

career resource guide



 **randstad**

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build your career

Know your objectives and preferences

Define your own specific objectives, both personal and professional, before you begin.

Decide if you are interested in contract or permanent placement. Each has its advantages.

Understand your preferences regarding work styles, environments, pace, etc.

Determine the job criteria that will help you meet your requirements.

Think about which tasks you enjoy most, especially if you are experienced in more than one area.

Consider what types of roles will help you achieve your long-term goals. Factor in the importance of learning new skills as you work.

Consider the size of organization you like most

Many professionals want to work for large companies in their market. Others appreciate the opportunity to pave innovative new roads with smaller firms.

Still for others, the size of the organization does not matter at all. Reflect on your own career experiences to date.

Have you found yourself happier in a small organization, or thriving in a large environment?

Factor your preferences in this area into your job search.

Determine your salary or rate

Understand that there is a wide range of salaries and rates for every role. Avoid letting salary alone influence your decision to accept or reject a potential opportunity.

Research the ranges for different organizations in your local area. Base your range on the type of work you do, your years of experience and your financial obligations.

Seek a compensation plan that is appropriate for your given role.

Factor benefits, such as training, insurance coverage, retirement funds, etc., into your evaluation.

Select hands-on work or management

Moving into a management role can be very rewarding.

Management roles, however, include added responsibility, paperwork and the career development of those working under your supervision.

If you enjoy hands-on work, management may not be the right direction for you.

If you are contemplating a move into a management role, consider the reasons why.

If you would simply like to pursue a higher salary, discuss that possibility with your current manager.

If you are certain that management is right for you, demonstrate your willingness to learn and to lead.

Additional factors to consider

Are you willing to commute or relocate?

You may have very specific needs that affect your career choices. Single parents, for instance, may require a daycare facility onsite.

If you have health considerations, you might need an organization with a comprehensive benefit plan.

Communicate your requirements up front so a potential employer can map an opportunity to those needs.

Do you enjoy the challenge of learning new skills or do you prefer to work in areas in which you already have experience?

Regardless of your skill-set, it is in your best interest to keep your skills current.

a strategic job search

10 points to consider for a successful job search

To make the most of your job hunt, it's imperative to have a strategic plan of action in place that's adapted to your needs. You'll need time to plan your search. Be sure to start only when you're certain you're ready to move forward. Looking for a job will become your full-time occupation.

1. Be an active job-seeker.

Mass-mailing a hundred resumes electronically won't necessarily allow you to get the job you want. You must target the various positions that interest you, adapt your resume and cover letter, apply, follow-up by phone, etc. You must demonstrate your interest in the specific position to the employer.

2. Talk about it!

Inform people around you that you're looking for a job. You can draw up a list of 25 people to contact. Ask them how they got their jobs. This will allow you to discover methods you've never thought of. These people might also refer you to new contacts from interesting companies or even tell you about available positions that aren't advertised.

3. Look everywhere.

Be sure to use a variety of sources. The Internet is unique for its global reach but it shouldn't be your only research source. This tool will prove to be even more effective when reinforced by other methods that include:

Newspapers

Internet sites specialized in job searching

Sites of professional associations

Sites of companies in industries that interest you

Job boards in CEGEPs, colleges, universities, specialized training schools, etc. If you don't have access to the Internet, go to one of the following places:

- Local employment centre (CLE, YMCA, etc.)
- Municipal library
- Internet cafés

4. Get informed!

Read newspapers to learn about potential job opportunities. For example, if you read a report about a company that's expanding, it's very likely that this company will be recruiting shortly.

5. Use all resources.

Work with the well-known placement agencies that specialize in your field. They'll suggest jobs that fit your needs and put you in contact with employers in your area.

6. Set yourself apart.

Hundreds of candidates like you send their resumes to the same employers. You must find a way to differentiate yourself. Don't hesitate to call the people in charge of hiring.

7. Act quickly.

Remind yourself that there are hundreds of other job-seekers in the race with you. Therefore you must be among the first to apply for the various jobs. Check for available positions as often as you can.

8. Stay organized!

Maintain an up-to-date journal and use it to make note of each resume you send out, every call, every letter and/or meeting and the ideal moment to do a follow-up. Without this tool, you might get a call about a position you don't even remember applying for.

9. Get out of the house!

Several job fairs, tradeshow and workshops take place during the year to help you find a job. These events are usually announced in the newspapers and on Internet job sites. Tradeshow and workshops are an excellent way to learn more about companies that recruit in your sector. Company representatives will be able to inform you about their company's mission, internal openings, etc. In order to make the most of them, be sure you have several copies of your resume with you, and a firm handshake.

10. Be tenacious.

Keep moving forward. Thoroughness and perseverance are key. Remember that employers are looking for determination and initiative; so the follow-up is a crucial element.



writing a resume

A resume is a concise outline of your work history, related experience and education. It should never be exaggerated or self-serving, but should have a positive, action-and-results-oriented tone. A resume should be appealing to the reader, thought-provoking and invite further questions.

Employers will scan a resume for about 30 seconds to decide if they will consider an applicant. You want to get your resume in the “for consideration” pile.

A resume is a “snapshot” of you and needs to be:

Written with the employer’s interests in mind.

Professional in appearance.

Targeted for a particular job or organization.

“Letter-perfect” – spelling and grammar mistakes can mean an automatic trip to the reject pile.

An honest and clear demonstration of your skills, abilities and achievements.

A clear indication of what you offer to the employer.

Target your resume

Employers look for people who have researched the job and can explain clearly how their skills, knowledge and abilities meet their needs.

In today’s job market, a generic, “one-size-fits-all” resume doesn’t work.

It’s better to send out a few targeted resumes and get a couple of interviews than to send hundreds of generic copies and not get any interviews. You don’t have to start from scratch with each targeted resume. You just re-arrange the content to emphasize what you can do for each specific employer. Think of your resume as a jigsaw puzzle with different pieces. In each targeted resume, you place the pieces in a new way to create a slightly different picture of yourself.

Whether you choose a chronological or skills-based resume (see below), begin with your personal data and end with your reference statement.

Contact information (essential)

Ensure that the employer can contact you easily.

Use a permanent address.

Provide an alternate number if you’re often away from your phone and don’t have an answering machine.

Include an email address (especially if you’re submitting your resumes electronically).

Career objective (optional)

Your “Career Objective” is the perfect place to show the employer, in one or two sentences, how your interests and skills match his/her job. Employers use this section to see how your goals mesh with their needs.

Include: job title, reference to your skills or experience, the main benefits to the employer.

Make it the first statement in your resume, no matter which type of resume you use. It should be no more than one or two sentences long.

Use this section to let a bit of your personality shine through, and show the employer what you can do.

Target the career objective specifically to the job and employer you are contacting.

(You may choose to omit this if you are including a detailed cover letter.)

Work experience (essential)

There are two different styles you can use for your resume.

Chronological resume

This is for someone with progressive work experience in the same career field. It shows the employer who you've worked for and what you contributed in each work setting.

Include: company name, location, industry, dates employed (month and year, start and finish dates), job title, duties, responsibilities and key accomplishments.

Highlight the work experience that will be of most interest to the employer.

Use action verbs to show you're a person who gets things done.

List your jobs in reverse chronological order (start with your most recent job and work backwards from there).

Provide two or more items that indicate your tasks and what you accomplished in each position.

Skills-based resume

This might be used by someone who wants to highlight work experiences and skills, has many employers, has little work experience, or is planning a career change. It focuses the attention on the skills you have used in a variety of settings.

In the skills-based resume you should also provide the following information on previous employers: job title, company, location and industry.

Professional qualifications (optional)

This section informs the employer of your professional, trade certifications and licenses to practice.

Include voluntary and mandatory certifications.

Include information on the issuing body for the certification.

If your membership is not up-to-date, get it renewed before including it.

Education (essential)

Employers with a position that requires a certain type of education or training will use this section to screen resumes. Other employers will use the education achieved as an indicator of your ability to learn.

List your education/training in reverse chronological order. Graduation dates are essential.

Indicate the title of your degree, diploma or certificate and then the name and location of the educational institution.

List any academic honours you received.

List your minors and majors, if applicable to the position.

Include professional training, relevant workshops and training received on the job.

Whether you put education or work experience first in your resume depends on what you believe is most important to the employer.

Awards/achievements (optional)

From this section the employer can see highlighted achievements that may not apply specifically to the job you're seeking, but demonstrate your desire to achieve excellence.

Information on specific awards or achievements can be highlighted separately or included under education or work experience.

Use short statements.

Be specific about what you've done.

Affiliations (optional)

This section can help the employer see you as a well-rounded person. Include memberships in professional or volunteer organizations. For legal reasons, do not specifically identify religious, ethnic or political affiliations.

Interests (optional)

This section can help the employer see you as well-rounded, and provides him or her with a more individualized view of you as a person. Be brief but show the range of your interests.

Volunteer work (optional)

Your volunteer activities provide important information to employers about your personality, interests and skills. You can highlight skills and achievements obtained through non-paid work.

Describe each volunteer activity as you would a work experience but with less detail.

List your volunteer assignments in reverse chronological order.

Indicate your title for each volunteer position and the name of the organization.

Provide two or more examples of what you did and accomplished in each position.

Use action verbs to demonstrate you're a person who gets things done.

Format and layout for printed resumes

Use bond stock in ivory, white or grey and match cover letter and envelopes. Do not use "cute" letterhead.

Highlight important features; your name, job titles and subject headings will stand out if bold type, upper case letters or italics are used.

Use "white space" effectively; keep the space balanced and pleasing to the eye.

In general, keep resume length to one or two pages. If you have one to five years of relevant professional experience, your resume should not exceed two pages in length. With five or more years, it should not exceed two pages.

Be sure to list your name and contact information on each page.

Be sure to get an objective opinion on the content of your resume and be sure your resume is proofread several times before finalizing.

References (not necessary)

Most employers check references after the interview. They want to get informed opinions on your skills and work habits.

Make a notation on your resume that references are available on request. This indicates that you have contacts who will discuss your qualifications with the hiring manager.

Prepare a neatly typed list of references with names, titles, addresses, phone numbers or email addresses. You can give this to a potential employer at the time of your interview or upon request, but do not attach the list to your resume.

Your references need to be able to provide information on your skills, work habits, personal skills and achievements. Use professional acquaintances, previous employers or professors.

Where possible select references with a standing within the industry or community where you are seeking work.

Be certain to obtain permission from those references so they are aware of possible calls from prospective employers and of the positions for which you are applying.

What the employer hears about you from your reference can be the deciding factor in whether you get the job!

For electronic resumes

Choose the appropriate file format for presenting your electronic resume. It is important to format your resume for electronic use to ensure it is appealing to the reader when viewed on screen or printed.

Frequently asked questions

What if I have only worked for one employer?

If you've had different positions within the organization, then list the positions separately and explain your responsibilities and accomplishments in each one.

If you've stayed in one position only, make sure that you list your accomplishments for that position.

What if I have gaps in my work history?

Under "Work Description" describe what you were doing while out of the work force, especially if it provided you with valuable experience.

I have no experience in the kind of work I want to do. Now what?

You can get experience through volunteering. Also, re-examine all your work and volunteer experiences to see if what you've done in the past can be applied to your new career path.

I'm older and worried my age will work against me. What can I do?

Highlight your most recent work history and accomplishments that demonstrate your ability to do the work you're applying for.

Things NOT to put in your resume

How much \$\$ you want to make.

Why you're changing jobs, or why you left a previous one.

SIN.

Addresses of former employers.

Your age.

Marital status.

Whether you have children, or are pregnant.

Height, weight.

Health status or disabilities.

Religion, race.

Before writing your resume

Make a list of your skills. Find achievements in life that demonstrate those skills. Remember those achievements can be at home, in the community, at school and on the job.

Sources of transferable work experience:

Part-time or summer work.

Sports and recreational activities.

Volunteer work.

Entrepreneurial experiences.

Academic activities.

Co-op or intern placements.

If you're having difficulty listing your skills you may wish to start by writing down the things you've done, then identify the skills required to accomplish those tasks. People who know you well can help you identify your skills and abilities.

Skills in demand:

Ability to communicate.

Willingness to learn.

Initiative and perseverance.

Analytical thinking.

Teamwork and cooperation.

Good sense of customer relations.

Adaptability.

Sense of responsibility.

Questions to ask when developing your resume

Ask yourself the following questions when you sit down to write about your work history. They're designed to get you thinking about your past experiences. Write all your answers down, and then use them to help you write the work history or professional experience section of your resume. Remember to use action verbs and to describe yourself in terms of your on-the-job accomplishments. Good luck!

1. What special skills did you need to perform this task?
2. What verbal or written comments were made about your performance by supervisors? Plagiarize from old reviews!
3. What different levels of people did you have to interact with to get your job done? How did you get your best out of your boss? Your co-worker? A subordinate?
4. What aspects of your personality were brought into play when executing this duty (attention to detail, determination, cheerful attitude, high energy)?
5. What was the biggest problem you had to face? How did you solve it?

Resume follow-up checklist

Once you've completed your resume, make sure to answer the following questions:

- Is the resume easy to read?
- Is the format clean (free of multiple fonts, not too much in bold or italics)?
- Is there appropriate use of action verbs in the employment history and summary of qualifications? Have you "sold" yourself and your experience enough?
- Are there any grammatical or spelling errors? (Do not rely on spell check!)
- Read it aloud to yourself. Does it make sense? If not, re-word what doesn't make sense.
- Does your experience justify the length of the resume?

candidate qualities

Ability to collaborate with others	Exceptional	Perceptive
Ability to communicate	Expressive	Perseverance
Ability to influence others	Feels at ease with routine tasks	Persuasive
Adaptable	Flexible	Planning skills
Ambitious	Follow-through	Potential
Analytical skills	Good coordination	Practical
Attentive to others	Good sense of customer relations	Problem solving skills
Bold	Has a good sense of organization, planning and initiative	Profitable
Calm	Has a knack for mechanics	Proven
Capable	Imaginative	Punctual
Careful in judging	Independent	Qualified
Communicates and expresses themselves easily	Initiative	Realistic
Communicative	Intellectual	Resourceful
Conceptual thinker	Interested in human behaviour	Results-oriented
Consistent	Interpersonal skills	Self-confident
Cooperative	Intuitive	Self-disciplined
Creative	Is precise and accurate	Sense of responsibility
Curious	Keen sense of observation	Sensible
Customer-service orientated	Knows how to carry out projects	Significant
Dedicated	Knows how to sell both ideas and goods	Skillful with their hands
Determined	Leadership	Sociable
Diplomatic	Likes to play with ideas	Stable
Discreet	Logical	Straightforward
Down-to-earth	Loyal	Team-work and cooperation
Driven	Meticulous	Thorough
Eager to learn	Optimistic	Tolerant
Effective	Organization skills	Understanding
Efficient	Original	Values knowledge
Encouraging	Passion for results	Willingness to accept responsibility
Energetic	Patience	Willingness to learn
Enthusiastic		



writing an effective cover letter

A cover letter is generally your first opportunity to impress a prospective employer. It can help you secure an interview opportunity – not a job. The cover letter shows the employer why they should consider your resume, and shows how well you communicate in writing. Because your cover letter is the first time you “speak” to an employer, it has to be “letter-perfect” and professional in appearance.

A cover letter should be typed unless the employer specifically requests a handwritten letter.

It should never be more than one page long.

Break the text into short paragraphs – that makes it easier to read.

The cover letter provides the opportunity to highlight how your skills and qualifications will benefit the employer.

It provides an individual touch.

Never send a resume by regular mail without a cover letter.

Contact info

This is the header of your cover letter and should show the employer how to reach you. It should include:

Name

Full address

Phone number

Mobile number (optional)

E-mail address (optional)

Address it right!

The address should include:

Name and title of the person reviewing your application – spelled correctly!

Name and full address of the organization – again, spelled correctly!

Employers are always impressed when a cover letter is addressed to them specifically. You may have to call the organization to find out who will be reviewing your application.

The body of the letter

Paragraph 1 – Introduce yourself, explain why you’re writing – stating precisely the position you are seeking – and give some indication of where you obtained information about the company or position.

Paragraph 2 – Explain why you feel you are the very best candidate for the position. State how your experience and background fits the job and how you can contribute to the company’s business objectives if hired. Be sure to refer to your resume at least once in the body of the letter. Describe the personality traits that will make you stand out. The original posting will always list specific qualifications, experience and skills the employer is seeking - make sure you reference two or three of those and show how they relate to your personal qualifications and experience.

Paragraph 3 – Thank the reader for his/her consideration and mention where and when you might be reached to schedule an interview. Don’t hesitate to mention that you will be following up with a phone call within the next week.

Use referrals, if possible: recommendations may enhance your credibility with potential employers and your chances of securing an interview opportunity.

Do's and don'ts

Do.....

Use the same paper stock for your letter and resume.

Type or use a computer. No handwriting – unless specifically requested.

Address the letter to a specific person, not a title.

Tailor the letter to the job and the organization. It should not be “canned.”

Keep the letter to one page.

Keep the paragraphs short and to the point.

Use action verbs to describe what you have done.

Experiment with different wording. If you don't think a paragraph is perfect, try to write it another way.

Show your enthusiasm for the job.

Show concern and pride for your profession.

Demonstrate energy and enthusiasm.

Maintain a balance between professionalism and friendliness.

Check for spelling or punctuation mistakes.

Have a friend or family member check your letter for advice and corrections.

Indicate where you can be reached.

Don't...

Make the cover letter run longer than one page.

Use a long word when a short one will do. For example, use “try” rather than “endeavour.”

Clutter the letter with too many facts or those that are not relevant to the job. Employers are not interested in your life story.

Use coloured paper or coloured type.

Use clip art, photos or other graphics.



acing the interview

You've been called for an interview. Chances are, the employer will be interviewing several well-qualified applicants. Interviews will vary from simple, unstructured meetings to formal, highly structured interview processes with predetermined questions and answers. Effectively demonstrate your potential by:

- Preparing for the interview.
- Performing well at the interview.
- Following up after the interview.

Remember – an interview is a two-way exchange of information.

The interviewer is interested in three things:

1. Can you do the job?
2. Will you do the job?
3. Will you fit in?

And you want to know if the organization is right for you and your career goals!

Preparing for the interview

1. Learn more about the company and position

Collect information about the company, and find out everything you can about the specific position. The better you understand the position and the employer's needs the more effectively you can show how you'll benefit their organization. Read the job ad thoroughly – it will often tell you some of the employer's major concerns. Think about how you can create value.

Knowledge of a potential employer's business, size, product or service or recent news events will never fail to impress the interviewer and will give you a sense of confidence. Get an annual report. Read newspapers or magazine articles about the company. Look for company information on the Internet. If possible, speak to representatives of other companies in the same industry.

Formulate a list of questions to ask about the company and about the position to demonstrate your interest and initiative. Don't ask about benefits or salary on the first interview.

Samples:

What are the specific responsibilities of the job?

Please describe a typical day in this position.

How might the responsibilities change in the future?

What is the usual length of stay in this position? Has there been much turnover in this job/area?

To whom would I be reporting and what are his/her responsibilities?

With which other departments will I be working?

Is there any training or course work required for this position?

What are the normal working hours?

What opportunities for growth are typically available?

How often are performance reviews given?

Does the company have any expansion plans?

When will you be making a hiring decision about this position?

What is the next course of action? When should I expect to hear from you or should I contact you?

2. Prepare for the interview questions

Practice responses to interview questions with friends or family – but don't try to memorize them. Being yourself is essential to interview success. Responses need to feel and sound natural.

Be prepared to do about 75% of the talking. An interviewer will want to see how effectively you can express yourself and how knowledgeable you are about the company/industry.

If you have taken the time to think through how you can add value to a specific employer, you'll be able to answer questions easily, as well as add relevant examples that will speak to their specific needs.

Types of interview questions you may be asked

Traditional interview questions:

- What jobs have you held?
- What are your strongest accomplishments?
- Why did you leave past positions?
- What have been your favourite/least favourite jobs?
- Why have you chosen this particular career?
- Why do you think you would like this job?
- What do you know about this company?
- Why do you want to work for this company?
- What contributions can you make to our organization?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- Where do you see yourself in 5 years? What are your long-range career goals?
- Under what type of supervision do you work best?
- What salary are you working towards?

Knowledge, ability and skills questions: often deal with the technical aspects of the job or basic knowledge that is essential to learn the job.

Situational questions: provide you with a hypothetical situation and ask how you would deal with it. Employers can check your understanding of specific processes as well as your interpersonal or team-working skills.

Samples:

How would you respond to a customer who isn't happy with the product?

How would you organize a file directory system on our computer network?

Behaviour-based questions: are used to assess similar skills and abilities to situational questions. With behavioural-based questions, the employer will ask you to describe what you did in an actual experience. Past action is a predictor of future actions. How you've dealt with situations tells the employer a great deal about how you'll handle things in their organization. Before you select a situation to describe, think about what it says about your ability to work well with others, to solve problems, to provide good customer service. Behaviour-based questions often start with "Tell me about a time when..."

Samples:

Tell me about a time when you dealt with a customer complaint.

Discuss a time when you demonstrated initiative at your former job.

Give me an example of a time when you were on a team and one of the members did not pull his weight. How did you handle it?

Describe a major problem you have faced and how you dealt with it.

Role-play questions: are another way for employers to assess how you'll react in certain situations. They're often used to assess how you'll deal with customer service or working with other issues. A brief description of the situation will be given and then you will be given the opportunity to demonstrate how you would react. If you think role-plays might be used, get a friend to help you practice and give you feedback.

3. Prepare your references

Inform your references promptly about any job interviews.

Tell your references the company name and the position for which you are applying.

You can ask them to comment specifically on key skills that are relevant to a given position.

Make sure you have given them a copy of your resume.

4. Practice introductions

The decision to hire is often made in the first 30 seconds. Make a good first impression: practice opening a door, coming into a room, offering your hand confidently, smiling and introducing yourself. Use your left hand for carrying your briefcase, portfolio, purse etc., leaving your right hand free for the handshake.

Just before the interview

Make sure you have eaten something light an hour or so before the interview, as you will need energy to perform at your best.

Wear appropriate clothes, preferably something more formal than you would normally dress for the job.

Just before the interview, calm yourself by doing some deep breathing. This helps concentration.

Make sure you have remembered to bring:

Your SIN card.

Your address, postal code and telephone number.

The times you are available for work.

The names and telephone numbers of references.

Extra copies of your resume.

Copies of your letters of reference.

A notepad and pen.

Perform well during the interview

Listening, confidence and quality of presentation are the keys to successful interviewing. Employers want to see enthusiasm, a little knowledge about the company, confidence, and an ability to work well in their environment.

The interview is also your opportunity to assess the company. Do you want to work there? Can you contribute, get new skills, and have a chance to advance? Will this position open doors for you?

You've arrived a few minutes early, checked your appearance, are unfailingly polite and pleasant with reception. It's show time!

Make your entrance

Before you say a word, the interviewer will make a judgment about you – maybe the deciding one.

A smile, a firm handshake, confident demeanor, good eye contact, and a friendly enthusiastic manner will go a long way to making that important first impression.

Body language

Body language can give away more about your personality than what you say or even the clothes you wear.

Be aware of your posture – make sure to sit upright. Nothing indicates laziness, indecision and a lack of professionalism like slouched shoulders and a stooped chin.

Sit still – avoid any type of nervous movement of your hands or feet, and try not to cross and re-cross your legs too many times. Any bodily expression of nervousness is likely to be perceived as a lack of discipline or self-control.

Smile – employers always prefer a candidate who seems cheerful and enthusiastic to somebody who comes across as grumpy, unfriendly or stressed. But be careful not to overdo it – smiles that are laboured and humour that is forced can be disastrous.

Take notes – listen carefully

Take your time – a concise logical answer that covers relevant facts is more effective than one that rambles.

Be certain you've heard and understood the question. Asking for clarification is acceptable.

Answer the question that's been asked – you don't have to give all the answers you've practiced.

Keep focused on how you can add value.

To show how you can make a contribution explain how:

Work on similar problems in a different environment gives you the experience to make a difference.

You have knowledge of a particular technology that can improve efficiency.

You understand their competitive situation.

You understand their concerns.

You understand a particular market.

You rise to a challenge and will not give up till it's met.

Present a specific and positive picture of what you can do. Use examples.

In your resume: you might have said "I increased sales by 15%."

In the interview: "I understand your need to increase sales in the national tourism market. In my last position, I was successful in doing just that by developing an innovative approach to customer service that resulted in a 15% increase in repeat sales."

Ending the interview

Ask some of the questions you have prepared. The last question could be when they anticipate a decision will be made and how they will inform the candidates.

Don't linger: say thank you, restate your interest in working with them, and leave. Request a business card from your interviewer, where appropriate. Acknowledge reception on the way out.

After the interview is over

You've done the interview. Aside from breathing a sigh of relief, there are some things you should do right away:

Write down a few notes on the interview such as key questions asked or information provided in the interview.

Go over the details of the interview and consider what worked and what didn't. What would you say or do differently the next time you're in an interview?

Follow-up quickly with a personal thank you note. Write a positive, enthusiastic note thanking your interviewer and re-stating your interest in the position.

If there was more than one interviewer, tailor notes to the priorities of each interviewer.

Ensure you have the correct names and addresses and spelling.

If you've been told you'll hear by a certain day, by all means give them a call a few days later.

If you haven't heard after 2 or 3 weeks, place a follow-up phone call to the interviewer. If the position has not yet been filled, re-state your strong interest in being hired.

If you did not qualify, explain to the interviewer that you'd like to ask a few questions that may help you do better in the future. Some questions you can ask:

Did you feel I was adequately prepared?

Was there something I could have said or done differently?

Was there a specific skill or ability that I didn't demonstrate?

Can you suggest areas that would help me improve?

Some final tips for successful interviews

Interview DO's:

Dress more formally than you would normally dress for the job.

Introduce yourself. Don't wait for someone else to make the first move.

Shake hands firmly. A handshake can make or break a first impression, so be sure your handshake shows confidence and professionalism.

Show your energy and enthusiasm for the job.

Listen closely to the interviewer.

Make eye contact (if you don't, you'll come across as either lacking confidence or having something to hide).

Answer all questions carefully and honestly. Take the time to think over your answer when you need to.

Close the interview by restating your interest in the job and summarizing your good points. Thank the interviewer for his/her time and leave the office with a handshake and a smile.

Arrange to call back in a few days.

Interview DON'Ts:

Don't be late. 10-15 minutes early is expected. Be sure to get directions to the interview location beforehand and leave enough travel time. If you're going to be late, or if you can't make it to the interview, call the employer as soon as possible and explain why. Ask if you can arrange a new interview time.

Don't come across as too shy or too aggressive.

Don't answer questions with merely "yes" or "no" responses – elaborate.....sell yourself by giving concrete examples.

Don't say anything negative about other people or past employers.

Don't lie or exaggerate your abilities.

Don't be overly familiar with the interviewer.

Don't chew gum, interrupt or use slang during the interview – even if the interviewer does.

Don't schedule more than 2 or 3 interviews in a day and remember to leave plenty of time between appointments.

Other things to consider:

Don't give up. Finding a job takes time. A person who knows how to conduct a job search will eventually be successful.

Try not to feel depressed and dejected. Simply recognize that, although you're qualified, someone with more experience, or perhaps a better personality fit, was chosen.

Go over your cover letter, resume and interview techniques. See if there are areas where you can improve your presentation.

Keep a positive outlook. Discuss your job hunt with friends and family members who will provide support and encouragement. Keep in touch with people you know who may have job leads.

Explore other options. Don't rule out volunteering or job shadowing as a means of connecting with the workplace.



writing a suitable thank-you letter

The thank-you letter — a few words that can make all the difference!

Surprising as it sounds, very few people write thank-you letters after an interview with a potential employer. However, the few minutes it takes to send a note can make all the difference when recruiters are having trouble deciding which candidate to hire. The letter may help set you apart from the other candidates and give you the edge.

In the letter, you can thank the employer for taking the time to meet with you. You can also reiterate some key points that, in your view, may not have been given enough attention during the interview.

The courtesy of a thank-you letter is much appreciated by recruiters and employers. It is an ideal way to demonstrate your commitment and unfailing interest in the position and the company.



how to leave your former position

Submit your resignation

Don't resign from your position until you have a firm offer from a new employer.

Write a brief letter to your manager giving notice of your last day.

Outline a list of projects you have been working on.

Detail exactly what you will and will not be able to finish before you leave.

Provide ample information for your manager to redistribute your responsibilities to other team members.

Ensure your letter has a positive tone, even if you are leaving due to personality conflict.

Avoid accepting a counter offer

It is almost never in your best interests to accept a counter offer from your former employer.

Statistics indicate that most employees who accept counter offers leave anyway within 10 months.

Your former employer may offer more money to evade larger issues or buy time to hire a replacement.

Think about the reasons why you sought a new position in the first place.

Remember that a committed organization will do what it takes to keep you satisfied before you choose to seek a position elsewhere.

End your relationship with your former employer amicably

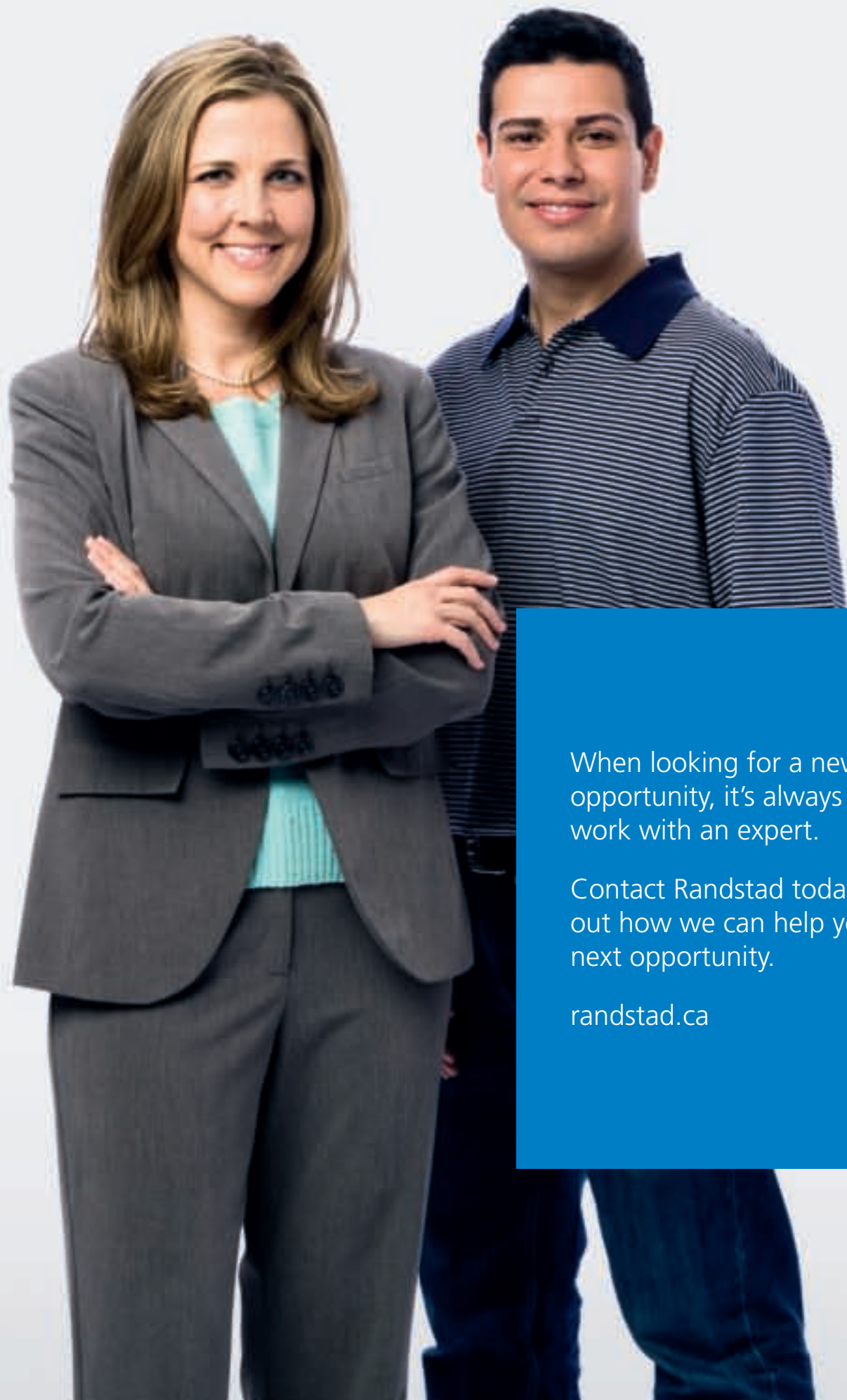
Do all you can to turn potentially negative circumstances into an amicable separation.

Maintain your sense of professionalism and integrity at all times.

Demonstrate a commitment to minimizing workflow disruption.

Keep details about your new position, and how you secured it, confidential.

Leave on good terms – you may find yourself working with the same colleagues again in the future.



When looking for a new career opportunity, it's always helpful to work with an expert.

Contact Randstad today and find out how we can help you find your next opportunity.

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