

THE JOB SEARCH HANDBOOK



Career Development Center
MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY, MANKATO



Career & Self-Development



Communication



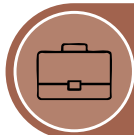
Critical Thinking



Equity & Inclusion



Leadership



Professionalism



Teamwork



Technology

Table of Contents

Understanding the Job Search Process	1
How Employers Find and Hire People	2
How People Find and Secure Jobs	3
Career Readiness Competencies At a Glance	5
Am I Career-Ready?	8
Minnesota Career Fields, Clusters, & Pathways	9
Self-Discovery	11
Identify Your Values	12
Complete the Values Sentences	13
Identify Your Characteristics	14
Identify Your Skills	15
Identifying Your Interests	17
Unpacking Your Interests	18
Values, Skills, and Interests: Putting it All Together	19



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THE JOB SEARCH HANDBOOK

Networking.....	21
Create your Personal Sociogram	22
Networking 101	23
How to Build Your Social Capital with Networking	24
Informational Interviews.....	25
A Brief Introduction to LinkedIn	26
Job and Internship Fairs.....	27
The Elevator Pitch	28
 Applying & Interviewing	 31
Creating a Resume 101.....	32
What Should You Include in Your Resume?.....	33
Writing Resume Bullet Points.....	34
Resume Language.....	35
Resume Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ).....	36
CV vs. Resume: What's the Difference?.....	44
Creating a Cover Letter 101	45
Application Material Example	49
Interviewing 101	53
STARR Stories	55
The Thank-You Note	58
Who Are My References?.....	59
Salary Negotiation	61
Illegal and Legal Interview Questions	62
 The Career Development Center	 65
Appointment Types and Additional Resources	66
Glossary of Terms	67
References.....	72



Understanding the Job Search Process

Job searching is not just about finding a job—it is about learning how the world of work operates and how you fit into it. Before you dive into resume building and interview preparation, it helps to understand the big picture. What are employers looking for in a job applicant? While earning a degree, how can you set yourself up for success? What kinds of jobs are even out there?

This section will walk you through what employers are really looking for, what steps both candidates and companies take during the hiring process, and how what you learn at Minnesota State University, Mankato can connect you to real career opportunities in Minnesota and beyond. Whether you're navigating the job search for the first time, returning to it after some time, or somewhere in between, your journey is uniquely yours—and now is the perfect time to take the next step.

The Job Search Handbook

How Employers Find and Hire People

1. Define Role Needs

First, the hiring manager (i.e., the person who supervises the new employee) works to define the position that needs to be filled. This could be a vacancy that is being filled (like after Tommy Turnover leaves) or might be a new or amended position to the company. In either case, the goal is to create a complete job description. A job description is a document that explains the important duties, required skills and education, and responsibilities needed to perform the job. It helps the employer, and the job seeker, understand what the role involves. The job description serves as the hiring manager's guide for reading applicant resumes, screening job candidates, and conducting job interviews.



2. Post Job

Next, the job description is posted in places where people look for work including the company's website and on job boards. Job boards such as Handshake, Indeed, LinkedIn, and ZipRecruiter, are online platforms where employers can post job openings and job seekers can search for and apply for available positions. They act as a central marketplace connecting employers with potential employees.



3. Collect Application

Once a job description is posted on a job board, the recruiter collects application materials from job seekers. Application materials typically include the job seeker's resume, a cover letter, answers to screening questions, and sometimes, for creative positions, a portfolio. Additionally, the recruiter will ask current employees of the company for referrals. Referrals are individuals that a current employee knows personally, who have worked with in the past, or that have been recommended to them by a mutual connection. Referred candidates are 7x more likely to be hired than ones applying via job boards, therefore it is extremely important to **network**, see p. 21 (Wilson, 2023).



4. Screen Candidates

The recruiter selects their top candidates based on the application materials and referrals they receive. From there, they begin to narrow down their list by conducting screens and interviews. A screen typically takes place over the phone or on video. The screen is used to assess a job seeker's personality and communication skills. After the screen, candidates may be asked to interview and, in some cases, may go through several rounds of interviews. A job interview is a formal meeting between a job applicant and the hiring manager. It is a structured conversation where the employer asks questions to gauge the applicant's skills and experience, while the applicant can also ask questions about the role and the company.



5. Check References

Once all candidates have been interviewed for the position, the recruiter and the hiring manager decide who they would like to extend an offer to. Before making an offer, the hiring team may ask for references from the job seeker. References are people (e.g., professors, former/current supervisors) who can speak about the applicant's work ethic, character, or experience. (see p. 59).



6. Make Offer

If an applicant's references spoke highly of the applicant, the recruiter will contact the selected candidate and make them an offer. An offer includes the official job title, the responsibilities of the job, the salary and benefits being offered, and a proposed start date. If the offeree negotiates the terms, the recruiter and hiring manager will work together with the offeree until an agreement is reached or the candidate declines.



Understanding the Job Search Process

How People Find and Secure Jobs



1. Prepare Resume

The first thing a job seeker should do is create a resume. A resume is a summary of one's experience and skills. Even if someone has never held a job before, resumes include more than just work experience. A typical resume includes the applicant's name and contact information, in addition to any education, work experience, volunteer experience, school projects, leadership roles, and skills (see pp. 37-43).

2. Search for Jobs

Next, the job seeker should search for job opportunities on job boards (e.g., Handshake, LinkedIn), company websites, and local businesses. Once the job seeker finds a job opening's description, they should read it carefully to determine whether they have the qualifications necessary to do the job. Job titles can be deceiving. It is important to read the entire description for each of-interest job. If it looks like a fit, it is time to apply.



3. Write Cover Letter

The job seeker will typically submit their resume through the company's website or through a job board. Employers often use an Applicant Tracking System (ATS) in which they store all candidates' application materials. For local businesses, simply dropping off a printed resume in person may work as well. Job seekers should apply for multiple opportunities to improve their chances.



4. Apply to Jobs

For each separate application, the job seeker should write a cover letter. A cover letter contains 2-5 paragraphs explaining who the applicant is, why they are interested in this opportunity, what makes them a great fit for the job (even if it is just a willingness to learn!), and any specific qualifications that can be linked directly back to the language in the job description. After applying for a job, you may be able to track your application through the employer's portal, though some companies rely on direct contact from recruiters. Since processes vary—and responses aren't guaranteed—it's wise to apply broadly and keep momentum in your search.



5. Interview

If the job seeker receives a call or an e-mail inviting them to an interview, they should respond promptly and politely. They will then collaborate with the recruiter to set up a time to meet in-person, over the phone, or virtually online. The job seeker should practice possible interview questions before the day of the interview (see p.s 55-58). On the day of the interview, the applicant should dress neatly, be on time, and bring a physical copy of their resume. It is also important to come prepared with 3-5 questions to ask the interviewer.



6. Follow-Up

At the conclusion of the interview, the job seeker should thank the interviewer for their time and be sure to ask for their contact card or e-mail address. Within 24 hours, the job seeker should send brief thank-you messages to each individual they met at the interview (see p. 58). These thank-you notes should mention at least one specific thing the applicant learned during the interview and reaffirm one's interest in the job.



7. Receive Offer

While the days following an interview can be nerve-wracking, it is important to be patient while the hiring team finishes their process. Ideally, the job seeker will be selected for the position and receive a job offer. Typically, a recruiter will go over the offer details over the phone first and then send an offer in writing. Some companies may bring additional Benefits and/or Human Resources (HR) teams in to help with this process. It is important to review the details (pay, schedule, start date, benefits), ask questions if unsure, negotiate salary and/or benefits if there are desired changes, and then accept the offer and get ready to start! Congratulations! Taking the first step is the hardest part and every application is great practice! Good luck!

The Job Search Handbook

Use the space below to take notes for your personalized job search plan and next steps:

[illegible]

Understanding the Job Search Process

Career Readiness Competencies At a Glance

Career readiness isn't just about having the right major - it's about developing the skills employers value most. The following NACE Career Competencies represent the essential behaviors, attitudes, and abilities that prepare students for successful transition into the workplace. Whether you're solving problems, leading a team, navigating diverse perspectives, or simply showing up prepared and professional, these competencies equip you to thrive in any field, industry, or role.



Career & Self-Development

Take initiative for your career through self-awareness, professional growth, and lifelong learning.



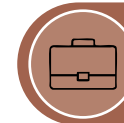
Leadership

Recognize and use your strengths to guide, support, and inspire others toward shared goals.



Communication

Clearly and effectively exchange information with others through written, verbal, and digital means.



Professionalism

Consistently demonstrate accountability, integrity, and effective work habits in any environment.



Critical Thinking

Identify and respond to needs by analyzing issues, making decisions, and solving problems.



Teamwork

Collaborate and build strong, respectful relationships to reach common goals.



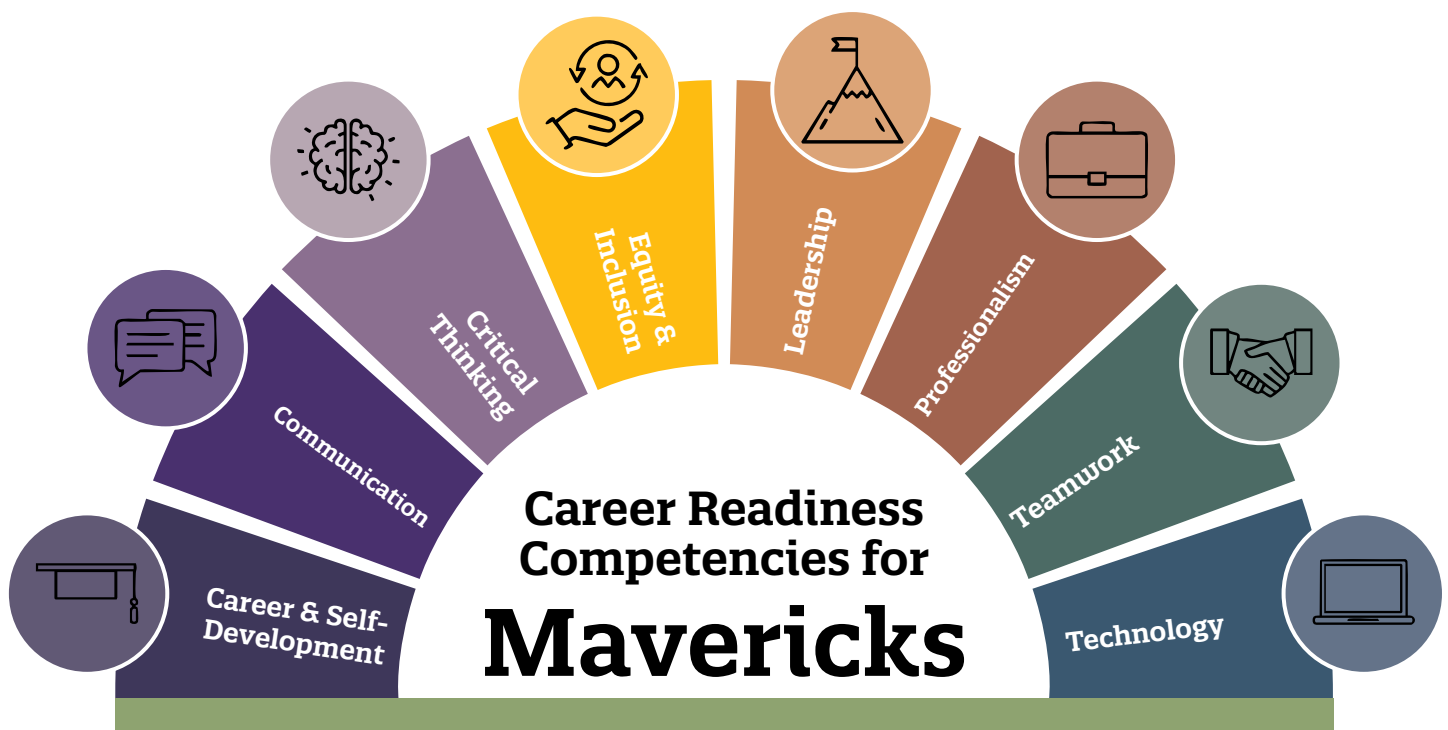
Equity & Inclusion

Demonstrate the awareness, attitude, and skills required to equitably engage and include people from diverse backgrounds.



Technology

Use digital tools ethically and effectively to solve problems, complete tasks, and enhance productivity.



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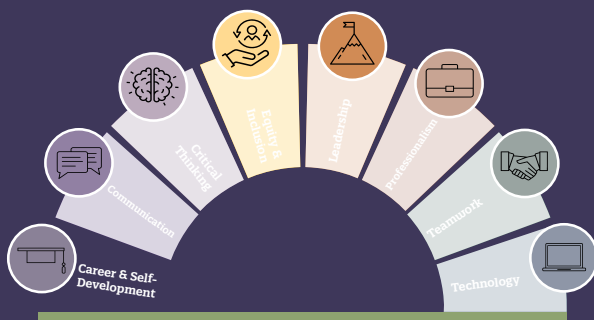


Careers & Self-Development

Take initiative for your career through self-awareness, professional growth, and lifelong learning.

Key Behaviors:

- Identify areas for professional growth and seek out opportunities for development.
- Establish and maintain relationships with professionals in the field.
- Set personal and professional goals and work towards achieving them.

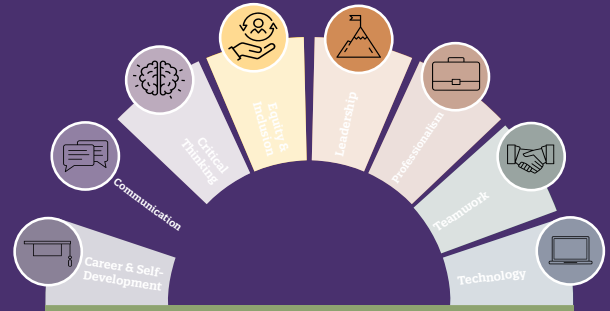


Communication

Clearly and effectively exchange information with others through written, verbal, and digital means.

Key Behaviors:

- Articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively in written and oral forms.
- Demonstrate public speaking skills and the ability to express ideas to others.
- Utilize active listening skills and provide feedback to others.

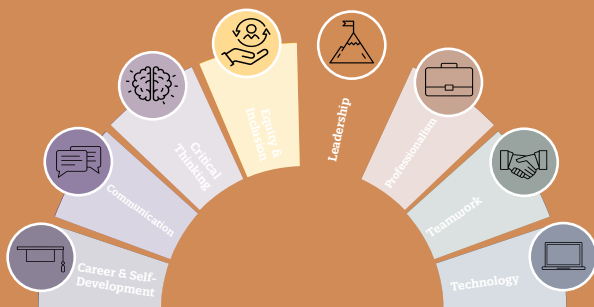


Leadership

Recognize and use your strengths to guide, support, and inspire others toward shared goals.

Key Behaviors:

- Inspire, persuade, and motivate self and others under a shared vision.
- Seek out and leverage diverse resources and feedback to inform direction.
- Use innovative thinking to go beyond traditional methods.

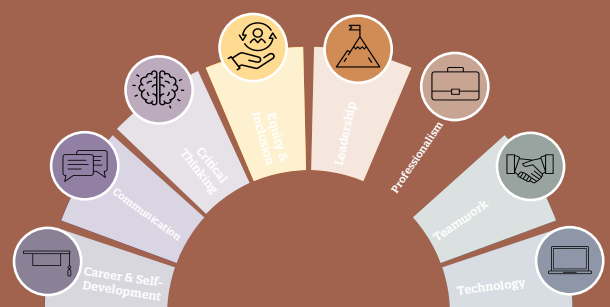


Professionalism

Consistently demonstrate accountability, integrity, and effective work habits in any environment.

Key Behaviors:

- Act equitably with integrity and accountability to self, others, and the organization.
- Maintain a positive personal brand in alignment with organizational and professional standards.
- Demonstrate dependability and consistent work habits.



Understanding the Job Search Process

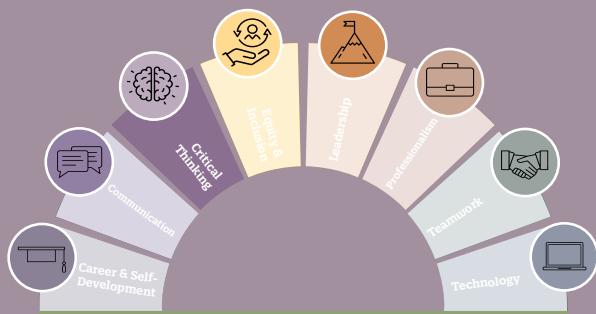


Critical Thinking

Identify and respond to needs by analyzing issues, making decisions, and solving problems.

Key Behaviors:

- Make decisions and solve problems using sound, insightful reasoning, and judgment.
- Gather and analyze information from a diverse set of sources and individuals to fully understand a problem.
- Proactively anticipate needs and prioritize action steps.

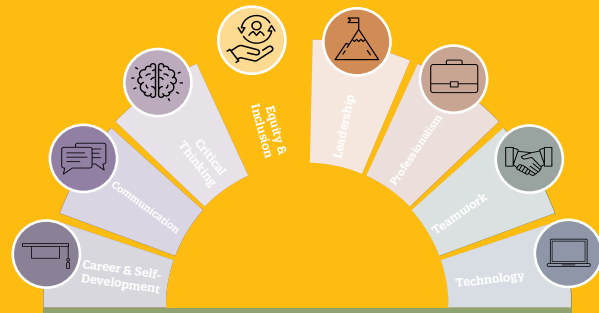


Equity & Inclusion

Demonstrate the awareness, attitude, and skills required to equitably engage and include people from diverse backgrounds.

Key Behaviors:

- Solicit and use feedback from multiple cultural perspectives to make inclusive and equity minded decisions.
- Actively contribute to inclusive and equitable practices that influence individuals and systemic change.
- Advocate for inclusion, equity, and social justice in the workplace.

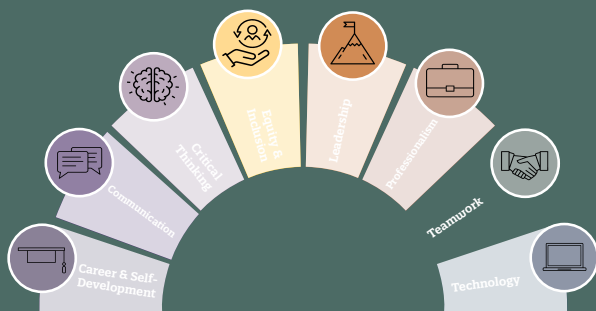


Teamwork

Collaborate and build strong, respectful relationships to reach common goals.

Key Behaviors:

- Listen carefully to others, taking time to understand, and ask appropriate questions without interrupting.
- Effectively manage conflict, interact with, and respect diverse personalities, and meet ambiguity with resilience.
- Be accountable for individual and team responsibilities and deliverables.

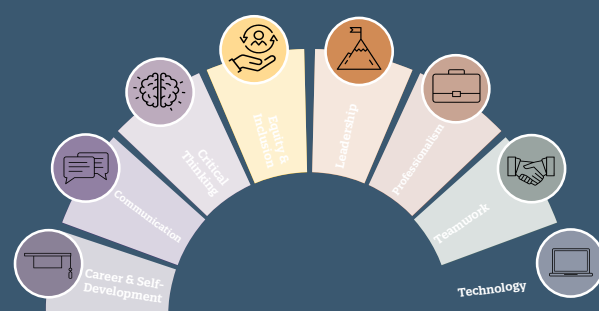


Technology

Use digital tools ethically and effectively to solve problems, complete tasks, and enhance productivity.

Key Behaviors:

- Navigate change and be open to learning new technologies.
- Use technology to improve the efficiency and productivity of work.
- Identify appropriate technology for tasks and utilize it effectively.



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Am I Career-Ready?

Now that you know about the eight Career Readiness Competencies, rate yourself on a scale from 1 ("requires substantial work") to 5 ("very experienced"). Use the space to the right to list ways in which you can work toward improvement.

Career & Self-Development Take initiative for your career through self-awareness, professional growth, and lifelong learning.	Rating:	Notes: _____ _____ _____
Communication Clearly and effectively exchange information with others through written, verbal, and digital means.	Rating:	Notes: _____ _____ _____
Critical Thinking Identify and respond to needs by analyzing issues, making decisions, and solving problems.	Rating:	Notes: _____ _____ _____
Equity & Inclusion Demonstrate the awareness, attitude, and skills required to equitably engage and include people from diverse backgrounds.	Rating:	Notes: _____ _____ _____
Leadership Recognize and use your strengths to guide, support, and inspire others toward shared goals.	Rating:	Notes: _____ _____ _____
Professionalism Consistently demonstrate accountability, integrity, and effective work habits in any environment.	Rating:	Notes: _____ _____ _____
Teamwork Collaborate and build strong, respectful relationships to reach common goals.	Rating:	Notes: _____ _____ _____
Technology Use digital tools ethically and effectively to solve problems, complete tasks, and enhance productivity.	Rating:	Notes: _____ _____ _____

Understanding the Job Search Process

Minnesota Career Fields, Clusters, & Pathways

Business Management Administration

- Marketing:
 - Merchandising
 - Marketing Management
 - Marketing Communications
 - Marketing Research
 - Professional Sales
- Business Management and Administration
 - Administrative Support
 - Operations Management
 - Business Information Management
 - Human Resource Management
 - General Management
- Hospitality and Tourism
 - Lodging
 - Recreation, Amusements and Attractions
 - Restaurants and Food/Beverage Services
 - Travel and Tourism
- Finance
 - Banking Services
 - Business Finance
 - Securities and Investment
 - Accounting
 - Insurance

Human Services

- Law, Public Safety, Correction, and Security:
 - Corrections Services
 - Emergency and Fire Management Services
 - Law Enforcement Services
 - Legal Services
 - Security and Protective Services
- Human Services
 - Consumer Services
 - Counselling and Mental Health Services
 - Early Childhood Development and Services
 - Family and Community Services
 - Personal Care Services
- Government and Public Administration
 - Revenue and Taxation
 - Foreign Service
 - Governance
 - National Security
 - Planning
 - Public Management and Administration
 - Regulation
- Education and Training
 - Administration and Administrative Support
 - Professional Support Services
 - Teaching/Training

Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources

- Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources
 - Animal Systems
 - Agribusiness Systems
 - Environmental Service Systems
 - Food Products and Processing Systems
 - Natural Resources Systems
 - Plant Systems
 - Power, Structural and Technical Systems

Foundational Knowledge and Skills

- Problem Solving
- Critical Thinking| Employability
- Citizenship
- Ethics
- Career Development
- Integrity Teamwork
- Legal Responsibilities Academic Foundations
- Technology Application
- Communications
- Safety Health & Environment
- Leadership Technical Literacy
- Cultural Competence
- Lifelong Learning
- Financial Well-being
- Organizational & Global Systems
- Creativity
- Innovation

Arts, Communications and Information Systems

- Arts, Audio/Video Technology, and Communications
 - Audio/Video Technology and Film
 - Journalism and Broadcasting
 - Performing Arts
 - Printing Technology
 - Communications Technology
 - Visual Arts
- Information Technology
 - Information Support and Services
 - Network Systems
 - Programming and Software Development
 - Web and Digital Communications

Engineering, Manufacturing and Technology

- Transportation, Distribution and Logistics:
 - Facility and Mobile Equipment Maintenance
 - Health, Safety and Environmental Management
 - Logistics Planning and Management Services
 - Sales and Services
 - Transportation Operations
 - Transportation Systems/Infrastructure Planning, Management, and Regulation
 - Warehousing and Distribution Center Operations
- Architecture and Construction
 - Construction
 - Design/Pre-construction
 - Maintenance/Operations
- Manufacturing
 - Production
 - Manufacturing Production Process Development
 - Maintenance Installation and Repair
 - Quality Assurance
 - Logistics and Inventory Control
 - Health, Safety, and Environmental Assurance
- Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
 - Engineering and Technology
 - Science and Mathematics

Health Science Technology

- Health Science
 - Biotechnology Research and Development
 - Diagnostic Services
 - Support Services
 - Health Informatics
 - Therapeutic Services

Additional Resources

- Learn about Programs of Study
- iSPEAK CTE Blog:
- Legend



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Self-Discovery

Before you begin planning your career, it is essential to take a step back and understand who you are. Your values, strengths, interests, and personality make up the foundation of a fulfilling career and, ultimately, of a meaningful life. No one else has your exact combination of experiences, passions, and talents—and that uniqueness is your greatest asset.

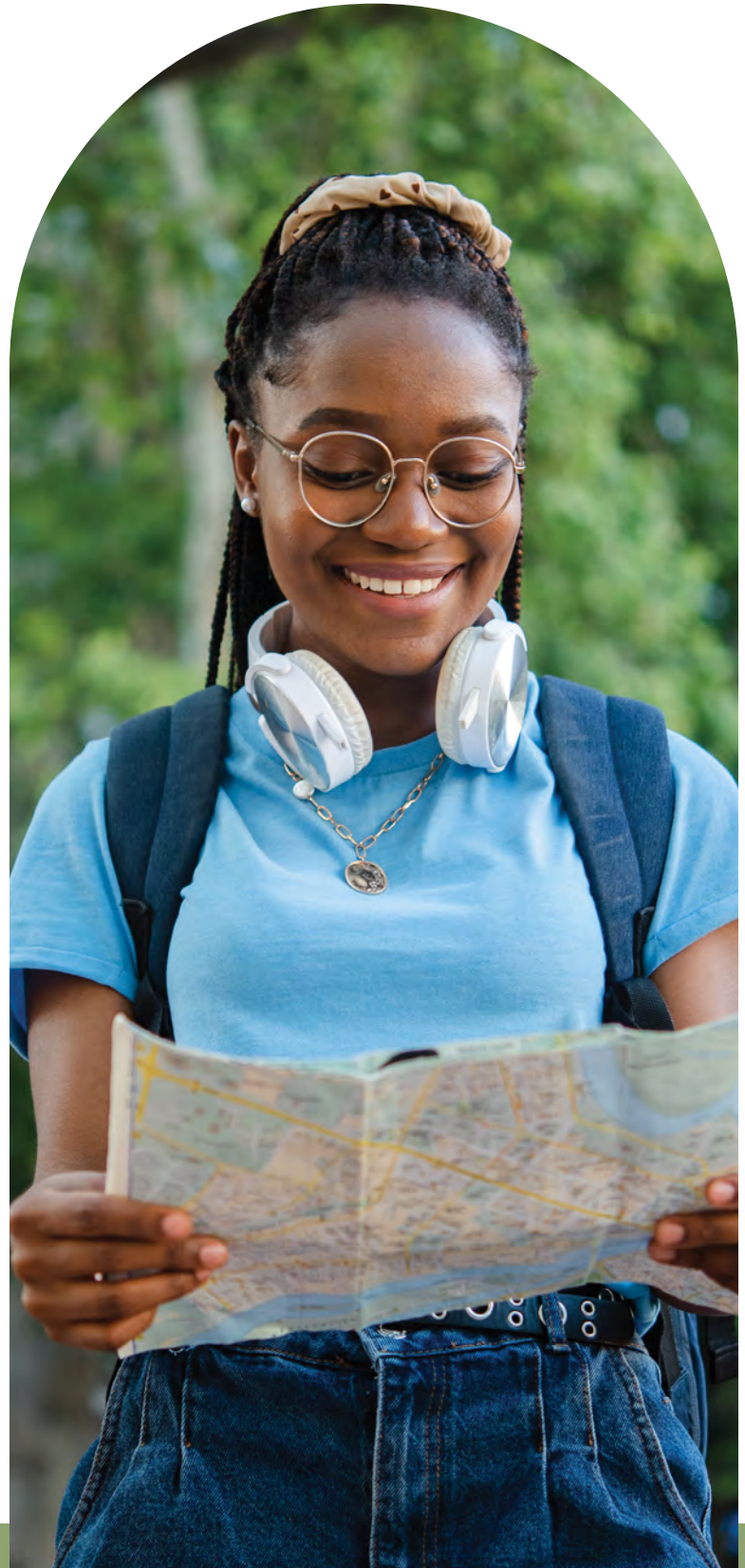
This section is designed to help you explore what matters most to you, what you are naturally good at, and what excites your curiosity. The more you understand yourself, the more confident and intentional you will be in making choices that align with your future goals. Self-discovery isn't a one-time event—it's a lifelong and career-long practice that evolves as you do.

The Job Search Handbook

Identify Your Values

What do you value in life? Rank your top ten (10) values in the order of their importance to you.

- ___ Acceptance
- ___ Adventure
- ___ Ambition
- ___ Balance
- ___ Creativity
- ___ Cooperation
- ___ Curiosity
- ___ Empathy
- ___ Family
- ___ Friendships
- ___ Financial Wealth
- ___ Fun
- ___ Growth
- ___ Happiness
- ___ Honesty
- ___ Helping Others
- ___ Humor
- ___ Independence
- ___ Intelligence
- ___ Loyalty
- ___ Maturity
- ___ Peace
- ___ Playfulness
- ___ Privacy
- ___ Reliability
- ___ Respect
- ___ Spirituality
- ___ Truth
- ___ Uniqueness
- ___ Wisdom



Complete the Values Sentences

- The greatest joy in my life is...
- The biggest decision I ever made was...
- My constant worry is...
- As a child I dreamed of...
- The thing I love most about life is...
- What I would like to change in my life is...
- The three things in the world I would change are...
- The person who influenced me the most taught me to...
- I spend most of my time...
- When I retire I am...
- I would prefer to be...
- A friend is someone who...
- My favorite kind of person is...
- Money is the most...
- What I would like to do most is...
- The people I work with are...
- If I were the boss, I would...
- The greatest sorrow of my life...
- My favorite place in the world is...
- To me, kids are...
- I hope someday to...
- I daydream the most about...

Before Moving On... Reflect:

Values serve as the basis for which life goals are established and provide a guide for individuals in making personally consistent and meaningful decisions about the future (Osborne et al., 1997, p. 82). Work values are more highly correlated than interests with work satisfaction. (Rounds, 1990).

Which of your values feel non-negotiable in a future workplace or career? Why?

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Identify Your Characteristics

The following exercise will help you identify who you are and what you bring to the table. Checkmark all the personal descriptors that fit who you are. Consider how your friends and family would describe you, and how you would describe yourself. Next, put a star next to any area that you would like to build or improve upon.

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| ☐ Achiever | ☐ Dignified | ☐ Knowledgeable | ☐ Shy |
| ☐ Active | ☐ Disciplined | ☐ Leader | ☐ Sincere |
| ☐ Adaptable | ☐ Direct | ☐ Lively | ☐ Sociable |
| ☐ Aggressive | ☐ Diplomatic | ☐ Logical | ☐ Softspoken |
| ☐ Alert | ☐ Do Gooder | ☐ Loyal | ☐ Sophisticated |
| ☐ Aloof | ☐ Domineering | ☐ Mature | ☐ Stable |
| ☐ Ambitious | ☐ Effervescent | ☐ Methodical | ☐ Striver |
| ☐ Analytical | ☐ Efficient | ☐ Non-Committal | ☐ Superficial |
| ☐ Animated | ☐ Emotional | ☐ Observant | ☐ Supervisor |
| ☐ Articulate | ☐ Energetic | ☐ Optimistic | ☐ Supportive |
| ☐ Attractive | ☐ Enthusiastic | ☐ Organized | ☐ Systematic |
| ☐ Beautiful | ☐ Expressive | ☐ Outgoing | ☐ Tactful |
| ☐ Bold | ☐ Extroverted | ☐ Patient | ☐ Talkative |
| ☐ Bright | ☐ Flexible | ☐ Perceptive | ☐ Teachable |
| ☐ Calm | ☐ Follows Through | ☐ Persuasive | ☐ Traveler |
| ☐ Capable | ☐ Follower | ☐ Pessimistic | ☐ Trusting |
| ☐ Carefree | ☐ Forceful | ☐ Pleasant | ☐ Trustworthy |
| ☐ Caring | ☐ Free | ☐ Practical | ☐ Versatile |
| ☐ Certain | ☐ Friendly | ☐ Punctual | ☐ Welcoming |
| ☐ Challenger | ☐ Gentle | ☐ Quiet | ☐ Wise |
| ☐ Cheerful | ☐ Giving | ☐ Rambler | ☐ Workaholic |
| ☐ Clever | ☐ Gregarious | ☐ Rational | ☐ Writer |
| ☐ Cocky | ☐ Hard Worker | ☐ Realistic | ☐ Youthful |
| ☐ Competent | ☐ Honest | ☐ Reasonable | |
| ☐ Competitive | ☐ Honorable | ☐ Relaxed | |
| ☐ Confident | ☐ Humorous | ☐ Reliable | |
| ☐ Conforming | ☐ Imaginative | ☐ Respectful | |
| ☐ Conscientious | ☐ Independent | ☐ Responsible | |
| ☐ Controlled | ☐ Innovative | ☐ Secure | |
| ☐ Cooperative | ☐ Inspiring | ☐ Selfish | |
| ☐ Courteous | ☐ Intellectual | ☐ Self-Confident | |
| ☐ Creative | ☐ Intuitive | ☐ Self-Reliant | |
| ☐ Decisive | ☐ Introverted | ☐ Self-Starter | |
| ☐ Dependable | ☐ Judgmental | ☐ Sensitive | |
| ☐ Determined | ☐ Kind | ☐ Serious | |

Identify Your Skills

Your functional skills are skills that can be used to complete general tasks at a job. You can use your functional skills in a variety of career pathways. Functional skills can be grouped together within general skill clusters to allow you to think about the kinds of skills you use the most. The following outline lists a variety of functional skills and the general skill clusters to which they belong:

- Draw a circle around all the skills you think you already have.
- ✓ Place a check by the skills you enjoy using.
- ☆ Put a star next to the skills you would like to develop or improve.

Creative Skills:

Abstracting
Acting
Conceptualizing
Creating
Designing
Developing
Directing
Distinguishing
Fashioning
Generating
Humor
Imagining
Innovating
Integrating
Intuition
Memorizing
Painting
Perceiving
Performing
Planning
Playing
Sensitivity
Shaping
Sharing
Synthesizing
Visualizing
Writing

Communication Skills:

Arbitrating
Arranging
Creating
Developing
Directing
Enlisting
Helping
Influencing
Interpreting
Leading
Manipulating
Mediating
Merging
Motivating
Negotiating
Obtaining
Persuading
Reading
Reasoning
Reconciling
Recruiting
Selling
Speaking

Detail Skills:

Approving
Arranging
Classifying
Collecting
Comparing
Compiling
Copying
Dispatching
Enforcing
Executing
Facilitating
Following Through
Implementing
Inspecting
Judgment
Meeting Deadlines
Memory
Operating
Organizing
Processing
Purchasing
Recording
Responding
Responsibility
Retaining
Retrieving
Routine
Systematizing
Tabulating
Time Management

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Financial Skills:

Accounting
Accuracy
Administering
Allocating
Analyzing
Appraising
Auditing
Bookkeeping
Budgeting
Calculating
Computing
Detail
Developing
Finger Dexterity
Managing
Planning
Preparing
Record Keeping
Researching
Solving
Speed
Sensitivity
Shaping
Sharing
Synthesizing
Visualizing
Writing

Manual Skills:

Assembling
Bending
Binding
Controlling
Cutting
Drilling
Driving
Feeding
Grinding
Handling
Lifting
Moving
Operating
Pulling
Punching
Setting Up
Shipping
Tending

Helping Skills:

Adjusting
Attending
Asking Questions
Caring
Directing
Empathizing
Guiding
Intuition
Leading
Listening
Maturity
Mentoring
Perception
Referring
Reflecting Affect
Reflecting Cognition
Relating
Rendering
Sensitivity
Servicing
Speaking
Teamwork
Understanding

Research Skills:

Clarifying
Collecting
Compiling
Critiquing
Deciding
Diagnosing
Evaluating
Examining
Extrapolating
Gathering
Inspecting
Interpreting
Interviewing
Investigating
Organizing
Perceiving
Recognizing Problems
Reviewing
Surveying
Synthesizing
Writing

Management Skills:

Administering
Analyzing
Assigning
Coordinating
Contracting
Controlling
Delegating
Developing
Directing
Evaluating
Firing
Hiring
Organizing
Planning
Prioritizing
Producing
Recommending
Reviewing
Scheduling
Supervising
Troubleshooting

Teaching Skills:

Adapting
Adopting
Advising
Briefing
Clarifying
Coaching
Communicating
Coordinating
Deciding
Developing
Empowering
Encouraging
Enlightening
Enthusiasm
Explaining
Facilitating
Goal Setting
Influencing
Informing
Initiating
Instructing
Persuading
Stimulating
Valuing

Identifying Your Interests

Below you will find a series of popular activities and topics of interest. In the far-right column, rank your interest level on a scale from 1 ("not at all interested") to 5 ("very interested"). Then, put a star next to your top 5 interest categories.

Category	Examples	Interest Level
Animals & Nature	Volunteering at an animal shelter, hiking in national parks, watching wildlife documentaries	
Art & Design	Drawing or painting, graphic design, decorating	
Business & Entrepreneurship	Starting a small business, investing in stocks	
Community Service	Organizing food drives, volunteering for local nonprofits, mentoring youth	
Computers & Technology	Coding, building PCs, exploring AI tools	
Education & Teaching	Assisting peers, creating lesson plans, working with children and adolescents	
Environment & Sustainability	Climate activism, organizing recycling initiatives	
Fashion & Style	Following fashion and makeup trends, designing clothing	
Film & Media	Shooting and producing films, editing videos, analyzing cinema	
Food & Cooking	Trying new recipes, baking, exploring new restaurants	
Government & Political Science	Debating policy, attending town halls, following elections	
Health & Wellness	Practicing mindfulness, learning about nutrition, reading self-help literature	
History & Culture	Visiting museums, reading nonfiction and historical fiction, studying world cultures	
Law & Justice	Participating in mock trials, studying legal cases, advocacy	
Math & Problem Solving	Engaging in mental challenges, analyzing data, solving equations	
Mental Health & Psychology	Self-reflection, studying human behavior, committing to personal growth	
Performing Arts	Playing an instrument, singing, acting in plays and/or musicals	
Reading & Writing	Writing stories or poetry, blogging, reading novels	
Science & Research	Conducting experiments, exploring new inventions	
Social Justice & Advocacy	Protesting for causes, raising awareness, organizing campaigns	
Sports & Fitness	Playing team sports, weightlifting, coaching youth teams	
Travel & Cultural Experiences	Learning new languages, exploring foreign countries, planning trips	
Video Games & Tabletop Games	Competing in tournaments, board game nights, video gaming	

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Unpacking Your Interests

Pick 4 things you love doing or learning about. For each interest, answer the following questions:

Interest	What do I enjoy about it?	What skills do I use when I do it?	What careers might involve this?

Before Moving On... Reflect:

Are there any interests you would like to build on in your career?

Are there any interests you would rather keep outside of your career as hobbies?

Values, Skills, and Interests: Putting it All Together

Take some time to answer the following prompts:

1. My preferred kinds of people to work with:	
2. My favorite working conditions:	
3. What I can do and love to do (or my favorite transferable skills):	
4. My goal, purpose, or mission in life (or my philosophy about life):	
5. My favorite fields of interest:	
6. Level of responsibility I would like:	
7. Rewards I hope for:	
8. My preferred place(s) to live:	
9. My preferred geographical factors:	



Networking

You have probably heard the phrase, “It’s not just about what you know—it’s about who you know.” While your skills and education are important, the relationships you build can play a powerful role in your career. Networking isn’t about having all the right contacts—it’s about approaching conversations with confidence, communicating clearly, and building authentic, meaningful relationships. And yes, that often means reaching out to people you do not know yet.

For many people, especially those just starting out, networking can feel intimidating and anxiety-inducing. But it’s one of the most important steps in finding opportunities and building a career. In fact, research shows that 70% of jobs are not even advertised on job boards and 85% of vacancies are filled via referrals (Kurtuy, 2025). That means the majority of opportunities for work are shared through conversations, referrals, and personal connections—not job boards.

This section will guide you through how to make those connections, from using LinkedIn and your alumni network to conducting informational interviews and crafting your elevator pitch. You don’t need to be an extrovert or have everything figured out—you just need to be willing to start.

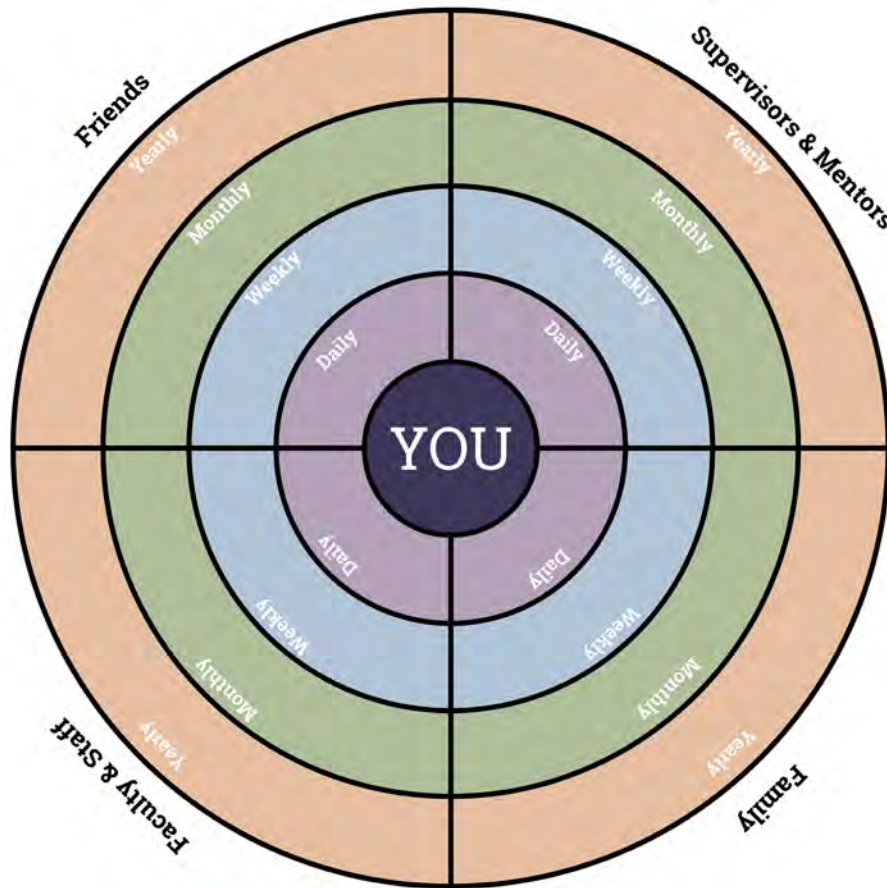
And don’t worry—networking isn’t a one-and-done task; it’s something you’ll keep doing throughout your career, often in ways that feel natural and even enjoyable.

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Create your Personal Sociogram

Directions:

1. Using the diagram below, list the names of people in your network according to the categories provided in each quadrant. Keep in mind, each colored ring signifies how often you connect with this person.
2. Draw a connecting line between people in your network who know each other.
3. Circle the connections that have had the most significant impact on you.



Reflection:

1. How well-rounded is your network? Are some quadrants less populated than others?
2. Which areas might need more attention and development?
3. Do you have a closed network (most of your connections know each other) or an open network (many diverse connections)?

Action:

1. Make an intentional plan to expand and strengthen your network by starting small: connect with someone new on LinkedIn, introduce yourself at a campus event, or strike up a conversation at a career fair.
2. Remember, growing your network doesn't have to be overwhelming – just intentional! Take it one step at a time.

Networking 101

Networking is NOT

- Schmoozing or trying to win someone over.
- Constantly calling an employer's HR Team.
- Getting something from someone.
- Begging strangers for a job/internship/opportunity.

Networking IS

- Meeting new people in every day life (e.g., in line for lunch, after class).
- Going the extra mile by reaching out to those who can help you in your field.
- Establishing mutually beneficial relationships.
- Understanding what you have to offer and how you can help someone.
- Being open and receptive to opportunities that may be available.

Networking = Building Social Capital

Social capital is the value of relationships and connections that can help you gain opportunities, advice, and support. Networking, on the other hand, is the process of building relationships.

To better understand social capital, think of it like a bank account: The more relationships you invest in, the more capital you have when you need support, advice, or job leads. Another way to look at social capital is to view it in terms of the following formula:

More Relationships → More Social Capital → More Support, Advice, and Job Leads

Examples of Social Capital in Action:

1. When your roommate is able to give you insights into a class that they took last semester (e.g., are there many small assignments throughout the duration of the course or only a few big assignments, is the professor reasonable about the occasional absence from class?).
2. When you need help with a difficult math problem and post on the MavLife App for advice.
3. When members of an athletic team are able to fundraise without having to check the authenticity of the product they are selling.

Before Moving On... Reflect:

Take a moment to assess your social capital. Is your network more closed or open? Are you connecting with people across different parts of your network? Do you have a diverse network, or is it homogeneous (i.e., are most people in your network similar to you and each other)? Do you have strong connections and weaker connections?

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How to Build Your Social Capital with Networking

Building social capital (i.e., growing your network) is about forming meaningful, authentic connections that can support your academic, personal, and professional growth. Here are some practical ways to get started:

Struggling to break the ice?

Think **FORD**:

F - Family:

Ask about their family, kids, pets, or upbringing.

"Do you have any siblings?"

"Where did you grow up?"

O - Occupation:

What do they do for work, study, or volunteer?

"What classes are you taking?"

"How'd you get into your line of work?"

R - Recreation:

What do they do for fun—hobbies, sports, travel?

"What do you like to do outside of work/school?"

"Any fun plans this weekend?"

D - Dreams:

What are their goals, aspirations, or things they're excited about?

"What's something you are looking forward to this year?"

"Where is your favorite place you've ever been?"

Get Involved on Campus

- Join clubs and organizations to meet peers with shared interests.
- Attend events and social gatherings, speaker panels, networking nights, and career fairs.
- Take on leadership positions to increase your visibility and to develop new skills.
- Step outside of your comfort zone and show up somewhere by yourself—introduce yourself to someone and see if you have anything in common. You may be surprised!

Build Relationships with Faculty, Staff, and Student Peers

- Visit your instructors' office hours. This is a great opportunity to seek mentorship, get to know them, and have them get to know you. If they teach something you are passionate about, you never know where this could lead.
- Engage with the Career Development Center for job search resources and employer connections.
- Sit by someone you don't know in class. Ask them to study together sometime or strike up a conversation about a topic in class you found interesting or confusing.

Tap Into Your Alumni Network

- Use Minnesota State University, Mankato's alumni network on LinkedIn to find graduates in your field of interest. Alumni love hearing from and helping fellow Mavericks!
- Reach out to alumni with purpose: introduce yourself, mention your shared experience, and ask thoughtful questions.
- Request informational interviews to learn about career paths and build rapport (see p. 25).

Be Curious and Consistent

- When talking to other people, whether you know them well or not, ask questions and show genuine interest in their experiences.
- Always follow-up. This can be in the form of a thank-you note/message, an expression of a nice time had, or an opportunity to make future plans.
- Give back by sharing opportunities and celebrating others' successes.

Informational Interviews

An informational interview is a brief (20-30 minute) interview where an individual seeks information and advice from someone who has experience or knowledge in a particular: field/industry, company/organization, or job/role. The purpose of an informational interview is to gain insights into a specific career path or industry, to build a professional network, and to learn more about the things that aren't "Googleable."

Informational Interviews 101:

Find people to interview on LinkedIn, within the Career Champions Roster, Alumni network, and/or by using the Graduate Follow Up Survey (see p. 28 for more information about how to introduce yourself).

Informational Interviews can occur in-person (preferred), virtually, or over the phone. It is important to be flexible and accommodating when scheduling, and to make sure that both parties feel comfortable and safe with the chosen location. If you meet someone virtually, be considerate of different time zones.

It's generally a good idea to schedule the informational interview a few weeks in advance to give both parties time to prepare and to avoid any scheduling conflicts. Once you have confirmed the time and date for the interview, be sure to follow up with a reminder a few days in advance.

Come prepared with a list of questions—remember that you are the interviewer and will be guiding the conversation. Consider 2-3 questions to help you learn about your interviewee's career journey, 2-3 questions about their day-to-day work, and 2-3 questions geared towards advice for your future.

Consider offering to buy the interviewee a coffee or lunch in exchange for their time and information.

Respect the interviewee's time by coming up with an agreed-upon timeline and sticking to it.

Ask for the interviewee's contact information if you do not already have it and send them a thank-you message within 24 hours of your meeting.

Depending on the relationship and situation, it may be appropriate to follow up periodically with the person you spoke with to check in and see how things are going. This can help maintain the connection and potentially lead to future opportunities.

Informational Interviewing in Action

Say you want to speak with an alum of Minnesota State Mankato, Connie Connex, who works as a physical therapist for the Saint Paul Saints baseball team. You are interested in a career in sports, so you reach out to Connie on LinkedIn and ask if she would be open for a 30-minute video call, and she accepts.

During your conversation with Connie, you ask about their day-to-day responsibilities. While you might assume that most of her time is spent treating injuries, Connie explains that a large portion of the job is actually preventative—designing mobility and recovery routines to keep athletes healthy and game-ready. It's the kind of insight you wouldn't easily find online.

Curious about how Connie landed such a unique role, you ask about her path to the Saints. Rather than applying through a job board, Connie shares that the opportunity came through a connection made during a clinical rotation. A mentor introduced her to the team's head trainer, which eventually led to a seasonal position

and, later, a full-time role. It's a clear reminder of how important networking and relationship-building can be in this field.

Thinking ahead to your own career, you ask what types of clinical experiences would be most valuable. Connie recommends seeking out fast-paced environments like orthopedic clinics or athletic training settings. She also emphasizes the importance of learning how to communicate effectively—not just with athletes, but with coaches and staff as well.

Before wrapping up, you ask one final question: "What's something you wish you had known when you were in my shoes?" Connie pauses and says, "Your skills matter, but so many doors open because of who you know and how you show up."

You leave the conversation feeling inspired and better informed—not just about the role itself, but about the hidden aspects of the profession that don't show up in job descriptions or online searches.

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A Brief Introduction to LinkedIn

LinkedIn is more than just an online resume or a social media profile—it is a powerful tool for discovering career paths, connecting with professionals, and learning from others in your field of interest. **95%** of recruiters globally regularly use LinkedIn, **101** job applications are submitted through LinkedIn every second, and **6** people are hired every minute (Osman, 2025). Here are a few ways to make the most of LinkedIn:

- **Create a strong profile:** Use a professional photo, write a compelling “About Me,” and list your experience, skills, and accomplishments. More is more with LinkedIn—it is not bragging to include these things.
- **Connect with purpose:** Start with classmates, professors, co-workers, and internship supervisors. Then branch out to alumni and professionals. Always include a personalized message when sending a connection request to someone you have never met.

Example: “Hi [Name], I am a student at Minnesota State University, Mankato studying [Your Major]. I came across your profile while exploring careers in [Industry] and would love to connect and learn more about your journey. Thank you!”

- **Stay active and visible:** Like, comment on, or share posts. Post updates about your internships, class projects, or events you have attended. Join LinkedIn groups related to your interests. You never need to post anything about your personal life, nor do you need to posture as if you have it all figured out. Keep your content professional.



Job and Internship Fairs

Job and internship fairs (i.e., career fairs) and networking events are more than just an opportunity for free swag—they are powerful and fun opportunities to connect with employers, explore career paths, and practice your professional presence. Whether you're a first-year student, preparing to graduate, or somewhere in between, here's how to show up and stand out:

Why Do Career Fairs Matter?	Explore Opportunities: Discover internships, co-ops, part-time, and full-time jobs across industries. Build Your Network: Meet recruiters and professionals in-person who can help open doors. Practice Makes Perfect: Sharpen your communication, confidence, and career readiness.
How Should I Prepare for a Career Fair?	Research Employers: Know who is coming and prioritize your top choices. Plan Your Outfit: Dress in business professional attire—think slacks and blazers, but do not lose your sense of style. Perfect Your Elevator Pitch: A 30-second intro about who you are, what you're studying, and what you're looking for (see p. 28)
What Should I Do the Day of a Career Fair?	Print Your Resume: Bring multiple copies of a clean, up-to-date resume. Leave the Backpack: It weighs you down and clutters the space. Instead, opt for a sleek folder or portfolio. Practice Your Handshake: Firm, confident, and paired with eye contact. Stay Engaged: Ask thoughtful questions and take notes after each conversation. Ask people you meet for their contact card.
What Do I Do After the Career Fair?	Follow Up: Within 24-48 hours, send your new connections an e-mail thanking them for their time. Connect on LinkedIn: Personalize your request by mentioning something specific you discussed. Attend the Next Fair: Keep going to Job and Internship Fairs hosted by the Career Development Center. It never hurts to make more connections!
Any Career Fair Final Words of Wisdom?	Be Yourself: Authenticity goes a long way. Stay Open-Minded: You might discover roles or companies you had not considered before. Keep Practicing: Every interaction builds your confidence and skills.

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The Elevator Pitch

The term **elevator pitch** comes from the idea of having just the length of an elevator ride—about 30 to 60 seconds—to make a strong impression on someone important, like a potential employer or investor. It's all about being brief, relevant, and memorable.

To effectively answer the question “Tell me about yourself,” think of it as delivering an elevator pitch—a concise, compelling summary of who you are, what you do, and what you’re aiming for.

Below you will find a breakdown of three contexts in which an elevator pitch will come in handy: Career Fairs, Job Interviews, and Networking. In each, you should introduce yourself clearly, highlight a relevant skill or achievement, show you’ve done your research (especially about the company or industry), and end with a thoughtful question or statement of intent.

Elevator Pitch Outlines

Career Fair

1. **Introduce Yourself:** Share your name, major, and year in school (if relevant).
2. **Share a Selling Point:** Highlight a professional goal, relevant experience, skill, or achievement that connects to your career interests.
3. **Show Your Research:** Demonstrate your interest by noting something specific you admire.
4. **Call to Action:** Ask a thoughtful question that reflects your curiosity or goals, and opens the door to further conversation.

Job Interview

1. **Start with a Hook:** Begin with a brief, engaging statement that grabs attention—this could be your passion, a unique strength, or a quick achievement.
2. **Who Are You:** Share your name, current role (or education), and 1-2 defining qualities or experiences relevant to the job.
3. **Why Should They Care:** Highlight a key skill, value, or achievement that aligns with the employer’s needs.
4. **What Do You Want:** State clearly what you’re seeking from the opportunity—what role you’re applying for and why.
5. **Make it Personal:** Mention something specific about the organization that resonates with you (their mission, recent initiative, culture, etc.).
6. **Express Gratitude and Confidence:** Thank them for the opportunity and affirm your enthusiasm.

Networking

1. **Clear Value Statement:** After introducing yourself, summarize what you do with this format: I help X achieve Y by doing Z (x= audience, y= value, z= how).
2. **Show and Tell:** Share a quick, relatable example that illustrates the challenge your audience faces—and how you’ve helped solve it. Keep it concise and authentic.
3. **Share Solutions:** Highlight what sets your solution or process apart. What do you do differently? Why are you effective in this space?
4. **Value and Application:** End by noting the impact or outcome of your work—what changed as a result? Tie it back to why it matters in real-world terms.

Networking

Use the space below to take notes and set your own goals of how you will grow and strengthen your network:

[illegible]



Applying & Interviewing

Once you have gained clarity about who you are, what you want, and have begun growing your network, it is time to explore the job market. The applying and interviewing stage is where your preparation meets opportunity. From crafting a compelling resume to confidently navigating interviews and negotiating offers, this phase is about presenting your best self to potential employers.

This section will guide you through each step of the application process, helping you communicate your strengths, experiences, and aspirations with clarity and confidence. With the right tools and strategies, you will be equipped to make a strong impression—and take meaningful steps toward the career you envision.

Remember, career paths are rarely linear—many people explore different roles, industries, and interests over time. You might stay in one field for 2 years or 22 years, and both are completely valid. What matters most is that you make the choice that feels right to you. The tools and strategies in this section aren't just for landing your first job—they are skills you'll return to throughout your career, whenever you are ready for your next step.

- The primary purpose of a resume is to obtain interviews with potential employers. Therefore, a resume should:
 - 1) Present a positive image
 - 2) Describe your qualifications
 - 3) Detail what you have done
 - 4) Provide a framework for an interview
- Stick to the facts and be positive. **Never** lie on a resume.
- Avoid abbreviations.
- Do not use any first-person language in your resume (e.g., I, my, our, we). Third-person language is the professional standard.
- Include your name, phone number, and e-mail address. Be sure your e-mail address is professional sounding (i.e., stomper.maverick@gmail.com v. stompiii.boiii2023@gmail.com).
- Personal information such as age, marital status, height, and weight should NOT be included on your resume—exceptions may occur in certain industries (e.g., performing arts such as theatre, dance).
- Do not include your references' or anyone else's contact information on your resume. Keep this information in a secure place until an employer asks for it directly and you have alerted your references (see p. 59).
- Microsoft Word is the **best** program for creating and editing your resume. Templates found on Google, Canva, and other design websites (**especially** templates for purchase) are not necessary to stand out to employers. They are also difficult to edit. As a resume is a working document, you will want to be able to edit your resume easily and frequently in order to reflect new skills and experiences as you gain them.
- Consider creating a comprehensive resume that includes **everything** that you have ever done. From there, create tailored resumes that showcase how you meet a particular job's qualifications. You can do this by simply cutting and pasting information to highlight key experiences that are relevant to the specific position you are applying for within a new Word document (i.e., customize every resume to the job you are applying for).
- Resumes are most often skimmed in under 30 seconds. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance to have an easy-to-read resume with a clear and consistent layout. A quick skim by a reader should give them enough to know whether you are a good fit for the role.
- Employers are interested in what you have done recently. Leave out your high school education and activities unless you are a first-year student looking for a part-time job or internship.

Applying and Interviewing

What Should You Include in Your Resume?

A well-crafted resume is more than just a list of jobs—it is a strategic snapshot of your experiences, skills, and potential. This guide explores some of the possible sections you can include to showcase your strengths from education and skills to volunteer work and leadership roles:

OBJECTIVE STATEMENT (Optional)

A short sentence that explains what kind of opportunity you're looking for and how you hope to contribute. This is optional and best used when you're applying for a specific role or industry.

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY (Optional)

A brief paragraph (2–3 sentences) that highlights your key qualifications, strengths, and career goals. It's like a mini elevator pitch at the top of your resume.

EDUCATION (Required)

List your college or university, degree, major, expected graduation date, and any honors or GPA (if 3.5 or above). You can also include study abroad experiences or relevant academic achievements.

RELEVANT COURSEWORK/PROJECTS (Optional)

Include classes or academic projects that relate directly to the job or internship you're applying for. This is especially helpful if you don't have much work experience yet. This can also be a sub-section within your Education section.

EXPERIENCE (Required)

This is where you list any paid or unpaid experience. Each experience listed on your resume should include the title you held, the company name you worked for, the location of the company including city and state, the length of your employment including the month and year you began to the month and year you departed, as well as bullet points detailing your responsibilities and accomplishments in the role. Some examples of possible Experience sections include:

- **Work Experience** – Paid jobs, part-time or full-time.
- **Volunteer Experience** – Unpaid roles that show commitment and service.
- **Relevant Experience** – Any experience closely tied to your career goals.
- **Clinical Experience** – For healthcare-related fields.
- **Leadership Experience** – Roles where you led a team, project, or initiative.
- **Other Experience** – Anything else that shows responsibility or skill.

SKILLS (If Applicable)

Highlight your technical, interpersonal, and language skills. Be specific by mentioning software, tools, or soft skills like communication or teamwork.

INVOLVEMENT (If Applicable)

This is where you can showcase your experience outside of the classroom. Some examples of possible Involvement include Clubs, Student Organizations, Honor Societies, Professional Associations, Committee Work, and Greek Organization Membership. If you hold a leadership position within a group, be sure to mention that too—it can overlap with leadership or volunteer experience.

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Writing Resume Bullet Points

Below is a basic formula for creating detailed bullet points. Use this formula as a starting point when writing bullet points:

what you did + how you did it + why you did it

(power verb) + (skills) + (result/outcome)

	Good	Better	Best
Example 1	Made a documentary.	Filmed a 10-minute documentary using a x3000 camera.	Filmed a 10-minute documentary on AIDS awareness for a class presentation, utilizing a x3000 camera.
Example 2	Attended weekly meetings.	Attended weekly, 30-minute meetings with C-Suite members.	Participated in weekly, 30-minute meetings with C-Suite members in order to expand knowledge of marketing strategies.
Example 3	Ran cash register.	Handled cash and credit transactions.	Handled over \$200 cash and credit transactions, balanced the drawer, and ATM accurately during each shift.

When writing bullet points, it is important to go beyond just your “duties” at a job. Try to answer as many of these questions as possible:

WHO – Who did your job help? The company? Clients? Customers?

WHAT – What happened with the results of the job? If you did research, was the information published? If you had to do a report, what was done with that information?

WHEN - When did this happen? Daily? Weekly? Monthly? Talking about how often you did something is a great way to show productivity in your job.

WHERE – Where did your duties occur? Did you have to travel for a job? Were you responsible for interacting with people nationally? Globally?

WHY & HOW – Why did you do this? How did your job duties help or add to the organization’s ability to function?

Applying and Interviewing

Resume Language

Power Verbs

Power Verbs convey accomplishments. (Past tense in parentheses).

Adapt(ed)	Conduct(ed)	Establish(ed)	Lead (Led)	Print(ed)
Administer(ed)	Confront(ed)	Estimate(d)	Lecture(d)	Process(ed)
Advise(d)	Construct(ed)	Evaluate(d)	Locate(d)	Promote(d)
Analyze(d)	Contract(ed)	Examine(d)	Maintain(ed)	Propose(d)
Anticipate(d)	Control(led)	Exhibit(ed)	Manage(d)	Provide(d)
Appoint(ted)	Coordinate(d)	Expand(ed)	Match(ed)	Question(ed)
Appraise(d)	Correspond(ed)	Expedite(d)	Measure(d)	Recommend(ed)
Approve(d)	Counsel(ed)	Facilitate(d)	Mediate(d)	Record(ed)
Arrange(d)	Create(d)	Forecast(ed)	Monitor(ed)	Recruit(ed)
Assemble(d)	Decide(d)	Formulate(d)	Motivate(d)	Sketch(ed)
Audit(ed)	Delegate(d)	Generate(d)	Negotiate(d)	Solve(d)
Boost(ed)	Demonstrate(d)	Hire(d)	Observe(d)	Speak (Spoke)
Build (Built)	Design(ed)	Implement(ed)	Operate(d)	Structure(d)
Calculate(d)	Develop(ed)	Improve(d)	Organize(d)	Supervise(d)
Circulate(d)	Diagnose(d)	Increase(d)	Originate(d)	Support(ed)
Classify(ed)	Direct(ed)	Influence(d)	Participate(d)	Talk(ed)
Coach(ed)	Dissect(ed)	Initiate(d)	Perform(ed)	Train(ed)
Compile(d)	Display(ed)	Inspire(d)	Persuade(d)	Translate(d)
Complete(d)	Draft(ed)	Interview(ed)	Plan(ned)	Update(d)
Compose(d)	Edit(ed)	Investigate(d)	Predict(ed)	Write (Wrote)
Conceive(d)	Eliminate(d)	Launch(ed)	Prepare(d)	

Adjectives

Adjectives enhance descriptions.

Accurate	Competitive	Efficient	Methodical	Quick
Adaptable	Confident	Energetic	Meticulous	Rational
Ambitious	Conscientious	Firm	Motivated	Reliable
Analytical	Cooperative	Flexible	Open-Minded	Resourceful
Capable	Determined	Industrious	Organized	Responsible
Clear-Headed	Discrete	Intelligent	Patient	Strategic
Competent	Effective	Logical	Precise	Successful

Skill Areas in Action

Use **Power Verbs** to help describe your **Skills**.

Administering programs	Delegating tasks	Interpreting languages	Publicizing content
Advising people	Distributing products	Investigating problems	Raising funds
Analyzing data	Developing rapport	Listening to others	Reporting information
Budgeting expenses	Editing designs	Maintaining records	Selling memberships
Comparing results	Encouraging others	Managing people	Speaking in public
Conducting meetings	Enduring long shifts	Motivating others	Supervising employees
Coordinating events	Enforcing rules	Negotiating contracts	Training new hires
Creating outlines	Expressing feelings	Prioritizing tasks	Working in a team
Defining goals	Handling complaints	Promoting products	Writing quarterly reports

The Job Search Handbook

Resume Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What should I include on my resume if I have limited work experience?

Focus on relevant coursework, projects, volunteer work, internships, leadership roles, and campus involvement. Include transferable skills like communication, teamwork, and problem-solving within your bullet points and description of duties.

How long should my resume be?

For most job seekers, a one-page resume is ideal. However, in some situations an individual may struggle to fit all of their relevant experience on one-page. We recommend a two-page maximum. Keep it concise and tailored to the job or internship you're applying for. For an example of a two-page resume, see p. 42. In a job seeker's mid to late career, a resume may be longer than two pages. CVs are typically well over two pages (see p. 44).

How do I customize my resume for a specific job or internship?

Use keywords directly from the job description and emphasize relevant experiences and skills. Adjust your bullet points to reflect how your background aligns with the employer's needs.

Can I include high school experiences?

Only if they are highly relevant or if you're a first-year student. As you gain more college-level experience, phase out high school content.

Can I include farming or agricultural work on my resume?

Yes! Farming experience demonstrates valuable skills such as work ethic, time management, problem-solving, and physical endurance. Be sure to describe your responsibilities and any leadership or technical skills (e.g., operating machinery, managing livestock, handling seasonal planning).

Is it okay to use AI tools to help write my resume?

Yes—as long as the content is truthful and accurately reflects your experience, using AI to help with phrasing, formatting, or brainstorming bullet points is acceptable. Think of it like using a thesaurus or grammar checker: it's a tool to enhance your writing, not replace your honesty.

How do I describe jobs that aren't related to my major?

Even if a position you previously held isn't directly related to your field of interest, it can still showcase transferable skills such as customer service, reliability, or teamwork. Focus on what you learned during that experience and how it applies to the role you're applying for now.

What are some common mistakes to avoid?

Some of the most common mistakes include:

- **Typos or grammatical errors:** Using lowercase letters for proper nouns or at the beginning of sentences is one of the most common examples of a grammatical error we see.
- **Using one generic resume for all applications:** Customized resumes are more likely to advance you in the process as a candidate.
- **Poor formatting or inconsistent style:** It is important that font sizes, font styles, spacing, bullet point styles, etc. are consistent throughout your entire resume.

Before Moving On... Reflect:

The following seven pages contain example resumes. Read each resume carefully and notice what differences you see. When you are done, return to this page and reflect on the similarities and differences you saw between the six examples:

Applying and Interviewing

One-Page Chronological Example

JOHNNY JENKINS

🏠 Mankato, MN 56001

✉ johnny.jenkins@mnsu.edu

☎ 507-555-1234

🌐 www.linkedin.com/in/jj

OBJECTIVE

Seeking an internship in which web development and data analysis experience can be utilized.

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science in Computer Science

Minnesota State University, Mankato | Mankato MN

Expected: May 2028

Minor in Database Technologies

GPA 3.95

Dean's List Recipient (Fall 2024, Spring 2025)

SKILLS

Web Development/ Programming Languages:

XHTML, HTML, CSS, Flash/Actionscript, JavaScript, PHP, Python, Java

Web Design/Graphics Design Tools:

Photoshop CS5, Dreamweaver CS5, Flash CS5, Canva

Software Technologies/Operating Systems:

Microsoft Windows, WindowsXP/Vista/7, Microsoft Windows Server, VMware Player, Rhozet Carbon Coder,

Microsoft Playready

Database Servers and Tools:

Oracle, My SQL, Firebird, SWL Server, Microsoft Access, Microsoft Visio, DB Designer Fork, SSMS

Communications:

Oral, Written, and Visual communication, Project Management, Adaptability, Teamwork

PROJECTS

Study Group Finder Platform

Feb 2025 - May 2025

Technologies used: Python, Flask, PostgreSQL, Jinja2, Bootstrap

- Collaborated with a team to create a web app where students can form or join study groups by course and schedule.
- Developed back-end logic with Flask and PostgreSQL, and rendered templates using Jinja2.
- Designed front-end features using Bootstrap and ensured mobile responsiveness.

Meal Planning & Grocery List App

Jan 2025 - May 2025

Technologies used: JavaScript, Firebase, CSS Grid, HTML5

- Built a front-end web app that lets users create weekly meal plans and auto-generate corresponding grocery lists.
- Used JavaScript and local storage to persist user data across sessions.
- Added login functionality and real-time database integration with Firebase.

EXPERIENCE

Crew Member

Dairy Queen | Mankato MN

Jan 2024 - Present

- Take and prepare 50-100 customer orders accurately and efficiently in a high-volume, fast-paced environment.
- Maintain cleanliness and sanitation of food prep areas, equipment, and dining spaces in compliance with health standards.

Retail Associate

Target | Shakopee MN

Sep 2022 - Jan 2024

- Delivered excellent customer service by assisting shoppers, managing returns, and handling transactions at the register.
- Maintained organized and well-stocked shelves to ensure a positive shopping experience.

The Job Search Handbook

One-Page Chronological Example

SAMUEL GARRETT

📍 Winthrop, MN 55396 ✉ samuel.garrett@hotmail.com ☎ 555-456-7890

EDUCATION	
Bachelor of Science in Nursing Minnesota State University, Mankato Dean's List Recipient (Spring 2024, Fall 2024, Spring 2025)	Expected: May 2027
CERTIFICATIONS & LICENSES	
First Aid & CPR/AED American Red Cross	May 2025 - Present
Basic Life Support (BLS) American Heart Association	May 2025 - Present
Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) - Nursing Assistant Registry	Aug 2024
INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE	
Summer III Nurse Intern - Neurology Department Mayo Clinic, St. Mary's Hospital Rochester MN	Summer 2025
- Provided patient education on prescribed medications, ensuring understanding of purpose, dosage, and potential side effects - Performed and assisted with NG tube feedings, tracheostomy care, suctioning, and dressing changes - Delivered care for PEG tubes, chest tubes, and PICC lines, including site assessment, cleaning, and dressing changes	
CLINICAL EXPERIENCE	
General Surgery Mayo Clinic Health System- Mankato Hospital Mankato Clinic Hours: 65	Spring 2025
Mental Health Community Behavioral Health Hospital Saint Peter MN Hours: 70	Spring 2025
Community Health Le Sueur County Le Center MN Hours: 65	Fall 2024
Geriatrics Laurels Peak Rehabilitation Center Mankato MN Hours: 60	Fall 2024
VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE	
Health Fair Volunteer People's Center Clinic (Minneapolis)	Apr 2025
- Helped with patient check-in and distributed educational health materials - Assisted healthcare providers during screenings and immunization clinics - Educated community members on health promotion and preventive care topics	
Blood Drive Volunteer Minnesota State University, Mankato	Oct 2024
- Managed donor registration and provided education on donation procedures - Assisted donors throughout the process to ensure comfort and efficiency - Supported event logistics including set-up, clean-up, and coordinating volunteers	
Volunteer Feed My Starving Children	Jun 2023
- Participated in packaging nutrient-rich meals to support malnourished children worldwide - Collaborated with a team to meet daily production goals ensuring timely shipment of meals	

Applying and Interviewing

One-Page Chronological Example

ANNIE ROGERS

 Saint Peter, MN 56082

 507-987-6543

 annalise.rogers@gmail.com



RELEVANT COURSEWORK

- Financial Management
- Business Analytics
- Consumer Behavior
- Integrated Marketing Communications
- International Business Management
- Managerial Accounting
- IBE Practicum

SKILLS

- Content Creation (Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, Facebook)
- Canva
- Microsoft Office
- Written and Verbal Communication
- Leadership
- Problem Solving
- Attention to Detail
- Organization

OBJECTIVE

Seeking an internship where foundational knowledge of marketing and business administration skills can be utilized.

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science in Marketing
Minnesota State University, Mankato | May 2027
Minor in Business Administration
AACSB Accredited
GPA 3.72

EXPERIENCE

Casting Intern

Chicago Shakespeare Theater | Chicago IL | May 2024 - August 2024

- Coordinated and scheduled auditions in collaboration with agents, actors, and creative teams, ensuring a seamless and professional casting process.
- Assisted with talent communications, the organization of the audition space, and maintained records of headshots, resumes, and audition notes.

Shift Lead

Starbucks | Shakopee MN | June 2023 - May 2024

- Scheduled baristas, trained new employees, and served as a store leader.
- Handled cash and card transactions efficiently while engaging with customers in a fast-paced environment.

Childcare Provider

Private Family | Burnsville MN | Sep 2022 - May 2024

- Provided safe, reliable care for two children (from ages 5-9) including meal prep, supervision, and activity planning.
- Communicated regularly with parents about schedules, behavior, and milestones.
- Managed household tasks such as tidying up, running errands, and assisting with homework.

LEADERSHIP/INVOLVEMENT

Vice President

Key Change A Capella | Jan 2025 - Present

- Assists in planning and executing weekly rehearsals, plays piano, and leads sectionals.
- Manages social media for the group including, but not limited to, Instagram and TikTok accounts, resulting in a 15% increase in engagement.
- Creates content for the group to engage with the community and hosts events

The Job Search Handbook

One-Page Chronological Example

SARA PETERSON

Address:
Mankato, MN 56001

Phone:
612-555-0123

E-Mail:
sara.peterson22@gmail.com

OBJECTIVE
Seeking Part-time position at Minneapolis St. Paul International Airport.

EDUCATION
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN AVIATION
Minnesota State University, Mankato | Mankato MN | Anticipated: Dec 2029
GPA: 3.79

Related Coursework:
Aviation Safety, Aviation Human Factors, Weather Advanced Flight Operations, Aviation Management, Regional Airlines Operations, Private Pilot

FLIGHT TIMES
| Multi-Engine: 20.5 | Instrument: 52.3 | Cross-Country: 98.7 | Night Flight: 22.8 | Simulator (FTD): 25.0 |
Total Flight Time: 285

WORK EXPERIENCE
RAMP AGENT
Minneapolis St. Paul International Airport | Summer 2025

- Loaded and unloaded baggage, cargo, and mail efficiently while ensuring proper handling and weight distribution.
- Operated ground service equipment, including tugs and belt loaders, in accordance with FAA and airline safety standards.
- Worked effectively in a fast-paced, outdoor environment while maintaining clear communication with team members and flight crews.

ACTIVITIES
SECRETARY/VICE PRESIDENT
Minnesota State University - Mankato Aviation Club | Jan 2024 - Present

- Aviation Club – Secretary**
- Maintained accurate meeting minutes, managed club correspondence, and organized documentation for event planning and budget requests.
 - Coordinated communication between club officers, members, and faculty advisors to ensure smooth operation of all activities.
- Aviation Club – Vice President**
- Assisted in planning and leading aviation-related events, including guest speaker sessions, and safety seminars.
 - Supported the president in managing club operations and took the lead on member engagement and recruitment initiatives, increasing active membership by 25%.

Applying and Interviewing

One-Page Functional Example

BRIANNE NIGINA

bnigina@outlook.com • 507.555.3821 • Mankato, MN 56001 • <http://linkedin.com/nigina>

SUMMARY

Detail-oriented and motivated professional. Brings hands-on experience in office coordination and operations support roles, building strengths in client service, internal process improvement, and administrative operations. Combines strong organizational skills with financial knowledge and a proactive mindset. Seeking to contribute to a dynamic team in operations, finance, or client services.

CORE COMPETENCIES

- Office Administration & Scheduling
- Cross-Functional Collaboration
- Client Relationship Management
- Financial Planning & Analysis
- Data Interpretation & Reporting
- Microsoft Office, Excel, & CRM Systems

HIGHLIGHTED QUALIFICATIONS

Administrative & Office Coordination

- Manage calendars, meeting logistics, and office communications for a financial services team of 4+ advisors.
- Maintain 100% accuracy in operational records and handle internal documentation and correspondence.
- Order and track supplies while organizing digital filing systems to streamline operations.

Business Operations & Project Support

- Support internal operations by coordinating onboarding and compliance documentation for 50+ new clients.
- Assist with event planning and scheduling for 6 financial planning workshops and client seminars with 30-100 attendees.
- Collaborate with advisors to maintain workflow efficiency and client satisfaction.

Financial Knowledge & Budgeting

- Completed coursework in Business Finance, Investments, and Personal Financial Planning.
- Helped draft budget reports and monitor spending for student organizations and office functions.
- Created sample financial plans using Excel and financial software in capstone projects.

Leadership & Team Collaboration

- Supported onboarding of new administrative staff by documenting workflows and training procedures.
- Acted as a liaison between multiple internal departments to coordinate project timelines and deliverables, improving turnaround time for internal requests by 25%.
- As treasure of the Global Business Club, managed a \$3,000 annual budget, and organized 4 fundraising events.

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science in Business Management

May 2024

Minor: Financial Planning

Minnesota State University, Mankato

IBE Certification (Integrated Business Experience)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Office Coordinator – Northwestern Mutual, Mankato, MN

May 2024 - Present

Bank Teller (Part-Time) – Minnesota Valley Federal Credit Union, Mankato, MN

Sep 2023 – May 2024

Operations Assistant (Intern) – Northwestern Mutual, Mankato, MN

May 2023 – Aug 2023

Student Assistant – Minnesota State University, Mankato, College of Business

Aug 2021 – May 2023

INVOLVEMENT & LEADERSHIP

Global Business Club – Treasurer, Minnesota State University, Mankato

Aug 2023 – May 2024

Business Professionals of America (member)

May 2023 – Present

The Job Search Handbook

Two-Page Hybrid Chronological-Functional Example

ARASHA THOMPSON

Minneapolis, MN 55401
arashathompson@yahoo.com
412-789-1234

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Results-driven Industrial-Organizational Psychology professional with over 10 years of experience in organizational development, employee engagement, talent management, and data-driven decision-making. Proven track record of designing and implementing strategic HR initiatives that improve performance, culture, and retention. Known for applying psychological principles to solve workplace challenges and develop leadership pipelines. Adept in change management, survey design, and cross-functional collaboration. Active member of SIOP and MPPAW, committed to ethical, evidence-based practice.

KEY QUALIFICATIONS

- 10+ years of experience in talent development, organizational effectiveness, and performance consulting
- Deep knowledge of psychometrics, employee assessments, and survey methodology
- Expert in data analysis, SPSS, Excel, and organizational research methods
- Proven success in leading DEI initiatives and change management strategies
- Strong communication skills with experience in stakeholder engagement and executive coaching
- Skilled in training design, facilitation, and evaluation
- Experience working in both corporate and consulting environments
- SHRM-CP (Certified Professional), Society for Human Resource Management | Awarded 2020

RELATED EXPERIENCE

Senior Organizational Development Consultant Horizon Behavioral Systems | Minneapolis, MN

Jan 2017 - Present

- Led enterprise-wide engagement survey strategy, including design, administration, analysis, and executive reporting, reaching over 4,500 employees across multiple locations
- Developed leadership development programs resulting in a 23% increase in internal promotions over 2 years
- Spearheaded onboarding redesign project that improved 90-day retention rates by 17%
- Partnered with HRBPs and business units to identify organizational needs, aligning interventions with strategic goals
- Facilitated change readiness assessments and action planning during organizational restructuring
- Conducted job analyses and validated selection tools to ensure compliance with EEO standards

Organizational Effectiveness Specialist EverGrowth Consulting Group | Remote

Jun 2014 - Dec 2016

- Collaborated with clients across healthcare, finance, and education sectors to deliver organizational diagnostics and recommend tailored interventions
- Created competency models and 360° feedback tools for mid-level managers and high-potential employees
- Delivered workshops on emotional intelligence, communication, and conflict resolution
- Contributed to white papers and client reports summarizing evaluation data and key findings
- Designed employee surveys measuring culture, morale, and DEI outcomes

Applying and Interviewing

Two-Page Hybrid Chronological-Functional Example

Human Resources Analyst (Talent Management)

City of Rochester | Rochester, MN

Aug 2013 - May 2014

- Supported succession planning and performance review systems for 1,200+ municipal employees
- Analyzed turnover data and recommended data-driven interventions to address retention issues
- Assisted in administering job satisfaction surveys and compiling executive summaries
- Developed standard operating procedures for data tracking in HRIS systems

EDUCATION

Master of Arts in Industrial Organizational Psychology

Minnesota State University - Mankato | Mankato, MN

May 2014

GPA: 4.0

Participant in Consulting Challenge (United Health Care)

Bachelor of Applied Science in Psychology

Minnesota State University - Duluth | Duluth, MN

May 2012

GPA: 4.0

Involvement:

- Psychology Club-Psi Chi
- Industrial Organizational Psychology Club

CERTIFICATIONS & LICENSES

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion in the Workplace Certificate

University of South Florida

2021

SHRM-CP

Society for Human Resource Management

2020

Data Analytics for Decision Making Certificate

Capella University

2019

Hogan Assessment Certification

Hogan

2018

Human Resource Management Certificate

University of Minnesota

2016

Organizational Change Leadership Certificate

UW-Platteville

2015

MEMBERSHIPS & AFFILIATIONS

Society for Industrial Organizational Psychology (SIOP)

Jan 2014 - Present

Minnesota Professionals for Psychology Applied to Work (MPPAW)

Oct 2013 - Present

The Job Search Handbook

CV vs. Resume: What's the Difference?

When applying for jobs, internships, or academic opportunities, understanding the difference between a **curriculum vitae (CV)** and a **resume** is essential—especially for students navigating both U.S. and international job markets. A curriculum vitae, which is Latin for “course of life” is a comprehensive record of your academic and professional history. A resume, which is French for “summary” is a concise overview of your skills, experience, and qualifications. In the United States, a resume is the most commonly used document for job applications. In many countries including the UK, India, and in African nations, the term “CV” is used where Americans would say “resume.” However, in the U.S., the two are not interchangeable.

A CV is...

- Multiple Pages
- Chronological and Cumulative
- Usually focused on academic achievements.

What to Include in a CV?

Unlike a resume, a CV includes detailed and exhaustive information. Common sections include:

- **Contact Information:** Full name, address, phone number, e-mail address, LinkedIn profile.
- **Education:** Degrees earned or in progress, institutions, graduation dates, thesis/dissertation titles.
- **Research Experience:** Projects, labs, methodologies, outcomes, and your role.
- **Teaching Experience:** Courses taught, teaching assistantships, curriculum development.
- **Publications:** Peer-reviewed articles, book chapters, conference proceedings.
- **Presentations:** Academic talks, poster sessions, invited lectures.
- **Grants and Fellowships:** Funding received, awarding bodies, project titles.
- **Awards and Honors:** Scholarships, academic distinctions, competitive recognitions.
- **Professional Affiliations:** Memberships in academic or professional organizations.
- **Work Experience:** Chronological career history including job titles, organization names, dates of employment, and bullet points describing your responsibilities and accomplishments, ideally with quantifiable outcomes.
- **Service and Leadership:** Committee work, student organizations, community engagement.
- **Languages and Technical Skills:** Proficiency levels, certifications, software or lab techniques.

Key Takeaways for U.S. and International Students

- The rules and regulations pertaining to employment for visa holders are complex. Before accepting any employment AND before working, please discuss your options with an immigration advisor.
- In the U.S., use a resume for most job applications unless applying to academic or research roles, where a CV is expected.
- Outside the U.S., the term CV may refer to what Americans call a resume. Always check the job description for clarification.
- A CV grows over time. If you are interested in graduate education (e.g., MS, PhD, MD) or working in an industry that may require you to use a CV, start building it early in your academic career and update it regularly.

Applying and Interviewing

Creating a Cover Letter 101

A cover letter is your opportunity to set yourself apart from other applicants, give them a glimpse of your personality, address any discrepancies in your experience/qualifications, and to offer the employer an example of your writing skills. Each cover letter should be individually tailored to the position you are applying for and should reflect your interest in the organization.

- **A professional cover letter should match your resume in font, format, and style.** Typos and errors are unacceptable.
- **Do your research about the organization.** Use what you learn to address why you are qualified to work with this employer and why you are interested in working for them as opposed to one of their competitors.
- **Address the letter to a specific person when possible.** If the job posting lists a hiring manager or department head, use their name. If not, "Dear Hiring Manager" is a safe and professional default.
- **Use the job description as a guide.** Your cover letter should include language from the requirements and qualification sections and address the company's core mission, vision, and values.
- **Start with a strong first paragraph.** Avoid generic openings like "I am writing to apply for the ABC ROLE I found on Handshake."
- **Use specific skills and examples.** Instead of speaking broadly (e.g., "I am a people-person and I love technology,") provide details (e.g., "During my internship, I developed strong customer service skills. At my part-time summer job, I utilized my strong technological skills to redesign webpages and analyze marketing trends.")
- **Avoid starting every sentence with "I" or "My".** Use some variety in your sentence structure.
- **Keep your cover letter short and simple.** It should not be more than one page in length.
- **Avoid negative language.** A cover letter is a persuasive document. The goal is to highlight your strengths. When you lead with what you *don't* have, you risk planting doubt in the reader's mind before they've had a chance to appreciate your strengths. Use clear and confident statements, emphasize action and results, but like in a resume, do not lie or fabricate experience.

In the following pages you will find a cover letter template as well as two sample cover letters to help you get started. The format you ultimately decide on will depend on the amount of information you include, as well as your personal writing style.

The Job Search Handbook

COVER LETTER TEMPLATE

Your Name

Your Address

City, State, Zip

Your Phone #

Your Email

Date of Writing

Name of Person you are Addressing

Job Title of Addressee

Organization Name

Organization Street Address

City, State Zip

Dear Mr./Ms. Blank: (Address your letter to a specific person, whenever possible)

Opening Paragraph – Your goal here is to spark interest in the reader. State the position you're applying for and how you learned about it. Briefly explain why you're interested in this specific role and company—mention something you learned through research (e.g., their mission, recent projects, or values). This is also a great place to include a short personal anecdote or motivation that connects you to the field or organization.

Middle Paragraph – Your goal here is to promote your value. Mention your major at Minnesota State University, Mankato, and your expected graduation date. Use the job description as a guide: highlight 2–3 qualifications or skills that match what the employer is looking for. Use specific examples to show how your experiences (academic, work, volunteer, etc.) have prepared you for this role.

Additional Paragraph (Optional) – Your goal here is to add depth. If needed, include another paragraph to expand on relevant experiences such as internships, clinicals, job shadowing, leadership roles, or major projects. Focus on how these experiences helped you develop skills that align with the position.

Closing Paragraph – Your goal here is to show appreciation for their time and re-state your interest. Thank the reader for their time and consideration. Refer them to your attached resume. Express enthusiasm about the opportunity and your interest in speaking further.

Sincerely,

Your Signature

Your Name

Applying and Interviewing

Cover Letter Example

SIOBHAN KENDALL

🏠 Address:
New Ulm, MN 56073

☎ Phone:
612-123-4567

✉ Email:
siobhan.k@gmail.com

August 19, 2025

Hiring Committee
KARE 11
Minneapolis, MN

Dear Hiring Manager,

As a lifelong tennis player turned communications major, I've always thrived in high-energy, competitive environments—and I'm ready to bring that same drive to the Account Executive role at KARE 11. Your mission to help communities thrive through trusted local media resonates deeply with me, and I'm excited about the opportunity to grow in a role that blends digital innovation, client relationships, and performance-based success.

Though an injury kept me from pursuing college athletics, it never slowed my competitive spirit. Whether I'm challenging my twin brother to a match or pushing myself to exceed expectations in the classroom, I'm motivated by goals, strategy, and results. At Minnesota State University, Mankato, I've built a strong foundation in communication through my coursework and my involvement in Lambda Pi Eta, the National Communication Association's honor society. My internship with Radio Mankato gave me firsthand experience in media outreach and audience engagement—skills I'm eager to expand in a digital sales environment.

While I'm still growing my experience in digital media, I'm a fast learner with a passion for storytelling, data-driven strategy, and client success. I'm excited by the challenge of helping businesses grow through innovative advertising solutions, and I'm confident that my energy, adaptability, and competitive mindset make me a strong fit for your team.

I've attached my resume for your review and would welcome the opportunity to discuss how I can contribute to KARE 11's mission and sales goals. Thank you for considering my application—I look forward to the possibility of connecting soon.

Sincerely,



Siobhan Kendall

The Job Search Handbook

Cover Letter Example

CHELLEY AUSTIN



Mankato, MN 56002



555-999-1010



austin.chelley@earthlink.net

JULY 9, 2025

Rory Recruity
Talent Acquisition Manager
Oncodea
1000 Westgate Drive
St. Paul, MN 55114

Dear Rory Recruity,

I'm thrilled to apply for the Research Assistant position at Oncodea—a company whose mission and values deeply resonate with my passion for ethical science and innovation. As a biochemistry major with a lifelong love for animals and a strong belief in cruelty-free research, I'm excited by the opportunity to contribute to a team that's transforming cancer diagnostics through cutting-edge, compassionate science.

What drew me to Oncodea is your commitment to innovation in cancer diagnostics and your leadership in bioinformatics and biotechnology. I was especially inspired by your mission to make molecular diagnostics more accessible and precise—values that align with my own dedication to science that serves both people and animals responsibly.

During my time as a barista at Starbucks, I developed strong attention to detail, multitasking skills, and a deep appreciation for teamwork—qualities I know are essential in a research setting. My academic background in biochemistry has given me a solid foundation in laboratory techniques and data analysis, and I'm eager to apply those skills in a real-world research environment. Growing up with a deep love for animals, I've always been drawn to science that prioritizes humane practices, and I'm excited about the opportunity to work in a company that reflects those values.

I've attached my resume for your review and would welcome the opportunity to discuss how my background and enthusiasm for ethical research can support Oncodea's mission. Thank you for considering my application—I look forward to the possibility of contributing to your team.

Sincerely,

Chelley Austin

Chelley Austin

Applying and Interviewing

Application Material Example

This section provides a complete example of a tailored application package, including a job description, resume, and cover letter. Key phrases and qualifications from the job description are numbered in **bold purple** to show how they are strategically mirrored in the resume and cover letter. This visual guide will show you how to align your materials with an employer's specific language and priorities. Remember, using the language from the job description is key in order to show the hiring team that you understand what they are looking for, and to spell out why YOU are the best person for the job.

Loffler Companies | Client Support Specialist | Job Description

Essential Duties and Responsibilities:

- Develop account relationships in support of the primary sales representative.
- Coordinate inter-territory installations with an assigned list of accounts.
- Coordinate customer equipment moves.
- Utilize CRM tools to look-up, enter and manage critical account information into the database, including EDA competitive information and account/territory alignments.
- Provide support to sales reps on the order process: utilizing the quoting tool for copier and print orders, prepping documents, credit applications, delivery status, etc.
- Schedule resources for client visits: demo room; conference room set up; specialists.
- Work with other departments to oversee large installations for the team.
- Assist with the RFP process.
- Using a closed-loop process, respond to miscellaneous customer issues: billing issues; supply orders; service escalation.
- Proactive customer interaction: surveys; marketing plans/open houses.
- Sales Manager Support: attend team meetings; assist with promotions; list manage focus and priority accounts; competitive watch/information etc.
- Typing & preparing of sales proposals, account reviews, and print management assessments.
- Submits dealer paperwork and data entry points, for various manufacturer programs.
- Responsible for understanding, staying updated on, and abiding by the Employee Handbook as written.

Minimum Qualifications:

- Ability to work well with others on the team and earn trust through consistent follow-through on commitments and tasks. **1**
- Ability to work well under pressure to meet deadlines. **2**
- Fosters openness and trust through personal behavior; trustworthy with confidential data. **3**
- Self-directed, and takes personal responsibility and is willing to be held accountable. **4**
- Works effectively across organizational boundaries. **5**
- Maintains the ability to "stay the course" even in the presence of adversity and opposition. **6**
- Demonstrates sufficient technical acumen to be credible in conversation with clients. **7**
- Develops relationships and trust with Loffler clients; capable of face-to-face interaction and leading a meeting agenda; proficient communication and writing skills. **8**
- Uses account information systems (CRM tools) and understands the importance of data mining and its relationship to strategic account management. **9**

The Job Search Handbook

Preferred Qualifications:

- Ability to use the web and resources to profile major accounts.
- Has organizational skills, attention to detail, and multi-tasking abilities. **10**
- Proficient with Microsoft suite (Excel; PowerPoint; Word; Outlook). **11**
- Has knowledge of pivot tables and v-look ups.
- Participates in and is a contributing member of the sales team and uphold the company mission statement.
- Follows departmental procedures.
- Ability to work with minimal supervision. **12**
- Plans and schedules work activities to complete assignments in their order of priority; makes the most effective use of time. **13**
- Contributes to a positive working climate through a friendly manner and cooperative attitude in dealings with others.

Education/Experience:

- Bachelor's degree from four-year college or university is preferred. **14**
- Experience and a proven track record in this industry is preferred but not required.
- Successful track record and work experience.

Work Conditions:

- The work environment characteristics described here are representative of those an employee encounters while performing the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions. The noise level in the work environment is usually minimal.
- For information on the physical demands of this job, see Human Resources. The posted range for this position represents a good faith estimate of the minimum and maximum starting compensation for this role. In addition to the base salary, we offer a comprehensive benefits package that includes health and dental insurance, retirement plans, and paid time off.

Why Work for Us?

- Career Advancement.
- Employer Paid Life Insurance and Disability.
- Paid Time Off, Volunteer Time, Holidays, Bereavement, and Parental Leave.
- Benefits Package including FSA, Medical, Dental, and Vision.
- 401K with Employer Match.
- Tuition Reimbursement.

Loffler Core Values: What Defines our Culture?

- **Positive Attitude:** Be Part of the Solution. Put Extra Effort in All You Do. Everything You Do Matters. Be a Team Player.
- **Integrity:** Live the Mission. Be Honest. Deliver on Commitments. Do What is Right.
- **Innovation:** Be a Visionary. Welcome New Ideas. Work Smarter.
- **Customer First Focus:** Exceed Expectations. Delight Our Clients. Bring Value Every Day. Always Do a Good Job. **15**
- **Professionalism:** Commit to Excellence. Learn & improve. Looks and Words Matters. Best in Industry; Field Expert.
- **Drive for Results:** Performance-Orientated. Hard-Working. Refuse to Lose. Accountable. **16**

Applying and Interviewing

Noah James

🏠 Mankato, MN

✉️ noahrjames@gmail.com

📞 123-456-7890

🌐 www.linkedin.com/in/nj

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Recent graduate from Minnesota State University, Mankato with a Bachelor of Science in Psychology¹⁰ and experience in client relations and customer service. Eager to leverage strong communication, organization, and innovation skills in a client support role. Passionate about exceeding customer expectations and committed to continuous learning and improvement.⁶

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science in Psychology

Minnesota State University, Mankato

May 2025

Relevant coursework: Social Psychology, Organizational Psychology, Behavioral Statistics

Capstone Research Project – “Communication Styles and Service Outcomes”

- Conducted a mixed-methods study examining how verbal and non-verbal communication styles influence customer satisfaction and loyalty.
- Surveyed over 150 participants and analyzed behavioral trends in service interactions.
- Presented findings at the MSU Undergraduate Research Symposium, highlighting strategies that improve frontline support and reduce service escalations.⁷

KEY SKILLS

CRM Tools (Salesforce, Hubspot) | Microsoft Office¹¹ | Written and Verbal Communication⁸ | Organization | Problem-Solving | SPSS Data Analysis

WORK EXPERIENCE

Client Relations Assistant

ABC Counseling Services | Mankato, MN

Jan 2024 - Present

- Assist in managing client relationships by addressing inquiries, scheduling appointments, and ensuring follow-up on service concerns, leading to improved client retention.¹³
- Support the administrative team by entering and updating client information in the CRM system, ensuring that all records are accurate and timely.⁹
- Collaborate with counselors and office staff¹ to coordinate appointments, meetings, and workshops, ensuring smooth operations and client satisfaction.
- Provide customer service support during billing inquiries and service follow-ups, resolving issues efficiently and with attention to detail.

Crew Member

Fast Food Restaurant | Mankato, MN

Sep 2022 - Aug 2024

- Delivered exceptional customer service by assisting customers in a friendly manner with menu selections, answering questions, and ensuring a positive dining experience.
- Managed multiple tasks simultaneously¹⁰ in a fast-paced environment², including taking orders, preparing food, and maintaining a clean work area.
- Worked as part of a team to ensure efficient service and quick resolution of customer issues, contributing to a high level of customer satisfaction.
- Supported daily operations by handling cash transactions, monitoring inventory, and ensuring timely delivery of products to customers.

The Job Search Handbook

Noah James

🏠 Mankato, MN

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📞 123-456-7890

🌐 www.linkedin.com/in/nj

7/29/2025

Hiring Manager

Loffler Companies

789 Stomper Street

Mankato, MN, 56001

Dear Hiring Manager,

I am excited to express my interest in the Client Support Specialist position at Loffler Companies. As a recent graduate with a Bachelor of Science in Psychology¹⁴, I bring a strong foundation in communication¹⁶, data-driven thinking, and hands on experience in customer service and client support. I'm confident that my background and enthusiasm for delivering excellent client outcomes align well with the goals of your team.

In my current position as a Client Relations Assistant at ABC Counseling services, I have learned the importance of being both reliable and self-directed⁴. Whether managing client scheduling, resolving service concerns, or communicating across teams, I've consistently taken initiative to solve issues and provide the best client experience possible. I take pride in staying organized and anticipating the needs of clients and my team.⁵

My academic background in psychology has also shaped my ability to connect with people and adapt quickly in changing environments¹⁵. These qualities helped me complete a capstone research project on communication styles and service outcomes⁷, which involved gathering and analyzing real-world feedback – an experience that sharpened both my attention to detail and customer empathy.

Though I'm still early in my career, I've built a strong foundation in managing information carefully, working independently¹², and upholding confidentiality and trust³ – values I understand are central to success in this position. I'm excited to join a company that not only values professionalism and performance¹⁶ but also fosters a culture of positivity and growth.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my application. I would welcome the opportunity to further discuss how I can contribute to Loffler's mission and provide dependable, thoughtful support to your clients and team.

Sincerely,

Noah James

Noah James

Applying and Interviewing

Interviewing 101

Once you have been invited to an interview for a job, you will want to make sure you are prepared. Practice goes a long way and interview preparation can make or break whether or not you end up receiving an offer. Below you will find helpful information about how to prepare for the interview, and what to do on the day of the interview itself. The employer is assessing whether you're best candidate for the role—but it's just as important for you to evaluate whether the organization aligns with your values and supports your growth and goals.

How to Mentally Prepare for an Interview

- Do your research and prepare for any questions related to the organization. This can impress the interviewer by showing them you've familiarized yourself with who they are and what they stand for.
- Revisit the job description to remind you what skills are needed for the position. Prepare specific examples of how your qualifications relate to the job position.
- Be ready for the question "tell me about yourself." Remember your elevator pitch.
- Practice common interview questions in the mirror or with a friend. You will gain confidence and improve your comfort level.
- Locate directions to the location of the interview. Figure out parking ahead of time so there are no surprises.
- Make sure you get 7-9 hours of sleep the night before.

How to Physically Prepare for an Interview

- Pick and try on your outfit before the day of the interview. If it's too tight, too loose, too short, or too long—don't wear it! When in doubt, neutral colors are always a safe option.
- Make sure your hair is clean, neat, and out of your eyes. If you are someone that plays with your hair often, pull it back completely to avoid the temptation.
- Avoid overdoing perfume, makeup, or aftershave.
- Bring a printed copy of your resume for each individual you will be interviewing with.
- Do not use nicotine products or drink too much caffeine before an interview—this can cause unwanted jitters.
- Eat food that is light and not too filling. Avoid trying anything new to eat—just in case!

What to Do During the Interview

- Be at least 15 minutes early. Give yourself plenty of time to park, walk to the interview location, use the restroom, etc.
- Turn your cell phone off before going into the interview.
- Bring a professional looking notebook or padfolio and a pen—it is okay to jot down notes throughout the interview.
- Greet the interviewer with a warm smile and a handshake.
- Be aware of the allotted time of your interview and capitalize on that time. Answer questions exactly and avoid rambling or including unnecessary details in your answers (see p. 55 for STARR story technique).
- Convey maturity, poise, and a positive attitude. Avoid any "hard luck" stories.
- Do not inquire about salary or benefits until an offer is made.
- Ask 3-4 questions at the end of the interview. These questions can be about the day-to-day of the role, the interviewer's personal experience with the company, any next steps in the process, and more.

What to Do After the Interview

- After the interview, write down some highlights from the conversation that you can refer to in the thank-you note.
- Send a thank-you note within 24 hours to the key players—this will look different for each interview but consider the hiring manager, your potential supervisor, and the search committee as priorities to receive a personalized thank you note.
- Consider what you might do differently next time around. Reflect on what went well.
- Wait patiently—the hiring process may take some time.

The Job Search Handbook

Interviewing 101 Continued

Most interviews begin with the interviewer asking you to tell them a bit about yourself. But what happens after you give your elevator pitch? Below are 5 common types of interview questions you may be asked in an interview:

Type of Question	Example
Personal or Motivational: These explore your personality, goals, and motivations.	"Why do you want to work for this company?"
Technical or Role-Specific Questions: These test your knowledge and skills related to the job.	"Can you describe a time you exceeded your sales targets? How did you track your KPIs?"
Culture Fit Questions: These assess whether your values and working style align with the company culture.	"How do you like to receive feedback?"
Creative Questions: These questions assess how well you think on your feet but also may be used to break the formality of an interview.	"If you could have dinner with any historical figure, who would it be and why?"
Behavior-Based Questions: These assess how you've handled situations in the past to predict future behavior. These are often seen as the most difficult questions to answer in an interview and therefore require practice.	"Tell me about a time you had to deal with a difficult coworker. How did you handle it and what was the outcome?"

Virtual Interview Etiquette:

In the age of video conferencing tools such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams, virtual interviews have become a popular option for conducting job interviews, especially when hiring managers live in a different location than the candidate.

Consider these tips in order to have a successful virtual interview:

- **Test your tech in advance.** Ensure your internet connection is stable. Test your camera, microphone, and speakers. Make sure your computer has a full charge.
- **Choose a professional setting.** Sit in a quiet, well-lit space with a neutral or tidy background. Avoid sharing space with pets, roommates, or children to reduce background noise. Use headphones to reduce echo or feedback.
- **Dress professionally.** Wear the same attire you would for an in-person interview.
- **Be punctual.** Log in 10 minutes early to show preparedness. This also gives you time to troubleshoot any last-minute tech issues. If you are in different time zones, triple check that you log in at the correct time.
 - **Maintain good body language.** Look into the camera (not the screen) when answering questions. This gives the illusion of eye contact. Smile often and avoid looking away frequently or looking at yourself. Nod occasionally to show engagement.

Applying and Interviewing

STARR Stories

Use the STARR method to craft clear, compelling responses that highlight your skills and experiences. For each behavior-based question, share a story that highlights the following five elements:

S

Situation

Describe the context or background to set the stage.

T

Task

Explain the Specific challenge, responsibility, or goal you need to accomplish.

A

Action

Detail the steps you took and your specific contributions to address the task.

R

Result

Share the outcome of your actions - quantify the impact if possible.

R

Relate

Connect the experience to the role you're applying for. Reflect on what you learned or what you would do differently to show growth and self-awareness.

The Job Search Handbook

On the next pages, practice your STARR storytelling by telling a STARR story for each of the following skills...

Motivation & Initiative *(example)*

S Saw a flyer looking for volunteers for campus sustainability fair.

T Even though I didn't know anyone, I wanted to get involved and contribute.

A Signed up, attended planning meetings, proposed idea for recycling challenge.

R Over 200 students participated in my challenge. The event was a success.

R Learned that even when you're new, stepping up can lead to meaningful experiences.

Interpersonal Skills

S _____

T _____

A _____

R _____

R _____

Technical Skills

S _____

T _____

A _____

R _____

R _____

Organizational Skills

S _____

T _____

A _____

R _____

R _____

Adaptability/Flexibility

S _____

T _____

A _____

R _____

R _____

Integrity

S _____

T _____

A _____

R _____

R _____

Applying and Interviewing

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

S _____

T _____

A _____

R _____

R _____

Strong Work Ethic

S _____

T _____

A _____

R _____

R _____

Teamwork

S _____

T _____

A _____

R _____

R _____

Communication Skills

S _____

T _____

A _____

R _____

R _____

Problem Solving

S _____

T _____

A _____

R _____

R _____

Other

S _____

T _____

A _____

R _____

R _____

The Job Search Handbook

The Thank-You Note

The thank-you note is an essential piece of the job search and can play a significant role in the hiring process. While some say it is a dying art, the thank-you note can set one candidate apart from another when the final decision for which candidate to offer the role to has become neck-and-neck for the hiring team.

Typically, thank-you notes are sent within 24 hours of the interview, and are used to express appreciation for the interview. You should send a thank-you note in the form of an e-mail to each individual you spoke with after each round of interviews. If you were unable to get the contact information of your interviewer, then send the thank-you to your recruiter or interview “host” and ask them to pass the note along to the interviewers.

In the past, thank-you letters were hand-written on professional stationery and mailed to hiring team. In more recent history, e-mailed thank-you notes have become the norm due to the fast-paced nature of the hiring process. Don’t forget to send thank-you notes to individuals with whom you have had informational interviews with as well as those individuals who may serve as your references someday. Below you will find a suggested format for post-interview thank-you notes:

Name of the Person you are Writing to
Name of the Person you are Writing to’s Professional Title
Organization or Company Name
Street Address of Organization
City, State, Zip Code
Dear [Their Name],

First Paragraph—Express appreciation for being granted the interview and for their time. Indicate the job for which you were interviewed, and when the interview took place. Then recall some pleasant incident that took place during the interview or address something you learned during the interview that surprised and/or pleased you.

(“Thank you so much for taking the time out of your schedule to interview me for Account Manager position this morning. I enjoyed hearing more about what the job entails! Your commitment to a collaborative work environment and active communication amongst co-workers made me even more excited to be considered for this role.”)

Second Paragraph—Reaffirm your interest in the position. Briefly cover your reasons for wanting this job. Indicate that you are available for further interviews at their convenience. Let them know if they have any additional questions for you or if they need any additional information that you would be happy to provide it.

(“I am extremely interested in the Account Manager position at Sales Incorporated. I believe my passion for surpassing goals and my preference for collaborating with others would make me a seamless fit for your team. Please keep me posted on the next steps. If you need any additional information from me or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at this e-mail. Thank you again!”)

Sincerely,
[Your Name]

Applying and Interviewing

Who Are My References?

Professional references are people who can speak to your skills, work ethic, character, and potential. Employers contact them during or after the interview process to verify your work history and qualifications, and to get a sense of how you might perform in the role they are considering hiring you for. Depending on the seniority level of the position, employers may ask for anywhere from 1 to 5 references. **Remember, never send your references or their contact information to an employer unless specifically requested!**

Who Makes a Good Reference?

- Professors or academic advisors.
- Volunteer Coordinators.
- Club or Organization Leaders.
- Managers from Previous Part-Time or Full-Time Jobs.
- Internship Supervisors.

Who Should You NOT Use as a Reference?

- Family members or close friends.
- People who don't know your work well.
- Anyone who may speak vaguely or negatively about you.

3 Steps to Ask Someone to Be a Professional Reference:

1. **Ask for permission:** Never list someone without asking them first.
2. **Explain the role:** Tell them about the job you are applying for and why you are choosing them.
3. **Share your resume:** Keep them up to date on your qualifications/skills and any areas you'd like them to highlight.

Once they have Agreed...Keep Your References in the Loop!

Before the Interviews: Let them know that they may be contacted as soon as possible.

After the Interviews: Share updates and be sure to thank them.

When you hear the Result: Let them know what the outcome is. If you do not get an offer, thank them, and ask if they would be willing to refer you in the future. If you do receive an offer, express your appreciation and stay in touch!

Sharing Your References with the Recruiter

When a recruiter and/or hiring manager asks you for your references, you will want to provide them in the following format:

Reference's Full Name

Reference's Job Title

Reference's Current Company

Reference's Relationship to You (e.g., "Former Supervisor", "Current Economics Professor")

Reference's E-Mail Address

Reference's Phone Number

Some recruiters will simply ask for your references via e-mail and have you reply with your references in an e-mail response. Others may ask you to submit a **reference page**.

A reference page is a PDF that matches the style and formatting of your resume and cover letter to create a cohesive application package. The reference page should use the same header as your resume and cover letter, should be titled "References" and should list your 1-5 references in the order you would like them contacted or in order of relevance. Depending on the number of references they need, we recommend having a comprehensive Word version of your reference page that can be adjusted and saved as a separate PDF for specific requests.

The Job Search Handbook

Reference Page Example

RICKY HATCH

Brookfield, IL 60513 | 630-603-6003 | hatch_ricky@yahoo.com | www.linkedin.com/in/r-s1-hatch

References

Adrian Carney, PhD

Associate Professor

Minnesota State University, Mankato

Former Academic Advisor

adrian.carney.9@mnsu.edu

612-101-1440

Juli DeSantis

Public Partnerships Assistant

UNICEF

Volunteer Coordinator

jds@unicefhq.com

555-123-4567

Drew Papaproko

Executive Assistant

Marriott Theatre

Former Full-Time Job Supervisor

drew.p@marriottlincolnshire.com

847-778-4487

Matt Walker

Assistant Manager

Arby's

Former Part-Time Job Supervisor

walker.m.assistant.mgr@arbys.com

952-925-0000

Applying and Interviewing

Salary Negotiation

You may be wondering what happens after the application, the interviewing, the thank-you note, and the reference checks. If Helen Hiresmore calls and says, “We’d like to offer you the job at XX thousand a year!”—what do you do next? Navigating an offer can feel overwhelming. You may worry about sounding ungrateful if you want to ask for more money or feel unsure how much to ask for. The key is to know your worth and ask with confidence—ideally after you’ve received the full offer details in writing, even if it’s just an email summary. That way, you have clarity and something to reference as you consider your next move.

1. **Start with a Healthy Mindset** – Negotiating a job offer can feel intimidating—but it’s normal and an expected part of the hiring process. Employers will not rescind an offer just because you asked for more money. In fact, asking shows confidence and professionalism. Remember:
 - You are not being greedy—you are advocating for your future.
 - The worst they can say is “no.”
 - You will never get more money unless you ask for it.
2. **Be Realistic, But Don’t Undersell Yourself** – It is important to align your expectations with your experience. That doesn’t mean settling—it means being strategic. Do:
 - Research average salaries for your role, industry, and location. Check out www.onetonline.org for great insight into salary expectations at each level via industry and geographic locations.
 - Consider your education, internships, and relevant skills.
 - Ask for a reasonable bump (5-10% above the offer is common for roles that do not require experience).
3. **Estimating Your Cost of Living** – Before accepting an offer, make sure it covers your basic needs plus a cushion for savings and leisure. Your salary should be at least **2.5-3x your monthly expenses** to live comfortably. Here is a simple monthly budgeting formula:

Category	% of Monthly Take-Home Pay	Example: Annual Salary=\$46,000 Approx. Monthly Take-Home=\$3,000
Rent & Utilities	30-40%	\$900-\$1,200
Groceries & Food	10-15%	\$300-\$450
Transportation	10-15%	\$300-\$450
Leisure & Lifestyle	10%	\$300
Savings & Emergency	10-20%	\$300-\$600
Miscellaneous	5-10%	\$150-\$300

4. **Don’t Overlook the Full Offer: Benefits Matter** – Salary is just one part of the package. Sometimes, a slightly lower salary with great benefits is a better deal. Key benefits to evaluate include:
 - Health Insurance: What’s covered? What is your monthly premium?
 - Paid Time Off (PTO): How many vacation/sick days will you receive?
 - Retirement Plans: Is there a 401(k) contribution?
 - Bonuses or Stock Options: Any performance incentives?
 - Remote Work Flexibility: Can you work from home? If so, how many days per week?
5. **Don’t Forget: You’ve Got This** – It is okay to feel nervous—everyone does! Remember, negotiation is a normal part of the process. Asking for more money does not mean you are being difficult. You are setting the tone for how you value yourself.

The Job Search Handbook

Illegal and Legal Interview Questions

Questions That Are Illegal for Employers to Ask

Personal Information / Identity

- What is your age or birthdate?
- What is your race, ethnicity, or color?
- What is your religion?
- What is your sexual orientation or gender identity?
- What is your citizenship status?

Family and Marital Status

- Are you married?
- Do you have or plan to have children?
- What does your spouse do for a living?

Health and Disability

- Do you have a disability?
- Do you take any medications?
- How many sick days did you take last year?
- Do you have a history of mental illness?

Arrest Records (in most states)

- Have you ever been arrested?

Financial Status

- Do you own a home?
- Do you have a car?
- Have you ever declared bankruptcy?
- Do you have debt?



Questions that are Legal for Employers to Ask

Employers **can** ask questions that relate directly to your ability to perform the job, such as:

- Are you legally authorized to work in the U.S.?
- Are you able to start work at 8 a.m. and work until 5 p.m.?
- Are you able to lift 30 pounds as required by the job?
- Can you perform the essential functions of the job?
- Are you willing to travel or relocate?
- Have you ever been convicted of a crime that is directly related to the responsibilities of this position?
- This role involves access to sensitive financial data and handling company funds. Are you comfortable undergoing a credit check as part of the hiring process?

Applying and Interviewing

Notes:

[illegible]



The Career Development Center

As you reach the end of this handbook, take a moment to reflect on how far you've come. You've explored the full arc of the job search journey—from understanding the process and discovering your strengths, to building meaningful connections through networking, and finally, applying and interviewing with confidence. Each step has equipped you with tools, strategies, and insights to help you navigate your career path with clarity and purpose.

Don't forget—you are not expected to have it all figured out right now—or ever, quite frankly! Career development is a lifelong process, and you are more prepared than you think. Whether you're making your first career move or considering a change decades from now, we invite you to use all of our resources at www.mnsu.edu/cdc to go from big-ideas and real-world thinking, to inspired action.

Grab Your Future by the Horns!

The Job Search Handbook

Appointment Types and Additional Resources

- **Schedule an Appointment with a Career Advisor or CDC Staff Member:** Scheduled appointments (offered in-person, virtually, or over the phone) are comprehensive, person-centered, one-on-one sessions with a career advisor that last anywhere from 30 to 60 minutes. You can choose from several topics:
 - Choosing or Changing Majors – Explore academic paths aligned with your interests and career goals.
 - Job Search Strategies – Learn how to find part-time, seasonal, or full-time jobs.
 - Resume or Cover Letter Reviews – Get detailed feedback to improve your application materials.
 - LinkedIn Profile Reviews – Optimize your online professional presence.
 - Interview Preparation – Practice answering questions and get tips on how to present yourself.
 - Mock Interviews – Simulated interviews to build confidence and receive constructive feedback.
 - Graduate School Planning – Guidance on applications, personal statements, and timelines.
 - Career Assessments – Tools to help identify strengths, interests, and potential career paths.
 - Other Career-Related Questions – Any other personalized career support you may need.
 - Alumni Appointments – A career consultation opportunity for our Maverick graduates.
- **QuickStop Drop-In Appointments:** These in-person appointments are held at designated times (available on our website) throughout the academic year and require no appointment. Sessions are 10-15 minutes long and students are seen on a first-come, first-served basis.

Career Resources

At Minnesota State University, Mankato, we are dedicated to providing Mavericks with access to the most effective and innovative job search and career exploration resources. For more information, access to tools, guidance, and resources, visit us at Wigley Administration 209 or online at www.mnsu.edu/cdc.

Glossary of Terms

Application

A formal request submitted to an employer for employment, that typically includes a resume, cover letter, and sometimes additional materials.

Alumni Network

A community of former students from a university or college who can offer career advice, mentorship, and job connections.

Application Materials

Documents submitted when applying for a job, such as a resume, cover letter, references, and sometimes a portfolio or writing samples.

ATS (Applicant Tracking System)

A software used by employers to manage and filter job applications, often used to scan resumes for keywords before a human reviews them.

Benefits

Non-wage compensation provided by employers to employees, such as health insurance, retirement plans, paid time off, and tuition reimbursement.

Candidate

An individual being considered for a job or internship position.

Career Champions Roster

A list of members at Minnesota State University, Mankato who intentionally impact students' career development in positive ways through the interactions that occur as part of their everyday work.

Career Fair

An event where employers and recruiters meet with potential job or internship candidates, often hosted by universities.

Career Pathways

A series of connected education and training programs and support services that enable individuals to secure employment in a specific industry or occupation.

Chronological Resume

A resume format that lists work experience in reverse chronological order, emphasizing job titles and dates.

Company

An organization or business that offers employment opportunities.

Competency

A combination of knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors that are necessary to perform a task or role effectively. Competencies are often used by employers to evaluate whether a candidate is prepared for a job or internship.

Comprehensive Resume

A detailed resume that includes all relevant experiences, often used as a principal document to tailor for specific job applications.

Connection(s)

People in your professional or academic network who may help with job leads, advice, or referrals.

Co-Op(s) (Cooperative Education Programs)

A structured educational program that combines classroom learning with paid, full-time work experience in a field related to a student's major or career interests. Co-ops typically last longer than internships—often a semester or more—and are integrated into a student's academic schedule.

Glossary of Terms

Cover Letter

A personalized letter submitted with a resume that explains your interest in a position and highlights your qualifications.

CV (Curriculum Vitae)

A detailed document used primarily for academic, education, or research positions, often longer than a resume.

Elevator Pitch

A brief, persuasive speech that summarizes your background, skills, and career goals, typically delivered in 30–60 seconds.

Employer

An individual or organization that hires people to perform work in exchange for compensation.

Experience

Practical contact with and observation of facts or events, often referring to work, volunteer, or academic involvement.

Field of Interest

An area or industry in which a person is interested in working or building a career.

Finalist

A candidate who has made it to the final stage of the hiring process.

Follow-Up

Communication after an interview or networking event to express gratitude, reiterate interest, or check on the status of an application.

Functional Resume

A resume format that emphasizes skills and abilities rather than chronological work history.

Functional Skill

A transferable skill that can be applied across various jobs and industries, such as communication or problem-solving.

Geographical Factor

Location-based considerations that influence job decisions, such as cost of living, proximity to family, or type of community (i.e., urban, suburban, or rural).

Graduate Follow-Up Survey

A survey conducted by Minnesota State University, Mankato to collect information on the post-graduation outcomes of students within one year of graduation used to inform current and prospective students about career outcomes by major and to help guide academic and career planning.

Hiring Manager

The person responsible for making the final decision on hiring a candidate for a position.

Hiring Process

The steps an employer takes to recruit, interview, and select a candidate for a job.

Homogenous

A group or environment that is uniform in composition, often lacking diversity.

HR (Human Resources)

The department in a company that helps manage everything related to employees—like hiring, training, benefits, and workplace policies. If you're applying for a job, HR is often the team that reviews your application, sets up interviews, and helps you understand your job offer and onboarding process.

Industry

A category of business activity, such as healthcare, finance, or technology.

Informational Interview(s)

A meeting with a professional to learn more about their career path, industry, or company—not a job interview.

Glossary of Terms

Interest(s)

Activities or topics that capture your attention and enthusiasm, often influencing career choices.

Internship

A temporary position that offers practical experience in a particular field, often for students or recent graduates.

Interview

A formal conversation between a job applicant and employer to assess qualifications and fit for a role.

Job Applicant

A person who has applied for a job.

Job Board

A website or platform, such as Indeed, LinkedIn, or Handshake, where employers post job openings and applicants can search and apply.

Job Description

A summary of the responsibilities, qualifications, and expectations for a specific job.

Job Market

The availability of employment and labor, influenced by economic conditions and industry trends.

Job Seeker

An individual actively looking for employment.

Job Title

The name of a specific position within a company, such as "Marketing Coordinator" or "Software Engineer."

Marketplace

The environment in which goods, services, or employment opportunities are exchanged.

Mentorship

A relationship in which a more experienced person provides guidance and support to someone less experienced.

Micro-Internships

Micro-internships are short-term, paid, professional projects that typically last from a few hours to a few weeks. They allow students or recent graduates to gain real-world experience, build skills, and explore career paths without committing to a traditional, long-term internship. These opportunities are often project-based and can be completed remotely or on-site.

Mock Interview(s)

Practice interviews that simulate real interview scenarios to help candidates prepare.

Mutual Connection

A person who is connected to both you and someone else, often used to facilitate introductions.

Negotiation

The process of discussing terms of employment, such as salary, benefits, or job responsibilities.

Network

A group of people with whom you maintain professional relationships.

Networking

The act of building and maintaining professional relationships to exchange information and opportunities.

Offer

A formal proposal of employment, typically including job title, salary, and benefits.

Glossary of Terms

Personality

The combination of characteristics or qualities that form an individual's distinctive character, often assessed in hiring.

Philosophy

A set of beliefs or values that guide behavior and decision-making, including career choices.

Portfolio

A collection of work samples that demonstrate skills and accomplishments, often used in creative fields.

Power Verb

Strong, action-oriented verbs used in resumes and cover letters to describe accomplishments (e.g., "led," "developed," "initiated").

Qualifications

The education, skills, and experience required for a job.

Rapport

A positive, trusting relationship, often built during interviews or networking.

Readiness

The state of being fully prepared for a job or career opportunity.

Recruiter

A professional who helps companies find and hire qualified candidates.

Reference(s)

Individuals who can speak to your qualifications and character, often contacted by employers during the hiring process.

Referral(s)

A recommendation made by a current employee who suggests a candidate for an open position within their organization.

Relevant Coursework

Classes taken that directly relate to the job or field you're pursuing.

Resume

A concise document summarizing your education, experience, and skills for job applications.

Salary

The compensation paid to an employee, typically expressed as an annual amount.

Screen(ing)

The process of reviewing applications or conducting initial interviews to narrow down candidates.

Self-Discovery

The process of gaining insight into your interests, values, and strengths to guide career decisions.

Skill Cluster

A group of related skills that support a particular function or job role.

Skills

Abilities developed through experience or education that enable you to perform tasks effectively.

Social Capital

The value derived from relationships and networks that can provide support and opportunities.

Strength(s)

Personal attributes or abilities that contribute to success in a role.

Talent Acquisition Specialist

A professional responsible for sourcing, attracting, and hiring top talent for an organization.

Thank-You Note

A message sent after an interview or networking event to express appreciation and reinforce interest.

Glossary of Terms

Transferrable Skill

A skill that can be applied in various roles or industries, such as communication or leadership.

Two-Week Notice

A formal notification given to an employer indicating your intent to resign, typically two weeks in advance.

Value(s)

Core beliefs or principles that guide your behavior and career decisions.

World of Work

The “World of Work” refers to the broad landscape of careers, industries, job roles, and employment practices that individuals engage with throughout their professional lives. It encompasses the skills, expectations, workplace cultures, and trends that shape how people find, perform, and advance in work. This concept also includes the evolving relationship between education and employment, influenced by technology, globalization, and changing economic demands.

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73

The Job Search Handbook

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75

