

INTRODUCTION

This handout has been created to answer general questions I've seen over the years from job seekers. My responses are formed as a recruiter, human resources professional, consultant, career coach and job seeker. Resources and downloads are available at www.ourhrsite.com/resources.html.

RESUMES

This is the first thing a lot of employers see from you, so it has to be good marketing collateral. A lot of people feel stuck or overwhelmed when creating a resume. If you can't do it yourself, ask for help from a friend or find a professional to help you.

No one knows you and your expertise better than you and the resume has to accurately reflect who you are. Experts can polish it, suggest changes and format it, but all of the data must come from you. Be honest and don't include experience or education if you don't have it. Quantify results when you can and present your skills and projects.

COVER LETTERS

Some people dismiss them but others view a resume as incomplete or unprofessional without them. Writing a good letter can help you and the employer focus on why you're a good match for the position and your transferable skills.

NETWORKING IN-PERSON AND ONLINE

Find small talk difficult? Embarrassed to talk about how you're "seeking your next opportunity"? Get over it! Dress as you would for an interview and get out of the house.

Statistics show that most positions are landed thanks to your network. Many companies have employee referral programs rewarding employees for certain hires, and they have an interest in finding candidates that someone can vouch for. List family, friends, neighbors, colleagues, managers, vendors and even your hairdresser and let them know you are looking for your next position and would like a copy of your most recent resume.

USE LINKEDIN

It's the most important website for professionals. See my PDF download, "Fundamentals for Effective Use of LinkedIn".

USING JOB BOARDS

Some people are hired via job boards so it should be a part of your strategy. See my PDF download "How to Effectively Use Job Boards".

SAY THANK YOU

People remember gracious people. When you've completed a round of interviews, write a thank-you note to individuals on the interview team. If it's a formal interview for a government job, send a note by snail mail, but most people promptly send a thoughtful email. You can address individual concerns, reinforce your experience, and include information you meant to mention.

Let your network know when you've landed a job, thank them for their help and then ask, "How can I help you?"

BACKGROUND VERIFICATIONS

Companies do background checks as part of due diligence and to protect the company from negligent hiring problems. Companies check for violence, embezzlement, other legal problems and lawsuits. We also check your job history, titles, salary and education. The most common lie on a resume is education, and a general background check catches these lies. Be honest on your resume and application form.

If a recruiter asks for your social security number, find out why they want it. If you're applying for jobs at companies like Visa, you need a background verification to interview. If you have questions about a particular company, ask your network about their experiences. Some corporate websites request it as part of their application process. If the company does a background check, you have the right to have a copy of the report. It's helped some people stop identity theft they didn't know about!

THE MOST COMMON QUESTION OF ALL TIME

"Why me?"

Your resume fell into a black hole, no one calls you, HR people stink and the world hates you.

People hate it when I say this, but **it isn't personal**, although being laid off is very personal and your job search ups and downs are personal. Layoffs are usually about numbers, not individuals. Companies have laid off a lot of people and that includes professional recruiters and HR staff. Non-professionals look at resumes and your resume is often going directly into a database. Companies are overwhelmed with thousands of resumes from all over the world. It's back to numbers: it isn't personal so don't take it that way. Just work on your job search and, as salespeople know, you might have 100 or more "no" responses to get to your "yes".

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

When you're looking for a new job, it's tempting to stay at home and in front of your computer. It's easy to get distracted at home and watch TV or clean up, and staying at home can make you depressed.

Be sure to get out of the house, talk with other people and do things you enjoy. There are lots of activities that don't cost anything: dance at home, walk in the park, ride your bike, go to the library. Employers want to hire people who seem to be happy, people they'd enjoy working with. It's stressful looking for work so take care of yourself. There is a lot of help and support available if you need it.

BEST OF LUCK!

MARCIA STEIN, PHR has worked in the Silicon Valley since 1989 and owns a Human Resources Consulting practice. She is experienced as a Recruiter, Staffing Manager and Human Resources Director and regular job seeker. Marcia presents to organizations, corporations and job search groups. She is the founder of Silicon Valley Women in Human Resources...and Friends, a networking, mentoring and educational group for professional women with over 1,500 members. She is the author of [Recruiters on Recruiting](#), a look into the career paths of different types of recruiters, their tips for job seekers and new recruiters. Her second book is [Strained Relations: Help for Struggling Parents of Troubled Teens](#). She has also released a booklet, [Top Tips From Recruiters for Job Seekers](#). See www.tellmeaboutyourself.info for more information.

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