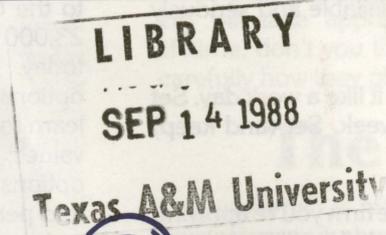


Texas Agricultural Extension Service



The World of Work!

Preparation for Employment

Dorothy Taylor*

The Job Search

In the minds of some people, destiny is an outside force that irrevocably controls the direction of their lives. They accept whatever life has in store for them and grow up believing that by doing the right things, somehow happiness will come to them. These people may unfortunately go through life just getting by in a "groping and coping" lifestyle unless they chose to accept responsibility for their lives and achieve a better balance of relationships between work, family, friendships and health. One of the most important responsibilities in life is obtaining a job but there are many factors involved which require careful consideration and preparation.

Surviving the Job Search. Finding a job isn't easy. But finding another job after losing one is even

*Extension family life specialist, The Texas A&M University System.

more traumatic. After the initial shock of job loss is over, reality surfaces and you realize you're compelled to look for another job. The higher up the career ladder you are, the longer a period of time will be needed to find a similar level. Executives, managers and corporate-level employees often take more than a year to find another job.

If you have not changed jobs for a long time, you may need to strengthen your job-search skills. Here are some techniques that will put muscle into finding the right job.

- Identify what you do best. If you're between 40 and 70, employers will be interested in areas in which you excel. Maybe you have a knack for turning unprofitable livestock into profitable herds, or stubborn workers into cooperative teams. Businesses want people who can come in and attack specific problems.

Job Options

Choosing a new career or retraining for one provides challenge, hard work, patience and reward. According to the U. S. Labor Department, there are more than 23,000 separate occupations in the United States today. Unless you recognize that there are many options, you may take the first job you're offered and learn to live with it instead of finding a job that fits your values, skills, personality and interests. Exploring your options offers you the greatest possibility for success and personal satisfaction.

A successful job pursuit is not without barriers. Your willingness to move, uproot your family, change career fields or take time out for training are choices that need to be made for the job you'd like to have. There are fourteen categories of job offerings:

1. Industrial production. Industrial production workers deal with things rather than people or ideas. They work in the production of new products. Examples are foundry, machine, print and assembly occupations.

2. Office occupations. These occupations consist of five major areas: clerical computers, banking, insurance and administrative occupations. Examples are cashiers, computer programmers, insurance underwriters and planners.

3. Service occupations. These careers involve working with other people. To be successful, a person must have sensitivity, flexibility and communication skills. Examples are mail carriers, police officers, cosmetologists, chefs and hotel clerks.

4. Educational occupations. Educational occupations are for those who enjoy helping others learn, explore and grow. They include teachers, counselors, school administrators, librarians and student personnel workers.

5. Sales occupations. Sales work ranges from department store clerks to insurance agents. To be successful, you should have an outgoing personality, a positive outlook, product knowledge, self confidence, persistence, an understanding of people and human nature, as well as drive and motivation. Examples are sales clerks, insurance agents, models, route drivers and travel agents.

6. Construction occupations. Construction workers build our communities, dams, bridges and highways. To be a construction worker you should be able to work well with others, participate in physical activity, solve mechanical problems and picture objects from blueprints. Examples include bricklayers, carpenters, electricians, ironworkers, operating engineers and general laborers.

- Write your resume to highlight accomplishments, not titles.

- Once you've identified your skills, spread the word. Let lots of people know you're available and seriously looking for a job.

- Organize your job search; treat it like a work day. Set goals to be met each day and week. Set (and keep) regular hours to look for jobs.

- In interviews, concentrate on the firm you're applying with — not where you used to work. Use "I", not "we", when showing that you are responsible for your accomplishments.

- Get a business friend to put you through a mock interview so you'll be sharper during the real session.

- Follow up an interview with a well-written letter. If you don't write very well, ask someone to type it for you. If you don't write, make a follow-up call to show your interest.

- Getting your financial house in order is another important step. A rule of thumb in job searches is that it takes one month of hunting for each \$10,000 of salary desired. This means you will be without a paycheck for several months. Financial planning during joblessness demands that you talk to creditors, particularly your mortgage lender. You may be able to negotiate smaller payments or a grace period until you find a job.

- Take unemployment insurance if you were fired or laid off. You have earned it.

- Borrow money to keep your home, car, furniture and other assets. Once you sell assets, you'll probably never replace them.

- Keep your insurance paid up, particularly health insurance.

- Talk to your family about the reduced financial state that must concern each family member.

- Postpone expensive vacations (even if it would relieve stress).

- Get your living costs down.

A career is the course of one's work over a period of time. Changing that course or finding a new career is stressful. An intelligent approach to job hunting requires that you have faith in the fact that the decisions you make **now** are seeds that will mature **later**. You are the one who will harvest the fruits of your labor so it's important to be aware of what you are planting.

7. Transportation occupations. Transportation occupations involve moving people or products quickly and efficiently around the nation. Examples are air traffic controllers, pilots, merchant marine sailors, dock workers, truck drivers and bus drivers.

8. Scientific and technical occupations. Scientists study the world around us. To be a good scientist you need curiosity, orderly thinking, systematic work habits, the ability to either work alone or as part of a team and patience. Examples include chemists, geologists, biochemists, statisticians and chemical engineers.

9. Mechanics and repairers. Mechanics and repairers use their minds and hands to fix things, and work under pressure, often without supervision. They must also have stamina and patience, as well as the ability to be courteous and tactful. Examples are air conditioner mechanics, airplane mechanics, computer service technicians, jewelers, locksmiths and telephone repairmen.

10. Health occupations. Caring for the sick is an ancient occupation and one which requires understanding and caring for other people. However, many medical procedures used today result from continuous new discoveries in this dynamic field which means numerous new occupations. Examples include physicians, dentists, nurses, therapists, radiologists, technologists, dietitians, administrators and biological photographers.

11. Social scientists. Social scientists study our behavior in order to understand what makes us act the way we do. Examples are anthropologists, geographers, historians, political scientists, psychologists and sociologists.

12. Social service occupations. People in these occupations must be people-oriented to do their jobs well. Examples include counselors (for schools, careers, employment and rehabilitation), clergy, cooperative extension service staff, leisure service workers and social workers.

13. Performing arts, design and communication occupations. These careers involve creating and communicating ideas and emotions. They use visual means to convey ideas in designs and mental images created by words in communications. Examples include dancers, singers, architects, industrial designers, advertisers and radio and television announcers.

14. Agriculture, forestry and fishery occupations. These traditional occupations have become increasingly technical over the years. They supply an ever-increasing population with necessary food, fiber, and construction materials. Examples are farmers, farm managers, laborers, cooperative extension service staff, soil scientists, foresters and commercial fishermen.

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A few hours studying about career choices can mean years of job satisfaction. Since your job and training will take approximately 70,000 hours of your lifetime, don't you think a person should choose very carefully how they plan to spend one-third of their life?

The Resume'

A resume' is an integral part of a job search campaign and should be concise, easy to read and attractive. It should create an interest in you, describe your accomplishments and skills and promote action toward hiring you. Most employers use a resume' as a preliminary screening device to fill vacancies in their staff. An effective resume' can make the employer want **you** to fill that position.

Include sufficient personal information: how to contact you during the workday and at home, your job objectives or career goals, a summary of your education a summary of your work history (paid, volunteer, full-time and part-time), honors, memberships or hobbies that support the job you're seeking and three references. Make sure the references know they are being asked to provide this information.

A letter may accompany the resume' and can be taken to interviews or handed to employers at job fairs, conventions, union halls, or other job-related gatherings.

Resume' Pointers. Be as brief as possible (one or two pages) so your resume' can be easily scanned. Choose only the information that applies to the specific job you're seeking. Condense it so the reader can group your history easily. The time to elaborate on details is at the interview.

A resume' is a positive statement about oneself. Always put the most important things first. Omit negative reasons for leaving earlier jobs. Information such as age, marital status, health or unnecessary hobbies should also be omitted. Salary requirements or current salary are other pieces of information to avoid until you've been offered the job.

Because credentials often change in short periods of time, write a fresh resume' for the job you're trying to get. Accent relevant experiences and minimize or eliminate other background information. A resume' does not need to report everything a person has done.

Present a professional-looking resume'. Have clear, sharp print on high-quality paper. **Do not pencil in changes.** Proofread so that errors won't hurt you.

If you lack work experience, write a functional resume' which shows your managerial and organizational skills in volunteerism or family business.

A resume' is not a substitute for a personal interview. It can, however, be a first step toward getting the interview.

PERSONAL DATA SHEET *

Name _____ Social Security No. _____ Phone: Day _____

Night _____

Address _____ Zip Code _____

SCHOOLS ATTENDED

Name of School	Dates Attended	Date Graduated
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_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

REFERENCES

Name	Address	Occupation
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_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

JOB EXPERIENCE

Name of Company	Address	Dates Job Held
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_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

* May be used when a resume' is not needed

Speech. The way you speak is at least as important in your job search as any other single factor. Only in careers where you don't deal with people can you get by with a sloppy English. Use good grammar. Keep the tone of voice pleasant. Avoid profanity or expressions which may offend others. Speech is one of the first personal attributes with which any potential employer has contact. Don't let it be the last.

Dress. Clothing and appearance are important in the work world. Although there is no universal "right way" to dress, there is an appropriate attire for the particular occupation, season and location. Your clothing should show good taste. It should not be overdone or distract the interviewer. Conservative styles and subdued colors usually make a positive impression.

First Impressions. First impressions are important, and your clothing is usually the first thing about you

that anyone will notice. Research studies show an 8-20 percent higher starting salary for appropriately dressed and well-groomed applicants. Most employers interpret neatness as evidence of skills when evaluating potential employees. If you're unsure about appropriate appearance, read some professional magazines or books on dressing for success. Don't let your wardrobe hold you back from the job you want.

Attitude. Attitude is part of your personality and includes all the other elements of your personal packaging. You can be sure that your attitude will be tested in an interview as well as the way you react to questions. Your behavior will indicate the kind of team player you are. Positive thoughts about yourself and other people, together with enthusiasm, are two attitudinal elements that every boss likes his or her team players to have.

Personal Hygiene. Laxity in personal hygiene will not be noticed as quickly as inappropriate clothing or speech, but it will certainly leave the most indelible impression. Sloppy habits can sabotage your chances at a job, whether it's poor hygiene related to clothing, hair, body or teeth. Being clean and well-groomed is essential to making a good impression. Even though skin and weight problems are usually related to health, they are perceived as hygiene problems and can diminish your chances at getting hired.

The Interview

The interview is an important event in job hunting. The 20 to 30 minutes you spend with an interviewer may determine whether or not you get the job.

Time and Place. Write down the exact time and location of your interview as well as the full name and address of the company. Make no assumptions. You also need to know the interviewer's name and how to pronounce it.

Be On Time. Arrive about 10 minutes early for an interview. Late arrival for an interview gets you off to a bad start and is unexcusable.

Know About The Job. Learn all you can about the company — what they do, make or sell. Find out where plants, offices or stores are located. Show some interest in the company and ask intelligent questions about its operations. Know what kind of job you want and why you qualify to work for this particular firm.

What to Take to an Interview

1. Social security card
2. A work permit, if required
3. A typed personal resume'
4. A typed list of personal references, complete with address and phone numbers, if you do not have a resume'
5. A pen and small notebook to fit in pocket or purse

What NOT to Take to an Interview

1. Chewing gum or tobacco (any form)
2. Shopping bags or parcels
3. Friends or relatives (unless requested by the employer)
4. Music or entertainment items

TIPS FOR THE INTERVIEW

- Wipe sweaty palms before going into the interview.
- Greet the interviewer by name as you enter. Shake hands only if the interviewer makes the first gesture.
- Wait to be seated until a chair is offered.
- Don't smoke, dip tobacco or chew, even if you're invited to.
- Some nervousness is expected, but try to relax.
- Be prepared for at least one surprise question, like: What can I do for you? Tell me about yourself. Why are you interested in this job/company?
- Interviews usually follow a simple question and answer technique. Answer calmly, intelligently and honestly. A straightforward answer is best. Don't hesitate to ask the interviewer to clarify a question you do not understand.
- Be informative without being boastful, but don't undersell yourself.
- Interviewers like to do most of the talking. When you feel like you've talked too much, give the floor back to him saying, "Perhaps you have questions to ask me."
- Be positive. Don't criticize other bosses or companies, nor do you want to vent your personal problems!
- Don't let your discouragement show if you think the interview isn't going too well.
- If salary is discussed early in the interview, politely pass the question by saying that you are more interested in the job than the money. If the interviewer insists on discussing salary, give a wide range. Negotiations over salary come after a job is offered.
- Jobs are seldom offered at interviews. If you want the job, merely say, "Yes." If you're not sure, ask for time to think it over.
- Most interviews last about thirty minutes. Watch for indication that the interview is over. Sum up your interest briefly. State that you think you're qualified for the job and find out what the next step is. Thank the interviewer and leave.
- Send a thank you note to the interviewer. Reflect your enthusiasm for the job, but don't reflect anxiety about getting the job. Follow-up letters make a good impression.

Some Tips for Successful Interviewing

DO:

- Act natural.
- Be prompt, neat, and courteous.
- Carry out promises to return requested information, forms or other credentials.
- Ask relevant questions.
- Allow employer's view to be expressed.
- Read company literature.
- Make yourself understood.
- Listen to the other person to determine the skills they are seeking.
- Present informative credentials.
- Think of your potential service to the employer.

DON'T:

- Criticize yourself or former employers
- Be late for your interview.
- Freeze or become tense.
- Present an extreme appearance.
- Become impatient.
- Become emotional.
- Talk too much or too little.
- Oversell yourself.
- Draw out the interview.
- Make elaborate promises.
- Arrive unprepared.
- Try to be funny.
- Unduly emphasize starting salary.
- Linger over fringe benefits.

Interview Questions You May Be Asked

1. What do you know about our company?
2. Why do you want to work for our company?
3. What was your best subject in school? Your worst? Your favorite?
4. What extracurricular offices did you hold?
5. What kind of contribution can you make to our company?
6. Do you like to work with others or by yourself?
7. Why are you leaving your present employer?
8. What do you think of your present management?
9. How much money do you expect to earn five years from now? Ten?
10. What would you do if you did not agree with instructions you were given?
11. What do you think determines a person's progress in a good company?
12. What interests you about our product or company?

Questions They Shouldn't Ask You (but sometimes will)

1. What is the lowest salary you will accept?
2. How old are you?
3. Are you married, do you have any children? How many?
4. Were you ever arrested and what for? (An applicant can be questioned about convictions, but not arrests).
5. Have you ever used drugs?
6. Can you work Saturdays and Sundays?
7. Have your wages ever been garnished? (Wages can't be garnished in Texas except for child support and IRS.)

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Educational programs conducted by the Texas Agricultural Extension Service serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, handicap, or national origin.

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