

JOB SEEKER TIP SHEETS

Tip sheet 1: Accessing the hidden job market

Did you know that 80% of job vacancies are never advertised? These jobs are filled by word of mouth, or by resumes on file from people who have contacted companies looking for work. So how can you access these “hidden jobs”?

Cold calling

- Make a list of employers to contact - use the Yellow Pages, the Internet, and look for employers in your local area.
- Have copies of your resume with you to leave with the employer.
- Dress as if you were going for an interview.
- Make sure you see the person who actually does the hiring, or at least find out their name.
- Follow up your visit with a phone call a few days later.
- Remember, cold calling is a numbers game – the more contacts you make, the better your chances of success.

Using your networks

- Talk to people you know to gain information and to develop contacts that can be useful in finding work.
- Talk to as many people as you can – relatives, friends, and friends of friends, neighbours, former workmates, and local professionals.
- Remember, the more people who know you are looking for a job, the more people you have helping you in your job search

Tip sheet 2: Top job websites

There are a lot of interesting websites to help you find a job. Here are some of the best:

- www.jobsearch.gov.au
Australian Job Search database.
Your personal page, job searches, resume builder, information on Job Network services, training opportunities, job outlook and many related links. Information on goal setting and career planning
- <http://mycareer.com.au>
The Age newspaper vacancies.
Job searches, resume manager, employment news, training and skills, tips, articles on finding work.
- www.careerone.com.au
Job searches, newspaper jobs, job profiles, jobs emailed daily, career resources and top stories on careers.
- www.employment.byron.com.au
A huge selection of jobs from agencies around Australia.
- www.myfuture.edu.au
Information on career development, education and training providers, courses & programs, qualifications, work and employment, labour market information, industries & occupations, patterns & trends in work.
- www.seek.com.au
Job searches, career resources such as job search strategies, choosing or changing careers, company profiles, links to volunteer websites.
- <http://www.jobs.vic.gov.au>

Tip sheet 3: Writing your resume

*A resume is a summary of your personal details, skills and qualifications.
Your resume is your main marketing document, and its purpose is to get you an interview.*

Preparing your resume

- There are different ways of organising information in a resume. Talk to your employment consultant about the best type of resume for you, and ask her to show you some different examples.
- There is no such thing as a standard resume. Your resume may need to be changed to suit particular jobs.
- Put the most important information on the front page so that it is easy for the employer to see what you have to offer.
- Keep it short. Your resume is to highlight skills and summarise your experience. You can explain particular points in more detail at the interview.
- If you have had a large number of casual jobs, include just those that are relevant to the position you are applying for.

Resume layout and presentation

- A resume should be typed on A4 paper. If you can't do this, ask someone to do it for you.
- Most resumes should be no longer than two pages.
- Never send your resume without a covering letter or fax. This letter should also be tailored to the job you are applying for.
- Keep your resume up-to-date.

Tip sheet 4: Choosing and briefing referees

After an interview, when an employer is trying to decide whether to employ you, they often talk to your referees - people who know about your work.

Choosing referees

- Select your referees carefully; choosing people who know your skills and can give specific examples of your achievements.
- Include the names of referees with your resume.
- Make sure you read the job ad. If it asks for two referees, give two, not one or three. If it asks for written references, include copies of these with your application letter and resume.
- Make sure the referee is someone who will make positive comments about you and your work
- Check that the referees' contact details are up to date.
- If you don't have a work referee, use a leader in your community – a religious leader, a teacher, or your employment consultant.

Briefing referees

- Always ask a referee's permission before you include them in your resume.
- Give your referees some background information about the type of job you are applying for. Send a copy of your resume to the people who have agreed to be your referees, and let them know when you are having the interview.
- Let them know how you went with your job application and thank them for their efforts.

Tip sheet 5: Sending off your application

*Each resume you send should be accompanied by a covering letter, or fax cover sheet.
Your aim when writing this letter is to show how your skills and experience relate to the employer's needs, and why the company would benefit from employing you.*

Preparing your application

- Talk to your employment consultant about what to include in the letter, and ask to see some examples.
- Ring the employer to get more information about the position and the company. Ask for a job description and selection criteria to be sent to you if they are available.
- Highlight the skills and experience that is related to the particular job you are applying for. Don't make the mistake of sending the same letter for every job.
- Make sure all requirements listed in the job ad are covered.
- Make sure all information is relevant to this job. Don't just write about your last job.
- Mention important points from your resume that demonstrate your relevant skills.
- Check the closing date for the application. Give a good impression by getting your application in early.

Letter layout and presentation

- Talk to your employment consultant about how to lay out the letter, and ask to see some examples.
- Ask someone else to read your letter to check for spelling mistakes and grammatical errors.
- Keep sentences clear and reasonably short, and keep the letter to one page.
- Type your letter on good quality white A4 paper
- Use an A4 envelope so that your application arrives in good condition.

Tip sheet 6: Telephoning an employer

A telephone call is often the first step in applying for a job. Remember, the impression you make over the telephone can influence whether you get an interview, so preparation is important.

- Read the job advertisement carefully, noting what specific skills and experience the employer is looking for. Make a note of how your skills and experience meet the job requirements.
- If you are calling to ask about a possible job vacancy, make sure you know about the company's business, and how your skills can meet the company's needs.
- Offer to fax a copy of your resume and come in for an interview if required. Be flexible and ready to come in when it is most convenient to the employer.
- Practise what you are going to say. Be ready to answer questions about how your skills meet the employer's needs.
- Prepare some suitable questions to ask the employer. Have a pen and paper ready to write down important information.
- Start your call by introducing yourself and giving the reason for your call.
- Ask for the name of the person you are speaking to, and write it down so you can ask for the same person if you need to ring again.
- Repeat all important information (eg. fax number, interview address and time), to confirm that you have written the correct details.
- Speak clearly and pleasantly. Be polite, making sure the employer knows that you are interested in the job. And remember – put a smile in your voice!
- Thank the employer for their time.

Tip sheet 7: Preparing for the interview

The secret of success at job interviews is following the three Ps: Preparation, Presentation and Practice.

Preparation

- Write down the time, date and place of the interview, and the name of the person you need to see.
- Make sure you have a thorough understanding of the job and what the employer is looking for. Read the advertisement, the job description and your application again before you go.
- Think about the questions you may be asked. Write them down and prepare answers.
- Be prepared to talk about your previous experience and how it relates to this job.
- Have photocopies of your resume and any relevant documents (copies of licences, qualifications etc) in a folder ready for the interview.

Presentation

- Dress neatly and conservatively - your clothes must be clean and ironed, shoes clean and polished.
- Hair should be clean and well groomed and fingernails clean and trimmed.
- Don't wear strong smelling perfume or aftershave. Do wear deodorant.
- No visible body piercing or excess jewellery.
- Try to avoid smoking before an interview. The smell may offend the interviewer.

Practice

- Ask a friend or family member to help you practise for the interview. Role-play the interview and ask for feedback on your answers to interview questions.
- Be aware of your body language and try to avoid nervous habits such as fidgeting, looking around the room, and sitting with your arms crossed or saying "um" and "yeah" too often.

Tip sheet 8: The interview

- Arrive 10 – 15 minutes before your interview time. If you can't get there or are going to be late, ring the employer.
- Arrive on your own. If you go with a friend or family member, ask them to wait outside for you.
- Greet the interviewer and offer a firm handshake.
- Send positive signals eg. smile, be friendly, maintain eye contact with the interviewer. Don't slump when sitting.
- Be positive. Look and sound both enthusiastic and interested.
- Listen carefully. If you don't understand a question, ask for clarification.
- Think through your answer before you reply.
- Give direct, honest answers in full sentences. Don't just reply "yes" or "no".
- Demonstrate that you are keen to work, flexible and willing to do training if required.
- Do not speak negatively about a previous employer or another company.
- Ask questions about the job.
- Ask about time lines eg. "When will a decision be made?" "When will I be required to start work?"
- Thank the interviewer for their time and re-affirm your interest in the job.

Tip sheet 9: After the interview

As soon as possible after the interview, take time to consider how it went and note things you could improve on. Things to consider include:

- Did I arrive in time for the interview?
- Was I able to show a good knowledge of the job and the company?
- Did I have answers for all of the questions I was asked?
- Did I give good examples of how my skills related to the job?
- Were there any questions that I could have answered better?
- Were there times when the interviewer looked unimpressed or confused by what I said?
- Was I dressed appropriately, and similarly to people working at the company?
- Did I make eye contact with the interviewer?
- If you haven't heard from the employer by the time they said a decision would be made, you should phone to ask about any progress. This is an opportunity to let them know that you are still interested.
- If you are unsuccessful, ask the employer for feedback that may be helpful in the future.
- Don't argue about anything you are told. Be polite and positive, as you may want to apply for another job with the same employer.

Tip sheet 10: Once you've got the job

Many jobs have a probationary period - usually 3 months. This means that your position will be made ongoing if your performance is satisfactory during that time. You should ask for feedback from your supervisor so that any problems can be sorted out before your probationary period ends.

Prepare for working again

- Make sure you know how much travel time to allow getting to work on time during peak hour. Check train and bus schedules or availability of parking.
- Practise how long it will take to get ready in the morning. Allow extra time for delays, such as getting children ready for school.
- Sort out childcare arrangements.
- Work out what you will wear for the first week of work.
- Take care of errands before starting your new job. Rearrange appointments for outside of work hours.

Employer expectations

- Punctuality (arriving on time and returning from breaks on time)
- Good attendance (try to keep sick days to a minimum, especially during the probation period)
- Being willing to learn and accept constructive criticism
- Being friendly and pleasant to other workers
- Working in a safe manner
- Maintaining confidentiality
- Using your initiative
- Being flexible with changing duties if required