

# Looking for a job?

Source: <http://www.wa.gov/esd/work/careerlinks/hunting.htm>



## THE JOB INTERVIEW

**The job interview is a strategic conversation with a purpose.** Your goal is to show the employer that you have the skills, background, and ability to do the job and that you can successfully fit into the organization and its culture. The interview is also your opportunity to gather information about the job, the organization, and future career opportunities to figure out if the position and work environment are right for you.

**Most employers do not hire people based on merit alone. Personality, confidence, enthusiasm, a positive outlook, and excellent interpersonal and communication skills count heavily in the selection process.**

**Think of an interview as a highly focused professional conversation.** You should use the limited amount of time you have to learn about an employer's needs and discuss the ways you can meet these needs. In many cases, you will interview at least twice before being hired for a position—once in a more brief screening interview and at least once again in a more serious meeting when you may also speak with many of your potential coworkers.

## YOUR RESUME

- ⇒ Make sure your resume is **easy to read** and the most important details stand out.
- ⇒ Make sure your resume is **targeted** to the employers who receive it.
- ⇒ **Make more than one resume** if you are applying to more than one industry.

## Other useful job hunting tips

- ⇒ **Be prepared.** You should have a copy of your resume with you at all times. It is also a good idea to have fresh copies of your resume prepared in case you are called to an interview at the last minute.
- ⇒ **Network!** Think of the people you know - relatives, friends, professors, classmates, co-workers at summer jobs, and others. Make more of an effort to meet with people, and use these conversations to ask their advice, to make them aware of your job search, to learn more about their jobs or their organizations, and to get the names of others who might be useful in your job search.

- ⇒ **Create a contact database.** Write down all the employers you contact, the date you sent your resume, any contact made, people you talk to, and notes about those contacts. Keep a notepad with you at all times - take notes as soon as you hear about an opportunity or when you leave an interview. Get into the habit of updating your database daily.
- ⇒ **Make a "to do" list every day.** This will help you organize your list of priorities and keep you focused on finding that perfect job.
- ⇒ **Try the buddy system.** Link up with a friend who is also job hunting. Arrange to speak weekly and report on accomplishments, best practices, and future plans.
- ⇒ **Learn how to talk about yourself.** Throughout your job search, you will speak with many people at different levels. You must be comfortable having conversations about yourself with other people. Keep in mind that you never know who may end up being useful to your job hunt.
- ⇒ **Prepare an elevator speech.** You never know who you'll meet in an elevator, in line at the coffee shop, or on the street. Know what your skills are and how to communicate them. You should be able to tell prospective employers and others you meet what you can offer. You should also be able to talk about how your skills relate to the industries that interest you.
- ⇒ **Find out all there is about employers in your field.** Remain current on any issues or developments in the field, read trade journals or professional publications, and read the newspaper. It is extremely impressive during an interview if you know about the latest merger or coup in the industry.
- ⇒ **Practice for each interview.** Preparation is key to interviewing well. Friends, relatives, and career services counselors can help you formulate strong answers to questions you might not anticipate.
- ⇒ **Follow up with leads immediately.** If you find out about a position late in the day, call right then. Don't wait until the next day.
- ⇒ **Stay confident.** Job hunting takes time and energy. Remain confident, but prepare yourself for challenges ahead. Don't get disgruntled if you are still looking for a job and it seems like everyone you know has an offer. Most students find their jobs after graduation, and even experienced job seekers often search for months before finding the right opportunity.

**Return to the Job Search Skills Section:** <http://www.jcfswinnipeg.org/JobInterviewingTipsInformation.html>