

Tips for a Successful

Job Search

Looking for a job can be a challenging experience. It helps to have a positive attitude and to be well prepared for every aspect of the job search. This tipsheet uses information from the NTID Center on Employment (NCE) at Rochester Institute of Technology/National Technical Institute for the Deaf and describes how to prepare for, interview, negotiate, and accept a job. It contains frequent links to NCE's website for more explanation of topics and examples of strategies.

PREPARATION

Most job searches begin with writing a **resume**, which is a brief description of your education, job skills, and work experience. A well-organized resume with no spelling or grammar mistakes is a must and will help you get an interview for a job. Often during interviews, you will be asked for a list of **references**. References are people who know you and will say positive things about your work and personal qualities.

Depending on what type of job you are seeking, you also may need to put together a portfolio to show during your interview. A portfolio usually contains your resume, reference list, and 5-8 samples of work showing your job skills. Be sure to have both an electronic and print version of your **portfolio** with you during an interview.

You will need to write several different kinds of letters during your job search. You may send your resume and list of references to potential employers through regular postal mail and through email. All methods of **correspondence** must be professional in appearance and language.

It is important to **dress professionally** when going to an interview. An employer usually forms a first impression during the first 30 seconds of an interview! Do not dress casually.

Tips on all of the above topics can be found at this

NCE link:

http://www.ntid.rit.edu/nce/job_process.php

STRATEGIES

Take time to research a company to learn more about an employer you are interested in working for. The more you know about a company, the better prepared you will be when you ask about opportunities. One good way to learn is to **research a company or job** online by looking at a company's website, annual reports, brochures, and through Internet search engines.

If you find a company that looks interesting and you decide to **contact an employer directly**, you must be organized when you make that first call. If you are using a relay service with an operator, make sure you have all necessary information ready before you make the call.

One of the best ways to find employment opportunities is through **networking**, which means asking people you know to help you with your job search. Your network can help you find job openings and make contact with employers. Many jobs are not advertised to the general public and may only be known by the people working at the company. These jobs, called the hidden job market, are often found through networking.

If you decide to attend a **job fair**, do your homework first! Research the employers attending the fair and make a list of those you'd like to meet. Dress professionally and bring copies of your resume. Remember basic rules of etiquette--make eye contact, greet the recruiter politely, always ask for a business card, and thank the person for his/her time. Send a follow up letter or call the recruiter on the telephone within a week of the fair.

For more information on these topics, go to:
http://www.ntid.rit.edu/nce/job_process.php

THE INTERVIEW

Remember that the purpose of a job interview is to sell yourself by presenting your skills and experience. Once you have scheduled an interview for a job, you need to practice/rehearse how to act professionally during the interview. You also will need to decide if you want to have an interpreter present during the interview.

For tips on interview etiquette, how to do an interview with/without an interpreter, and how to describe your skills effectively during an interview, visit:

http://www.ntid.rit.edu/nce/job_process_interview.php

This link contains video clips of sample interviews. Note: You will need to have QuickTime installed on your computer to view the videos.

EXPLAINING ACCOMMODATIONS TO EMPLOYERS

Employers will want to know how to communicate with a deaf or hard-of-hearing employee. Be ready to offer some suggestions and explain strategies, services, and equipment that are effective in the workplace. Depending on your needs, provide information about how to obtain such services. Offer to teach some basic signs if you use sign language and be willing to explain Deaf culture to those you meet.

For more information about how to explain accommodations during an interview, go to:
http://www.ntid.rit.edu/nce/job_process_explaining.php

JOB NEGOTIATION

After you have been offered a job, you must **evaluate the offer** to make sure it is the right job for you. Besides the salary, you need to think about career growth, networking, and gaining

experience. Remember that one job can lead to another opportunity in the future. Consider if the job content is something you want to do, if the environment and location are right, whether it has good salary and benefits, opportunities to advance, and other factors. All of these things can help you decide whether to accept or decline the offer.

If you think you might receive another offer, contact the other employer first before you make a decision. See *Ethics of Accepting/Rejecting an Offer*. Once you decide, there are some procedures to follow.

If you want to **accept the job**, thank the employer for their offer and ask him/her to give you the details of the offer in writing. Then write a letter accepting the offer, thanking the employer, and summarizing the details. Remember this is a commitment and you can't change your mind. If you decide to **decline the job** offer, be professional in turning it down. You may meet the people involved later in your career, or decide to apply there again in the future. Write a letter declining the offer, thanking them for their interest in you, and end the letter in a positive way.

STARTING A NEW JOB

Congratulations! You have a new job. Here are some things you can do to be successful in the job. Before you start, get a job description, organizational chart, handbooks, newsletters, and anything else that will help you become familiar with how the company is organized. When you start the job, make sure to dress professionally, explain to people the best way to communicate with you, and be enthusiastic and respectful of the company's way of doing things. Arrive on time, or even a little early, to the workplace and meetings, be friendly and positive, follow rules, and complete your assignments on time. For a list of helpful suggestions on how to fit in and be successful at your job, visit:

http://www.ntid.rit.edu/nce/job_process_newjob.php

For more information, contact:

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