IDAHO
DEPT. OF LABOR

MAXIMIZE YOUR JOB SEARCH

A guide for anyone making an employment or career transition.

What's Inside?

- Getting Started
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- Social Networking
- Applications
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labor.idaho.gov

GETTING STARTED

First Things First

- As you begin a job search, take some time to think through your situation.
- Are you employed but want a different job or one more suited to your skills and education?
- Are you re-entering the workforce after an absence such as staying at home with children or nursing a family member?
- Are you just graduating from high school or college and looking for your first full-time, permanent job?
- Have you recently lost your job?

Finding Work Takes Effort

Looking for work can be a lot of work, especially if you haven't been in the job market for a while or you are changing careers. Today, job searching is rarely a one-time event. Learning the techniques of job searching is an invaluable and evolving lifetime skill.

Being aware of emotional reactions you may have to this change is critically important to maintaining the kind of positive attitude you will need to successfully move forward.

To Make the Job Search More Productive

- Keep your skills current. Maintain an updated list of responsibilities and training you've had.
- Update your resume when you have gained new skills, abilities and accomplishments.
- Get the training or experience you will need to move up in your field or to change careers.
- Keep a list of awards, accomplishments and recognitions.

Examine Your Recent Work History

Take some time to think through the past. Get an accurate grasp on other job experiences to help define where you are and where you want to be.

Things I did well at my previous jobs:

1.

2.

3.

Things that I could have improved:

1.

2.

3.

Where I can find help during this process:

1. **labor.idaho.gov**

2.

3.

New Career Path?

Under any of these circumstances, this can be a perfect opportunity to pursue a new career path. Find out resources the Department of Labor can offer on page 23.

MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR TIME

Landing that new job requires an organized and consistent effort. **To help manage your time:**

Stay Focused

- There will be distractions. Many things may sound better than looking for work, but your job search must be your primary focus. The results you achieve will depend on the effort you invest.
- Let your family and friends know that finding a job is your primary focus to help minimize distractions.
- Challenges and frustrations in the job search process can make you lose your focus for a while so use each experience to polish your approach and improve your "self-marketing" campaign.

Research

- Research the job market and employers in your area through personal contacts, online resources, social media, newspapers, publications, current and past co-workers. Make informed decisions about the direction of your job search based on facts rather than feelings. Your local Department of Labor office is there to assist you every step of the way. Please enquire about federally funded programs that we administer that may be able to assist you in your job search and short-term training needs.

Keep Track

- Use day planners, calendars and online tools to keep records of your job search activities. Good records will help you capitalize on all opportunities. Your personal profile page on IdahoWorks — labor.idaho.gov/idahoworks — provides great online tools for keeping track of your search.
- Check your progress daily and ensure your goals are realistic.

Take Care of Yourself

- Build personal time into your schedule to rejuvenate.
- Eat well, sleep well and be active to maintain your health.
- Reward yourself for accomplishing goals.

IDENTIFYING SKILLS

SKILLS ARE THE FOUNDATION

Employers want to know who you are, where you've been and what you have to offer. Identify skills you have gained through employment, community service, volunteerism and life experience. A skill isn't always something that requires years of formal education and experience.

Types of Skills

Job Content Skills: Skills specific to a job or occupation. Some examples include:

- An administrative assistant may be skilled in typing, filing, correspondence and telephone protocol.
- A salesperson's skills could include customer service, order processing and record keeping.
- Accountants would be skilled in accounts payable/receivable, calculations and tax preparation.
- A nurse is skilled in administering medications, taking and recording vital signs and monitoring patient needs.
- Construction workers may have specialties or a variety of skills such as welding, framing, setting tile, roofing, carpentry, concrete work, electrical and plumbing.

Transferable Skills

These are skills that you have learned and used in activities in jobs, classes, projects, hobbies, parenting and life. They can be substituted or interchanged with another job. Think about the types of things you are good at and chances are they are transferable skills. For example:

- If you were an office manager in a medical office, you probably organized patient files, greeted customers in person and on the phone, ordered office supplies and processed incoming mail. Those same administrative skills are needed in many different types of office settings.
- In your last job, you managed retail sales people. Your management skills could easily transfer to managing call center customer service agents or managing outside sales representatives.
- If you were a stay-at-home parent, you have skills in budgeting, cooking, child development, property management, problem-solving and effective multi-tasking to name a few. These can be useful skills in many types of occupations from day care to office management.

Maintain a Competitive Edge

Even if you have strong job content skills, it is a good idea to take a look at what skills are being required in the jobs you are interested in to determine whether or not your skills are up to date with industry standards and are relevant to the job you are applying for. Are you able to operate the latest machinery, equipment and software that are typical to the occupation you are interested in? Do you have the training, certifications or licenses that are typically required or should you consider updating those? Now is the perfect time to take stock of your job specific skills, certifications and licenses and develop a plan for improvement if necessary. Today's workplace requires us to continue learning and upgrading skills to remain marketable.

Have a question about upgrading your skills? Talk to one of our specialists about programs we might have available to help with acquiring new skills. Call your nearest local office or check **labor.idaho.gov/officedirectory** for contact information.

Take Inventory

My skills are:

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

Good Interpersonal Skills — Soft Skills — are Always in Demand

These skills are extremely important to employers because they can directly impact the quality of the work environment and the success of the business. Many employers would rather hire someone with great soft skills and refine or teach hard skills on the job. Being a successful employee isn't just about performing the tasks involved with a specific position.

It also includes:

- Building successful relationships with co-workers and customers.
- Working well independently and with various-sized groups.
- Keeping a positive attitude, even when working under pressure.
- Being professional in appearance, attitude and behavior while at work.
- Demonstrating a strong work ethic by being dedicated to getting the job done, managing your time wisely and leaving your personal life at home.
- Exhibiting positive self-management skills such as arriving on time ready to work, treating others with respect and focusing on your job responsibilities while you are at work. This includes detachment from personal electronic devices, which is an ever-increasing issue that employers now have to address with their employees.

Soft skills are personal attributes that enable someone to interact effectively and harmoniously with other people.

- OxfordDictionaries.com

How Can You Show an Employer Your Soft Skills?

- Be on time. Be dependable.
- Accept guidance and direction.
- Demonstrate honesty and integrity.
- Communicate effectively.
- Be a team player.
- Bring your best attitude.
- Give customers your best.

Evaluate your soft skills. Ask friends, family members and maybe even previous employers about your soft skills and where you might be able to improve.

How Strong are Your Soft Skills?

Consider your skill level in these areas and how you can demonstrate these abilities to potential employers.

Communication
Are you able to express your thoughts clearly and professionally?

Leadership
Are you able to guide, direct and inspire others?

Initiative
Are you self-motivated? Will you identify and take ownership of work that needs to be done?

Time Management
Are you efficient and able to prioritize tasks and use your work time wisely?

Flexibility
Will you adapt and adjust to changing situations?

Conflict Resolution
Will you remain calm while handling stressful and tense situations?

Positive Attitude
Do you remain optimistic, productive and engaged for as long as it takes to get the job done?

Personal Appearance
Do you appear professional in clothing choice, appearance and hygiene?

THE HIDDEN JOB MARKET/ NETWORKING

WHAT IS THE HIDDEN JOB MARKET?

The hidden job market is any job not advertised. These jobs are filled by referral, the "who do you know" method of recruitment. So while keeping an eye on social media, newspaper advertisements and Internet job search sites is important, the percentages are in your favor if you investigate the hidden job market.

Why Should You Network?

You use your network in many ways. Have you ever hired someone to do repairs in your home? Care for your child? Fix your car? If so, you understand the importance of hiring someone who has been referred to you by someone you know and trust — someone in your network. The same philosophy applies to hiring employees in a business.

- Hiring an applicant the employer has no previous experience with poses significant risks to any business.
- Employees can make or break a business.
- Advertising, recruiting, hiring and training are some of the most costly and time-consuming activities for businesses. Hiring referred applicants can greatly reduce time and costs

Sources of Advertised Jobs

- Idaho Department of Labor
- Online job search sites
- Social networking sites
- Newspaper classified ads
- Staffing agencies

The Long Term

Even when you are employed, maintaining and expanding your network is important to your future. It can be easier to network while you are employed. You never know when a better opportunity will present itself or when you might need that network again should circumstances change.

How to Network

Focus your networking efforts on as many people as possible who work in or have some tie to the types of work you are interested in. This will yield more suitable opportunities.

DEVELOP YOUR PERSONAL NETWORK

Start With Us
Idaho Department of Labor offices throughout the state coordinate a variety of hiring events, workshops and networking opportunities. Find these events on our statewide calendar at **labor.idaho.gov/calendar** or contact your local office.

Informational Interviews
Schedule an informal meeting with someone who has a job you might like or works in an industry you are interested in.

Volunteer
Join volunteer organizations, community service centers, volunteer to serve on a board or council or work with nonprofit organizations that may have some connection to the type of work you are interested in. The benefits are many. Besides helping people or groups, you are also meeting new people. If you are unemployed, it also will keep you busy.

Keep Talking
Tell as many people as possible you are looking for work. Discuss your interests and skills. Develop a 30-second speech for these conversations and remember the broad and instant reach of email, texting and social media for getting the word out.

Have Fun
Participate in community and social activities that interest you, and get to know people who share common interests. If you're short on cash, check your local newspaper or community events social media pages for free events.

Network Online
Social networking sites such as LinkedIn and Facebook have become a desirable method for professional networking and connecting applicants and employers.

Why do Informational Interviews?

- You'll gain first-hand knowledge about a business, giving you a competitive edge for your resume and cover letter and the potential interview.
- You establish a rapport and the prospective employer begins to gain a basic understanding of you as a potential employee.
- You expand your network and increase opportunity.

How to do Informational Interviews

- Identify companies of interest.
- Identify who you want to see — the owner, a manager. Call or email that person explaining you are doing personal research for a career transition and would like to know who might be able to meet briefly for an informational interview about the business or industry.
- Schedule the interview.
- Develop a list of open-ended questions that encourage as much conversation as possible.
- Follow up with a thank you note.

Sample Informational Interview Questions

1. What are the organization's goals?
2. Which skills are most important to the organization?
3. What type of education or experience is required?
4. What are the most important personal characteristics for success in the field?
5. What type of positions does the business offer? What do you like most about your position?
6. What are the challenges you experience?

30-Second Speech

The 30-second speech is a tool that will help you best verbalize your skills for those important, face-to-face connections during networking activities as well as job interviews.

- Write it down to organize your thoughts, identify the types of work you are seeking and the key skills you want to emphasize.
- Develop a professional, courteous, personal introduction.
- Practice out loud. You will gain confidence the more you hear yourself speak.
- Express yourself in a positive and enthusiastic manner.

Online Networking Tips

See page 8 for more on this topic.

- **Research. Some sites will be better equipped than others to deliver the best results for you. Learn how each site differs and which are most used by employers.**
- **Keep personal information personal.**
- **Be persistent. Developing an online presence takes consistency over time.**
- **This is only one of several methods that make up a successful job search. There is still no substitute for face-to-face interaction or a personal referral.**

SOCIAL NETWORKING

Using Social Media in our Job Search

Your Brand. Everything you do on social media creates a perception about you. Use social media as a brand amplifier, to promote your skills. The first 10 seconds someone meets you (or visits your social media account) makes a difference in how you are perceived. Make sure the first thing employers see is professional. What people see is what they assume you are.

Conduct a Personal Audit of Your Online Presence. Search yourself on Google to see who you are online. If there are negative search results, manage them by shutting down damaging references, managing your results through sites like brandyourself.com or simply increase positive posts to drive down the negative ones. Many potential employers will also research you online. If a potential employer looked at any of your social media accounts today, would they find information that doesn't represent you in a positive or professional manner? What you say to the world about yourself online — and about others — will determine what employers assume about you professionally.

Get LinkedIn: A Commonly Used Online Resume. LinkedIn is a must if you are looking for a professional level job. A large percent of recruiters are on LinkedIn. The Help section on the LinkedIn website can get you started, but in general:

- Use a professional photo
- Write an informative headline
- Create an engaging summary
- Add your current position with a description
- Add your previous work history
- Include education
- Add at least five skills and fields of expertise

Be Searchable. Be Smart. Be Connected. Make sure you use your LinkedIn profile to connect with as many of your professional contacts as possible. The more connections you have, the larger your network. And as you customize your resume for specific jobs, remember to include words from the job description. Why? Applicant tracking systems allow employers to digitally search resumes for specific keywords. Some systems look for keyword frequency. Others look for keywords based on specific locations or industries.

See more about keywords on page 11.

Identify the Best Platform for You. After you complete your LinkedIn profile, consider other platforms. Each of the major social media platforms — Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, blogs and Google+ — serve a different purpose and are best used for specific goals. Research them to decide what's best for you.

Remember Your Family and Friends. Consider sending an initial email to let people know you're in the market for a new job. They are part of a network of other friends and family who they know who might be looking for someone like you for a job. Provide periodic updates on interviews to keep your family and friends posted on your progress.

Like and Follow Companies Online. Keep current on businesses and organizations you are interested in and learn about their workplace culture and when they are hiring. Learn their challenges. Suggest solutions, but don't go overboard. Do not "friend" managers or hiring recruiters.

Let Them Serve You. Many online sites allow users to set up alerts via email, text messages or other options such as RSS feeds to let you know when jobs are available. Generally, you select specific criteria for any alerts. Unless your situation requires you to take the first job that comes your way, choose options that ensure you are alerted to the most relevant opportunities for your skills. This will help you avoid being overwhelmed with unwanted alerts.

TARGET YOUR AUDIENCE

Make the most of your time by identifying the sites that will link you to opportunities that match your preferences. For example, you can customize your job search preferences and alerts online with the Idaho Department of Labor at **labor.idaho.gov/jobseeker**. Focus on sites that match your:

- Targeted industries
- Targeted employers
- Skills
- Geographic preferences
- Interests

Not the Sole Source

With a focused and well-planned approach, using online networking methods can certainly move your job search to the next level. While this method can initially connect you to a broad array of opportunities, it does not replace the value of networking in person.

Prepare for the Future

Technological advances are taking the hiring process to new places, and employers are making their own rules when it comes to recruiting employees. You must be ready for just about anything in this fast-paced job market to promote yourself in any number of ways. Don't be surprised if an employer asks you to make a 30-second video of yourself from your cell phone to tell him why you would make a great salesperson or he texts you with a message saying, "I've got 10 minutes to meet with you about a job. Are you available?"

TECH CHECK

Phone Etiquette

Going into a place of business for an application or to find out if they are hiring? Leave your phone behind.

What about the interview? DOUBLE CHECK to be sure your phone is silenced or better yet, don't bring it with you. NEVER answer or check your phone during an interview.

Listen to your voice mail message. Is it professional and appropriate? What about your ring back tone? Anything the employer hears represents who you are.

Email Etiquette

Do you have an old email address, which might be less than professional? (i.e. imsocool171@gmail.com) You may need to create a new professional email address just for your job search activities.

If you receive an email from an employer, make sure you treat your response as professional communication, not as a text message.

- Don't use abbreviations or text shortcuts.
- Use appropriate greetings and closings.
- Use complete sentences and correct punctuation and grammar.

APPLICATIONS

First Impression
Most employers require an application. In some cases, this will be your first contact with the employer. The following are some general guidelines for completing applications.

Curbside Appeal
Fill out the application neatly with no errors in grammar or spelling. Print clearly, avoid abbreviations, use black ink and answer every question. Print N/A if the question does not apply to you.

Follow Directions
Read the entire application before you complete it. Pay attention to what is being asked and how you are expected to respond.

Be Upbeat
Present a positive, honest picture of yourself. Avoid negative information. Look for ways to show you are the right person for the job. Think of what you would look for in an employee if you were an employer.

Honesty is Best
The information you provide may become part of your permanent employment record. False information can be cause for dismissal. Provide only information the employer is seeking or is necessary to sell your qualifications.

Meet the Need
Applications have limited space. Use it to showcase your most relevant skills, experience and accomplishments to increase your chances of landing an interview. Show you meet their needs.

Be Position Specific
Identify the position you want. Responses like "open" or "any" imply desperation or lack of focus.

Desired Salary
The time to negotiate salary is when the job is offered. If an application asks about salary requirements, give a range or respond with "negotiable."

Reasons for Leaving
Try to make your reasons for separating from previous employment positive or neutral. Choose your words carefully. Using words like "quit" or "fired" may affect the employer's decision. Here are some examples you might use:

- Reorganization or merger
- Raised a family
- Returned to school
- Career change
- Contract ended
- Work was seasonal
- Lack of work
- Better opportunity
- Not enough hours
- Relocated
- Promotional opportunity
- Seeking growth
- New job

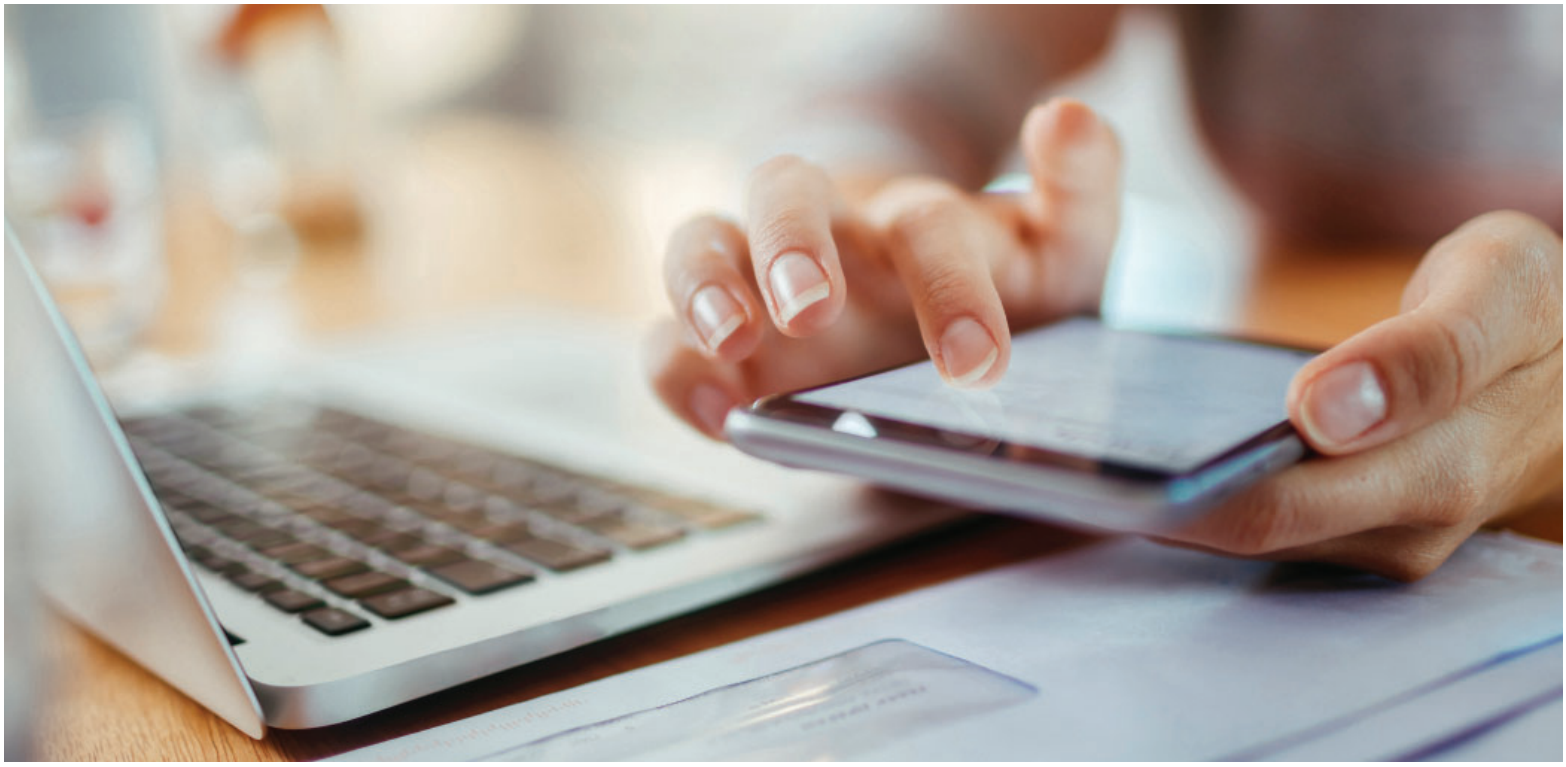
Tips for Completing a Paper Application

Whenever possible, take the application home and get more than one copy in case you make a mistake. At home, you can fill it out where you are comfortable and able to take your time. Some companies put their printable applications online. Follow the directions for submitting the application.

- Never leave a blank space. Print N/A or a dash.
- Use correction fluid for fixing minor errors or print out another application and start over.
- Write out responses using a separate sheet of paper before completing the application or obtain a second application for back-up.
- Double check grammar, spelling and content. When possible, have someone proofread it.
- Prepare a personal data sheet – your cheat sheet. Use it as a reference sheet when completing applications, writing resumes and interviewing. Collect data that might be requested such as dates you started and ended jobs, managers' names, business addresses, telephone numbers and email addresses.

Questionable Questions

Questions on applications should be relevant to your ability to do the job. Questions about age, gender, disability, health, marital status, children, race, arrests or convictions may be difficult to answer or seem irrelevant and in some cases, may even be illegal to ask. Use your best judgment about how to respond. If you have concerns about a question, ask for clarification or how it relates to the job.



Tips for Online Applications

Many companies require job seekers to apply online through their company website. The online application process can be intimidating at first but will become easier with each application. Here are some tips to keep in mind when looking for and completing an online application.

- Gather together all of your work history, employment dates and contact information before you begin.
- Look for "careers" or "find a job" tabs or buttons on the company's website.
- Some websites will navigate you to open positions first and some might bring you directly to a job application.
- Some employers use a third party for the online application process, and you may be routed to another website such as Brassring to fill out the application.
- You may need to set up an account to fill out an application. Keep track of your username and passwords.
- Some online applications tie into your social media profile. If you use this make sure your social medial profile is updated and appropriate.
- Read all instructions thoroughly before you begin.
- If possible, print the application and fill it out first. Use it as a rough draft to follow when you are filling out the actual application online.
- Proofread everything thoroughly before you submit your application.

Scannable Resumes

What is a scannable resume?
A scannable resume can be viewed by a computer using document imaging technology called optical character recognition. This makes it possible for employers to scan resumes for keywords quickly and store them in a resume database. Many employers request scannable resumes with online applications. The two most important elements of a scannable resume are formatting and keywords.

Formatting a scannable resume

- Use a common, plain font such as Arial or Times New Roman.
- Use spacing breaks to indicate a section heading rather than using bold fonts or bullets.
- Left justify everything and use line spacing to indicate breaks.
- Use as many nouns as possible as these become important in the scanning process.
- Some employers will specify the type of file they accept, mostly likely a PDF or Word document. Be sure to follow employer instructions.

Keywords
When employers typically scan for keywords, they are usually looking for nouns that describe your skill and attributes as well as any special training or education that might be required. Use words describing skills specific to the industry. Some examples include:

- Ethics
- Teamwork
- Marketing
- Leadership skills
- Finance
- Java
- Flash
- Forklift certification
- CPR certification

DO I REALLY NEED A RESUME?

YES!

A resume is a self-promotional document that presents you in the best possible light so you will be invited to a job interview. A well-written, compelling resume will help give you a competitive edge. It's your first shot at selling yourself to an employer.

It's not just about past jobs! It's about YOU — your skills, knowledge, accomplishments and experiences — that are relevant to the work you want to do next.

TIPS AND SUGGESTIONS

Start With a "Master" Resume

This is a complete inventory of your work history, and you will build all your other resumes based on this. List all your skills, training, education and accomplishments during your entire career so far. If you are new to the job market, list all of your volunteer activities, non-job work you have done and life experiences that provided new skills or accomplishments.

Write Your Own Resume

It's OK to seek assistance but be sure that your resume is written in a way that accurately represents you and how you normally communicate.

Meet the Need

If you're writing a resume for a specific job listing, review the requirements and use your "master" resume to identify your skills, knowledge and accomplishments that correspond with the employer's needs. This makes it relevant to the specific position, which helps demonstrate that you are a great candidate for the position.

Speak Their Language

Pay close attention to the wording in the job description and use the same words when they reflect your skills and abilities. For example, if the employer is asking for someone with customer service and problem solving skills, your response could be something like "10 years excellent customer service experience while providing satisfactory solutions for both clients and employer."

Be Results Oriented

Describe each accomplishment in simple, powerful action statements, emphasizing how it benefitted the employer. Use active voice. Results speak louder than a list of responsibilities. Instead of writing "worked as a salesperson" write "increased company sales by 12 percent in one year."

Formatting

- Be thorough, but concise. Keep it to one page if at all possible. If you have to include a second page be sure it is at least a third of a page. If it is less, consider adding more content or rethink the first page content.
- Make your resume easy to read. Use conservative and easy-to-read fonts like Arial, Times, Calibri or Cambria.
- Use 11 or 12 point font size.
- Make your margins 1 inch.
- Avoid paragraphs. Use bulleted statements.
- White space is important. White space is the "open space" between sections. White space enhances readability.
- Emphasize category headings using boldface type, larger font, all caps or a combination.
- There are a variety of resume styles. Check out other resources for examples.

Proofreading

This may be the most important part of writing a resume. Ask someone else to proofread it as well. It may take only one spelling, grammar or punctuation error for an employer to set your resume aside. Put your best foot forward and create a perfect resume.

RESUMES - CONTENT THAT MATTERS

An effective resume generally contains five distinct components – heading, objective, highlights of qualifications, relevant experience and work history. Additional information that may be helpful includes education, training and volunteer or community activities.

Heading

Keep it simple but informative. Include your name, address, phone number and a professional email address if you have one. This is usually centered on the page.

Objective (Optional)

If you know the job title, be specific and concise. Let the resume support your objective.

- **EXAMPLE:** Customer Service Representative for ABC Company

If you do not know the job title or a job has not yet been posted, write the objective to reflect the employer's perspective, not your own.

- **EXAMPLE:** To manage people, interface with customers and work with highly technical software or hardware applications.

Another option would be to give a more detailed explanation of your qualifications for the job.

- **EXAMPLE**: Acquire an entry level position in the hospitality industry where I can apply my experience in advertising and public relations.

Highlights of Qualifications

Grab their attention. This may be the most important section in the resume so it should be strong and convincing. Most employers will spend 15 to 20 seconds scanning your resume. If they do not see a connection to the job description, they might not read any further.

Emphasize in a few brief statements the skills and experience you have that match what the employer has asked for in the job description. Use a strong, active voice.

Ask yourself the question, "Is every item in the highlights section relevant to my target job?"

- **EXAMPLE:** More than 10 years experience as an organizational training consultant. Energetic self-starter with excellent analytical, organizational and creative skills.

Relevant Experience

The rest of the story. This is where you elaborate on the information you provided in the "Highlights of Qualifications" section.

Let the employer know what you have produced, what happened as a result of your efforts or what you are especially gifted or experienced at doing.

Use past tense action verbs when describing your accomplishments.

When possible use quantifiers to make your accomplishments stand out.

- **EXAMPLE:** Increased annual sales in 2015 by 20 percent for a total profit of $85,000 more than in 2014.

How far back should you go? Far enough and not too far! About 10 or 15 years is usually enough unless you have a specific work history relevant to the work for which you are applying.

Work History

- Who, what, when and where.
- List jobs in reverse chronological order. Include dates, job titles, company name and location.

  EXAMPLE:
  December 2010- Present | Data Entry Clerk
  XYZ Company | Boise, Idaho

References

Create a reference sheet and have it available at an interview. Some employers will ask for references when applying and some will ask for them later.

Always ask references if you can use their names and contact information and tell them what you are applying for so they will be prepared if they are called.

RESUME CHECKLIST

- ✓ Tailor your resume to each job
- ✓ Address all requirements in the job description
- ✓ Highlight accomplishments, not functions
- ✓ Use action words
- ✓ Demonstrate how you solved problems
- ✓ Identify results/accomplishments of your work
- ✓ Quantify results where possible
- ✓ Use industry terminology when appropriate
- ✓ Include volunteer experience
- ✓ Put education at the bottom of the page
- ✓ Ask someone else to proofread for errors
- ✓ Leave salary range and references off unless requested

BUT AVOID....

- ✗ Using a generic resume
- ✗ Including personal interests unless they are relevant
- ✗ Creating an untargeted work history
- ✗ Describing your jobs using general terms
- ✗ Including irrelevant volunteer experience
- ✗ Sending out your resume without a second opinion

Resume Writing FAQs

If I don't have any work experience how can I make a resume?

- A basic resume highlights the skills you've acquired through non-work activities.
- Include things such as working a concession stand for a club or group.
- List volunteer activities.
- Include other life experiences which have given you job-ready skills.

What if I have gaps in my work history?

- As a general rule, explain what you were doing, as gracefully as possible rather than leave a gap.
- If you were doing anything valuable, you can use that in the gap periods. For example: "2012-2014 - Full-time parent" or "2015-2018 - Maternity leave and family management."

How can you avoid age discrimination?

- Avoid using dates such as your high school or college graduation date. Also remember that you don't have to use your entire work history. Pick the relevant parts and label it "Recent Work History" or "Relevant Work History."
- Even if you have an entire career's worth of experience avoid using terms such as "35+ years of experience."

What about hobbies and interests or religious beliefs?

- Don't include them on your resume. Unless they clearly support your career objective, they don't belong on a resume.

Some Idaho Department of Labor local offices offer resume workshops. Check the calendar to find out if there's one in your area at labor.idaho.gov/calendar.

BASIC RESUME

Lindsey Lucas
329 Edgewood Avenue
Boise, Idaho
208) 555-8989
LCL512@aol.com

Skills

- Proficient in Microsoft Word and PowerPoint (2019)
- Work well with others
- Excellent leadership

Work Experience

Child Caretaker

- CPR and First Aid certified
- Played games, read stories, put puzzles together with children to keep them entertained
- Monitored children's behavior and reported to parents
- Fed and cooked meals for children

Landscaper

- Mowed lawns
- Used a weed eater along fence lines and curbing
- Weeded flower beds and gave them proper nourishment
- Raked and shoveled dirt and debris
- Collected payments

Education

Timberline High School – Boise, Idaho
Expected to graduate June 2021

- General Studies
- Spanish 1 and 2
- Web Design
- Basic Photography
- Yearbook Club
- Marching Band

CHRONOLOGICAL RESUME

Ben Turner

2345 Brook Avenue, Englewood, Idaho 12345
(208) 555-5555 | username@email.com

Objective

Security Guard for Pinkerton Services

Summary of Qualifications

- Active U.S. government security clearance
- Bilingual — fluent in both English and Spanish, both written and spoken
- Superior performance award for past four years in security management

Employment History

Security Specialist, U.S. Marine Corps, May 2014 to present

- Supervised $100 million worth of highly sensitive equipment — security efforts led to zero loss in a three-year period
- Implemented new security system plan that led to increased lockdown protection for personnel
- Provided leadership, instruction and supervision of 25 personnel — efforts resulted in 30 percent decrease in staff turnover and a 10 percent increase in promotions
- Expertly managed investigative reports — recognized as Non-Commissioned Officer of the Quarter for efficiency and accuracy of written instructions and documents
- Proven ability to communicate effectively in diverse environments — efficiently managed a diverse workforce and inmate population resulting in a 10 percent decrease in inmate violence

Warehouse Supervisor, Micro Chemical, Inc., Denver, Colo., February 2008 to May 2014

- Supervised crew of 15 in daily operations and evacuation — efforts led to company-record promotion rate for staff and a 10 percent decrease in staff turnover
- Monitored complex cataloging and ordering systems; implemented a fast track procurement system for office supplies resulting in a 20 percent decrease in supply ordering turn-around
- Helped develop and implement an effective security system — efforts led to $85k savings annually by reducing pilferage and damage
- Proficient at using Windows 10, Microsoft Office and PeopleSoft databases

Security Guard, Mayfield Malls, Denver, Colo., August 2003 to January 2008

- Coordinated work assignments, evaluated performance and managed a four-member security team — recognized as “Security Supervisor of the Quarter” for boosting morale and encouraging an innovative and safe working environment
- Investigated security and safety violations and wrote detailed incident reports — led to Mayfield Mall being recognized as the “Safest Shopping Facility in the Mountain States” in 2006 and 2007
- Helped diffuse conflicts in a public environment with regard to everyone’s safety — consistently recognized through customer feedback for excellent customer relations

Education

U.S. Marine Corps, Specialized Training: Explosives, Firearms, Leadership, Diversity, Communication
Metro State College, 42 Semester Units in Administration of Justice, Denver, Colo.

CAPTIVATING COVER LETTERS

DO I REALLY NEED A COVER LETTER?

While not all employers request a cover letter, it is a good idea to include one with your resume for several reasons. A cover letter is an additional opportunity to market your skills and abilities to the employer. It is an opportunity to present a complete picture of yourself and your attention to detail. It also allows you the opportunity to address unique situations that are difficult to include in your resume such as relocation, gaps in work history, criminal records and career changes.

- Make it compelling, personal and brief. Use active voice, not passive. **EXAMPLE** - *Passive: Was the supervisor of a six-person team; Active: Supervised six-person team.*
- Keep it specifically related to the position.
- Be positive! Be positive! Be positive!
- Avoid references to salary or benefits.
- If it is not an online letter, use 8 1/2" x 11" paper identical in color and font style to your resume paper.
- Include contact information as shown on your resume.
- Proofread it and ask another person to proofread it, too.
- Remember to sign it!

Cover Letter Basics

Cover letters are typically two to four paragraphs in length.

Date
Name of Contact (if known)
Title
Name of Company
Mailing Address
City, State Zip

Dear Mr. / Mrs. / Ms.,

PARAGRAPH 1: The Opening/Your Introduction

1. Give your reason for writing the letter.
2. Tell the employer the position you are interested in.
3. Tell the employer where you found out about the job opening.
4. Tell the employer why you are interested in the company.

PARAGRAPH 2: The Body/ Your Hook

1. This is one or two paragraphs that tell the employer why you are qualified.
2. Identify specific qualifications from job posting to address (usually the first three qualifications).
3. Match what you have accomplished to three key qualifications/ requirements listed in the job posting.

PARAGRAPH 3: The Closing

1. Tell the employer you are interested in interviewing for the available position.
2. Thank the employer for considering you for the position.

Sincerely,

Signature

Name

COVER LETTER SAMPLE

Mike Brown

113 Oak St., Lakeview, ID 55555
(208) 555-xxxx
username@yahoo.com

Sept. 1, 2016

Mr. Phillip Moore
Production Manager
XYZ Corporation
21 Industry Lane
Lakeview, ID 55555

Dear Mr. Moore,

I am applying for the position of Production Assistant that was listed with the Idaho Department of Labor. With a high-tech background in Fortune 100 companies, I am well qualified to represent your company in this position. I am accustomed to a fast-paced environment where deadlines are a priority and handling multiple jobs simultaneously is the norm.

With five years experience in production, I supervised up to 35 personnel, often making decisions quickly and effectively. Constant negotiations with all levels of management and employees have strengthened my interpersonal skills.

Please consider my qualifications for this position. I look forward to hearing from you to discuss how I could provide value to your organization. I can be reached during the day at (208) 555-5555 or in the evening at (208) 555-xxxx. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mike Brown

THE INTERVIEW

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

Research the Company. If it has a website, study it. Read company literature, talk to people familiar with the company and observe workplace dress, attitudes and company culture.

Navigate. Find out where the company is located and how to get there. Use Google Maps or MapQuest and print out the directions. Allow extra traveling time in case you are delayed beyond your control. Whenever possible, take time for a trial run that will give you an idea of what kind of traffic and parking to expect.

Write Down Important Information. Write down the date of your appointment as well as the name, address and phone number of the company. If you know the name of the person you will be interviewing with, write that down as well. Keep the information with you.

Take Your Portfolio. Your portfolio includes copies of your resume, certificates, letters of recommendation, references, samples of your work. A portfolio can be as simple as a new dark-colored plain folder. Bring a pen and notebook, too.

Dress for Success. Double check your appearance. Your clothes should be clean, pressed and appropriate for the interview. Make sure your hands, nails and hair are clean and your perfume or aftershave isn't too strong. The rule is to wear "one step above" what others in the company are wearing. Neutral colors such as black, brown, grey or navy are best. Appropriate shoes are important.

Be Punctual. It's your interview — go alone. Arrive 10 to 15 minutes early. Cordially let the receptionist know who you are and who you wish to see.

Final Notes. It's a good idea to leave your personal electronic devices in your vehicle and remember — your interview starts when you pull up in the parking lot.

DURING THE INTERVIEW

- Be yourself. You got the interview because of your skills.
- Present yourself in a friendly, straightforward and confident manner.
- When introduced to the interviewer, greet them, smile and remain standing until you are asked to be seated.
- Make yourself comfortable and retain your poise.
- Place your purse or other personal items on the floor next to your chair.
- Be diplomatic. Don't argue or tell the employer your troubles.
- Refrain from jokes or gossip, use proper grammar and avoid slang such as "OK" and "yeah."
- Maintain eye contact and be aware of body language.
- Be a good listener. Be enthusiastic.
- Don't say anything negative about your former employer. Even if the circumstances of your separation from your last employer were not good, find a way to discuss it as positively as possible in the interview.

DON'T ALLOW TOUGH QUESTIONS TO BECOME ROAD BLOCKS

What have you been doing between jobs?

Tell them about the constructive things you have been doing such as schooling, volunteer work or temporary work.

Why should we hire you instead of someone else?

Explain the qualities you have that would make you an asset to the company.

Do you have any questions?

This is only difficult if you haven't prepared! Do your homework and learn something about the company before the interview.

Sample questions include:

1. What are the key tasks for this position?
2. Why do people like working here?
3. Is there anything I can do or study to get a head start on learning this job?
4. When do you expect to make a decision?

Make sure you get the information you need to decide if you want the job. Even in a buyers' market, the employer is selling the job to you as well.

Sell Yourself

Almost every interview begins with "So, tell me about yourself." What they want to know is what kind of person you are, will you fit in and are you dependable, motivated and eager to learn. Keep any personal information about yourself to a minimum if you discuss it at all.

Demonstrate Your Ability

Show that you can help their business by using examples from past experiences, stating results and quantifying when you can. For example; did you increase sales, cut costs, improve quality, reduce production time or save money? Tell the story.

Be Positive

You got the interview because you possess the skills necessary to do the job. However, the No. 1 reason people are hired is because of their attitude. Your attitude is revealed by the way you dress, your eye contact, body language, voice and choice of words.

Close the Deal

When the interview is coming to a close, let the employer know that you want the job. For example: "Mr. Smith, after speaking with you, I am very interested in this position and I am confident that I would be an asset to your company. What is the next step in the process?"

THE FOLLOW-UP

Who Really Sends a Thank You Note?

Those who are serious about finding a job. Thank you notes are seldom used but are a great way to get a competitive edge. Thank you notes reveal your sincerity, attention to details, manners, thoughtfulness towards the company and your desire to work for them.

Tips on Emailed Thank You Notes

- Be sure to send an email to everyone on the interview panel.
- Make each email different so that the interviewers don't feel like they are getting a template.
- Be professional and don't email like you're sending a text message.
- If you choose to respond electronically use email rather than text or follow the employer's lead. For example, if that person texts you it's appropriate to text back.

Finish Strong!

- Thank you notes can be either emailed or handwritten.
- Send a thank you letter or note no later than 24 hours after the interview.
- Be brief and to the point.
- Address the note to the name and title of person who interviewed you.
- List the date of your interview.
- Include the job title.
- Thank the interviewer for his or her time.
- Restate your interest in the position and the company.

THE JOB OFFER

EVERYTHING IS NEGOTIABLE

. . . and that includes salary. Here are a few tips to keep in mind when considering a job offer. The local economic conditions will play a big role in how you choose to negotiate.

Take Some Time

It is acceptable to ask for time to consider an offer but don't take more than a day or two and be specific about the length of time you would like to have to consider the offer.

Know the Numbers

Research the salary range for the position you are applying for to determine if the offer is reasonable. One place to look for comparable salaries in different cities in Idaho is the wage information on the Idaho Department of Labor's labor market information website at **lmi.idaho.gov.**

Discuss Value

Talk about money in terms of the value of your particular skill set in the marketplace and what you have to offer in terms of expertise and experience.

Be Positive

If a job offer is unacceptable to you, remain positive and state clearly why the offer is unacceptable and what you would need to have modified in order to accept the offer.

NEGOTIATING THE TERMS

The process of hiring someone is expensive. The employer may be prepared to negotiate so you should be, too. Consider the following points when choosing to negotiate.

Ask For the Offer in Writing

If you choose to negotiate, ask for the start date, salary, job details and benefits in writing.

Back It Up

Be prepared to remind the employer of your skills and expertise and the added value you will bring to their organization.

Be Open-Minded

Remain open during the negotiation process. If salary negotiation is limited, perhaps there is room to negotiate a benefit package that would better suit your needs.

WHAT ELSE CAN WE DO FOR YOU?

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

We can help with career and life transitions, apprenticeships and job training, online profiles and resume building, job listings, mock interviews, hiring events and networking opportunities.

IdahoWorks.gov

Set up an account on IdahoWorks.gov and you can create multiple resumes and make them searchable by employers. Search through our job database for all sorts of occupations.

Veterans Services

Find out what Priority of Service means and the employment benefits that are available to veterans and their families. Meet with one of the several veteran representatives located throughout the state.

Adult & Youth Education & Training Programs

Having trouble looking for and finding work? We can help. Adults and youth who meet certain criteria may be eligible for support with earning a GED such as accessing training, education or tutoring resources, and finding employment.

Farmworker Services

Idaho is committed to ensuring farmworkers know what laws protect their rights to fair wages and working conditions.

Ex-Offender Services

In the ex-offender re-entry services program, we assist ex-offenders re-enter the state's workforce.

Resource Center

Our local offices and mobile locations offer personal computers for our customers, resume templates, internet access and career planning along with fax, phones, copiers and information about community services.

JOBSCAPE BRINGS IT ALL TOGETHER

JobScape is an easy-to-use tool to help job seekers and students make informed career and educational decisions through access to education, career and labor market information.

You don't need an account, there's no log-in, just go to **labor.idaho.gov/jobscape** and get started. Type in the name of a job/occupation and click the Search button or search all occupations at once.

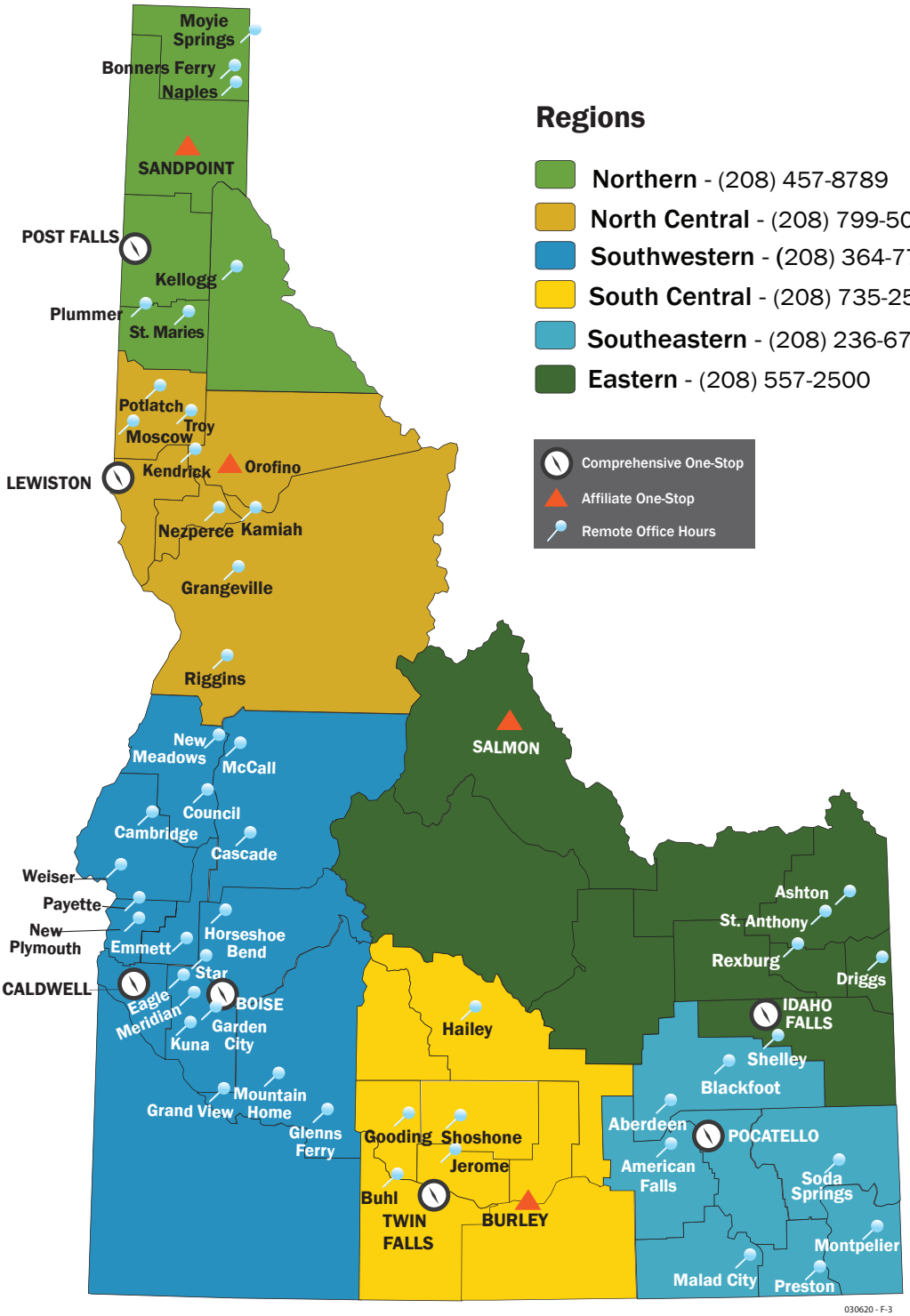
Information you will find on occupations:

- Related job titles
- Demand (high, average, low)
- Entry level education required
- Typical hourly/annual wage
- Annual job openings statewide
- Current number of people employed in the occupation
- Programs of study in Idaho
- Link to current job openings listed with the Idaho Department of Labor

LABOR OFFICE DIRECTORY

The Idaho Department of Labor provides many locations to serve the citizens of Idaho. Besides the 11 one-stop offices listed on the right, there are more than 40 mobile offices open on a rotating schedule. Mobile locations are shown on the map. To find out days and hours of operation, see the local office directory at labor.idaho.gov/officedirectory.

IDAHO DEPT. OF LABOR



ONE-STOP OFFICES

Sandpoint
Phone: (208) 263-7544
Sandpointmail@labor.idaho.gov

Post Falls
Phone: (208) 457-8789
kcmail@labor.idaho.gov

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Phone: (208) 799-5000
lewistonmail@labor.idaho.gov

Orofino
Phone: (208) 476-5506
orofinomail@labor.idaho.gov

Caldwell
Phone: (208) 364-7781
canyoncountymail@labor.idaho.gov

Boise
Phone: (208) 332-3575
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Twin Falls
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Salmon
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salmonmail@labor.idaho.gov

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