

GET THE JOB

MARCH 2020



BILLINGS GAZETTE
COMMUNICATIONS

GET ORGANIZED ▪ CUSTOMIZING YOUR RESUME ▪ DO YOU NEED A COVER LETTER ▪ USE YOUR NETWORK ▪ USE THE STAR FORMAT
EMPLOYMENT AFTER MILITARY SERVICE ▪ BUILD YOUR ONLINE BRAND ▪ WHY AREN'T YOU GETTING CALLS ▪ RESEARCH YOUR TARGET COMPANY
ONCE YOU'VE GOT THE JOB

GET THE JOB

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Get organized

If you're disorganized during a job hunt, it's likely that it won't result in your favor.

Because you may find yourself applying for multiple positions, it's likely your resume will be fine-tuned to meet the keywords and requirements of a hiring manager. Forgetting which copy you sent where can lead to embarrassing mistakes or worse, a dishonest and unprofessional impression.

Getting lost in the shuffle when discussing career opportunities can lead to missed interviews, blown deadlines and misplaced contact information.

Stay on top of the organization during your job hunt by following these helpful tips.

Use a Spreadsheet

To organize your job applications, using a spreadsheet can keep everything organized in a neat package.

When developing this data tracker, here are some

important things to include in your list:

- Company name and point of contact;
- Email addresses and phone numbers of company;
- Date applied and application summary;
- Interview dates, follow-up actions and post-interview status.

This will give you a clear perspective of which stage you are in for each position you have applied for and how you should move forward.

Reduce the Number of Applications

While a spreadsheet is effective to organize multiple job submissions, limiting the number of applications you send at once also is helpful.

When you only have a few to focus on, it's easier to follow up. For instance, it will be easier to manage sending thank-you emails to hiring managers following an interview.

If possible, apply for a few batches that meet your criteria at once, rather than sending applications to every company on a hiring website.

Nail the Interview

Once you get an interview, being organized gives you the opportunity to learn more about the company. By keeping track of the hiring manager's details, you can search online for their business persona to get an idea of their professional goals. Take advantage of interests you share in your own career path and call on that information in an interview.



Customize your resume

When applying for jobs, it's becoming increasingly important to stand out in a crowd. Many companies use software to find qualified candidates; it's likely your resume won't even be reviewed by an actual human.

And even if it does get a set of human eyes, a recent study by employment experts The Ladders shows hiring managers only spend about six seconds reviewing a resume before making a decision.

Customizing your application to the specifications of a hiring advertisement can give you an advantage. Your document must be neat, impressive and well organized to make an impression. Here are a few strategies to get a call back.

Understand the Job Description

Even a degree and work experience in a particular field may not be enough

to entice a hiring manager. It's crucial to analyze each job description you are applying for and fine-tune your resume to its specifications. Within a post, you should analyze the responsibilities and requirements of the job. Look for key words and phrases when considering how to highlight your employment achievements.

Finding the Right Keywords

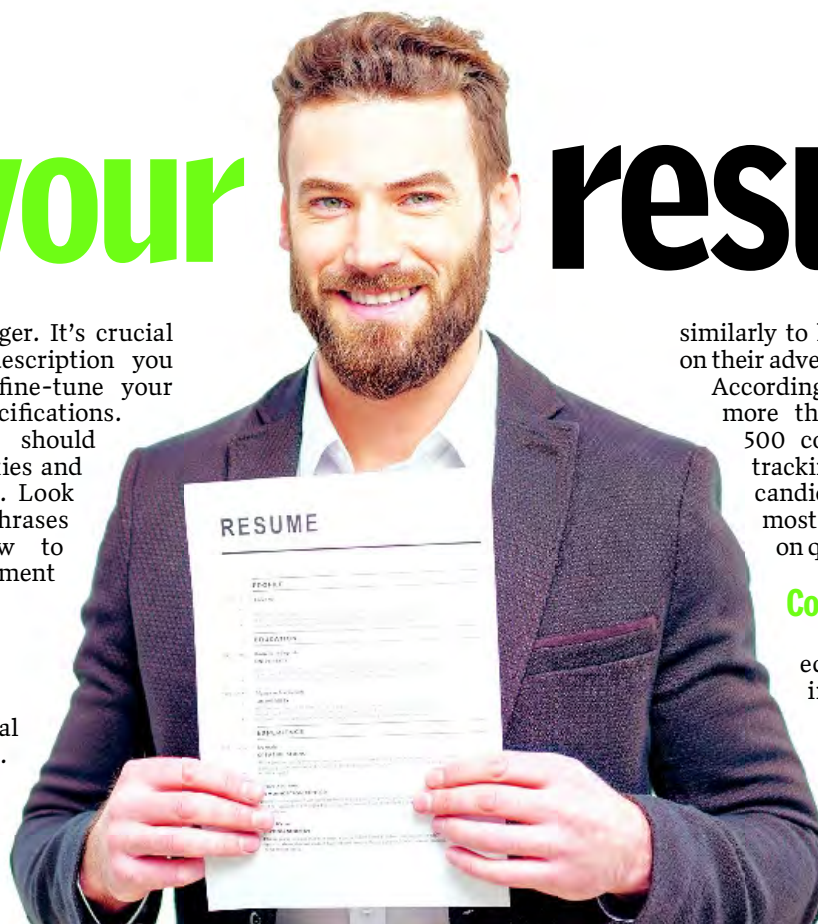
Print out physical copies of job postings. Highlight the key terms you see frequently. When creating your resume, it's important to phrase qualifications

similarly to how an employer lists them on their advertisement.

According to a study by Jobscan, more than 98 percent of Fortune 500 companies use an applicant tracking system to sort through candidates. This system picks the most qualified applications based on qualifications and keywords.

Consider Experiences

While work experience and education play a major role in meeting qualifications, don't forget the extracurricular activities. For instance, if it applies to the job, consider including any volunteer roles or charitable positions you have held.



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Do you need a cover letter?

Many job seekers place the majority of their focus on drafting the perfect resume. A common mistake is forgetting to dedicate the same passion to a cover letter.

When prepared accurately and professionally, this documentation duo can be the difference between landing the job and waiting for an interview.

Your resume is enhanced by a cover letter that provides another opportunity to brag about your skills and how they can benefit a company. Try not to duplicate the information; instead, explain to a hiring manager how you can have a direct impact on the challenges they are facing, based on the job description.

It's important to do your research on the company so you can specifically target their needs.

A Strong Opening

The Harvard Business Review states one of the most important things to include in your cover letter is an opening expressing why you're a good fit for the position. Start with an explanation that showcases how your previous experiences will meet the needs they describe in their job posting.

For instance, when applying for a leadership position, provide a brief explanation about the accomplishments you obtained with a previous team.

Make sure to include how many employees you oversaw and how you improved productivity. Your opening should also include any personal connections you have with someone who is already employed within the

company. You can also impress a hiring manager by addressing your cover letter directly.

With a little research on social media and company profiles, you should be able to find their name easily.

Show Personal Value

After a strong introduction, you can emphasize your value by displaying proactive problem-solving skills.

Again, research will be a beneficial strategy so you can discover issues your targeted company is facing.

Don't worry if you are unable to discover a specific problem, you can find common trends that impact most businesses within the industry.

Show your wisdom by discussing new laws or mandates that may affect a company and a plan to adjust a strategy to accommodate them. Here, you can share a professional experience which explains how you solved a problem previously.







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USE YOUR NETWORK

If you have spent time in the professional world, it's likely you have built a network of peers and managers.

Did you know that up to 80 percent of jobs are not published? According to experts at Career Horizons, most of these spots are filled by recommendations from others in the field to place the perfect candidates.

When finding it difficult to gain traction after applying to online listings or in person, it may be time to take a new approach. Make a list of your previous work relationships and reach out to contacts to discover potential job leads.

If you plan to enter a new field, there also are great situations to take advantage of when building a new networking web.

Meeting New Peers

Building a network isn't difficult but requires plenty of work on your end to execute efficiently.

Take advantage of professional social media outlets such as LinkedIn to display your career goals and accomplishments while connecting with like-minded peers.

You also should be aware of conventions or job fairs in your area. Consider different ways to market your brand and explain your openness to new opportunities during conversations. A good way to make a lasting impression is by creating a memorable business card.

Facts on the Hidden Job Market

To understand the importance of networking, check out these statistics from the Association for Talent Developers regarding the hidden job market.

- 51 percent of top organization leaders find new hires from current employee referrals;

- The expected period for job retention of networkers is eight years — only four for job searchers; and
- The average annual income is 6 percent higher for those who are referred to a position.

Reconnecting with Former Peers

It may feel awkward to reach out to a peer you have lost contact with to ask for a referral or recommendation letter. To lessen the stress of this situation for both parties, don't begin the conversation with an agenda to land a job.

Instead, send a short email or request to connect on social media outlets to catch up. Once you feel comfortable with bringing up your agenda, do it in a way that benefits each of you. For example, ask what you can do for them — not what they can do for you.



Use the STAR format

During an interview, you will likely be asked questions that catch you off guard. Instead of answering with short answers, prepare to discuss portions of your job history with stories.

It's a quality skill to master and can make the interview process more comfortable.

While it may feel awkward to brag about your career accomplishments during an interview, it's what a hiring manager wants to hear. However, how you do it can make or break how they feel about you as a candidate. If you're unfamiliar with the STAR — or situation, task, action, result — format, you should become accustomed to how it works and its impact during your job hunt.

What is the STAR format?

To stand out during a meeting with a hiring manager, how you answer behavioral interview questions can make a difference. A STAR response should contain a desirable trait or skill when describing a professional experience.

According to experts at Balance Career, here are a few things an interviewer will be listening for in your answers.

- Problem-solving skills and analytical ability;
- Creativity and perseverance through failure; and
- Teamwork orientation and quantitative skills.

Here is how you should use the STAR format when answering behavioral questions.

Situation

Explain in detail a challenge you faced at work. This could be a time you spent working in a group or were involved in conflict between coworkers.

Task

Describe the role you played during the situation. Were you in charge of meeting deadlines during the group project or responsible for diffusing a conflict?

Action

Now you should explain the steps you took to resolve

the challenges you faced.

Make sure to discuss your role rather than an outside influence like another peer or manager.

The action step should showcase your skills to manage trying situations.

Result

Now, include how the final results generated through your situation, task and action demonstration. This should highlight a positive outcome by showcasing what you accomplished.

Utilize during interview

It's impossible to know which behavioral question an interviewer will ask, so practice the STAR method beforehand. Make a list of your qualifications, skills or experiences as they relate to a job posting. Practice incorporating a STAR explanation into common interview questions that are likely to come up during the interview.



Employment after military service

While a career in the military can prove to be a lifelong venture, many men and women choose to return to civilian life once their enlistment is complete. Serving provides you with an incredible skill set and experiences to help find your dream job. Do you know how to use them to market yourself to hiring managers?

Most companies use software like applicant-tracking systems to filter through job seekers before a resume is presented to an actual human. Make sure your application is fine-tuned to the job requirements and responsibilities.

Even an impressive military career can be overlooked if it doesn't appease the software's expectations.

A resource you should consider is a professional resume writer or career counselor. They can efficiently draft a portfolio to explain your career goals and attract attention from hiring managers. Here are some other beneficial ways to get started in your civilian job hunt.

The COOL Program

Credentialing Opportunities On-Line Program is in place to help those who have served, with assistance in translating the skills honed in the military to civilian credentials. Each branch offers their own unique service, which are easily accessible with a proficient search engine. Here are a few areas where they can help, according to the United States Department of Defense's Military OneSource Network.

Gain information on credentials relating to your service specialty.

Identify gaps in training and credential requirements.

Provide resources to close the gap between credentials and training.

Government Assistance

The Department of Labor reports that the unemployment rate for veterans was 2.7% in May, that's down from 3.4% from 2018. Assistance from agencies like the Department of Veteran Affairs offer advantages for servicemen and women to showcase their talents and connect with like-minded employers. It's easy to register with the VA and ensure your contact information and resume is available to hiring managers in search of your skill set.

Finding Jobs

Having military experience is a requirement for numerous high-paying jobs. You can find them by reaching out to local recruiters, networking on professional social media outlets and even the classifieds section of your morning newspaper. Best of luck on your job search for your post-military career and thank you for your service.



Build your online brand

Social media can be a job hunter's best friend or worst enemy. A report from Career Builders shows about 70 percent of employers screen a potential candidate's online personas. Make technology work for you by replacing embarrassing posts and photos with a clear picture of your professional goals.

When you are seeking a new job, building your brand online gives you an opportunity to showcase more of your skills and passions that don't fit on a

traditional resume.

Here are some helpful ways to move in the right direction with your online presence.

LinkedIn

This career-oriented site gives job seekers access to industry leaders while promoting their own professional visions. It's also easy to reach out to like-minded peers or industry leaders. Don't be afraid to

ask for advice through the messaging app; you never know what opportunity lies with the right connection.

Write a blog

This tactic may take a bit longer to pay off because finding an audience can be difficult. Focus on your industry, but you also can include content about navigating the job market. Not only can you paint a clear image of your professional goals, but

reporting on useful information will show your knowledge to others on the same career path.

Sharing is caring

Share educational and statistical articles about the industry you hope to break into. With the right luck and skill, your post can go viral, giving you mass exposure. This can lead to huge opportunities both financially and professionally.

Why you aren't getting calls

If you find yourself being proactive in your job search but failing to receive interview invitations, you should review your strategy.

A common reason people don't hear back from an employer is by applying to positions outside of their qualifications. Make sure to thoroughly read the job description to discover what employers are seeking.

Another factor that may dismiss your chances of employment can be found in your online persona. Review your active social media accounts for content that may appear unprofessional or represent you in an unreliable fashion. According to a report from the Society for Human Resource Management, 77% of their surveyed companies use social networking sites to recruit candidates.

Here are some other reasons you may not get the desired responses during a job hunt.

Ignoring directions

Depending on the type of job you're seeking, the application process can vary.

Oftentimes, submitting a resume and cover letter or application are only the first step. Some hiring managers will ask to see previous examples of your work through a portfolio or website and may require you to follow special instructions when applying for the position.

Their extra steps throughout this stage are created for a couple of different reasons. First, having a direct link to related work experience gives them quick access to a list of applicants, rather than researching each candidate individually.

It also provides a hiring manager with a perspective of how detail oriented potential employees are. Showing you can follow their simple instructions promotes your accountability and attention to detail.

Resume issues

With all the factors you consider when presenting an exquisite resume, one thing you may forget to address is ensuring a digital copy will be visible once it's received by a hiring manager. Since many



resumes are submitted electronically, there's a chance that your file may experience issues when opened. For peace of mind, attempt to email a copy to a few different friends to make sure it can be accessed without error.

Your resume should also be tailored to specific listings. You can work with an expert to customize a document

that includes the right keywords and highlights your work experience that meets a job description's requirements.

Common mistakes like grammatical or spelling errors can also be a reason your application was dismissed. You can avoid this issue by using grammar-checking software or hiring an expert to analyze your document.

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Research your target company

Just like a hiring manager will use the Internet to discover more about you, a job seeker should do his own research. Researching professional profiles is a great way to understand your interviewer and find potential topics to discuss during an interview.

Study the Leadership Team

Imagine walking into an interview knowing the names and faces of your potential new peers and bosses. How much more comfortable would the process be?

Unfortunately, not every company makes it easy to discover employees and their roles within. When you're unsure who the interviewer is, here are some strategies to employ.

First, look through the company's website to find their directory, then links to employee bios.

If a leadership team isn't so easily found, network until you make connections within the company that can help get your name to the top of the applicant list.

Incorporating Goals

It's likely that a company's website or social media account will feature their future goals and accomplishments.

Pay attention to any similarities you have and use them to your advantage during an interview.

A great tactic to use before sitting down with a hiring manager is to analyze their vision and consider how it matches your own. During the interview, you will likely be asked to express your desires for the future. Similar goals can help you stand out from the crowd during the interview process.

Research Others in the Industry

Don't limit your research to the company or leadership team at businesses to which you are applying. Seek speeches or articles from other leaders within the industry.

Once you land an interview, the knowledge and perspective you gain can give you an edge over other applicants.

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Once you've got the job

You've finally landed your dream job after sending numerous applications, impressing during interviews and waiting to receive confirmation. So, what's next?

The anxiety regarding the uncertainty of your new job can be dismal. Relax and prepare for the upcoming journey.

If you're unsure how to act as you begin your new occupation, check out these tips from the career experts at Indeed.

The First Week

It doesn't matter how qualified or educated you are for your new position; you're not expected to know everything about the operation during your first week. Take this time to familiarize yourself with your surroundings, policies and peers.

To alleviate anxiousness, try to introduce yourself to as many people as you can. It shows that you're eager about the opportunity and interested to share your enthusiasm. This could lead to a chance



to grab lunch or coffee after befriending a coworker. Their knowledge of the environment will be an advantage.

The First Month

At this point, you should be settling into your new role. Now is a good time to begin

organizing tasks and determining how to perform them efficiently.

After the first month, your coworkers and managers are likely becoming more comfortable with you also and may offer more constructive criticism than before. It's important to use this as a chance to grow rather than get offended. Being humble and

open-minded can help you transition into the new setting faster.

The First 90 Days

After the first few months, you should have a good grasp on the responsibilities surrounding your new role. Be proactive in setting ambitious goals and create a strategy for reaching them.

Once these obligations become comfortable, step up the level of difficulty to challenge yourself.

This is also a good time to establish boundaries. In your first few months, you may feel obligated to take on more work, but after learning what you can handle, it's OK to say no if it will impact your performance negatively.

Try to touch base with previous coworkers once you settle in to the new position. Keeping your professional network intact is an important part of any career.



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