

## TOPIC D: JOB APPLICATION

Employment applications are an important part of your job search. Some employers require the application as the first step in the selection process. Others may not require it until later.

No matter when the application is requested, it is an important job search tool. It provides an opportunity to sell your qualifications. The completed application may be the first impression the employer has of you. The application is a legal document and is required by many employers, regardless of the submittal of a resume.



The employment application is used to obtain information about your qualifications and to compare you to other applicants. Companies may receive hundreds or even thousands of applications each year. Therefore, they look for ways to reduce the number of applications they will read thoroughly. The employer "screens out" many applications based on various factors in the application. You need to do everything possible to create the "perfect" application.

REMEMBER: The application is truly a pre-employment test!

Employers use job applications to:

- determine if the applicant is right for the job;
- screen out applicants;
- obtain required information on applicants;
- match applicants to a job opening;
- determine if applicants can successfully follow directions and/or complete a simple task.

Job applicants use job applications to:

- make a good first impression;
- communicate basic skills;
- demonstrate that they are prepared and can properly complete a task;
- obtain an interview opportunity.

Information on job applications is usually in the following categories:

- personal information;
- employment history;
- education history;
- military experience;
- references

There are a variety of ways to complete a job application. Applicants for employment can apply online for positions at a large number of jobs sites or apply directly at company sites. In many sectors, employment applications can be completed in person. When companies do not require a job application, send a resume and cover letter as your employment application. The most important rule to remember when applying for jobs is to follow the directions. If the employer tells you to apply in person, don't call. If the job posting says to mail your resume, do not send it via e-mail.

Come prepared to complete the job application and make a good first impression by:

- bringing your résumé so you have your work and education information with you;
- bringing information on your education starting with high school and additional information that is not on your résumé;
- bringing a list of three personal and three work references with names, addresses and phone numbers;
- printing your responses clearly and carefully;
- answering **all** questions;
- using a phone number where the employer can either reach you or leave a message (do not use a phone number that is blocked at times by internet use);
- bringing accurate and complete information on your prior employers including phone numbers and addresses;
- write nothing negative about any of your prior jobs – focus on the strengths you gained;
- have appropriate messages on your answering machine – keep it conservative.

### Helpful tips

Practice, practice, practice! Being familiar with application forms and having your information available to complete an application accurately and neatly promotes success.

If asked an expected pay rate or salary, respond with either “negotiable” or your last pay rate. If you know what the job pays and are willing to accept that rate, enter that amount.

If you have a gap in your employment, write an asterisk (\*) between the two jobs and explain that gap in that space or at the bottom on the page in the space provided for additional information.

Always give a positive reason for leaving a prior job. Don't write, “My boss was a jerk,” or “I got fired.” Instead make it positive, like “I wanted a job with the potential for career growth,” or “The company downsized.”

If asked to list your skills or prior job duties, list ones that relate directly to the job for which you are applying.

Check out this interesting website for online applications as well as, downloadable applications for some of the most popular employers! <http://www.job-applications.com/>

# COMPETENCY JOB APPLICATION

## APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT Employment Questionnaire / Equal Opportunity Employer

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### PERSONAL INFORMATION

NAME (LAST NAME FIRST)

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

PRESENT ADDRESS

CITY

STATE ZIP CODE

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER

REFERRED BY:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### EMPLOYMENT DESIRED

POSITION

DATE YOU CAN START

SALARY DESIRED

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

ARE YOU EMPLOYED?

CAN WE CONTACT CURRENT EMPLOYER?

YES  NO

YES  NO

EVER APPLIED TO THIS COMPANY BEFORE?

WHERE?

WHEN?

YES  NO

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### SCHOOL INFORMATION

	Name and Location	Years Attended	Did You Graduate	Subjects Studied
High School				
College				
Trade, Business or Graduate School				

Subjects of special study, special projects, special training skills, research work, etc.

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U.S. Military Service    \_\_\_ YES    \_\_\_ NO    Rank \_\_\_\_\_

**FORMER EMPLOYERS**

Dates Employed	Name and Address	Salary	Position	Reason for Leaving
From: To:				

**REFERENCES**

Give the names of three persons not related to you, whom you have known for at least one year.

NAME	PHONE NUMBER	HOW KNOW THEM	YEARS KNOWN

**CERTIFICATION**

I certify that the facts contained in this application are true and complete to the best of my knowledge and understand that, if employed, falsified statements on this application shall be grounds for dismissal.

I further authorize investigation of all statements made on this application and give permission for all references and employers listed to be contacted.

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

INTERVIEWED BY: \_\_\_\_\_

----- DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE -----

**REMARKS** \_\_\_\_\_

## PREPARING FOR AN INTERVIEW

It's wise to begin researching the company as soon as possible prior to your interview. You may find reams of information and you must be able to sort out the pertinent information and retain the key facts. If you are interviewing with a number of different employers, it's smart to keep a file on each one. As you do more research, the file will help you keep facts organized which will make the preparation easier. The information in each file should include articles from periodicals or newspapers, tips and comments from others and annual reports. When it is time to prepare for the interview, you can organize the information in a way that will impress the recruiter during the interview.

### *The Key to a Successful Interview? Be Prepared!*

#### Facts to Know About the Organization

- Size of organization in industry
- Annual sales growth for past five years
- Complete product line or services
- Potential new products or services
- Age of top management and their backgrounds
- Location of corporate headquarters
- Number of plants, stores, and outlets
- Recent developments via news stories
- Name and correct spelling of recruiter
- Potential growth
- Competition
- Geographical locations
- Organizational structure
- Type of training program
- Promotional path
- Relocation policies
- History of organization
- Typical career path in your field



*Never leave the interview without knowing the recruiter's name (including correct spelling), title, and address. Ask for their business card! This information will be invaluable when you begin your correspondence with the organization.*

Researching an organization can be done through a variety of sources. The primary source should be annual reports and employment brochures. While this information is prepared by the organization and includes predominantly positive information, it is a good starting place. All publicly held companies are required to report to their stockholders through annual reports.

### IS IT REALLY NECESSARY?



This may seem like a lot of trouble to go through just to be prepared for the interview. Finding the right job is hard work and should be approached in such a manner as to stack the odds in your favor. There is much competition and you're trying to market a product (yourself) successfully! There is rarely a professional position open that does not draw at least five qualified applicants. Remember, you are trying to create a positive impression by appearing informed and goal-directed.

One way to demonstrate your goals is to indicate during the interview what interested you in that specific organization and how your goals, qualifications, and personality fit that employer's opportunities. You only get one chance to leave the right impression; so take the time to do your homework and research the organization, and you will increase your chances of leaving a positive impression.

### What Happens During the Interview?

The interviewing process can be scary if you don't know what to expect. Most interviews tend to fit a general pattern and share 3 common characteristics: the beginning, middle and conclusion.

The typical interview for an **entry-level** position will last 30 minutes, although some may be longer. A typical structure is as follows:

- Five minutes--small talk
- Fifteen minutes--discussion of your background and Credentials as they relate to the needs of the employer
- Five minutes--asks you for questions
- Five minutes--conclusion



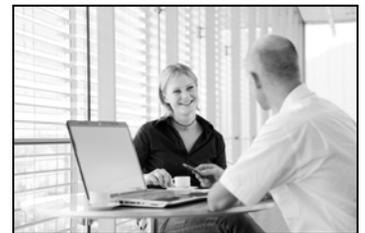
There is not much time to state your case. The employer may try to do most of the talking. When you do respond to questions or ask your own, your statements should be concise and organized without being too brief.

The typical interview starts before you even get into the interview room or office. The receptionist/recruiter begins to evaluate you the minute you are identified. You are expected to shake the recruiter's hand upon being introduced. Don't be afraid to extend your hand first. This shows assertiveness. It is a good idea to arrive at least 15 minutes early. You can use the time to relax and look over notes you've prepared.



Many recruiters will begin the interview with some small talk. Topics may range from the weather to sports and will rarely focus on anything that brings out your skills. Nonetheless, you are still being evaluated. Recruiters are trained to evaluate candidates on many different points. They may be judging how well you communicate on an informal basis as well as react to pressure! Let's face it, we experience pressure in these situations! You must do more than just smile and nod.

The main part of the interview starts when the recruiter begins discussing the organization. If the recruiter is vague about the position and you want more specific information, ask questions. The opportunity to ask these questions is usually offered once the interviewer has given the basic overview. Be sure you have a clear understanding of the job and the company.



As the discussion turns to your qualifications, be prepared to deal with aspects of your background that could be determined as negative, e.g., no related work experience, gaps in employment, criminal record, etc. It is up to you to convince the recruiter that although these points appear negative, positive attributes can be found in them. You might have no related work experience, but plenty of experience that shows you to be a loyal and valued employee. Be sure to indicate this through calm, confident answers and conversation.



You will soon have an opportunity to ask questions; therefore, be sure to have your notes and carefully thought out questions that will ensure positive responses from the interviewer. The questions should bring out your interest in and knowledge of the organization. In asking intelligent, well thought-out questions, you show the employer you are serious about the organization and need more information. It indicates that you have done your homework.

During your interview, you may be asked some unusual questions. Don't be too surprised! Many times these questions are asked simply to see how you react. For example, surprise questions could be, "Tell me a joke" or "What time period would you like to have lived in?" These are not the kind of questions for which you can prepare in advance. The interviewer will evaluate your reaction time and the response you give, but there's no way to anticipate questions like these. They are intended to force you to react under some stress and pressure! The best advice is to think, relax, and give a natural response.

Remember that the interviewer will be observing and evaluating you throughout the interview:

1. How mentally alert and responsive is the job candidate?
2. Can the candidate demonstrate an understanding of the questions and how they can relate their skills and abilities to manage and accomplish what is expected of them?
3. Has the candidate used good judgment and common sense regarding life planning?
4. What is the candidate's ability in reflecting problem-solving skills?
5. How well does the candidate respond and/or react to stress and pressure?

The interview is not over until you walk out the door. The conclusion usually lasts 5 minutes and is very important. During this time the interviewer is assessing your overall performance. It is important to remain enthusiastic and courteous. Often the conclusion of the interview is indicated when the interviewer stands up. Shake the recruiter's hand and thank him or her for considering you and the opportunity to have had the opportunity to meet them and learn more about their organization.



# Ten Rules of Interviewing

*By Carole Martin, Monster Contributing Writer*

**In the current job market, you'd better have your act together, or you won't stand a chance against the competition. Check yourself on these 10 basic points before you go on that all-important interview.**

## Look Sharp

Before the interview, select your outfit. Depending on the industry and position, get out your best duds and check them over for spots and wrinkles. Even if the company has a casual environment, you don't want to look like you slept in your clothes. Above all, dress for confidence. If you feel good, others will respond to you accordingly.

## Be on Time

Never arrive late to an interview. Allow extra time to arrive early in the vicinity, allowing for factors like getting lost. Enter the building 10 to 15 minutes before the interview.

## Do Your Research

Researching the company before the interview and learning as much as possible about its services, products, customers and competition will give you an edge in understanding and addressing the company's needs. The more you know about the company and what it stands for, the better chance you have of selling yourself. You also should find out about the company's culture to gain insight into your potential happiness on the job.

## Be Prepared

Bring along a folder containing extra copies of your resume, a copy of your references and paper to take notes. You should also have questions prepared to ask at the end of the interview. For extra assurance, print a copy of Monster's handy interview take-along checklist.

## Show Enthusiasm

A firm handshake and plenty of eye contact demonstrate confidence. Speak distinctly in a confident voice, even though you may feel shaky.

## Listen

One of the most neglected interviewing skills is listening. Make sure you are not only listening, but also reading between the lines. Sometimes what is not said is just as important as what is said.

## Answer the Question Asked

Candidates often don't think about whether they are actually answering the questions asked by their interviewers. Make sure you understand what is being asked, and get further clarification if you are unsure.

## Give Specific Examples

One specific example of your background is worth 50 vague stories. Prepare your stories before the interview. Give examples that highlight your successes and uniqueness. Your past behavior can indicate your future performance.

## Ask Questions

Many interviewees don't ask questions and miss the opportunity to find out valuable information. Your questions indicate your interest in the company or job.

## Follow Up

Whether it's through e-mail or regular mail, the follow-up is one more chance to remind the interviewer of all the valuable traits you bring to the job and company. You don't want to miss this last chance to market yourself.

## DRESS FOR SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEWING

First impressions count! Project a professional image. You are trying to sell yourself! Your main task is to choose clothing and accessories that will not take the interviewer's attention from you and your qualifications.

Stick to the accepted "corporate" standard interview to be safe. Make sure the interview clothes you have chosen enable you to feel comfortable, confident and secure!



### GENERAL GUIDELINES:

- Dress for the job you want, not the job you have.
- Absolutely no gum, candy, or cigarettes. Never smoke before an interview, the odor will linger on clothes, hands and breath.
- Good hygiene is essential. Shower, use deodorant, brush your teeth, comb your hair and shave.
- Avoid overpowering aftershave, cologne or perfume.
- Nails should be neat and clean.
- Wear a dress watch. Your belt should always match the color of your shoes.
- Clothing, shoes and accessories should be neat, clean and ironed. Clothes should be new or at least in very good condition.
- Arrive early, go to the restroom and check the mirror for your appearance.

### GUIDELINES FOR MEN'S PROFESSIONAL DRESS:

- Conservative, well-fitted, two-piece business suit (navy, gray, black, green, pinstriped or solid)
- Long-sleeved, ironed, lightly starched dress shirt of 100% cotton, in white-off white or pale blue. Long sleeves give the impression of authority and professionalism (no stripes or short sleeves).
- Wear a white undershirt underneath your dress shirt.  
*Note.* Wear underwear.
- Matching silk tie that extends just below the belt line. If possible find a tie that has a pattern accenting the company color and coordinates with the color of your suit.
- To build a basic corporate wardrobe, buy a good suit in a dark color. Add items as you can afford them.  
Purchase a blue or black blazer and two additional pairs of pants to go with the suit and sport jacket. Buy two good-quality white or off-white cotton shirts and one light-blue shirt. Purchase three silk ties, one with a conservative pattern. Buy black wing tip shoes or other dress shoes with a black belt. If you opt for a dark brown suit (less formal), buy brown shoes with a matching belt.
- Wear mid-calf dark socks with polished lace-up dress shoes in black or brown. If new, wear at least one day to break in. When you are seated the sock should be above pants cuff.
- Carry a leather portfolio, leather-like or a briefcase.
- Keep hair neat and clean. Short hair is expected.
- No facial hair is most conservative. If you have facial hair, trim it neatly.
- Remove visible body piercings, including earrings, and cover tattoos.
- No casual clothing (jeans, t-shirts, sport tube socks).



## GUIDELINES FOR WOMEN'S PROFESSIONAL DRESS:

- Conservative, well-fitted suit (navy, gray, black-dark colors are best). Stylish, professional pantsuits are acceptable with many employers. When in doubt, wear a skirt suit (the hem should be no shorter than 2" above the knee, wear appropriate undergarments).
- Blouse of 100% cotton or silk, carefully ironed, in white, ivory, pale blue, gray, or light pink. It should not be too tight, sheer or revealing. Remember, no plunging scoop necklines.
- Don't wear anything considered sexy!
- Avoid or use sparingly colognes or perfumes. Your scent should not linger after you leave.
- To build a basic wardrobe, buy a good suit in navy, black, gray, olive, camel or wine. Then purchase a white or ivory shell or blouse (silk, polyester, rayon, cotton, acrylic/cotton blend), black pants, knit top, print blouse and fine gauge sweater top. All items should go well together. Add pieces to match your basics, and you will have many professional alternatives.
- Neutral, non-patterned pantyhose in skin tone. Bring an extra pair in case of runs.
- Polished, closed toe, low-heeled pumps or flats in black, navy, brown, or burgundy.
- No dangling earrings, no more than two earrings per ear and no more than one ring per hand. Remove visible piercing and cover tattoos.
- No deep necklines, no frilly dresses, no casual clothing (jeans, t-shirts).
- Keep hair neat and clean, without obvious dark roots. If hair is long, pull it back or keep away from forehead and eyes.
- Make-up should be minimal and look natural.
- Nails should be neat and clean. Use natural, or a complementing color, if desired.



Last but not least, do a pre-interview dress rehearsal. Think about the message you want to send and make sure it is conveyed in your professional attire.

# FINAL TIPS FOR INTERVIEW SUCCESS

## Body Language

- Smile during the interview.
- Shake hands firmly.
- Sit when you are offered a seat.
- Use good posture and maintain eye contact.
- Show that you are listening by nodding, taking notes, etc.
- Avoid sending negative messages (yawning, looking at your watch, etc.).
- Show composure (no fidgeting, playing with your hair, biting your nails, etc.).

## Responsiveness

- Be on time or, better yet, early.
- Use the employer's title and last name.
- Know the job for which you are applying.
- Know about the company.
- Show enthusiasm.
- Speak clearly, using proper grammar.
- Avoid using slang, swearing and suggestive language.
- Answer questions clearly, completely and honestly.
- Focus on your strengths.



## Attitude

- Show respect.
- Be positive and enthusiastic.
- Know the interviewer's name.
- Have all paperwork completed.
- Do not say anything negative about any of your former employers.

## Miscellaneous

- Turn off your cell phone prior to the interview.
- Do not bring your children to the interview.
- Do not seem desperate for the job; emphasize your interest in the job. It is always better to get a job and turn it down than to not be offered a job.
- Ask when a decision will be made.
- Send a thank-you letter to the person with whom you interviewed.

## Group interviews

While these behaviors are important for individual interviews, they are often criteria for selecting members during group interviews. For example, your appearance, the body language you use and the attitude you portray are often used to screen prospective members during group interviews.