

GET THE DAMN JOB!

By

ANONYMOUS

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If such a level of assistance is required, the services of a competent professional should be sought.

INTRODUCTION

I've had many jobs in my life, ranging from fast food to retail to Fortune 500 companies, startups and even government positions requiring security clearance.

That means that I've had more interviews, background checks, offer negotiations and rejections than the average person.

I've also been on the other side of the table working in Human Resources departments where I hired for different roles.

Along the way, I've helped countless others draft better resumes and cover letters, winning them jobs as well.

Having seen the experience from both sides gave me the experience and perspective yet the biggest drawback still remained: why does job searching take so LONG?!

With technology advancing us forward it's now possible to set up a system that automates most of the process so you can do other more important things.

Whether this is your first job fresh out of college, or your next job as you change careers, using this system will help you get the most out of your efforts, avoid frustration, and stay organized.

Quick note: everything below is based on assuming you're using [Google Chrome](#) (or an offshoot like [Brave](#)) to view the internet.

If you're using something else, don't. It's just easier.

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I. GETTING SET UP

GOOGLE EMAIL

E-mails are the most critical part of your job search and you should be very particular about the prefix you use.

You can (and will) be judged by the email address you send resumes from.

Under no circumstances should you use an email address with nicknames (like hotboii32@yahoo.com or sexclauren0913@icloud.com) or anything that could be perceived as offensive.

Recruiters are looking for more reasons to cut you than hire you, remember that.

Create a brand new Gmail account that you only use for job searching.

A few good reasons why to use Gmail over anything else:

- Google is compatible with the majority of job-related websites and can save time by logging you into their respective systems instead of creating a new account at each one.
- You can also set up a Google Voice number attached to the account (which I'll talk about in the next section).

- You can install free plugins that extend the usefulness of Gmail.

How to create a Gmail account:

1. Go to mail.google.com.
2. Click 'create an account'.
3. Click 'for myself'.
4. Enter your first and last name.
5. Choose a username with your first and last initials, the word 'jobs', and a four digit number (e.g. 'xyzjobs2024@gmail.com'). If the one you choose is already in use, keep trying different year combinations until you find a free one.
6. Choose a password and enter it twice.
7. Click 'next'.

INBOX SETUP

By default, Gmail throws a bunch of things at you all at once. I get why they do it—they're trying to be helpful and give you as many different ways to use it as possible, but we need to streamline it some.

How to change your inbox type:

1. Get rid of the 'get started with Gmail' banner by pressing the 'x' mark in the middle right corner.
2. Click the gear and under 'inbox type' choose 'customize'.

3. A pop up will appear asking you to select the tabs to enable. Deselect 'social' and 'promotions'.
4. Click 'save'.

How to change undo send time limit:

1. Click the gear located on the top right, then 'settings'.
2. Click 'see all settings'.
3. Under the 'general' tab, scroll down to 'undo send' and via dropdown, change from 5 seconds to 30 seconds. If you send an email or a reply and forget something (like attaching your resume) you can undo the sending process, make your corrections and resend.
5. Scroll to the bottom and click 'save'.

Labels:

Labels are how you track the process of engaging with employers over time. Without them, it'd be easy to have a disjointed inbox filled to the brim with auto-replies, work-in-process conversations, and dead leads.

You will move all correspondence from one label to the next as events like first human contacts, phone screen requests, interview requests, etc. happen.

The interview process can be broken down into three stages: cold, warm, and hot.

Cold: Cold is the first stage and consists of you receiving an automated reply thanking you for applying, and stating someone will reach out to you if there's interest.

Move all of these emails to the cold label.

Warm: Warm is the second stage and happens when a human replies back, typically after looking over your resume, and either asking additional questions or making requests.

Move all of these emails to the warm label.

Hot: Hot is the last stage and happens when you are communicating with a human directly about advancing through the interview process. Here, you should be scheduling in-person or virtual face-to-face interviews.

Move all of these emails to the hot label.

How to manage labels:

1. Click the 'more' arrow on the left side of the screen underneath the 'compose' button and at the bottom of the newly exposed area you'll find two blue links called 'manage labels' and 'create new label'.
2. Click 'manage labels'
3. Deselect the following by clicking 'hide':
 - a. Starred

- b. Snoozed
- c. Chats
- d. Scheduled
- e. Drafts
- f. Social
- g. Updates
- h. Forums
- i. Promotions

How to create 'cold', 'warm' and 'hot' labels:

Click 'create new label'.

1. Click the 'more' arrow on the left side of the screen underneath the 'compose' button and at the bottom of the newly exposed area you'll find two blue links called 'manage labels' and 'create new label'.
2. Click 'manage labels'
3. Label it 'cold' and choose the color blue.
4. Repeat for 'warm' and 'hot', respectively, and choose the colors yellow and red, respectively.

MAIL TRACKING

There's one more thing to do in Gmail; just as important as it is to keep up on the incoming/outgoing emails is to know whether or not you're wasting your time with a prospective employer.

The best way I've found to do this is to install a free extension for Gmail called [Snov.io](https://www.snov.io) that tells you if and when your email has been opened and read. This keeps the HR personnel honest and prevents them from saying they never got your resume or reply.

Set up mail tracking:

1. Go to chrome.google.com/webstore/.
2. Search for 'Snovio'
3. Click the unlimited email tracking version.
4. Click the 'add to...' button.
5. Go to your Gmail inbox.
6. You'll see a popup asking if you want to activate Snovio for your inbox, click the 'activate' button.

GOOGLE VOICE

Google Voice is a free phone number that you can use as a message phone that will not only store voicemails but allow you to send and receive texts call out directly from your computer.

Your Gvoice account can have its own number that can ring to your mobile phone as well.

In most cases you can still use it even if the number you attached to it is no longer in service.

You're given the choice of whether you want to use a new number or your already existing mobile one; choose a new number.

This should be a work-only email and phone number to create a buffer to separate your professional life from your normal life and only use your Voice number to call back genuine messages.

Set up Google Voice:

1. Login to your Gmail account.
2. Go to voice.google.com.
3. Click 'for personal use'.
4. You'll see a welcome screen. Click 'continue'.
5. Next, you'll get a prompt asking you to set up your Gvoice number. Choose a number in your city or nearby suburb if possible. Click 'select' for your chosen number.

6. You'll see a screen stating the need for verification. Click 'verify'.
7. A pop up will ask for you to enter your cell number where your inbound calls will forward to. You can either verify with a 6-digit code or an automated phone call.

Once verified, you'll see the congratulations screen where you can click 'finish' to complete the process.

Vocemails will appear in your regular inbox like emails.

Update your resume with this number.

COVER LETTER

The purpose of including cover letters is to give the recruiter the opportunity to know you before—and sometimes instead of—reading your resume.

It should be at max 3 paragraphs and you should copy/paste it in the body of the email.

Walls of text rarely get looked at. Unless companies have a required length, short and sweet and very personal / honest is the way to go.

You want to address them to someone specifically if you can. In many cases you can go to LinkedIn and search “HR” + “company name” and find the people doing the hiring.

They tend to have titles like “talent acquisition” or “corporate recruiting” in their titles.

While there, take a few minutes to research the person you’re sending the cover letter to so that you can include a customized ‘first line’.

First lines are sales tricks used to cold email prospects.

The idea is that you show them you’ve taken the time to become familiar with them professionally, and connect with them through that.

Try to compliment something they've done, including awards won, public recognition or even posts they've written and shared.

I've even used podcast appearances to show them that I've taken a deeper interest in knowing them than the rest of the candidates.

You want to follow the first line with a clear reason why you're contacting them and the position you're applying for.

You want to state where you found out about the opening.

You want a hyper-specific action statement showing a positive result in a defined time window.

Lastly, wrap it up with an invitation to reach out.

Here's an example you can copy:

Good day Mr. NAME, I saw from your LinkedIn profile you attended the University of Miami. I graduated in the class of 2018. Go 'Canes!"

I'm contacting you today because I would like to apply for the Jr. Copywriter role listed on ABC Company's website.

I believe I'd make a great addition to the marketing team primarily because of my experience creating high-converting email campaigns.

A recent example of this success is a series that increased XYZ Company's quarterly sales by \$24,842 dollars over a 30-day period.

I would love to speak with you more about my qualifications more in-depth with you and the value I can add to ABC Company.

Feel free to reach me directly at (123) 456-7890 or at xyzjobs2024@gmail.com.

Thank you for your consideration,

- YOUR NAME

RESUME

Most resumes, especially in the beginning and end of hiring blitzes, are skimmed, not read.

That's why your resume, above everything else, should be simple to make and change, and even simpler to read and understand.

To do that, we're going to use the Serif template, available from [Google Docs](#).

It's free, small in size, editable directly in the browser, and organized in a way that makes it easy to scan by human eye and software.

You will need to modify it a bit though.

There are plenty of free templates with fancy fonts, graphics, and images—ditch them all.

You might think trying to get the recruiter's attention this way is good, but it can actually have a negative reaction.

The fancy resumes may not parse information correctly in the ATS (applicant tracking software).

Also, as a recruiter, when you've got to get through several hundred cover letters and resumes, anything that slows you down can cause irritation, and get your resume put in the trash.

What recruiters look for are keywords, applied experience and relevant education—and typically in that order.

Here's why: the majority of recruiters and HR personnel don't actually know anything about the job they're hiring for outside of what's listed in the job posting.

Do:

- Be consistent in how you format the resume
- “Show, don't tell” and demonstrate your experiences
- Use up to three entries with no more than 6 bullet points each
- Be specific in what you did and accomplished
- Speak in an active tense (here's a [list of action verbs](#) you can use)
- Use different verbs for bullet points (starting each one with 'created' looks cheesy)
- Name your resume "FirstName LastName Resume" and that's it. Never submit it with "(Project Management)" or "Final" or "2018" or literally anything else in the file name
- If emailing your resume, always submit it as a PDF, never as a Word doc. You never know how wonky a Word doc will look on someone else's machine. If uploading to an online application that uses resume parsing software,

you can upload the Word doc as well or if it's required to do so.

- Try to read it in 10 seconds or less and see what you take away from it. That's about the initial screen time before someone makes an initial up/down decision, so you'll want to examine it from that perspective.
- If you have to upload a resume to an application that uses resume parsing software, 100% make it Word. Sorry, this was for email applications. Let me edit. Thanks!

Don't:

- Use bold, italic or underlines
- Use flowery language and jargon
- Use personal pronouns like "I"
- Use slang
- Include age, gender or a picture of yourself
- Go over 1 page

How to tweak the Serif template:

Font – The default Serif template uses Merriweather and Open Sans, we're going to change everything to Arial.

Depending on the kind of computer used to view your resume, other fonts may not look right on all screens.

Arial is a default font every computer this side of 20 years old can easily read.

Hit Control+A to select everything in the template. Choose the 'font' menu item and change to Arial.

Name section (36 pt) – Try to keep this short if possible. There's nothing wrong with using initials for your first name if it's lengthy.

Remove the string of text underneath the name section.

Contact info (9 pt) – Found directly to the right of your name. Do include your email address. Don't include your physical address or phone number.

Experience (11 pt) – One of the three main places where both robot and human eyes go almost immediately; pay close attention here.

Education (9 pt) – Found on the right next to experience, directly underneath the contact information.

No need to get too wordy here; the name of your school, degree plan and start/end dates is sufficient.

It's easier than ever to get your school transcripts so if they're interested in finding out more about your college career, they'll ask the school directly.

Technology/Software (9 pt) – Add the software you've used in your jobs so far.

Visit [Payscale's US research tool](#) and [Indeed](#) and search for your position.

You're looking for names of skills and software you can add to this section.

If possible, try to align the technology and skills of your experience level with what you add to this list.

For example, when I type "junior copywriter" at Payscale, I see the following terms:

- marketing communications
- advertising
- editing
- social media marketing
- user experience design
- project management

When I type "junior copywriter" at Indeed, I see the following terms:

- online portfolio
- SEO strategies
- new product launches
- conversions
- digital writing

A good practice is to copy and paste the job descriptions for the position in a separate Google doc and highlight keywords and phrases that you don't currently have in your resume.

Insert those terms in the 'skills' and 'technology' sections as well as in the bullet points under 'experience'.

This ties everything together, and adds cohesion to the narrative of your professional life.

Interests (9 pt) – Interests are important because it gives the interviewer something to connect with you on, and it makes you more than just a faceless resume. If you put Seinfeld, I promise someone will ask you what your favorite episode of Seinfeld is (mine's the Soup Nazi).

II. THE JOB SEARCH

Now that you have the tools, it's time to go through the steps. Everything except finding your search radius should be done daily.

SEARCH RADIUS

Understanding the areas of your city you're willing to go to is important because knowing what's too far away will keep you from burning unnecessary gas.

There are two ways to identify and establish your search radius:

Google Maps

1. Pull up Google Maps and enter your street address. Zoom out a bit, and look at the cities all around you.
2. Click on those names and click the driving / public transportation option.
3. Take note of the names of the cities that immediately surround you.

These city names will pop up during your search and knowing what you're close to (and far from) will help you decide if that long trek really worth your time (especially if you're on public transportation).

For most major metropolitan areas 10 to 15 miles is as far as you really want to go. In more rural areas you may need to stretch that a bit.

Craigslist

1. In the search results page, under 'miles from location' on the righthand side, click 'use map...'
2. A pop up box with a map will appear. Enter your city name or zip code in the search box.
3. The map will zoom in to your location and show the names of nearby cities.

Craigslist doesn't show driving directions or distance, but it's a handy way of figuring out neighboring cities quickly, especially if you're new to the city.

JOB BOARDS

There are literally hundreds of websites that list jobs; I've scoured through a large number of them and what I've found is many either get the same work orders from recruiters and companies or they copy the job request from other websites.

When you boil it all down, there are only four main sources of job leads you need to be concerned with: classified, job boards, temporary agency listings and your state's employment portal (which differs state to state so I won't cover them here. Google

‘unemployment’ + ‘your city’ and you should be able to find the website.

I’m going to focus on the particular sites I’ve had success with.

Regardless of the site you use, the overarching theme still applies.

CRAIGSLIST

Craigslist is great because the layout is minimal and it’s straight to the point.

How I use it varies a little based on what job I’m looking for but let’s start with account setup.

Technically you don’t have to create an account, but doing so allows you to post resumes and receive search specific alerts.

1. Type ‘yourcity.craigslist.org’ and hit enter. This is the homepage.
2. It looks just about the same regardless of your location, the only big differences being the names of places listed on the right hand side under ‘nearby cl’ and the city name in the address bar.
3. From here, click ‘my account’. you’ll be creating a new account on the next page.
4. On this page you’ll see the options of either logging in or creating a new account.

5. Enter your email address under 'create an account' and hit the 'create account' button.
6. You'll then see a prompt thanking you for signing up and instructing you to activate your account by heading over to your inbox.
7. Fairly quickly, you should receive the email to your inbox from robot@craigslist.org with a link you'll use to log in to your new account.
8. Once you do, you'll be asked to create a password to secure the account.
9. You'll then see a confirmation screen with a reminder saying you need to log in with this password the next (and every time afterward) you log in.
10. The last screen before actually entering your account is Craigslist's terms of use.
11. Click 'I accept' at the bottom and you're into your account.

Most people who use Craigslist merely visit their chosen category, quickly look through listings, and leave without searching nearly as thoroughly as they should.

How jobs are worded plays a big part in their discoverability and in some cases you'll find

This opens up the opportunity for you to find and capitalize on possibly un-searched for and unseen opportunities.

Come up with a short list of alternate titles for what kind of job you're looking for.

How to find alternate job titles:

1. Visit Indeed.
2. Search for your chosen term.
3. Look for job listings with alternate names but similar in duties.
4. Compile those into a list.

For example, if you're looking for a data entry job you could also add terms like 'clerk', 'processor', 'operator', 'admin' and 'clerical'.

Inside the search results page, you'll see a group of checkboxes to the right used to further refine your search.

Use these settings to get the most out of your search.

'Search titles only' - Leave unchecked; Craigslist understands different keywords are used frequently to describe the same position and checking this would limit your return.

'Has image' - Leave unchecked; you don't have any need for a picture (a lot of times the images scammers use to get your information is pictures of cash or other images that don't directly relate to the job at hand).

'Posted today' - Leave unchecked unless you've combed through this section previously the day before.

'Bundle duplicates' - Check this one; companies tend to post multiple ads and you don't want to keep applying for the same job over and over again.

'Include nearby areas' - Leave unchecked; you're going to have listings from nearby areas included by default. I've found that having this checked brings positions with commutes longer than 10-15 miles.

'Miles from zip' - Usually, you can leave this blank but in situations where you need to be specific (like surrounding areas that don't have public transportation) plug in 10-15 miles.

'Internship', 'non-profit', 'telecommute' and 'employment type' - Leave unchecked; none of these are paid positions.

If you select anything from this sidebar, hit 'update' search and the modifiers will take effect.

INDEED

1. Insert your keyword and city in the search bar and click 'Find Jobs'.
2. On the left change the 'Sort by' filter to 'Date Posted'.

3. When you find a listing you're interested in, click the 'Apply Now' button to open the job to the right. Avoid those that don't say 'Easily Apply' as you'll have to go to the employer's website to complete the application process, which can be lengthy.
4. Enter your information, upload your resume and plug in your cover letter from before.

TEMPORARY AGENCIES

Temp jobs are the quickest way to get on a job most times and there's nothing to be ashamed of by going this route.

There are literally hundreds to choose from and major players like Kelly Services, Apple One and Randstad have a lock on most major cities so there's a good chance there's one by you.

Because there are so many, the best way to cover as much ground as possible is to compile a list of them.

To do this, type 'your city + temp agencies' and jot down all of the names you see.

Do the same with your phone book (if you have one). If you don't, you can visit [Yellow Pages online](#) and drop the keyword and city/state.

When the list is complete, visit each agency's website.

You're checking for two things: that they do indeed operate in your area and that they have current job postings. If the agency's website looks outdated, that's a good sign they aren't making any money.

Sometimes you'll come across one that's been out of business for quite some time and when you actually call the number you get the disconnected dial tone.

Search these like you would CareerBuilder or Indeed.

Typically, these agencies will post to job search engines but are seemingly more likely to respond to you if you use their system.

The agency recruiters will either shoot you an email or call for a quick phone screen.

Afterward, they may need you to come into the office for an in-person interview.

Always ask what position they had in mind for you and if they reply either they don't have anything right now or there are 'multiple opportunities' but won't go into detail about any one, politely tell them you'd be happy to either Skype or come in when there's a job matching your skill set.

Unless the call was about a specific position, you could end up heading to their office, completing paperwork, doing whatever tests they ask and leaving no closer to a job than you were before.

III. THE INTERVIEW

PHONE SCREENS & VIDEO CONFERENCES

Because there are so many people out of work and applying for jobs now, many places are opting for phone or Zoom interviews first before bringing you in.

While it is an extra step between you getting hired, it can work in your favor if you do it right.

That means speaking clearly with an upbeat manner and enunciating your words.

Most of the time they will ask you about your previous duties; just reiterate what's on your resume.

Then they will come at you with open-ended situational questions like 'what did you do when faced with a particularly difficult customer' or 'what's your definition of customer service'.

Their aim is to gauge how well you can articulate yourself; in other words this is when they will make their decision on whether to bring you in for a real interview or not so **SELL YOURSELF**.

Here are some good phrases to throw into the mix (I damn near ran this down like a hook pass play each time) the caps signal emphasis:

"I build **RAPPORT** quickly..."

"I UNDERSTAND how people relate to one another..."

"I'm RESULTS oriented..."

"I'm a ROLE PLAYER that understands a POSITIVE TEAM ATMOSPHERE..."

Basically these terms all amount to the answer to the question they didn't ask but really only want to know the answer to: can you come in, learn the job and leave without killing anyone if we decide to fire you.

Should you do well, you'll make it to the next and last step: the in-person interview.

IN-PERSON INTERVIEWS

Arrive there 15-30 minutes early in case they have you fill out an application and do prerequisite testing.

If you see a receptionist there, introduce yourself to them specifically and ask his/her name. NEVER bring a paper resume with you because the majority of the people coming in for the position will.

Just reply that you didn't have access to a printer and when the logic hits them, slide in there a 'Besides, I'm a much better read than my resume' quip. Chances are they'll laugh at your cheekiness and you'll further implant yourself into their memory.

Remember that saying 'dress for the job you want; not the job you have'? Yeah, I found it crap too.

Here's how you should really dress. Business casual in every interview.

I had a navy button down shirt with a black tie, black slacks and shoes that I wore every first interview and then a dark grey shirt I swapped out for second interview if need be.

I did this purposely because in either shirt/tie combination I got positive feedback from interviewers with helped in building the 'buddy buddy' dynamic that pushed me in front of legitimately qualified people.

This also created a 'middle-management' aura employers like.

Dress in high fashion suits and they'll think they can't afford you and you'll eventually quit to start your own business or take a higher paying corporate gig--a naked tie/shirt combination says that your entrepreneurial spirit is broken and you will gladly wear their yoke until you croak.

The question of 'where do you see yourself in 5 years' tends to come up and like the other open-ended questions they want to gauge your intelligence.

Realistically no one knows what they'll be doing in 5 years. Look them straight in the eye and say 'I'd like to explore the possibilities here'; that question is their

job before the knockout punch of offering you well below what you should be making for the job and asking if that's alright.

They want to see if that glint of rebellion flares up from recognizing being played.

Assure them that's fine and they'll believe you to be so thirsty for a job that they can keep you at this range for many years to come.

When they ask if you have any questions, say this:

"I only have one. In your opinion, what is the skill set necessary to become the best employee possible?"

By indicating that you only have one question you are framing this one question to be important to you and the normal response is "that's a great question!"

Because you came back at them with an open-ended question that isn't easy to explain they will consider you intelligent enough to perform the duties well (aka they're getting more for their money out of this mule).

On the way out, be personable, laugh and joke with the interviewer as you head back towards the front, especially if there are others there waiting to interview; this may help make them more flustered when going in and less memorable when compared to you.

Also, if you can, ensure that the interviewer sees you say goodbye to the receptionist (and even go shake his/her hand if possible) as the HR manager and receptionist often compare notes afterwards.

Being a good mention from the receptionist can't hurt.

If the interview went great you should hear back before the end of the day.

If not wait until the day after the following day to follow up (although if they haven't called you yet chances are you didn't get it or something delayed the process).

REFERENCE CHECKS

References are supposed to ensure that your story checks out with former colleagues, supervisors and employers.

In most cases, reference checks are little more than a formality because the person performing them can't get too in detail without risking privacy issues.

This means some very surface level questions that are aimed more at your character and work habits than anything else.

If you have peers from previous jobs who can vouch for you, definitely tap them.

If not, use well spoken family members, friends or check out the Subreddit [/bemyreference](https://www.reddit.com/r/bemyreference).

Be sure to send them a quick email detailing what you want them to say and a reminder of when the time most the reference checker will call.

Some companies will ask for references early in the application process: there's no reason they should have them so don't give it to them yet.

Politely explain that due to the sheer number of responses you've received you can only provide reference information upon receipt of a job offer.

Most will understand this and let you live.

DRUG TESTS

Depending on the company doing the hiring, you may be required to take a pre-employment drug test.

Some may pay for it while others will try to take the cost out of your check.

The ones that do that are shady and you don't want to work for them because they'll try to nickel and dime you at every turn (not to mention try to gouge you with their terrible health plan policies).

They will let you know that one is coming up and if you're asked to take one, it's a positive sign because they aren't going to spend money on someone they won't hire.

Also, if you're job searching, stay off the drugs. It's a (sometimes costly) pain that is becoming harder and harder

to get around.

IV. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

What follows are the most often asked questions I get and I thought I'd share in case any of them you had.

Q: Should you bring multiple copies of your resume to the in-person interview?

A: No. Just two at max.

Q: Why do you only ask one question of the interviewer?

A: You can definitely ask more questions if you want to; that's just the baseline question I've always used for the reasons listed above.

If you want to draw them in further, research the company a bit and sprinkle in the knowledge.

People in hiring positions tend to be narcissistic so stroking their ego through acknowledgment of their master will ingratiate yourself in there further.

Q: What do I say if asked if I'm interviewing anywhere else?

A: ALWAYS SAY YES, even if you aren't.

No one wants a dead fish and by saying that another company is interested in your talents you have effectively put the fire under their butts to make a decision on you, especially if they're under pressure to fill that role.

If they ask how far along are you any information about who they are, reply 'I don't feel comfortable touching on other opportunities, however, I am looking for the best fit that will be mutually beneficial.'

Most will drop it there but if they really want to probe, no reason not to reel them in.

You could also say that you have interviewed elsewhere and while they were a solid company, the only thing they presented better than you was starting salary.

This will spark their interest because companies always want to play into corporate espionage and find out information on rivals they may not have known before. They will more than likely follow up with 'how much are they offering you?'

Once they do this, the cards are face up on the table.

A company that properly bases compensation on the metrics of the individual role won't even allow their HR managers the wiggle room to offer more and as such, they won't be 'professionally curious'.

When they ask 'how much' come back with 'a little more; I'm not hung up on the money but it does make a difference'.

Don't give specifics because that can force a knee-jerk reaction.

You want to give them the idea that they're scooping you from under the thumb of their competitor.

One of three things will happen next: they'll offer you more on the spot (which you should accept), wish you well in your endeavors (which means you probably didn't have the position anyway but finding out what the competition pays will get them a doggie treat) or say something like 'let me see what I can do/see if I can fight for more money for you/etc. and call you back' (which means they're trying to start up a waiting game on you and then return with an offer that's still a fraction of what they really could offer; if you need the dough and the new offer sounds right, no harm in taking it).

Bottom line is if they're talking money, you're almost in there.

Q: How would someone market themselves for a job they're qualified or over-qualified for without appearing desperate, broken or downtrodden?

A: You might be missing the point of this guide.

This isn't for a 'career'-esque job; this is for the jobs that will keep a roof over your head and food on your table only.

If you're looking for a position to fulfill that life-long ambition, you're better off learning a trade, getting an entry level internship or position so you can be mentored into the role, 'nepotised' in through college fraternal connections or grandfathered in through real familial means.

Q: How did you manage jobs over \$50K/year? Is it about experience, GPA or the college you went to?

A: I never went to college and early on I had ZERO experience in the fields I got into.

Realistically, for positions outside entry level you're looking at a couple different ways in:

Private recruiter – I'd posted my resume on Monster and a recruiter came to me with the opportunity.

Once he'd emailed me about the position, I Googled competitive companies and cross-referenced what the basics of the job was and what it paid.

Once I knew more about the jargon and duties, I called the recruiter directly and glossed over my resume with him while building rapport with him.

When it came to money, I used my knowledge to give him a realistic basis for cranking the wages up and peak his client's interest.

Because I acted bold and like I belonged there during the entire process, I was rewarded.

Inside reference – For the govt. job I knew someone who was already in and had them present me for a branch in another state (I was planning to move anyway and this would help get me established there more quickly).

I wowed the HR generalist via phone, came down and interviewed in person. Pretty simple.

Q: With so many new options available, why is Craigslist still your favorite?

A: Craigslist is the go-to because you're dealing directly with companies looking to hire.

Not to say there weren't ghost jobs on there but with access to a direct email address (like susang@abccompany.com) you have a place to start the follow up process.

I would send the resume first, hit the website for the company to check where it's located, call them and ask for the HR department (and specific names if I had them).

From there I could go with a 'Hi Susan, I wanted to follow up on the resume I sent over...'

Q: How important is being liked by the interviewers?

A: Interviews are little more than popularity contests.

If you know someone who can tip the scale for you at a company, by all means tell them to do it.

In the interview, take accounting of what type of person the interviewer is (do they have crayon pictures from their kids up, Star Wars figurines, etc.) and use that to your advantage.

Slide in a joke if it feels tense and go with the flow.

Q: Is it a good idea to carry business cards?

A: I don't see the point of business cards unless you own a business.

Q: Say you learned skills on your own like learning programming languages, would it be relevant to bring it up in an interview?

A: Sure, if there's a direct correlation between that skill and the job.

Q: Should I spend a lot of time on writing a great Objective statement?

A: No. The reason being it gets skipped when skimmed and takes up room that could either be

better used for experience/skills or keeping the resume 1 page max in length.

Q: Should I create a LinkedIn profile?

A: Never saw the use. Don't confuse your mission: finding a job, not 'networking'.

To me, LinkedIn is nothing more than an online version of one of those bum networking conventions: a million worker bees trading war stories with no real means of advance.

If you do create a profile, use it to search jobs and contact HR personnel outside of the platform.

Q: How should I address the fact that I haven't had any experience in the last five years due to being locked up?

A: There are two things here:

1. if they run a criminal background check they'll pick it up, maybe not the amount of time but on just about every application there's a space to fill that in.

Don't try to hide that fact because doing so tends to be an automatic disqualification.

2. Building solid rapport with the interviewer and company is far more important than what your resume says so if you come across as someone who can be trusted you should be fine.

I would actually suggest getting as menial a job as possible that will still pay bills and look to starting your own business; having a record makes an already difficult situation harder to overcome and when you're working for someone else you don't need that strike.

Q: Where do you include your cover letter in an e-mail?

A: In the body of the email.

Reason is, there's a high probability no one's going to read it.

Not that it can't be useful in some situations, but cover letters don't get forwarded to the correct HR personnel; resumes do.

Cover letters don't get scanned by ATI programs; resumes do.

If anything, don't spend a lot of time on cover letters because if they're going to give you a shot, it'll be because of how well you align with what they're looking to hire for, not because you were able to compose a a cover letter.

Q: How should I handle salary negotiations?

A: "How much money do you want?" -> "Well salary is important to me because I'm looking at owning a home and setting up roots here, so it'll definitely be a component of wherever I decide to go, but first and

foremost I'm looking for a job that I'll be happy in and that I think advances my career to where I want to be in the long term."

Make them give you the first number; they should be able to tell you the job's range.

"If they push on salary, it's very easy to say, "Well, I wouldn't consider the job for less than X, and I'd likely make the move for Y, and I'd be thrilled to come to work every day for Z."

You want them to give you a number in between Y and Z.

Don't give them only X because it's the bare minimum you'd work for.

Give them multiple choices and make them choose.

Use Glassdoor.com to apply to jobs and prep for interviews – most jobs at big companies have all the interview questions on there already.

Make sure you know 95% of the questions coming at you before they're asked.

Q: How do I explain away a gap in my work history on my resume?

A: It's ok to have a job on your resume that says:

Company: Independent Consultant

Role: [X] Consulting for Multiple Clients

Dates: Year last worked elsewhere - Present

Then just have one bullet point that says, "Needed scheduling flexibility to take care of some personal matters, so I worked as an [independent consultant] for a year."

If you don't have any side work during your time off, just have a bullet point under your last job (very last bullet point) that says "Needed scheduling flexibility to take care of personal family matters, which is why I left this role."

No one will ask about the personal matters, and you can just handwave it away as "Some family items that needed to be sorted out" if they do.

That way, you don't have to explain why you took a break in the rat race, and you can phrase it as "but now I'm ready to jump back into a full-time position in the area I'm most experienced in and enjoy the most."

Don't feel the need to over-compensate for the gap -- people value simplicity and like it when people are straightforward, and they don't like overdone bullet points or long-winded explanations by phone.

10 seconds or less during the interview, move on, excited and ready for the new gig.

Q: How do I move horizontally in my career (i.e., make a career switch)? Should I embellish my current experience as a front desk person?

A: I wouldn't gussy things up on the resume. Don't try to make a non-glamorous job sound like anything other than what it is.

Describe it quickly: are you a bartender? Put "Tend bar full-time at local restaurant that can require 60+ hour work weeks."

You can show you're a hard worker, but you don't need to say things like, "Provide outstanding and exemplary customer experience in a top-10 Austin fine dining establishment."

People tend to embellish on resumes to compensate for what they view as bad experience, but I advise people to lean into it; otherwise, you can't confidently talk about what you've done in the past.

You'll want to look at job descriptions online in your experience range (i.e., # of years in the workforce) for companies you want to work for, look at the skills they require, and then go learn them before applying. Maybe do some side projects.

I'm talking skills that can be learned in a month - Google AdWords, Amazon AMS, Google Analytics, Shopify website design and marketing, Facebook marketing, Instagram marketing, viral marketing on

reddit, etc. Look at sales jobs, biz dev jobs, marketing jobs, customer service – those are all more lenient to people with differing backgrounds.

You'll have to get at least 1-2 years of a good company name or good experience on your resume before you "move up" to a dream job or a non-monotonous job.

If you like graphic design, take some Adobe Creative Cloud courses on Udemy and build a portfolio of projects on Fiverr.

If you want to move into programming, use Codecademy, G School, General Assembly, or another program like that (some cost \$\$, some don't, all are around 3 - 9 months long to learn any type of useful programming skill that looks good on a resume).

Do as much coding as you can in your spare time on public projects and include your Github profile as a link on your resume.

Also, look at startup jobs on Angellist – startups are a little more lenient when it comes to hiring people from various backgrounds.

Stuff like that will go a long way towards a career trajectory shift.

A lot of people put objectives that say they want to make a career change, but honestly... I don't know if an objective will help here.

If you applied for a job that's an obvious career change, the screener will see that and know that. You're either qualified or not, and I find objectives that say, "I'm looking to make a change" or something like that come off as a little desperate.

I prefer someone be confident and just apply to the job with a normal resume without any explanations – you shouldn't hope to get passed through for a job you're not qualified for, and an objective won't change that.

I would focus more on side and freelance projects in the field to show that you have at least some relevant experience or deep interest in the field.

Q: I want to relocate. How can I apply for jobs in different cities without being at a disadvantage for living out of town?

A: Instead of your current city, or alongside it, put "Moving to: City, State" at the top of your resume for whichever location you're applying to so they know that you're already dead-set on relocation.

A: IMO, I'd go hard on the relocation angle – you're moving across the country to this city no matter what (that's what you'll say in the interview), so you obviously need to apply for jobs.

The conversation about why you're applying to a job at this company should really begin and end with that, and you can also prepare a lot around why this new job and company are perfect for you (and you for it).

I would make it clear that you're interviewing for multiple roles in this new city, and that you're crazy excited to move there for XYZ reasons.

They'll be satisfied with that; people relocate and leave jobs all the time, totally normal.

If they press on happiness in your current role, you can add a side of "The full-time version of the internship I had is something completely different than what it started out as.

Basically, because this company is understaffed and it's the busy season, I'm doing 50% sales work, which honestly isn't the best use of my time.

I'm more than happy to do a little sales work and helping the sales teams as needed, but I'm an engineer first and foremost, so I'd like to go somewhere with a better system in place that uses employees to their max potential."

V. INDEX OF RESOURCES

[Jobs That Hire Felons](#) – A list of companies who specifically indicate they hire felons. Alternate list of [felon friendly employers](#).

[Lifeline Program](#) (Free Cell Phones/Internet) – If you are eligible, you may receive free/ reduced cost cell phone and/or internet service. Click your state on the map and see a list of lifeline providers in your area.

[Strategic Government Resources](#) (Govt. Jobs) – A list of local and state government jobs you can apply for.

[Career One Stop](#) – Job search engine provided by the U.S. Department of Labor. Updated frequently and in the postings you can see which companies contract with them directly.

[MyNextMove](#) – Database of information about jobs you can read up on. Good for alternative keyword suggestions and get a forecast on careers according to their forecasts.

[Onet Online](#) – Similar to My Next Move in it breaks down what a job consists of, the training involved and provides outlook on the popularity of the field.

[USAJobs](#) – The official hiring hub of the US govt. where you can find federal jobs.