upon or clarify responses you felt were weak or shaky.

A thank you note lets you make points you forgot to make in your interview. Sometimes after an interview, as you walk out to your car you smack yourself on the head and say to yourself, "Why didn't I talk about X?" Frustrating? You bet. But you can take care of the problem to some degree in your thank you note. Again, perhaps in the second paragraph, you can say something to the effect of "After our discussion, it occurred to me that I forgot to tell you about X."

A thank you note demonstrates your written communication skills.

In receiving and reading your thank you notes, your interviewer will see firsthand how you handle yourself on paper. You will be using similar skills every day with clients – so the interviewer will be reading carefully to see how you come across in print.

Notable Note

The thank you note is a necessary tool for any job-hunting strategy. But should you send it by email or snail mail, handwritten or typed?

Email Thank You Notes

How did the company initially contact you? If you have always corresponded with them via email for setting up the interview and answering questions, then by all means send an email thank you note as soon as you return from an interview. However, make sure to follow it with a typed note to show that you are not Mr. or Ms. Casual. Email thank you notes have one clear advantage over their snail mail counterpart: they can put your name in front of the interviewer on the same day – sometimes within hours – of your interview.

Snail Mail

If the company you interviewed with is formal and tradition, use snail mail to send your thank you note. Should it be handwritten or typed? Typed is standard. Handwritten notes are appropriate if you would like to extend your thanks to others in the office who helped you out. For example, if a receptionist, assistant, office manager or other person involved with the interviewing process was especially helpful – say they took you to lunch or guided you from office to office – then a handwritten note is a nice gesture to show your appreciation.

What to Say

More important is what you say and how you say it. A standard thank you note should accomplish several things:

- ✓ Thank the person for the opportunity to interview with the company.
- ✓ Recap some of the conversational highlights.
- ✓ Clarify any information you needed to check on from the interviewer.
- ✓ Plug your skills. Use the last paragraph to state, “The job is a good fit for me because of XYZ, and my past experience in XYZ.”

Interviewers have short memories. A thank you note is your final chance to stand apart from all of the others who want the same position.

Length

How long should your thank you letter be? Of course, as with anything else in a job search, there is no definitive answer. One or two pages is the norm, depending on the amount of information you want to communicate. Letters certainly do not have to be only one page.

Remind yourself that you already have the company’s interest or you would not have been interviewing, and use your thank you letter as a tool to communicate valuable information. The entire job search process is marketing and merchandising your product – you. There is no reason why writing thank you letters should be any different than any other of your job search activities.

Pre-Interview Checklist

- I reviewed the directions to the interview and am familiar with where I am going.
 - I planned when I need to leave so I arrive 15 minutes early.
 - I practiced my answers and question out loud, as well as “boasting” about my accomplishments.
 - I prepared a personal statement, a list of 10 questions to ask, and 5 success stories to share.
 - I researched salary information and estimated my monetary value. I know what my salary needs are based on my living expenses.
 - I contacted my references and asked permission to give their name and number to my potential employer.
 - I thought about what I will wear, ironed it, and laid it out for quick dressing.
 - I polished my shoes and they are in good shape.
 - I researched the company thoroughly and am prepared to share what I know.
 - I packed the following items:
 - 3 or more copies of my résumé and references
 - My research of the company
 - Two professional-looking (non-click) pens and a generic pad of paper
 - The exact address and directions to the interview
 - Full name of the interviewer and their contact information
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Post-Interview Checklist

- I mailed a thank you note right after the interview to everyone I made contact with.
- I have ensured my answering machine message is professional.
- I have two pens and a pad of paper that are accessible to grab.
- I have notified my references of the status of the job interview.
- I have marked my calendar to follow up with the interviewer if I don't hear from them.
- I have made an effort to diligently check my email account listed on my résumé.

NASW Resources

NASW Ohio Chapter staff is happy to help members with their résumés. If you are a member and you would like a professional critique of your résumé, please send the request with your contact information and résumé to info@naswoh.org. We will get back to you within 15 days to discuss your résumé and job search. NASW wants to help you succeed in your career!

Also, NASW Ohio Chapter is offering members 20 free NASW business cards. If you are interested in taking advantage of this member benefit, please e-mail info@naswoh.org.



Practice Perspectives

www.socialworkers.org

Get answers to some of the most challenging situations, and save time with sample HIPAA privacy forms and office policies and review information on billing codes.



Legal Issues

www.socialworkers.org

Members get access to an archive of 100 free legal articles, designed to answer commonly asked questions on hot-button emerging legal issues related to social work.

Social Work Journal

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Expand your knowledge base by perusing the latest in social work research in the free, online, peer-reviewed journal, *Social Work*.



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Online Job Banks

www.naswoh.org/careerconnection | www.careers.socialworkers.org

Need a job? Looking for consulting work or interested in practicing part-time? Access the Ohio Job Bank or search for national listings on the NASW Career Center.