



Tools For Success



Step 1: Resume

Refresh Your Resume!



The smallest details can make a big impression, so check your resume for typos and inaccuracies. It's also a great idea to have a friend or mentor look over your resume to make sure it looks and sounds professional. If you have a cover letter, address it to the interviewer or hiring manager. Matching your cover letter font to your resume font is neater and looks more professional. These are the kinds of details that show people how organized you are!

Your resume shouldn't have distracting features like head shots or colorful fonts. Unusual fonts can make it hard for interviewers to read your resume, or hard for them to upload it digitally!

Use a simple email address that focuses on your name to make communication straightforward and professional. Email names such as AnnaBanana@gmail.com or MusicIsMyLife@yahoo.com might seem fun, but they can give the impression that you're not serious about your job search. Save these creative emails for friends and family. Creating a new email address on Gmail or Yahoo is free, and takes less than five minutes.

Turning that traditional "Objective" statement into a quick summary is another great update for your resume. The summary should be a brief description of your talents and goals. Think of it as your elevator pitch, on paper. Say what you are looking for, and how you can help your potential employer.

It's your resume, so know it inside and out! Your interviewer will expect you to know your professional history off the top of your head, so study your resume. Be ready to answer questions about gaps in your work history, reasons for leaving jobs, special projects you completed, or anything that might stand out.



Get References



Have at least two (but preferably three!) professional references who are willing to sing your praises. Reach out to them ahead of time to ask if they're willing to be your reference, and give them a heads-up when you're on the job hunt so they can expect a call or email from a hiring manager.

Even if you're not looking for work, maintaining relationships with your references is always a good idea. Reach out to them once or twice a year to say hi, and to stay on their radar. The last thing you want is for them to forget you or your work when the interviewer asks them about you.

Speaking of remembering, keep your references as fresh and recent as possible. Make new connections with coworkers and supervisors with every job you take on, so that you have plenty of professional support in your contacts list. If the only references you have are from jobs you held several years ago, your interviewer might be suspicious. Make sure all contact information is updated just in case they've changed jobs and have new emails or phone numbers.

Step 2: Social Media Review

LinkedIn Profile

Update your work history and refresh your summary:

A great LinkedIn profile showcases your current job position, along with your skills and any recent projects. Refresh your summary as well. Many people who don't spend much time exploring your profile will still read your summary! A good summary states your talents, passions, and overall career goals (think "elevator pitch," like your resume summary). Talk about what problems you solve, but be brief.



Put up a new LinkedIn photo:

Choosing a professional-looking, high resolution photo makes a great impression on anyone who comes across your profile. Selfies are unprofessional and may seem too casual to hiring managers, or may even seem immature. Remember: many supervisors aren't millennials and don't understand the selfie phenomenon. Have a coworker snap a few crisp shots of you at your next work event, or even take a photo of you at a pretty area in your office the next time you come in wearing your favorite outfit.

Stay engaged:

Many employers reach out to new hires through LinkedIn, so check your messages often. Check in with your contacts now and then, and congratulate them on promotions and endorse them for their skills. This will boost the people in your network! Remember: LinkedIn is the social network of the professional world. The more you communicate with your contacts, the more they will help boost your profile.



FaceBook and Instagram



Take a few minutes to give your FaceBook profile a sniff-test for anything that might be a red flag for hiring managers. Most interviewers these days scope out potential hires on social media to get a glimpse of your lifestyle and personality. No one wants to water down their profile, but it's possible to create a positive impression while still showing your fun side. If you're in doubt about any content you've posted, either remove it or consider having separate profiles for your friends and for your professional life.

Step 3: Get Ready For Your Interview



Do Your Research



Check out the company's website, blog, and social media feeds. These sources are the perfect place to get a feel for the firm's culture and environment. Learning about them ahead of time will also help you feel more confident!



Prep For Questions

Be ready to answer any questions the interviewer may ask you. They may say:

- Tell me about yourself.
- Why do you want to leave your current job?
- What makes you want to work here?

Have some anecdotes ready for the open-ended, behavior-related questions. Be ready to answer questions like:

- What's the hardest thing you've ever worked on?
- What projects did you like working on the most?
- What have you learned so far on your career path?

Come ready with some questions to ask the interviewer. You don't want to come up blank when the interviewer asks you if you have any questions for them! This would make you seem unprepared--or worse: disinterested. Some great questions to ask are:

- What are the expectations for someone in this job role?
- What is the culture like at this company?
- What are the day-to-day job responsibilities?

Be Ready To Talk Salary

Don't be the first to bring it up, but be ready to talk about your expectations so that the interviewer can get a realistic idea of what you're looking for. Honesty is the best policy: be truthful when answering the employer's questions so they know what job openings are the best match for you.





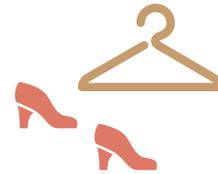
Do A Dry Run To The Interview Location



If you're not familiar with the interview location, you may want to visit it ahead of time to get the lay of the land. Look up the directions well before your interview time so you can account for traffic delays or time spent looking for parking. Do whatever it takes to avoid being late!



Professional Presentation



It's time to look your best! You don't necessarily need a suit, but you should be dressed somewhat more formally than the rest of the staff. If you're not sure, err on the side of being dressier rather than casual. Do some online research to find out what the office culture is like and what the team usually wears to work. Sporting a fresh haircut and clean, trimmed fingernails are also helpful to showing that you take the opportunity seriously. Makeup should be understated and professional. Dramatic features like false eyelashes can look gaudy, and should be saved for after-work cocktail nights with your future coworkers.

Fresh breath and a clean smell are important too! That said, avoid too much wearing too much fragrance. It can overwhelm the interviewer, especially in small interview rooms and office spaces. If you're a smoker, don't smoke on your way to the interview. Bringing drinks or food into your interview is also a no-no. They are distracting, and are a sign that you're indifferent about your job search. If you chugged your coffee on your ride in, pop a breath mint so you'll have sweet-smelling breath. Mints are preferable to gum, since gum-chewing can get in the way of answering questions.

Practice good posture. Standing and sitting up straight will make you more alert and show that you're attentive and interested. Don't underestimate the power of body language! Research shows that job candidates with straight posture were more likely to be hired than their slouching counterparts.

Some job seekers might feel it's unfair to be judged on their appearance, but the truth is that your effort on looking your best tells your interviewer that you're a qualified candidate who's enthusiastic about this opportunity. Besides, being dressed to impress will give you a boost of confidence!



Step 4: Pack Your Bags!



What To Do The Day Before

The night before your interview, print out extra copies of your resume, your references' contact information, and a hard copy of directions to the interview location (you never know when your GPS might decide to take a day off!). Pick out your interview outfit and make sure it's clean and wrinkle-free. There's no worse feeling than thinking your go-to blouse is ready for your big day, only to find a stain on the sleeve!

You might also want to bring a pen, business cards, a notepad, breath mints, a Tide To-Go pen, cash (in case you need to pay to park somewhere), and samples of your work, if relevant.

Finally, smile! Put your best foot forward and present a cheerful, polite attitude to everyone you meet. Showing respect to all staff (not just your interviewer) is a sign of integrity and shows the team that you'll be pleasant to work with. Take a deep breath, stand tall, and get ready to wow!

