

Patent Law Job Toolkit

**Resume Advice • Cover Letters
Interviews • Networking**

Patent Education Series[™]

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Patent Law Job Toolkit

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About this Manual

The Patent Law Job Toolkit is broken up into 3 modules:

Module 1:

"How to Write an Impressive Resume and Cover Letter & Launch Your Career as a Patent Professional" which covers the basics of resume and cover letter writing. The tips within this module can apply to job seekers in a number of fields, but the example resumes and cover letters are catered to patent professionals.

Module 2:

"Interviewing for a Position as a Patent Professional" which covers interviewing. The tips in this module may be applied to a number of high profile professions including the patent law field.

Module 3:

"Job Seekers and Networking: How to Land the Job You Really Want" which covers networking tips. You may apply these tips while searching for your patent law job and widening your list of contacts.

The *"Patent Law Job Toolkit"* has a companion manual entitled, *"Patent Law Career Strategies"*. The strategies are related to those in the patent law field and were a compilation of interviews with patent attorneys and patent agents as well as those in hiring positions at law firms around the U.S.

How to Write an Impressive Resume and Cover Letter & Launch Your Career as a Patent Professional

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Chapter 1: The Basics

Employers are always on the lookout for the resume that jumps out at them. Studies have shown that recruiters and hiring managers take only 10 seconds to determine if they are going to spend any time actually reading through any particular resume. They want to see RIGHT AWAY that YOU are the right candidate for the job. Otherwise, your resume will get tossed in the trash.

Tall order, right? It is. And that is why you are already ahead of the game by having this book handy. It will be your key to continuously impressing employers. If you follow the essential steps outlined within its pages, you will surely be on your way to a successful career as a patent practitioner.

Your resume writing skills will become well honed. Your resume will be fine tuned. You will learn to sell yourself with simple, yet, effective words. You will learn how to customize your resume for every job you apply to. If you can accomplish this, then your resume will not be relegated to the bottom of any pile; it will be placed where it belongs -- at the very top!

To begin, make a decision to discard any former knowledge learned about the “rules” of resume and cover-letter writing. People commonly become stuck in “bad” writing habits. It is almost a certainty that since you last wrote your resume, much has been learned and even more has changed.

This book is chock full of the most recent and cutting-edge resume and cover-letter writing techniques, culled from writing professionals and employment experts.

The Purpose of Your Resume

Your resume is an important tool that communicates who YOU are. When it does the job right, you win an interview.

Your resume does not simply provide a prospective employer with your work history. It speaks loud and clear that you have the credentials needed to be a complete success as a patent professional.

Just as you would sell any product that you believe strongly in, you will learn to sell yourself. Once you have learned how to do this, you will find that you get a better response from prospective employers than other prospects do (even those with better credentials). It is all in how you market yourself!

What we are aiming for is for your resume to attract immediate attention. The reader will want to pick it up and read it from top to bottom. Interest will be stimulated. An interview will be arranged.

In order to accomplish this, your resume will contain:

- Contact Information
- Headline
- Skills Summary
- Professional History
- Educational History
- Affiliations

Resume Presentation is Key

Writing a top notch resume is not about compelling drama or clever prose; it is about quickly selling yourself to your reader. All your reader wants to see is that you are the person for the job.

Your resume should be in a format that can clearly and easily be read on the employer's computer screen. Stay away from fancy formatting. You do not want to risk having an unreadable resume. Just because it looks good on your screen at home, does not mean that it is not a jumbled mess on your reader's screen. It is essential to know what will always work.

Your resume will be made up of clear, concise bullets. Recruiters and hiring managers detest long, dense paragraphs. Studies show that these resume formats will not be read. You must use powerful statements that impress. This is very important, but do take care not to oversell yourself. Above all, you will make honest statements about yourself. These must be strong, 100% true statements, or they will not be effective.

Your resume should never exceed two pages. Within these two pages should be a headline, a skills summary, history/experience, education, affiliations, publications, and any other relevant information. This book highlights each of these sections one at a time.

Wow the Employer

Your resume must impress within the first few seconds or it will not impress at all. This means your resume must really stand out.

First of all, you need to know who the reader of your resume is. Often, this person is the one who oversees the day-to-day operations of the company you want to join.

The resume reader will likely make the hiring decisions. This person will care about whether or not you can do a good job for the company. Keep in mind that this is who you are writing your resume for.

You want to be sure you are the right candidate for the job. You want to be sure you know everything there is to know about this company. You want to understand exactly which qualities are needed to be the right candidate for this job. And, you want to *show* the reader that you match all of the desired qualifications (or as many as you can).

You will write a resume that does much more than just inform; you will write a resume that compels them to take action! Your prospective employer will be interested, will stand up, and take notice.

Chapter 2: The Top Third of Your Resume

The top third of your resume is the most important. This is what your reader will see right away, and if you do not grab the reader's attention at this point, you will not have a chance of getting an interview.

This part of your resume will contain powerful and assertive statements about your skills, expertise, and, if possible, some major accomplishments. This section of your resume must be customized to match exactly what the employer is seeking. This is where you tell your reader that YOU are the person for THIS job.

The rest of your resume will illustrate your education, professional history, and any other relevant information, such as affiliations, that show the prospective employer you are a person of substance.

The Headline

Do not include an objective. Objectives do not tell the reader if you are qualified for the job. They only say what you WANT to do, not what you can do.

The key to grabbing your reader's attention is having a powerful headline that says right away who you are and what you do. Your headline will convey that you will make the kind of contributions that they need and want.

To begin, find any relevant job description that you feel you are qualified for. It does not have to be in your geographic area; this is just to get down a basic headline and Skills Summary (which is discussed next). Once you have these two sections down, it will be easily customizable for each actual job you apply to.

What you are looking for are the main fundamentals of the job description. Highlight in one color these main fundamentals:

- The profession
- The industry
- # of years of required experience
- A specific expertise or specialty they are seeking

Your headline should include at least three of these areas. This headline will need to be customized to each job you apply to. Your headline will be in bigger font than the rest of your resume; it will also be in bold font.

Tailor your Headline

What is the title of the role? How many years experience are they looking for? What is the territory? Are they looking for a strong scientific or technical background? These elements are what you want to narrow in on when customizing your headline. You already have the basic headline down, now look for what this new job is calling for, remove what is irrelevant, and include what is relevant.

If they are calling for a Patent Attorney with 2 years experience along with a strong science background for understanding their clients' inventions, and you meet these criteria, you can state, "Patent Attorney with over 2 years experience with strong scientific background." Think about the effect this will have on the reader. They will think to themselves, "*This is the person I am looking for!*"

Skills Summary

Beneath your headline, you will need to come up with an easy-to-follow summary. Use 5-8 concise bullet points that can be easily customized to match what the employer is seeking. This section should match what the job description is calling for.

Highlight in a second color the specific requirements of the position as well as the particular responsibilities that you will have. You must address all of the elements you have highlighted with the second color. This is where you include whatever qualifications they need that you have.

If the job description is calling for an ability to attract new clients and you have experience or know you have that ability, make it a bullet point. It is as simple as saying, “Strong ability to attract new clients.” If they want someone who can quickly close new deals, say, “Highly skilled at closing new deals.”

If specific technical/computer expertise or software skills are required, list your relevant expertise. If they are specifically looking for someone with a strong technical background, you should have a Technical Summary (*we’ll address that later on*).

What licenses or certifications are required or relevant? Make sure to state which ones you possess. You can even state the specific license or certification that they need in your headline, such as, “Patent Agent with over 2 years experience drafting biotech patent applications”

This section will only contain the information about you that is commendable and sets you apart from the crowd. Try to stay away from “fluffy” words, even if they are in the job description. You want to *show* your reader that you are motivated, a team player, and a self-starter by illustrating your expertise.

However, “good moral character” and “strong reputation” are very necessary skills for this type of work, so feel free to add that in your Skills Summary. Using the right kind of language will show your prospective employer that you alone will be the best fit for the position they need filled.

Tailor Your Summary

It is absolutely essential that you tailor your Skills Summary section to match the specific needs of the employer. Every statement made in your Skills Summary section will be targeted to show the employer that you have what it takes to fill that particular position.

Every time you send your resume out, you will want to customize your Skills Summary. Tell your reader how many years experience you have performing a specific skill that they are looking for. How does your expertise relate to each specific requirement listed in the job description? Offer tangible examples in terms of years, dollar amounts, etc. Below are a few good start-off phrases to give you an idea of how it should be written:

- X years experience doing...
- Strong ability to...
- Expert at...
- Extensive experience doing...
- Highly skilled at...

These bullets should be illustrating the specific skills and expertise that the job description is calling for.

If you are a recent graduate, you want to be sure that you are qualified for the job. In addition, you can focus on what you are *able* to do. You can state that you are “Highly knowledgeable in...” or “Strong desire to...”

You can also add some of your more impressive skill sets even if they are not mentioned in the job description. You should highlight some of your experience or major accomplishments that really make you stand out. Here is a list of things to keep in mind:

- Any benchmarks or landmarks accomplished as the result of your unique skill set
- Facts, figures, and statistics that show how your best efforts produced the best results
- Your specific talents and unique gifts as related to your job
- Any strong accomplishments that set you apart

After reading your Skills Summary, the employer should know without any doubt, that you are the best man or woman for the job. The employer will be compelled to read more.

After reading your attention grabbing headline, they will continue to be impressed as they read through the skills that match exactly what they are looking for!

Chapter 3: The Rest of Your Resume

Professional Experience

In this section, you will list all the jobs you held in reverse chronological order. This section will include only *recent* (last 8-10 years) and *relevant* professional history. Concentrate on giving good detail that is accomplishment oriented. There can be a separate section called Previous Employment that will briefly list older jobs and/or Other Employment that briefly lists jobs unrelated to the job you are currently seeking .

Present jobs should be described in present tense. Past jobs should be in past tense. The company name, your job title, and the dates you held the position will be in bold.

If you do not have enough professional experience to list here, then you should include *relevant* volunteer and internship experience in this section as well. This section does not only have to include paid experience. However, if you have a strong professional history of jobs that are in the relevant field, you should create a separate Volunteer Experience section, and list that experience later.

All jobs you have held that are unrelated to the position you are seeking should be listed briefly later (Other Employment and Previous Employment). Do not waste your reader's time by talking about jobs that have nothing to do with the position you are seeking. Make it easy on your reader and highlight only what is relevant.

Concentrate on focusing on the experience you gained at your present or past jobs that would prepare you for a position as a patent agent or patent attorney.

Give details to show your abilities within specific areas, such as: “Initiated leadership role in research leading to the securing of a patent.” Even if you have never written a patent application, you may have played an integral role in helping your company gain one (especially if you worked in a Research and Development department).

Your first bullet should be an overall description of what your general role was at the company. What were you hired to do? Be specific about the scope of your position. Keep in mind that none of your bullets should be longer than two lines. You can use the first few bullets to sum up your overall position if needed; but each separate bullet should be no longer than two lines.

The rest of your bullets should show your reader how well you did your job. Be accomplishment oriented. Here are a few examples:

- How did you perform the job better than others would have?
- What were the problems or challenges that you, the organization, or the client faced?
- What did you do to overcome those problems?
- What were the results of your efforts?
- How did the company (or client) benefit from your performance?

Stay away from listing your job duties and responsibilities. The reader can infer many of your duties based on your job title. What you want to focus on is how you made a difference at each company. Provide specific examples of how the company benefited from your performance.

Technical expertise will be helpful; so be sure to focus on that, especially if you do not yet have experience writing or prosecuting patent applications.

If you are a recent graduate seeking your first job in the field, then you should elaborate on your Education, and your Professional History will be briefly listed below your Education section.

Stay away from complete sentences; and never use first or third person in your resume.

Previous/Other Employment

If you have jobs that were held more than 8-10 years ago, create a Previous Employment section that will briefly list these jobs.

If you held jobs that are more recent, but are not related to the job you are seeking, create an Other Employment section that will briefly list these jobs in the same manner. Just the name of the company and location, your title, and the dates you held the job are sufficient for both these sections.

Education

If you have professional experience to showcase, your Education section should be listed at the end of your resume. If you are a recent graduate with no professional experience, then your Education section should follow your Skills Summary.

List your educational credentials in reverse chronological order. Show your completed degrees or licenses first, and then show your completed certificates and key training.

Follow by listing Education in progress with a proposed date of completion. Bold type anything you wish to highlight, such as your completed degrees. If you already have professional experience, there is no need for too much detail here. Be concise by showing only your degree, your major, the institution you attended, as well as any awards and distinctions received.

If you do not have the professional experience yet, then you should go into more detail with your education. What are the major courses you took that are directly related to this job? What were the focuses of these courses; what did you learn? Again, you will want to stick with quick, easy-to-read bullet points to illustrate to your reader what you gleaned from your education.

List grade point average of 3.5 or better and only highlight any courses of study engaged in as it relates directly to the position you seek. List this information only if the education is recent (within the last 3 years). Leave off your year of graduation if it was over 10 years ago. If your awards and commendations are impressive, give them a section of their own.

Professional Affiliations

This section highlights your community involvement and any current participation in any areas that might impress the employer as being relevant to key work issues. Memberships with Intellectual Property organizations, etc. are the types of items you may wish to list here. For example:

- American Intellectual Property Law Association (AIPLA)
- International Association for the Protection of Intellectual Property (AIPPI)
- National Association of Patent Practitioners (NAPP)
- New York Intellectual Property Law Association (NYIPLA)
- Patent Information Users Group (PIUG)

You should especially list participation on a Board, as well as any bar admissions you may have gained entry into. Your USPTO registration will most certainly count here.

Hold back when stating political involvement, as this can be judged negatively by an employer or company.

Publications

If you can offer experience in this section, your employer will be impressed. Only highlight published material. Have you authored scientific research papers? If so, put these here.

If you have a long list of publications (and is pushing the resume past two pages), you should take this section out of your resume and instead include a separate page for listing your publications. Title this new sheet, “Publications.” You can include a line at the bottom of your resume that states, “See next page for list of publications.”

Personal Interests

Generally, you should leave off your personal interests. Your reader is only interested in learning whether you are qualified for the position or not. However, if you do not have much professional experience, but you feel that your personal interests and hobbies relate to the position, then feel free to include them. Just be sure they are relevant.

References

Do not include references on your resume. You do not want to risk your prospective employer calling your current employer before you have had a chance to speak with either party first. It is assumed that references are available upon request, so

there is no need to take up space on the resume saying so. An employer will not hesitate to ask for references when needed.

You should, however, have your references ready in case they do ask for them. Past and present employers make the most impressive references. Include contact information for them. You can send this reference page to your prospective employer when needed. This is especially good to have on hand during an interview. It is best to supply the person interviewing you with a list of at least three references.

Chapter 4: Your Resume – A Work of Art

Now that the most basic elements of an impressive resume have been covered, it is time to look at some of the finer points.

Your resume will be formatted to look appealing to the eye. This is best accomplished by keeping in mind the following:

- Structure looks clean and flows well (use bulleted, indented, and focused statements)
- Should provide a visual “road map” to your reader
- Easily understood with simple wording and phrases
- No dense paragraphs
- No first or third person references
- Not crowded; contains plenty of white space (wide margins, skip lines between sections)
- Your resume should never exceed two pages

All formatting should be offered consistently. Do not rely too heavily on the bolding, italics and underlining. This should only be used for best effect and not throughout the entire resume.

Your resume will be your front line in communication. Before you meet your prospective employer, your employer will meet you via your resume. Be SURE that your resume is error free. This means it must be free of typos, improper spelling, poor

grammar, lack of required punctuation, and contain no errors in facts. Spelling errors and typos are a huge turn-off to hiring managers.

Key information included in your resume consist of:

- Your contact information (name, address, phone, email)
- Headline
- Skills Summary
- Professional Experience
- Education and Training

Professional experience will include:

- Position title
- Name of company
- City and state of company
- Dates there (Mon YR- Mon YR)
- Accomplishment-oriented bullets

Electronic Resumes

Today, the primary form of sending a resume is via email. Therefore, you must be sure that your resume is internet-friendly. If the employer cannot open your resume, they will simply move on. They will not waste their time trying to get you to send it in the right format.

Microsoft Word is the de-facto standard in all business environments. Unless specifically asked otherwise, your resume should be sent as an MS Word attachment.

Stay away from the use of tables, templates, or graphical text lines within your resume. Never center any text other than your contact information. Following these rules

will ensure that your resume will look the same on your reader's screen as it does yours. If your resume looks like a jumbled mess because you used fancy formatting, you will not be given a chance at all. Those who are not aware of how to format an electronic resume, even with stellar qualifications, will never be called in for that important interview.

Many companies will do a "search" for keywords in a resume. They are looking for specific skills that when typed into a "search" field, certain resumes will come up. You want to make sure that your resume contains these keywords, but these words must be used in powerful bulleted statements and not simply listed. Do NOT have a "keywords" section that just lists random words. This does not tell the reader what your actual experience is in these areas.

Keep in mind that your resume might be scanned first by the computer, but then later also read by the employer. You want to make sure that your resume will meet standards for both the computer and the employer.

Below are the elements necessary to meet the Electronic Resume standard:

Fancy is out: Stay away from any type of fancy formatting. Scanable resumes are very conservatively written. Do not decorate and do not use uncommon typefaces. Do not use italics.

Use simple design: The computer will read text and not graphics. Anything that is complex, such as tables, templates, and graphical text lines should be excluded. Have your resume in MS Word.

Avoid abbreviations: With the exception of very common abbreviations, such as BA (Bachelor of Arts), use full terms.

Make good use of white space: Leave ample space between sections for the computer to pick up that one section has ended and another has started. Provide a visual “road map” for your reader.

Write using proper language: Use common words that everyone will understand.

Use of descriptors: Use keywords that are mentioned in the job description. Try to mention all of the important ones; but make sure they are described in a way that tells your reader how much experience you have in these areas.

Chapter 5: Specific Tips & Pet Peeves

Specific Tips

- Your resume will be targeted to show your suitability for the desired position. Your resume will show that you are uniquely qualified and should be chosen.
- Your resume will be interpreted by the use of strong, clear wording and phrases that convey a message of impressive credentials and experience. Your resume will make your reader want to know more. You want your employer to feel compelled to bring you in for the interview. Your resume will grab the eye through the use of design, formatting, and proper balance.
- Your resume will show that you will get the job done better than anyone else.
- Write about your qualifications through clear statements explaining what you have accomplished. Do not bore them with long-running lists of your duties and responsibilities.
- Show the exact results of your targeted accomplishments. Make good use of verbs and adjectives to show the extent of your skills and experiences. This will indicate that you are results oriented.
- Write to be concise and keep to the point. Write bullet points as short and direct as you can.
- Be as direct as possible and avoid complete sentences.
- Be sure your resume is internet-friendly.
- Create a work of art! Use the best supplies for your resume. Use a laser printer or an ink jet printer to produce the best results. Use a good-sized typeface (font) in 11 or 12 point.

Use off-white, ivory or bright white 8 1/2 x 11-inch paper, in high quality. Submit a resume without smudges or staples, and leave a generous border (even if you are not mailing your resume, you will want a few printed to have at your interview).

- Keep your resume to 2 pages. Always leave them wanting to know more. Remember, you are marketing yourself for this specific job; you should not be telling your entire life history.
- Submit an accurate telephone number with area code. Be sure the phone number on the resume will be answered in-person or by a voice mail/answering machine, Monday through Friday, from 8-5pm. You want to be available when invited in for that important interview.
- Include your e-mail and fax numbers as an alternate means of reaching you.
- Omit any kind of information that can be seen as being controversial, such as political affiliations.
- Put your strongest bullets towards the top of each list.
- Use bold face type to highlight your name, section headings, titles, companies, dates with a company, and degrees. You can choose to bold face your school name if you feel it is necessary.

What Not To Put In Your Resume

- The word “RESUME” at the top of the your resume
- Personal details, including political or religious beliefs, family status, children, age, ethnicity, etc.
- Objectives
- Salary information
- Addresses of former employers
- Why you left your previous jobs
- The names of supervisors
- References

Only The Facts

While you definitely want to sell yourself, you want to do this honestly. Do not inflate the truth to put yourself in a better light. You will need to be able to back up all claims about yourself in an interview. If you lie on your resume, it will eventually come back to haunt you.

Many companies do background checks on their employees sometimes years after the employee has been with them. If they find out you lied, you will be immediately fired. This is a huge embarrassment and it will make it next to impossible to get your next job.

Pet Peeves of Employers

There are quite a few things that recruiters hate to see on resumes. It is essential that you know what these are so you do not turn your reader off and miss your chance for that important interview.

These are the things that employers hate to see:

- **Hiding or not including vital information.** An employer needs to see all of your important information without having to search for it.
- **Major gaps in your employment history.** This leaves an employer wondering about your work ethic. Account for each gap by including a quick explanation. Be prepared to answer questions if you have such gaps.
- **Summaries that are hard to follow.** Your reader wants to be sold quickly. Keep your summary easy and brief.
- **Fancy fonts and formatting.** Fancy fonts and colors are not eye catching in the manner that you likely wanted it to be.
- **Keywords section** that does not tell the reader anything.
- **Narratives or the use of first or third person.** It sounds unprofessional and can also come off as arrogant and/or egotistical.

- **Pictures and/or graphics.** These are extremely distracting to recruiters. There is also a good chance that the reader will not be able to even open the resume because it is not internet-friendly.
- **Functional resumes.** Employers want to see your history in chronological order. Functional resumes can be vague and often tell the reader that you are hiding something.
- **Lying or misleading information.** This is a major no-no. There are always ways for an employer to check up on you and many do; so do not lie.
- **Unnecessary information** such as your hobbies.
- Sending a resume that is not customized to that particular job. You are wasting their time.
- **Dense paragraphs.** Always avoid density in your resume. It is harder for the employer to read and will not usually be read.
- **Resumes that are more than two pages.** More than two pages will not be fully read by an employer. That is just the way it is.
- **Unclear or vague information.** Your reader wants it all spelled out in a clear and concise manner.
- **Wrong order of your work history.** This makes your resume harder to follow. Work history should be listed with most current jobs at the top.
- **Too much detail about your previous duties.** This is just wasting the reader's time. Be accomplishment oriented and show how you stand out.
- **Spelling and grammatical errors.** This just proves that you are not very keen on details.

Chapter 6: Writing Your Resume with Power

As a practice exercise, take your current resume, and at random, look for places to insert good power words. Watch how quickly your old resume will be transformed!

Make good use of verbs when writing your resume. Remember, a verb expresses action. When writing your resume you want to be able to show that you took the initiative at your previous place(s) of employment. Write with description and your resume will be more interesting!

Power Words

A

accomplished	advertised	arranged
achieved	advised	assembled
acquired	analyzed	assisted
adapted	appraised	audited
adjusted	approved	augmented
administered	arbitrated	authored

B

budgeted	built
----------	-------

C

calculated	conceived	coordinated
catalogued	conceptualized	copyrighted
charted	conducted	corrected
coached	constructed	counseled
compared	consulted	created
compiled	contacted	cultivated
completed	controlled	closed (a deal)
composed	convinced	consolidated
charged with	corresponded	

D

debugged	detected	discovered
decreased	determined	dispatched
delegated	developed	distributed
delivered	devised	documented
designated	diagnosed	
designed	directed	

E

edited	enhanced	examined
elicited	enlarged	exceeded
eliminated	established	executed
empowered	estimated	expanded
engineered	evaluated	explained

F

fired	flagged	formulated
founded		

G

gathered	generated	guided
----------	-----------	--------

H

headed	hired
--------	-------

I

identified	initiated	interpreted
ignited	innovated	interviewed
implemented	inspected	invented
improved	installed	inventoried
increased	instituted	
influenced	instructed	
in charge of		

J

justified

L

lectured	lobbied	logged
led		

M

maintained	mediated	motivated
managed	modified	
manufactured	monitored	

N

negotiated

O

obtained	ordered	overhauled
operated	organized	

P

patented	prepared	programmed
performed	presented	promoted
persuaded	presided	proposed
placed	processed	provided
planned	produced	purchased
posted	proficient	

Q

quantified	qualified
------------	-----------

R

recognized	reorganized	researched
recommended	repaired	restored
reconciled	replaced	reviewed
reduced	reported	revised
referred	represented	recruited
regulated	rescued	

S

scheduled	sold	suggested
screened	solved	supervised
selected	steered	supplied
served	streamlined	systematized
simplified	studied	

T

taught	tracked	transcribed
tested	trained	translated
traced		

U

updated

utilized

W

won

wrote

Chapter 7: Sample Resumes

Below are some sample resumes that illustrate how different types of candidates should put together and lay out their resume. All of the fictional candidates have passed the Patent Bar Exam. Please keep in mind that these are just examples and you need to cater your resume for your own circumstances.

Resume 1: John Smith

This candidate has a law degree and patent drafting experience along with some relevant professional experience as an electrical engineer. He would like to transition himself into the role of a Patent Attorney.

Resume 2: Sharon Says

This candidate has extensive experience as a Patent Attorney and is seeking a related position as a Patent Attorney with a background in biotechnology.

Resume 3: Sarah P. Smythe

This candidate has extensive experience in biotechnology and recently passed the Patent Bar Exam. She is applying for her first position as a Patent Agent.

Resume 4: Jason Jones

This candidate has gained extensive skills and experience in engineering and has recently passed the Patent Bar Exam. He is applying for his first position as a Patent Agent.

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BAR MEMBERSHIP

Admitted to United States Patent and Trademark Office, October 2007.
Admitted to State Bar of Pennsylvania, June 2006.

EDUCATION

Juris Doctor, University of Pittsburgh School of Law, Pittsburgh, PA (2006)

- Dean's Scholarship
- *American University Law Review*, Staff Member

Bachelor of Arts in Electrical Engineering, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN (2003)

EXPERIENCE

Law Clerk, Kline & Associates, New York, NY (May 06 – Sep 06)

- Responsible for researching inventions and drafting preliminary patents.
- Demonstrated strong ability to review patent applications and coordinate efforts with outside patent counsel.
- Performed extensive patent search duties and wrote analysis of search results.
- Identified technologies that can be patented.

Teaching Assistant, University of Pittsburgh School of Law, Pittsburgh, PA (Jan 05 – Apr 06)

- Hired to mentor and advise first year students on legal writing and oral argument skills.
- Presented instructions to the class on legal writing.

Research Assistant, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN (May 03 – Sep 03)

- Charged with researching and designing various digital control circuits and systems.
- Projects included high speed comparator logic circuits and high voltage pulsed.
- Responsible for drafting weekly progress reports.

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Institute of Electrical Engineers 2003

PUBLICATIONS

The On Sale Bar and Inventors, 43 Pittsburgh Law Review, 145 (2004)

Sharon Says
1 Wildwood Street • Place, NJ 02544
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SKILLS

- Patent prosecution and drafting experience in biological devices and biotechnology.
- Skilled at effectively contributing to important strategic patent procurement and enforcement decisions.
- Expertise in biological research, protein separation, and cell biology patent procurement and enforcement strategies.
- Capable of discovering crucial legal points in complex patent prosecution and litigation cases.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Patent Attorney

JONES & PETERSON, LLC, Secausus, NJ

2000 – Present

- Perform application procedures for seeking patent rights, with a specific emphasis in biochemical patents.
- Litigate patent infringement cases for clients.
- Consult with clients to protect the intellectual property rights of their inventions in the U.S. and internationally.

Patent Attorney

CLAYTON IP FIRM, Chicago, IL

1994 – 2000

- In charge of drafting and prosecuting patent applications pertaining to biotechnology.
- Instrumental in a new patent organization system implemented throughout firm.

EDUCATION

J.D.	HARVARD UNIVERSITY, Boston, MA	1994
M.S., Chemistry	BROWN UNIVERSITY, Providence, RI	1990
B.S., Chemistry	UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA, Online	1988

BAR ADMISSIONS

United States Patent & Trademark Office 1995
State of New Jersey 1994

PUBLICATIONS

“Intellectual Property in Biochemical Assays,” *IP Rights Today*, 2000

AFFILIATIONS

American Intellectual Property Law Association

Sarah P. Smythe, Ph.D.
1111 Deerlock Rd. • Portland, OR 97208
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Registered Patent Agent with extensive Biotech experience.

Skills Summary:

- Extensive experience working side-by-side with seasoned scientists.
- Supervision experience with than 25 scientists.
- Highly skilled at developing and implementing appropriate strategies for patent families.
- Ability to manage interference and opposition proceedings.
- Experience working closely with scientific teams to define new inventions and manage all aspects of patent prosecution matters, both in-house and with outside counsel.

Education:

<i>Doctorate of Biochemical Engineering</i> , University of California, Berkeley, CA	1994
<i>Bachelor of Arts in Biological Sciences</i> , University of California, Berkeley, CA	1988

Bar Admissions:

United States Patent and Trademark Office, Registered Patent Agent, #54,769	2004
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------	------

Professional Experience:

Head of Research and Development

Commercial Biochemical Inc., New York, NY	1995 - Present
-------------------------------------------	----------------

- Conduct state-of-the-art research leading to breakthroughs in biochemical research.
- Investigate interaction between TCR and CD44-ERM signaling in adhesion and migration of T lymphocytes from human systemic lupus erythematosus

Publications

Smythe, Wade. "Polymers in Biochemical Assays", *Journal of Molecular Biology* 263: 223-229, (2004)

Smythe, Kelper, Wade. "High Affinity Calcium Dependent ATPase in the Surface Membrane of Leukocytes", *Cell Physiology* 876: 228-235, (2003)

Jason Jones

199 Giant Crescent • New York, NY 95520
(555) 125-4554 • jjones@aol.com

Registered Patent Agent with extensive skills in thermodynamics.

SKILLS

- Intermediate experience with interpreting thermodynamics models and implementation.
- Extensive troubleshooting on design of evaporative cooling technology.
- Strong desire to advance new technologies in this area of innovation.

EDUCATION

Bar Admission to United States Patent and Trademark Office, 2007

Avondale University, Cooranbong, Australia
BS, Mechanical Engineering

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Breaker Thermodynamics Industries, St. Paul, MN
Mechanical Engineer, 2003 – Present

- Create tool designs for proprietary thermodynamics project
- Draft detailed reports on new technology used for patent applications
- Provide tolerance study analysis and designs from concept to detail

Avondale University, Cooranbong, Australia
Technical Assistant, 2000-2001

- Managed and supervised supply of equipment, installation and commission of HVAC and Electrical Systems for the university.

PATENTS

U.S. 5,309,867 – Integrated Thermodynamics Module for Surge Capacitor

MEMBERSHIPS

American Society of Mechanical Engineers

AWARDS

2003 Breaker Thermodynamics Industries – Letter of commendation from corporate president for work done on ITMSC project and patent

2000 Sigma Xi scholarship for engineering program

Chapter 8: Cover Letters

Your cover letter introduces you (and your resume) to your prospective employer. It should always accompany your resume. Some companies spend time reading cover letters; others do not. Regardless, you should be sure that your cover letter sells you enough to make the reader want to read your resume.

Just like your resume, your cover letter needs to get the point across quickly and concisely. One good reason for creating a headline and Skills Summary for your resume is that this information can be literally cut and pasted on your cover letter, and you are more than halfway done.

Below is a basic cover letter template, as well as an example of an actual cover letter. Feel free to deviate from the style of quick bullets. Contrary to the resume, you can write with complete sentences and use first person. Include what works best with your expertise and experience and what you think is most appropriate to the company.

When pointing out specific accomplishments, pick ones that are directly related to the position you are seeking. Show your reader that you have the expertise that they are looking for.

Cover Letter Template

Your full name

Your full mailing address

Your City, state, and zip

Your Telephone number(s)

Your Email address

Today's date

Your addressee's full name

Their professional title

The organization name

Their mailing address

Their City, state and zip

Dear Mr. (full name here) or Ms. (full name here),

Open your letter with something that will command attention—a statement that establishes you to your reader. Briefly state which job or position you are applying for and where you saw the posting.

- The secondary section of your letter should be your headline and Skills Summary literally cut and pasted from your resume.
- Your headline will be the first bullet, and it should be the same size font as the rest of the bullets in boldface font.
- Make sure these sections are customized for this resume.
- These bullets should exactly match what the job description is calling for.
- You should have 5-8 bullets here; be sure none of them are more than two lines long.

Your closing paragraph should simply express your interest in an interview. Let your reader know that you are available and eager to meet with him/her.

Close the letter and type your name. If you are mailing it in, be sure to sign it above the typed name.

Sincerely,

Your name

Sample Cover Letter

Jennifer Tilly
2150 Orange Grove
New York, NY 55555
(555) 555-5555

January 20, 2008

Mr. John Smythe
Jones & Smith, LLP
5854 Tombon Road
New York, NY 55555

Dear Mr. Smythe,

I am submitting this letter in interest of the position of Patent Agent, posted in the Daily Free Press.

Please accept a copy of my enclosed resume for your review. I am familiar with the important role your law firm plays within the community and I believe that my combination of scientific and practical experience will bring a very significant contribution to the firm.

As you can see, my qualifications directly match what you are seeking:

- **Registered Patent Agent with extensive Biotech experience**
- Extensive experience working side-by-side with seasoned scientists
- Supervision experience on more than 25 scientists
- Highly skilled at developing and implementing appropriate strategies for patent applications

- Experience working closely with scientific teams to define new inventions and manage all aspects of patent prosecution matters, both in-house and with outside counsel

In my current role as a Protein Biochemist, I am responsible for developing assays for the application of chemical innovations to human disease. Much of the research I have worked on has been instrumental in the securing of new patents for my current employer. In addition, I am a registered before the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office to write and prosecute patents.

I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss my potential contributions to your company with you. Please contact me at your earliest convenience.

I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Tilly

Key Phrases to Use in Your Cover Letter

- I am writing to you in response to your advertisement in the Washington Post, dated January 13th, 2008.
- As you can see from my enclosed resume, my experience and accomplishments match this position's requirements.
- I would like to point out.....(add text that is most relevant to the position.)
- During my 5 yrs. with Amsted and Querns, I initiated extensive improvements that resulted in garnering 30 more clients for the period ending....
- I would appreciate the opportunity.... to meet with you to discuss my qualifications for your position, OR,...to speak with you in person.
- Please accept this letter as an expression of my interest in the position of...
- A copy of my resume has been enclosed for your review.
- I believe that my skill set matches perfectly with your requirements.
- I possess the right combination of skills to be an asset to your organization.
- I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss my potential contributions to your company.
- I look forward....to hearing back from you....OR.....to your reply.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

Now that you have mastered the art of resume and cover-letter writing, it is time to become a seasoned job hunter.

Everyday, some 32 million people will leave their homes for a job they absolutely hate. Dark feelings of negativity will touch every aspect of their lives, including their family, their friends, and not to mention the many activities they put their free time into. These people might lack the know-how they need to change. They might be afraid to leave the security of a weekly paycheck behind, or they might just feel locked-in to accepting a dead-end job.

Whatever the reason, there is a far better way to live. All it takes is the first inkling to want more, want better, and then.....to just move on. Sure, there is an element of risk involved, but that just comes with the territory. Without risk in life, well....life is not nearly so interesting.

Change is not always easy. We all deserve change, if that is what we need to live a better life. Meaningful purpose in our lives can be the one driving force that adds dimension to our days. Finding that meaningful purpose through our work, through our career, well, that is what life is all about!

Many people give up on making a career change because they cannot score an interview. It weighs heavy on your self-esteem and you begin to forget just how great

your qualifications are. The secret is just knowing how to communicate these skills to your prospective employer. Now you know how!

Your job, your career, your life can be so much more than just a wish, it can be your truth and your reality.

It is up to YOU!

Interviewing for a Position as a Patent Professional

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Introduction

Once you pass the Patent Bar Exam, it will be time for you to start looking for a job as a patent attorney or a patent agent. Hopefully you have reviewed our guide on writing a resume and cover letter for a position as a patent professional.

Most people assume that the most important part of a job interview is showing up well groomed, but there is more to it than that. Everything you have strived so hard to obtain may be riding on your *behavior* at a job interview. The smallest detail can mean the difference between getting a new job or spending more time pounding the pavement.

Scoring the interview is merely the first step in the journey to get the job of your dreams. The fact that you have been invited for an interview shows you are qualified for the job. Now, it is up to you to not only live up to, but also surpass the company's expectations.

This book will be your comprehensive guide to winning a job as a patent agent or patent attorney. By following the steps listed here, you will have all of the knowledge required to get yourself through the door to a career in patent law. In this book, you will learn:

- How to get the interview of your choice
- How to prepare for the interview
- About the phone interview

- About the face-to-face interview
- How to make a great first impression
- How to conduct yourself during the interview
- About the restaurant interview
- What common mistakes you should avoid
- What the most common questions are
- What questions to ask your interviewer
- Questions that interviewers cannot ask and how to handle them
- About the post-interview follow-up

How to Get the Interview

There are times when you can win that interview by simply making a phone call. In other instances you will have to send in a formal resume and cover letter and compete with others.

The methods of achieving an interview vary from company to company. It is best to know what the company's application process is before taking your first step.

Generally, when a company is hiring, they post an ad in the newspaper or within an online job bank. Their preferred method of contact is usually included in the ad as well. You do not want to *email* a resume to a company that is requesting applicants to *walk in* with their resumes. You do not want to *call* a company that requires a *faxed* resume. Ignoring the preferred method of initial contact will virtually guarantee you no interview. They are not going to be too impressed that you have already proven you cannot follow simple directions!

Sometimes you can get a job lead from a friend or colleague before the job opening has been posted. In this case, you can ask your friend to give the employer your resume and cover letter. If your friend does not actually work at the company where the lead came from, you can try calling about the position and asking what the application procedure is.

There are four general methods of applying for a job. They include emailing, mailing, faxing, or physically bringing in your resume. The details of each of these methods are listed in the following pages:

Emailing Your Resume

Emailing resumes is the preferred method by most companies. You should attach your resume as a Word document. MS Word is a de-facto standard in all business environments. Unless specifically asked otherwise, your resume should be sent as an MS Word attachment.

Name the file “Smith_John_Resume_clerical_position.doc.” It is a good idea to send a cover letter as a separate Word attachment. This is simply a formality. Name the cover letter, “Smith_John_CoverLetter_clerical_position.doc.”

The subject line should read, “Smith, John (clerical position)” unless the company specifies otherwise. This makes it easy for the recruiter to know who the email is from and what it pertains to. It also helps ensure that your email will be read.

In some instances there are specific methods for emailing your resume. If your company wants you to paste your resume right into the email, do not send attachments because your email will likely be deleted right away.

Mailing Your Resume

Some companies prefer that you mail in your resume. For this type of approach, be sure to include a cover letter. The cover letter is a basic letter that describes the position you are interested in, where you saw the posting, and a few details of your qualifications and skills. It is basically a lead into your resume.

Before writing your cover letter, you should know to whom the letter should be addressed. You never want to begin with “Dear Sir or Madame” or “To whom it may concern.” These vague titles show that you have not prepared for this particular job, but rather, that you are applying to random postings. It shows disrespect to your prospective

employer. If it is impossible to find the name of the contact, a better alternative to opening the letter is, “Greetings.”

Faxing Your Resume

You will need to include a cover letter when you fax in your resume. Be sure to include your proper contact information on the cover sheet in case the resume did not make it through.

Walk-In Your Resume

Dress appropriately if you are physically bringing in your resume. Dress like you would for an interview. Smile and be polite, no matter who you are talking to. That could be the difference between getting an interview and taking an extra trip for nothing.

The Phone Interview

It is a natural instinct for interviewers to want to eliminate candidates from the stack of good resumes; it only lessens the work they need to do. One primary way to weed out the applicants is to have a phone interview.

This is a chance for the interviewer to save her own time, but it is also a chance for you to win the face-to-face interview. Use this to your advantage. Your happiness and prosperity may hinge on this phone call. This is your chance to show the interviewer that it is worth her time to meet face to face.

Preparing for the Phone Interview

You might think you have some time to do the research after submitting your resume, but it is very possible that you might get a spontaneous phone interview soon after submitting your resume.

You do not need to go overboard preparing for a possible phone interview, but it is important to have taken down some notes about the company so you have a general idea of what they do. You should also have some questions written down that you would like to ask. These questions should be general questions about the company; there is no need to get into too much detail at this point.

You should have your resume in a place that you can easily get to should they call. There is a good chance that the interviewer will call you unannounced to intentionally catch you off guard. Therefore, keep a copy of your resume by the phone (or somewhere that you can quickly get to) as well as your notes from the research you did and questions you would like to ask. If you have sent your resume to multiple companies, be sure to have your materials well organized.

On the Phone

- Be calm, positive, friendly, and collective. When the interviewer calls, ask her if she will wait just a moment while you close the door. Then grab your materials and take a couple deep breaths. She knows that she has caught you off guard, so she is looking to see how you handle an unexpected stress.
- Speak directly into the phone. Do not eat, chew gum, or drink anything during this call, and do not smoke. It is very easy to tell when someone is smoking on the other end of the phone and this could be a major turn-off.
- Take notes. They will be invaluable to you in preparing for the face-to-face meeting.

Closing the Call

At the end of the phone interview, the interviewer will probably ask if you have any questions. It is a good idea to have a few prepared. Some of your prepared questions might be answered during the interview, so have various questions ready.

Thank her for her time and ask when you can expect to hear from her again.

The Face-to-Face Interview

Preparing for the Face-to-Face Interview

Once you get invited for the face-to-face interview, the next thing you must do is prepare for it. You really can never over-prepare for an interview. It is absolutely essential that you have a *strong* understanding of the company by the time the face-to-face interview comes around so you can maintain an intelligent dialogue throughout the interview. You need to be able to show your interest and knowledge in that particular company.

Remember, during an interview, you are a salesperson. You are there to sell yourself to your prospective employer. You want to market yourself in the most interesting way possible. Great preparation for the interview is your best bet. A salesperson that is knowledgeable, friendly, and positive always gets the close.

The following pages list a few things that must be done in order to prepare for your interview.

Do Your Research

It does not matter how much experience you have or how much knowledge you have about the position if you do not know who the company is or what they do. It is disastrous to enter an interview and not be able to show your interviewer what the company is about. How would you be able to explain why you feel that you would be a good addition to their company?

So where do you begin? A good place to start is to look up their website. You can get all of the general knowledge about them right off a website, including the names of key people and their job titles. You should sift through all of their pages, including the pages that show samples of their work.

You can also look them up in any available media files, including press releases or articles. Read any articles written by any employees or by the company in general. Soak in as much information as possible.

Take notes during your research, and continue to review these notes up until your interview.

Do not be shy to pick up the phone and ask general questions, without referring to yourself as a potential employee. Ask them questions as though you were a potential client.

You can also check out the area surrounding the company. It makes for a nice icebreaker at the beginning of the interview. Perhaps make a comment about a particular monument or resting place nearby.

Know Your Contact

When you are called in for an interview, ask who you will be speaking with. It is nice to be able to greet your interviewer by name at the beginning of the interview without first being told who he is. It shows that you are on top of things.

You will also want to do some research on the person that will be conducting your interview. Learn what he does for the company and try to read through samples of his work or achievements in the company.

If you know what department you are going to work in, you may want to get the names of your potential colleagues and superiors prior to the interview as well. This way you can get some information about their roles in the company and the type of work that they have done. Again, take notes so these important details will not slip from your mind.

Interviewers tend to mention specific employees during the interview to try to explain how the job works. He probably will not give a background of each employee, so it will be impressive if you are able to follow what he is explaining. Ask questions and show that you already know a bit about that person's position or about that employee in general. If you can, provide an example of their work so that you will appear more genuine. You can also express how much you look forward to working with these potential colleagues.

Practice Your Responses

If you are prone to nervousness, it is best to practice giving your responses to any questions that may be asked of you (*near the end of this manual we provide you with a list of the most common questions*). You should practice your wording and your tone of voice. It is best to try to keep your responses as brief as possible, but with as much detail as you can. You do not want to ramble on, but you want to be sure to answer the question. Be clear and concise in your answers.

When you are trying to work out the proper responses to the interviewer's questions, you should practice the art of getting your nerves under control as well as ridding yourself of any distracting habits while talking (e.g., expressing yourself with your hands).

Practice answering your interview questions with a friend. Get his or her opinion about your delivery and gestures. Perhaps your friend will have some insights for you to use during the real interview.

Dress the Part

Pre-select your attire the day before your interview. Make sure that your clothes do not have any wrinkles or stains on them. Pick an outfit that best suits the type of job you are applying for. Dress conservatively. Avoid mini skirts, low-cut shirts and hats. Avoid wearing too much cologne or perfume. Just a hint is appropriate.

Get Organized

Make sure all the things you will need for the interview are prepared the day before. You may even want to make a checklist.

You should always have a few extra resumes handy during the interview, as well as a note pad to take notes during the interview if needed. (Only write down the important things you think you will need to remember – you do not want to spend the interview staring into your notepad or writing feverishly.)

Bring along a business card if you have one; it makes it easy for them to contact you later. It also shows that you are professional and it may help the employer to remember your name.

The Restaurant Interview

In some cases interviewers (or recruiters) will ask you to conduct your interview during lunch or dinner. It makes for a more relaxed setting for you and the interviewer, but you should remember that it is still an interview, and your behavior must be in accordance to that.

During this type of interview, you should try to look at it as a relaxing way for you to talk about and sell yourself to the interviewer. It is expected that you will make a little bit of small talk. Do not bring up the topic of the interview until the interviewer does. She might want to get to know you a bit first.

Remember to talk about yourself, but do not get too personal. Below are also basic points of etiquette and common-sense rules you should follow:

- Remember your basic table manners (e.g., never put your elbows on the table, etc.).
- Always fold your napkin on your lap before eating.
- Do not order messy or sloppy foods (e.g., finger foods like ribs, extremely large sandwiches, pastas with thick sauces, and French fries).
- Do not order the most expensive item on the menu.
- Avoid alcoholic beverages.
- Common sense: do not smack your lips or talk with your mouth full.
- Always excuse yourself if you plan to leave the table for any reason; place your napkin on your chair or on the arm of your chair if you need to get up.
- Do not have your cell phone turned on.

Impressions

First impressions can be a hard thing to get past in any situation. During an interview you want to give the best first impression that you can. There are many small things you can do to ensure that you give the best impression possible:

- You can never be too polite to the person who directs you to the waiting area when waiting to be interviewed. A small gesture such as asking how he/she is doing can work wonders for you when you leave the building later.
- While waiting to be interviewed, sit properly and behave as if everyone passing you by is your potential interviewer (they just might be). Smile at people as much as possible. Do not act impatient or bored (no matter how long they keep you waiting). Some interviewers will keep you waiting just to see how you handle yourself.
- Greet your interviewer with a firm handshake and a smile.
- Remain standing until your interviewer asks you to be seated. It is simply polite and shows proper etiquette.
- Dress professionally.
- Show yourself to be well organized by having everything needed for the interview (and do not dig through your bag or briefcase when looking for it).
- Do not eat or drink anything while you are waiting.
- Do not chat on your cell phone while waiting for your interviewer; be sure the phone is turned off.

How Do I Act?

There are many things you can do to take off some of the pressure during an interview. The way you behave is one of the most important. It is not all in the words that you speak, but often has a lot to do with the mannerisms you use.

Interviewers are not just wondering if you are skilled enough for the job; they are often also wondering if you would fit in nicely with co-workers. Since they called you in, they probably believe you are qualified for the job. Therefore, your personality is a big part of the interview and can make all the difference. Here are some of the little things that you should pay particularly close attention to during an interview:

The Basics

Never chew gum, eat breath mints, or use slang during your interview. This can be perceived as rude and unprofessional.

Show Confidence

Do not enter into an interview with a defeatist attitude. Do not mope or exude too much placidity in your manner. It certainly is not inviting and does not give the impression of a person that anyone would want to face every day!

Be sure of your abilities without appearing arrogant or narcissistic. You want to let your interviewer know you are equipped to perform well at your job without alienating other workers. You should point out your accomplishments in your field while remaining somewhat humble.

List your accomplishments in a matter-of-fact way without going into too much extraneous detail. Be clear, concise, and friendly. Understand that body language plays a

large part in exuding confidence to others. Sit straight, practice good posture, and keep your head up.

Keep a Positive Attitude

You should always try to smile and keep a positive outlook during your interview. If you are hearing something that does not sound good to you, do not frown and look disgruntled; just keep a slight smile on your face until it is time for you to say something. Then approach your interviewer with your questions or concerns when the time is appropriate. Keep in mind that people tend to hire people who are like themselves. Show that you agree with the interviewer whenever possible.

Maintain Eye Contact

Keeping eye contact with your interviewer is very important, especially when one of you is speaking to the other. If you are looking around the room or at the items on the interviewer's desk, you will appear uninterested. Just imagine what you would be thinking if you were speaking to him and he was looking all over the room. You would probably think that you already lost the interview!

Body Language

You must take care to avoid the common errors many people make when they are speaking to others. Here is a list of what you should strive to avoid when sitting through an interview:

- Fidgeting; it shows a lack of self-confidence.
- Speaking while using overly expressive hand gestures; it is distracting.
- Biting your lips in between sentences; it gives the impression that you are making things up.
- Sitting with your arms crossed; it makes you appear standoffish.

- Shrugging your shoulders when asked a question that you are unsure of; it gives the impression that you do not know the answer. Take a moment to think of your response.
- Answering with nods and headshakes; use words to answer questions.
- Yawning; this is a sign of boredom. Get plenty of sleep the night before.

Closing the Interview

Once you have run through the bases of the interview, it is still important that you end the interview well. The hard part is over and now all that is left is for you to close out the interview in a winning manner.

Wait until your interviewer stands up or requests that you do so. Give your closing greeting. Thank the interviewer for his time. Perhaps say something to the effect of, “It was very nice of you to take the time to consider me for the position. And, it was a pleasure meeting with you.”

Offer a firm handshake, and ask when you can expect to hear from them about their decision. Send a thank-you card that same day (*which we’ll discuss later*).

Do's and Don'ts

There are quite a few things you should do during an interview that will make it easier for both you and the interviewer. Naturally, there are quite a few things you should not do as well:

Do's	Don'ts
Arrive on time, or better yet 10 minutes early.	Be late, or make any negative comments about the weather or traffic.
Refer to the interviewer by name.	Be too casual, even if the interviewer seems very casual.
Smile and use a firm handshake.	Be overly aggressive or egotistical.
Be alert and act interested throughout.	Answer with only yes or no.
Maintain eye contact at all times.	Excuse yourself halfway through the interview, even if you have to use the bathroom.
Make all comments in a positive manner.	Act defensively when questioned about anything.
Speak clearly, firmly, and with authority.	Excuse your bad points about work history or speak badly about past colleagues or employers.
Accept any refreshment offered.	Ask for coffee or refreshments.
Promote your strengths.	Talk about money.

Interview Questions

Every interview will consist of the interviewer asking you a great deal of questions. However, most of them are standard questions that every interviewer asks, which make it easier to prepare. Below is a list of the most common questions that you will encounter during an interview.

By reading these common questions, you will have an edge on the competition. This is one of the keys to acing any job interview. It is a good idea to think of specific examples for the questions that relate to how you have handled a certain type of situation in your past. You should have more than one example, in case one is not relevant to what your interviewer is looking for.

1. **Tell me something about yourself.** This is a way not only for the interviewer to learn about you, but also to see how you will choose to answer this open-ended question. This question gives an overall impression of your personality. The response should be about three to four minutes and should concentrate on your professional background. This would also be a good chance to work in some specific accomplishments.
2. **Describe a time when you were faced with a challenging situation and how you handled it.** This question is designed to reveal not only your leadership skills, but how well you work with a team as well as an independent. It is important to have

prepared examples that you have really thought through, because it can be a very revealing question.

3. **What is your biggest weakness?** The employer is looking for honesty. The best way to answer this question is to describe your weaknesses as strengths. Pick a fault that is actually a good thing. Try saying, “I don’t take on projects that I can’t give 110% on.”
4. **What is your definition of success?** This is an opportunity to show pride in your work. Think ahead of time about what success means to you and try to come up with a response that can be relevant to the success of a business. You want to show that you want to be a part of a successful business. You can mention some specific accomplishments that have brought you to where you are now.
5. **Why are you interested in this position/company?** This is where your research comes in handy. The interviewer wants to see if you are really interested in this particular company, based on how much you really know about it. He also wants to know if you understand what the position entails.
6. **Where do you see yourself in 5 years?** The interviewer wants to see if this particular position falls into your motivation. Focus on where you see yourself professionally and be sure to explain how this particular position fits in.
7. **Do you prefer to work on your own or as a team?** You want to be able to demonstrate how you are easily able to excel in both situations. This is another good question to have examples prepared.
8. **What separates you from other candidates/why should we hire you?** This question is a chance for you to market yourself as best you can. Your response should be focused on your strengths; but keep in mind this response is actually a reflection of your character (whether you are too timid, too arrogant, unsure about your qualities, etc.).

9. How do you handle a difference of opinion with your colleagues or superiors?

This is another question that can be very revealing, so be sure you have thought it through so you can provide an honest but positive response. The interviewer is trying to see if you will fit in well with your new co-workers. Never bad-mouth former co-workers. A good idea is to focus on a team-managed project that involved different opinions. How were you able to end up on the same page and successfully complete the project?

10. What are your salary requirements? This interviewer is looking for a straightforward and clear response. It is best to state a salary range (e.g., between \$50,000 and \$55,000). Let him know that you will consider the whole package, however, as well as the cost of living indexes, commuting time, and other factors such as quality of life and interest in your work. This keeps you in the game if you might have said a range that may be too high.

There is a good chance the interviewer will ask why you left your past job. If you left on bad terms, do not lie about it, but do not act bitter about it when discussing the reason; this will not benefit you in the end. Be forthcoming and sincere. Express that it was a learning experience for you and tell them what you learned from it. This will reflect well on your temperament.

Common Questions for Recent Grads

Here is a list of questions interviewers commonly ask recent college graduates:

1. Tell me what your most rewarding college experience was.
2. What extracurricular activities did you participate in?
3. What have you learned in college that applies directly to this job?
4. How have you prepared yourself for the transition from college to the workplace?

5. Are you going to graduate school or law school? If so, do you plan to continue working as well?
6. How do you plan to manage graduate/law school and working?
7. Did you get any hands-on experience in college?
8. How do you feel that college has prepared you for this job?
9. Have you ever done an internship that helped to prepare you for this type of work?
10. What do you think is the best asset that you could bring to the company?

These are all fairly straightforward in terms of the interviewer trying to see how qualified and dedicated you are. Make sure you have a solid idea of how you would respond to each of these.

Questions You Should Ask Your Interviewer

Just like you will be fielding questions from your interviewer, you should ask a few of your own. It shows that you are genuinely interested in working for *that* company and that you have some concerns of your own. It also shows that you feel fairly certain that this is the place for you. So feel free to interact and ask questions throughout the interview. However, take care not to interrupt the interviewer; ask questions when it feels appropriate. Also, the interviewer will always ask if you have any questions at the end, so be sure to save a few for that time.

Asking the right questions to your prospective employer will show him that you are serious in your efforts to work for their company and that you are an organized individual. Make sure that you are asking questions directly about the job and/or work environment; steer clear of asking any personal questions or any questions that are not directly job related.

If you wish, you may jot down some of the answers that you are given for reference later on. Keep your questions simple and polite.

Here are some questions that you should ask your prospective employer:

1. Why is this position available right now?
2. How many times has this position been filled in the past 5 years?
3. What should the new person do that is different from the last person that had this position?
4. What would you most like to see done in the next 6 months related to this position?
5. What are the most difficult problems this job entails?
6. How much freedom do I have in the decision-making process?
7. What are my options for advancement?
8. How has this company succeeded in the past?
9. What changes do you envision in the near future for this company?
10. What do you think constitutes success in this job?

Questions Employers Cannot Ask

Obviously, there are many questions that an interviewer can ask, but there are also many that she cannot ask. Some questions are actually illegal to ask. If you encounter inappropriate questions, there are ways to respond to them. It is important to know that you do not have to answer these questions.

However, this can be a tough position to be put in, because a defensive reaction will ensure that you will not get the offer. If asked an inappropriate question, you can simply ask how those questions pertain to the job.

If you are not comfortable saying that, you can respond to the questions in a way that eases the interviewer's mind and proves that you are dedicated to the job. For example, if asked if you plan to start a family, you can say something like, "I would like to, but that is further on down the road. It also depends on the success of my career. I

would like to give my all here and certainly do not have any plans to leave a company that I want to fully succeed in.”

Remember, you can decide later not to accept an offer if this particular employer is not right for you. But it is a good idea to try to maintain a positive interview, unless, of course, you are completely offended and would like to end the interview then and there.

Here is a list of subjects that are illegal for an interviewer to ask about:

- Age
- Marital status
- Children
- Personal health
- Ethnicity
- Sexual preference
- Disabilities
- Specific arrest record

The Post Interview Follow-Up

Thank-You Card

Now that the interview is over, the hard work is done, but you still have to follow up. Sending a thank-you note is the best way to start. The thank-you letter should be a brief letter thanking him for his time and consideration in seeing you. If you met with more than one person, be sure to address each one.

Notes

As soon as you can, write down for future reference everything you found out at your interview. This will give you a solid ground to work from if you are called in for a second interview.

Follow-Up

If you have not heard from the employer within a week, you should call the office to ask if they have reached a decision yet. This will not be considered as pushy; it simply shows your enthusiasm and persistence. If they have not reached a decision, ask when you might expect to hear from them. If they do not give an answer, try again in another week and so on.

Employer Evaluation

When an employer decides to conduct an interview with you, there are certain things that they are looking for:

- **Enthusiasm:** Employers want to know that you are willing and eager to be a part of their company. Being fully stocked with knowledge about the company is a sure-fire way to show your enthusiasm.
- **Ability to speak clearly:** If you approach an interview mumbling and speaking slang, a prospective employer will not see you as a professional.
- **Teamwork skills:** You should show an example (it is a good idea to think up various examples) of your ability to work as a team during your interview.
- **Leadership skills:** You should show your leadership abilities by approaching your interview with a strong and confident train of thought.
- **Problem-solving ability:** Employers need to know that you can handle yourself when a problem arrives.
- **Work-related experience:** You want to show you have some experience in the field already so that the employer knows you will not be overwhelmed.
- **Community involvement:** It is always a plus to show that you have done volunteer work. It exemplifies pride in your community and that you have a willingness to be a team player. When possible, give an example of teamwork through your experience in community involvement.
- **Company knowledge:** Employers like to see that you have done your research about their company. It shows that your interest in working for them is genuine.

- **Flexibility:** Employers want to know you are able to go with the flow. It proves they can depend on you.
- **Ambition and motivation:** Ambitious people are generally motivated enough to make great improvements in the company as they work their way up the ladder. Ambition usually means more money for the company.
- **People skills:** Your ability to get along with others is very important to an employer. They need to know that you will not ruffle any feathers if you are hired.
- **Professional appearance:** Nobody wants a slob working in his or her office. Be certain to dress appropriately for the interview.
- **Ability to multitask:** This is getting to be a very necessary skill in the workplace. Most days, you will be required to multitask.
- **Computer ease:** These days, just about every company in the world is running on computers. The ability to work a computer with at least minimal amount of ease is important. It is best to be familiar with the most common software like MS Office. If you do not have today's expected basic computer skills (e.g., MS Office), consider taking a course or seminar.
- **Reliability:** Employers want dependable and reliable people working for them. Your ability to arrive on time is a good place to start when trying to prove that you possess this quality.

Employers are generally monitoring and evaluating you on three skill sets during an interview. Those three skill sets can easily be broken down into these sections:

Content Skills

These are the skills that directly relate to performing a specific job in your profession. This would include your degrees, the fact that you have passed the patent bar exam, any training you may have, work experience, and internships. This shows an employer that you have acquired all the knowledge that you will need to perform your job efficiently.

If you do not have a desired skill, you can simply express that you are looking into specialized training, and/or would be willing to start training. It may not be exactly what the employer is looking for, but it shows that you have initiative.

Functional Skills

These are the skills that reflect your ability to work with others and how you apply information. This is where an employer decides whether or not you are a team player. You can convey this skill by displaying your past employment record and accomplishments that are directly job related.

Adaptive Skills

Adaptive skills show your personality and temperament. It also covers your self-management skills. During your interview, the employer will be evaluating you on your general ability to get along with her. Your general personality traits are monitored during this time.

When faced with a difficult question, do not get defensive or angry. Just take a few seconds to think about what you should say rather than say something you will regret. Be sure to take your time with each response. You want to appear at ease, (or as much so as you can) during your interview. You want the employer to think that you anticipated everything that she is going to say.

Summary

By now, you have learned everything that you need to know before you enter an interview. If you prepare yourself as outlined in this manual, you will have acquired the skills needed to ace any job interview. Below is a summed-up list of tips and helpful hints:

- Researching the company before your interview is essential. It lets the employer know that you really want to be a part of that particular company.
- Prepare questions to ask ahead of time, and bring extra resumes with you. You want to be prepared even if the interviewer is not. Also, the interviewer might spontaneously invite someone else to join the interview.
- Be aware of what turns off an interviewer. Be sure to look great, feel great, and be polite yet confident.
- Market your skills as best you can. Remember, you are competing against other qualified candidates. Be sure to do it in a way that is positive but not arrogant.
- Let your interviewer bring up the topic of salary first.
- Do not volunteer personal opinions about any subjects unless you are asked.
- Practice responses to the commonly asked questions. Be prepared!
- Follow-up with a thank-you card as well as a phone call a week later if you have not heard from them. Be persistent but not pushy.
- Try to establish and maintain a good rapport with your interviewer. Remain professional but, most importantly, be yourself!

As promised, you are going to approach your next interview with an edge on the competition. If you have read and used all of the information in this manual, you will have increased your chances of getting that job by 100%. So relax, and go get that job!

Job Seekers & Networking: Your Key to Landing the Job You Really Want

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Introduction

It's not easy to find a good job in today's world. It's difficult anytime, but it's especially difficult when the economy is down.

Looking for a job can take weeks, months, or even years. And all that time and effort takes a huge toll on us physically, mentally, and emotionally.

Often new college graduates find it especially difficult to find a good job right out of school. With a more competitive job market, companies are looking for people with years of experience and new college graduates simply don't have this kind of experience. So they are forced to take lower-paying jobs that aren't even in their field, which doesn't give them the right type of experience.

But anyone - both recent graduates and those who've been in the workforce for years - can have a tough time finding a job. And that's why it's so important to do everything you can to put yourself in the best position in order to get a job.

The number one thing you want and need to do is often overlooked by job seekers. This one thing is networking.

Of course the fact that most people don't network makes it all the easier for those who do to find jobs.

But just knowing that you have to network is not enough. You have to know how to network and how to do it well. And that's just what this book will discuss.

First we're going to take a look at what networking is and exactly why you should do it. Then we'll get into everything you need to do and gather (for your "Networking Tool Kit") before you actually go out and begin networking.

Next we'll take a look at where and when you can network and the importance of keeping a list of everything you do. This will include how to properly keep the list so that you stay organized and are able to get the most benefits from your networking.

Finally, we will talk about how you can use networking while at job fairs and similar events. This will give you all the tools you need to be able to make a favorable impression and put yourself in a positive position for a job.

Chapter 1: Networking - The Why and What

Before we get into exactly how, when, and where you should network, we should first discuss what networking is and why you should do it. That way we'll all be on the same page as we move forward.

According to Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary (merriam-webster.com), the definition of networking is:

The exchange of information or services among individuals, groups, or institutions; specifically: the cultivation of productive relationships for employment or business.

We are concerned most with the second part of that definition: The part about cultivating productive relationships. Put into plain English this means forming and maintaining relationships with people so that you can get a job.

Of course in this case the entire definition also extends to relationships businesses have with each other in order to benefit themselves.

For this book all we care about with the definition of networking as it pertains to finding jobs.

To get into it a little further: Networking means meeting people who will either be able to give you a job or will know people who will be able to give you a job.

Of course, it isn't just about meeting people, you have to be able to make a positive impression on everyone you meet so that they remember you when it comes time for them – or someone they know – to hire new employees.

The best way to make a favorable impression on people is to make sure that you remember networking is actually a two-way street. This means you need to always keep in mind that networking isn't just about what you can get from other people, it's about what you can do for other people too.

Think about this for a minute.

If you're just trying to use people to get a good job then most people are going to realize this sooner or later. And they aren't going to want to have anything to do with you.

People don't want to be around someone who only wants to take from them. They want to be around someone who's willing to help them out if they need it. And then that will make them more likely to help you in return.

So make sure you approach everyone with the attitude that you want to do whatever you possibly can to help them.

Now, obviously you won't be able to always help others, especially when you go to job fairs and similar events. But job fairs are just one type of event where you can go to find a job.

Whether you believe it or not, there are many other places to find a job. There are also many other opportunities. And many of these opportunities aren't even recognized as opportunities until they lead to a job. But we'll get into networking opportunities in Chapter Two.

Why Network?

In the Introduction we briefly covered why you should network.

You know you should network to find a good job. But there's more to it than that.

So now we'll get into it a little more.

It's been estimated that about half of all available jobs are not advertised. That means that all those jobs are filled by people who are known to the business or someone in the business that is involved with the hiring.

And as a result of this, it's also been estimated that as many as 75% of all jobs are actually filled through networking. So this includes almost all jobs that aren't advertised and some jobs that are advertised.

Even in today's job market, the turnover rate for an average business is around 14%. This means that every year, every business, has to refill more than one in ten jobs. So the outlook is not a bleak one. You should be encouraged.

Again, if you stop to think about it, many jobs are given to people because they are known to the people who are in charge of hiring or they are known to someone in the upper levels of the company.

So, by networking you will be known to these people and therefore you'll have a much better shot at getting hired.

And that really is the entire reason you want and need to network. You want to be known to the people who are doing the hiring and/or the people who have the power to say who gets hired and who doesn't get hired.

Not only do you want to be known to these people but you also want to be known as someone who they would want to hire and someone they would want to have working for them.

In fact, you want to make such a favorable impression that they'll remember you when the time comes for them to hire another person into their business.

The key here is to make sure that you are always networking regardless of where you're at or what you're doing.

The bottom line is: You never know when there is someone around who can hire you for a great job.

In fact, many people find great jobs in the least likely of places. Many people find their dream job where and when they are least expecting it.

And this brings us to the next chapter: Networking Opportunities.

In the next chapter we'll discuss the importance of always networking and we'll even include a great example of when informal networking landed one of my friends a great job.

Chapter 2: Networking Opportunities

As we mentioned in the previous chapter, everywhere you go and everything you do is a networking opportunity. This means that you should always be putting your best foot forward.

Always.

Companies are always on the lookout for good people so that they can get the best employees when they need them.

Don't believe me?

Well, let's take a look at a couple of examples – one negative and one positive.

A Negative Example

Whether you know it or not, companies will try to find out as much about you as they possibly can. That means they will ask around the office if anyone knows you. If you live near someone that one of the bosses knows then you can bet that person will be asked if they know you and what they think and what they've heard about you.

Of course many years ago, these were the main techniques businesses used to try to discover more about their potential employees.

But not anymore.

Not with the Internet dominating our existence now.

Now, businesses know enough to go ahead and type your name into Google and search it. They also know enough to search for you on MySpace, FaceBook, and some of the other well-known social networking sites.

Yes, that's right. That kegger (beer party) you went to last month and snapped a couple picks of you and your friends drinking will be studied if you put the picture on your MySpace page. And if you have any thing that is not acceptable on that page it will cause you to be eliminated from consideration.

This may sound unfair to you. It may even seem like some sort of violation of your rights.

But it happens every single day.

So make sure you are always putting your best forward even with everything you do online. Right down to not using excessive profane language when you leave messages on other people's MySpace or FaceBook pages.

A Positive Example

We also discussed in Chapter One how one of my friends found a great job in the most unlikely of places. In fact, he found that great job in a barber shop.

No, he isn't cutting hair. But he was getting his hair cut at the same time as the owner and president of a small, but very successful software company.

Matt, which isn't his real name, was getting his hair cut and talking with his barber. He was also talking with the barber next to him, the other guy getting his hair cut, and

another man who was waiting. Matt was conversing with all of them and being his usual outgoing and engaging self.

Well, when he was just about done, he mentioned that he was about to graduate from college. So the guy who was sitting next to him asked if he needed a job. Matt said he did. The guy gave him his card and told him to stop by his office and talk with him.

A week later Matt was hired as one of their international salespeople.

Matt would travel to Europe, Asia, and Australia. He would have his own company car and his own six-digit salary.

But it gets better.

Five years later Matt was the Vice President of the company when the owner decided he wanted to try something else. So Matt and the other VP got some people to invest in them and they bought out the company.

Now Matt is the co-owner of a software company that is worth over 20 million (last time I checked).

And it all started because Matt was “networking” in a barber shop.

Of course Matt has a gift for talking to people that many of us don’t possess. And there’s no doubt that his gift helped him get hired and also to rise-up through the company quickly and eventually get investors to back him for buying the company.

However, although the rest of us might have to work at it a little more and a little harder, that doesn’t mean we still shouldn’t learn a lesson from this example and make sure we’re always networking.

Always.

You should be networking in the grocery store, at the movies, in a bar, and everywhere else.

You just never know when your next boss might be sitting beside you, or standing behind you, or getting his hair cut with you.

And you never know who might know someone who will be your next boss. So always be on your best behavior and always try to make a favorable impression.

Obvious Networking Places

We just discussed how you should network everywhere you go. And you also need to always be aware that the things you do can and will be looked at by potential employers.

However, there are some places that are obviously networking places. These are places such as job fairs.

When you go to these places you need to make sure you bring along the proper tools in order to be able to network effectively. Some of these tools are tangible (resume, etc.) while others are intangible (a speech, etc.)

Obviously you won't be able to use the tangible tools – business cards, resumes, and other tools that we'll discuss in Chapter Three – everywhere you go. But you need to make sure you have these tools when you are going to be in obvious networking situations.

The intangible tools you should be able to pull out and use anytime the situation calls for it.

Chapter 3: Networking Tool Kit

In Chapter Two we discussed how you need to be ready to network at any time. In fact, a part of you should always be networking. You never know who might be able to link you up with a great job.

This means you always want to be aware of how you're acting and what you're saying. The way you act and what you say are considered intangible tools. And probably your most important intangible tool will be what is known as an "elevator speech".

Before we get into your very own elevator speech we should first discuss what's meant by the term "elevator speech". This term is usually new to people.

What is an Elevator Speech?

There are slightly different definitions for this term.

For example, businesses might have an elevator speech in order to tell prospective clients what they're all about. But in your case, elevator speech will mean that you have a short speech that will tell prospective employers everything they need to know about you.

When planning your speech, you need to consider how long your speech should be. When contemplating the length of the speech, you should always remember where the term came from. It's called an elevator speech because you want to be able to say your entire speech in the time it would take an elevator to go from the bottom to the top of a building.

And just in case you're curious, we're not talking about a four floor building nor are we talking about the Sears Tower. Shoot for somewhere in between. Just remember shorter is always better but be sure to include all the information that needs to be included so the other person knows about you.

In all your speech should be around two minutes in length. Under no circumstances should it take more than three minutes.

What to Include

In your elevator speech you want to include all the answers to the major questions. So this would include providing the answer to who, what, where, when, and why.

Who you are:

It's often helpful to include a little bit about your personal life. Just try to make it relate to the type of employment you're seeking.

What you want to do:

What are your short and long-term goals? What do you hope to do in the near future? You should also include what you're currently doing.

Where you're from:

Be sure to tell your hometown, where you went to school, and where you currently live. You can also include where you are employed and/or where you've been employed in the past.

When:

Tell when you graduated from college and perhaps when you worked for a certain company (include internships).

Why:

You want to tell why you're interested in the profession you're in or are about to go into. You also want to include why someone should want you as their employee.

Why and When to Use an Elevator Speech

You want to be prepared as much as possible when you meet people who are important. You want to have a way of letting them know everything they need to know about you quickly and effectively.

You don't want to bore them and you don't want to take too much of their time. But you also don't want to let someone who could be your future employer get away without knowing all the important information about you.

That's why you need to prepare an elevator speech.

In fact, you should memorize your elevator speech so you always say the same thing, which will be all the right things.

As for when you should use your elevator speech, the answer to this question is anytime you can.

It's as simple as that.

But you're pretty much guaranteed to have an opportunity to use your speech every time you meet someone at a job fair and every single time you have a job interview.

Almost every job interview begins with the interviewer looking at the interviewee and saying, "Tell me a little bit about yourself."

Too many people don't know exactly how to respond to that. Because too many people don't like to talk about themselves and they don't know how to do it. And this immediately takes the interview down a bad path.

The employers figure if you can't string together a few sentences to tell them about yourself then how will you possibly be an asset to their company if they were to hire you?

And they're right.

You'll also notice that whenever you meet someone at a job fair, a conference, or a similar networking event, the first thing you'll be asked is something like, "So what do you do?"

So make sure you have your elevator speech down pat so that you can reel it off at anytime in anyplace. The more you are able to give your elevator speech the better you'll get at it so don't be shy to use it when you get the opportunity.

How to Compose a Good Elevator Speech

We already talked about what you need to include in your speech – who, what, where, when, and why. But we didn't get into any specifics.

It's up to you to actually compose a unique elevator speech that is perfect for you. You should begin with the idea that you are trying to sell yourself and your skills as a great employee.

Don't be afraid or shy about seeming arrogant. If you don't sell yourself then no one will do it for you. Always remember that.

It's up to you and you alone to market everything that you have to offer.

Now, as for the actual content of your elevator speech, besides being sure to include the answers to all the questions we've already discussed, you are free to construct your elevator speech anyway you want.

Every person is an individual and every person has their own story to tell.

The key to a good elevator speech is pointing out what makes you unique.

Consider:

- What can you do for the business world that most others can't?
- What type of experience or education sets you higher than all the other people who are also going for the job?
- What can you say that will help you stand-out to the person your speaking with?

Those are all questions you need to consider when preparing your elevator speech. And the main point is to stick-out in the minds of potential employers.

Luckily, often you don't have to just rely on the intangible networking tools. You'll also have tangible tools.

And that's what we'll discuss next.

Business Cards

Regardless of your experience – whether you've been working for 30 years or you're fresh out of college – you need to have business cards.

Business cards will allow you to have a tangible tool that can be used anytime, anywhere.

Of course, it won't take the place of your resume, which you will always bring to job fairs and interviews, but your business card is something you can give to anyone who is interested in what you have to offer.

Here is what you should include on your business cards:

Contact Information

This should include your name, your address, and your phone number. Do not put a PO box on your business card and be sure to include a cell phone number if you have one.

Certifications

This should include any degrees and professional certifications that you have.

Professional Experience

Obviously you can't get into details about your work experience like you're able to on a resume. But if you have some valuable work experience (including an internship) in your past, be sure to include it on your business cards.

Business cards are a handy tool to have because they are so small yet they can provide anyone with valuable information about you. And very few people who are looking for a job have a business card.

So just having a card to distribute to people will automatically set you apart from many of the other job seekers.

The cost to have your own business cards made is really very reasonable. In fact, you may be able to find a service online that will make the cards for no charge.

Just make sure that the business cards you have look good. The last thing you want is a business card with a typo or that looks very cheap. Remember, the business cards are representing you and if they don't look good, you won't look good either.

Chapter 4: Networking List

It's very important to stay organized with everything you do with networking. Therefore you need to keep a networking list with specific information that will help you as you move forward with your quest to find a good job.

What to Include

The following is what you need to include on your networking list:

Name and Contact Information

You always want to know everyone you “officially” contacted and networked with. Of course this can't include people you may have met who you didn't realize was someone who may hook you up with a job in the future. But the list needs to include anyone who you know to be a solid contact.

You want to include the phone number, the business name, and the address (whenever possible). Also, include the email address. The more contact information you can include, the better off you'll be in the future.

Timing of Contact

On your list you also want to include when you met the person. Along with this, if they asked you to contact them then include when the person said to contact them. Even if they didn't say to contact them, you will still do a follow-up. So include when you might do this as well.

Where you Met

Include where you met as well. Also, you need to write down whom or what referred you to this person.

Any Other Details

Finally, you want to include any other details that might prove to be important. If the person told you something, anything, that might be important then make sure you write it down. Don't assume that you'll remember later because most likely you won't.

Chapter Five: Where to Network

We already discussed a few places where you'll have the opportunity to network. These places include job fairs, seminars, and any informal place including a barber shop.

But there are many other opportunities for you to network. Many of these opportunities will continue to help you even after you land a good job.

Personal Networks

When you were in high school your guidance counselor and others probably encouraged you to volunteer for different things and to join a variety of clubs and organizations. Being more involved in extracurricular activities helped you look good to prospective colleges.

Well, this same idea can and should be applied to helping you find a job. The more clubs and organizations you belong to the more opportunities you'll have to connect and network with people.

Also, don't forget you may already have valuable contacts that you don't even realize. These contacts are family and friends, which is where we'll begin.

Your possible personal networks include:

Family and Friends

It may seem a little strange to you that you would be networking at the family reunion but if you get past that uneasy feeling you may very well find yourself with a new job.

Of course you can network on your own, without a family reunion. You can send out cards to all your friends and family and just include a couple sentences that explain exactly what you're looking to do.

For example, you may write, "I just graduated from Clemson with a degree in Computer Science and now I'm looking to get a job with a computer company."

Just make sure you keep it short and easy to understand.

Religious Group

If you belong to a church then you probably have other people that also belong to that church who would be great contacts for you. Often these people have known you for many years too. Therefore they're usually willing to help you out and they will be able to vouch for you. So don't be afraid to let people at your church know that you're looking for a job.

Civic, Social, Volunteer Groups

These groups all benefit your community. It's good for your own character and for society for you to be involved with these types of groups. However, these groups can benefit you too.

You will automatically look good to any employer just by being a part of civic, social, and/or volunteer groups. But you will also have a very good chance of meeting people who will be able to hook you up with a good job.

Of course, you want to make sure that your number one goal is to be a productive member of these types of groups. Then in time you will be able to use the groups for your own networking (after the group has benefited from your participation).

Special Interest Groups

Any specialized group falls under this category. Groups based on a hobby you might have are a perfect example.

Perhaps the most important groups are the ones that are partly community based and partly business based. Examples include Kiwanis, Rotary, and your local chamber of commerce.

Once again, when you are a member of any of these groups you must first focus on being a productive member of the group and allow your job networking to remain in the background a little bit.

Alumni Association

Just about every college and university has an alumni association. It would do you a lot of good to belong to this.

Not only should you belong to the alumni association but you should be somewhat active in it.

You want to go to the meetings, have an active role on their online site, and occasionally volunteer for different things throughout the year.

Many employers like to hire people just like themselves. And having the same college in common is about as alike as you can get in the business world.

So make sure you stay as involved in your alumni association as you possibly can.

Professional Networks

Some of the most important networking possibilities we discussed earlier in this book fall under professional networks. These include job fairs, seminars and the like.

But there are also individuals who fall into this category and can be very helpful to you.

Other Job Hunters

Obviously there are more people than just you looking for a job. While you probably don't want to network with anyone who is looking for the exact same job as you, you will find it's beneficial to network with people who are looking for similar, yet different jobs as yourself.

Your References

You should have references already – people who are willing to vouch for you and your value to an employer. Don't forget to explore the possibility that your references might be able to help you find a good job.

Other Professionals in Your Field

Being able to network with people in your profession can prove to be very helpful. Knowing one person can lead you to a connection with dozens more people. And the more people you know in your profession the better your chances will be to land a great job.

A Few Final Words about Networking Opportunities

The way in which you choose to network can be broken into two broad categories: electronic and in person. Electronic includes email, Instant Messaging (IM), telephone, and message posting. Basically the only method that qualifies as in person is actually, physically standing in front of the person.

Which method you choose is completely up to you. Of course in person is usually most effective, but electronic is the easiest and will allow you to make the most contacts.

You should do everything possible to use both methods to your advantage.

Networking is exactly like planting seeds and then waiting for your crops to grow. You want to do what's best so that those seeds are able to take root and actually produce something – in this case a great job for you.

Now, anytime you network electronically you will be basically repeating the same process over and over again. You are sending messages that tell a person about you and what you're looking for.

However, when you're networking in person you will find that there is no set formula for how things will go. Your elevator speech will always be the same but that may be the only constant you'll face with in person networking.

Always remember that networking is a two-way street.

You want to try to do something for others so that they will be more than willing to do something for you in return. That might be to give you the name of someone who's looking for a job, to put in a good word for you at a company, to get you an interview, or it may even include giving you a job.

When you are involved in organizations it's especially important for you to remember that you have to give of yourself before expecting anything in return. If you volunteer for something and you don't actually do any work, and you're blatantly looking for a job, you will turn people off instead of impressing them.

You've seen that there are many different places and opportunities for networking. However, places like job fairs are the main places where you'll have an obvious chance

to network. Therefore, it's especially important that you know what to do and say at these types of events.

So in the next chapter we'll take a close look at what you should do.

Chapter 6: Working the Room

This chapter will get into how you can really shine to perspective employers. The last thing you want to have happen is for all your hard work to get flushed away just because you make a bad impression when you meet someone in person.

While the advice in this chapter is specifically meant to be used when networking, much of the advice can and should be applied when you go on interviews.

Before we get into the specifics, it should be mentioned that while you're at these events, you want to make sure you network with people who are known as "power contacts". These are people who are especially important. Usually they will include speakers at different events and other well-known people.

Now let's get into the specifics:

"You never get a second chance to make a first impression."

You've probably heard that more times than you'd care to remember. But you better remember it anytime you are dressing for success because it's very true.

And what you wear might not land you an interview but it can certainly make you seem like a great prospective employee or it can discount you from all consideration before you even open your mouth.

Be sure you always dress for success.

What Men Should Wear

Men need to wear a suit. The suit should be dark in color but not black. A navy blue or dark blue suit works best.

The suit should be wool since that's the fabric that wears the best. The suit should always fit properly and be comfortable so that the man can relax as much as possible and at least look comfortable.

Your shirt should always be long sleeved (yes, even in the summer) and it should be light colored. White is always a safe bet but all lighter colors are fine.

Shoes should always be leather and either brown or black. They need to be clean and polished. Like the suit, the shoes should also be comfortable.

As for ties, a cheap tie can pull down the entire look of a suit. Likewise, a nice tie can make a cheap or older suit look better. So if you can't afford the best suit, at least spend a few extra dollars on the tie. And never make the mistake of wearing a cheap tie with an expensive suit.

As for the type of tie, silk ties are always best. And you want a tie that complements your suit – it shouldn't match it completely nor should it battle the look of your suit. Never wear a tie with pictures or busy prints on it.

Don't be the guy who wears a great suit but fails to wear proper socks. You can wear a cheap pair of socks as long as they're in good shape and they match your suit. Never wear white athletic socks with your suit. Nothing looks goofier or says "I'm either careless or clueless" more than white socks with a suit.

As a man you want to keep the jewelry to a minimum. This means a watch is fine and of course a wedding ring is too, but much more than that isn't needed and some people would be turned off by it.

While we're on the topic of unnecessary things on your body, tattoos fall under this category too. So, try to cover-up any tattoos that you can possibly cover.

Finally, accessories should be chosen wisely as well. A belt should always be worn (whether you need it or not) and it should match your shoes. A briefcase is always good to carry with you (if the situation allows for it). And a handkerchief always looks nice as well. If you don't know which color to go with, white always works.

What Women Should Wear

Women have more options available to them for what they can wear. Gone are the days when a woman is expected to only wear a drab business suit. However, you do still need to be careful.

Make sure you always wear something that is conservative and projects confidence and professionalism.

Avoid any clothing that is overly revealing. Avoid gaudy looking jewelry and flashy clothing.

Do wear long sleeve blouses (projects power) and a scarf rather than a necklace.

As with men, carrying a briefcase will project power. Do not carry a purse with your briefcase though. Instead, transfer your essentials into a small bag and store that bag in your briefcase.

Make-up is perfectly fine (of course) but it should look natural and not be too much.

What to Bring

We already mentioned that you want to bring a briefcase. However, it will be cumbersome to continually open and close the briefcase. Therefore, you want to bring your business cards so you can pass them out without any problems.

Obviously you also want to bring along your resume and a list of references. Be sure to bring a pen as well so that you can take notes.

Body Language

About 50% of all productive communication is done non-verbally. Whether you realize it or not, body language is very important. What you do with your body and how you act can be and is perceived to mean different things.

The Handshake

Of all the body language that occurs between two or more people, the handshake has to be the most important.

Here are the keys to a good handshake:

- Your hands should always be clean and well-manicured. You should never have sweaty palms.
- Try to allow the potential employer to be the first to extend their hand (initiate the handshake), However, if you begin to extend your arm first, don't pull it back.

- Match the pressure of the handshake with the person whose hand you're shaking. Do not exceed the pressure. The handshake should last between 2 and 5 seconds.
- Make eye contact and smile confidently.
- Always extend your hand with your palm perpendicular to the floor. Having your palm turned up from the floor (toward the ceiling) indicates you're being submissive while your palm facing down indicates you're being aggressive.
- Always shake with one hand. Don't bring in a second hand to grasp their hand or any other part of them including their elbow, shoulder, etc. This is a gesture that is too informal and it can also be seen as trying to gain power over someone.
- Try to maintain 30 inches between you and the other person at all times. This actually applies to the entire conversation or interview. Don't invade the other person's personal space.

Hand Gestures

Much of the body language that happens is performed with the hands.

The hands can send a variety of signals – both good and bad. So you must be aware of what you should and shouldn't do with your hands.

Occasionally exposing the palms of your hands while you're talking is a good thing. This shows that you're open, friendly, and that you have nothing to hide. Also, forming a steeple with your fingers while you consider the answer to a question shows that you are a deep thinker. Just make sure you don't do this more than once or twice and that you don't hold the gesture for more than a few seconds.

You should NOT do any of the following:

- Clasp your hands behind your back.
- Put your hands in your pockets or in your belt.
- Cross or fold your arms in front of you.
- Pull your collar away from your neck.
- Play with your tie.
- Pick at invisible lint on your clothing.

Many of the above are nervous habits that many people don't even realize they're doing. So be aware of what you're doing with your hands and make sure you're not sending a bad message.

Important Tips

Always remain positive and aggressive when you're networking. This is your time to make things happen so don't let the opportunity pass you by.

If you are sitting down to eat or for any other reason, make sure you sit with people you don't know. That way the table will be full of networking opportunities.

It may help you to go with a friend so you have the moral support. However, make sure the two of you separate at the actual event. You don't want to get in each others way and you don't want to look to others like you are dependent on each other.

Be sure you always project a positive image when you network. What you wear, how you act, and the words you speak will all be judged. So be sure to be at your best.

Remember to prepare your elevator speech. Bring the materials you need to bring. Dress for success. And communicate well with your body language.

We already discussed how to shake hands and how to use your hands (and how not to use your hands). Also be sure to nod your head and smile while the other person is talking. And make plenty of eye contact.

Don't ever be afraid to go up to anyone and introduce yourself and give your elevator speech. Remember every single person at these events is there to meet people and to network. So don't think you'll offend anyone by going up to them and speaking to them.

Before you go the event prepare a few questions you want to ask and a few ways you'll want to open conversations.

You should also check the news for what's happening in the area you will be working in. This will give you more ideas for conversations and it will also prepare you for any questions you might be asked about regarding current events.

Following Up

Make sure you always follow-up with the contacts you make.

If the person asked you to call them, make sure you note this in your networking list. If not, you should still send them a letter or an email thanking them and telling them how nice it was to meet them. You should also remind them that you'd love to discuss a position with them.

You should make the initial follow-up about a week after meeting the person. And then continue to follow-up every other month. You can alternate between sending letters (or email) and making phone calls to the person.

Be sure not to be too pushy but make sure you let them know you're still interested and you're still available. The letter or conversation doesn't have to be long and shouldn't be long. You don't want to seem like a pest.

So all you need to do is say hello, remind them who you are, and ask if there are any anticipated vacancies. You don't want to take-up too much of their time so you should keep the conversation short and to the point.

Chapter 7: Resources

Here is a list of resources you should find useful during your networking adventures:

Networking Groups

<http://www.networkinggroups.com>

<http://www.networkinginsight.com/>

Social Networking Sites

<http://www.facebook.com>

<http://www.myspace.com>

<http://www.classmates.com>

<http://www.plaxo.com/>

For a complete list of all social networking sites visit:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_social_networking_websites

Conclusion

So now you have all the information you need in order to network effectively.

It will certainly take some work and a lot of practice but networking will land you a great job. It is only a matter of time.

Always make sure you put your best foot forward and that you view every situation as an opportunity. Of course you don't want to be overbearing about it but you also don't want to automatically eliminate yourself from any potential position because you say or do the wrong thing when you don't even realize there is someone watching you who could be a great contact for a good job.

And when you are in definite networking situations make sure you wear the right clothes, display the proper body language, and say the right words. Of course a proper handshake is a major piece of your body language and your elevator speech should be major part of what you say.

Be sure to follow everything else you've discovered in this book too, and you will find yourself working away in that great job before you know it.