



careerlink

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# THE JOB SEEKER'S GUIDE

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*to connecting with an amazing career*

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# ABOUT AIM CAREERLINK

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AIM Careerlink is operated by AIM, an innovative not-for-profit community organization that grows, connects and inspires the tech talent ecosystem through career development and educational programs.

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As the region's top career development website, AIM Careerlink supports all levels of professionals. Whatever phase you're in, AIM Careerlink offers a variety of tools and resources geared toward helping you succeed on your career path.

# BEGINNING YOUR JOB SEARCH

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When we break down the process of job searching into steps, the first step is obviously to find a job you want to apply for. But sometimes, that first step can be harder than it seems.

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# NETWORKING

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Aside from internet searches, how do you find available jobs? You've no doubt heard of networking but do you know why networking is so important to the job search?

A report from the [Society for Human Resource Management](#) noted that employee referrals are the top source of company hires. In 2016, more than 30 percent of all hires and 45 percent of internal hires came from referred candidates.

But friends and family circles can only reach so far. Often times, your key to obtaining a referred position is to expand upon existing social circles.

With social media and its impact on almost everything, the ability to network has become even more efficient, given its instantaneous nature and easy accessibility.

## 🕒 Why Network?

As a job seeker, networking offers you more opportunities to find a position by helping you build your knowledge of companies within your search area. It can open up your job options by broadening your perspectives on possible employers and giving you a chance to explore what is going on outside your workplace or current career field.

Ultimately, networking can provide you with a potential "in" that can act as a direct job referral.

## 🕒 How to Network

So how do you go about networking within new circles?

- 01 | Think small.** It's not about knowing a lot of people, it's about focusing on knowing the right people who can take you in your intended direction. Thinking small will not only help you achieve your goal, but it will also ensure that you build and maintain actual friendships that matter.
- 02 | Keep in touch.** Once you connect to someone and establish a professional relationship, try your best to keep in touch to avoid asking for a favor from someone you barely talk to.
- 03 | Return the favor.** If someone is willing to put in the time and effort to help you out, then they shouldn't expect any less from you. Always try your best to return the favor even if it is something small like acting as a reference. Simply offering that kind of gesture is the best way to let them know that you are really grateful for their help.
- 04 | Be authentic.** You need to be authentic throughout this whole process and not treat someone as a bridge to a new job. Not only is it wrong but it could potentially ruin a new friendship or social circle.

## 🕒 Who to Network With

You know why and how you should network, but who should you be networking with?

- 01 | The mentor.** The mentor is perhaps one of the most essential people to have in your network. At one point or another, everyone needs some guidance when it comes to their career. Having a mentor who will always have your back is one of the best ways to help you grow into the successful person you want to be.
- 02 | The authority/expert.** Similar to the mentor, an authority or expert in the field is there to help you learn. The main difference, however, is that what you learn from them is specialized, whereas a mentor's influence can extend beyond that. Having this kind of person around is great for helping you hone in on the necessary skills that will help you become an expert in the field yourself.
- 03 | The outsider.** While it might seem strange to have someone in your network who isn't working in your field, the truth is, they can end up making a bigger impact than you think. The outsider is someone who may not exactly know the specifics of your field, but that kind of third-party perspective may be just what you need in order to understand how others view what you are doing.
- 04 | The colleague.** Friends are always there to have your back and no friend is more important than a colleague when you need help on the job. Having a colleague who will look out for you is essential. Colleagues can also be great advocates and references when you are looking to move up, so make sure you always have one on deck.
- 05 | The client.** The benefit of having clients in your network extends a lot further than just buying your goods or services. Building strong relationships with your clients can do wonders for your networking because they give you an insider's perspective on what other customers may want, as well as great resources for referrals to other customers/clients who may be in need of your services.
- 06 | The thought-leader (innovator).** Finally, find someone who is always looking for the next big thing. Whether they're in your field or not, having someone in your network who values progression and is always trying to push the envelope is definitely a great asset. It can help to broaden your perspective on big picture thinking and also hopefully push you to think beyond your everyday tasks and innovate yourself.

## ● AIM Networking Opportunities

For more than 20 years, AIM has supported the local community with programs to grow, connect and inspire tech talent. We offer a wide range of events and opportunities for professionals to connect in-person while building in-demand skills.



INFOTEC

[AIM Infotec](#) is the Midwest's largest annual conference for enterprise information management. The event features a keynote speaker, breakout speakers, networking sessions and an exhibitor area. Infotec is guaranteed to inspire, whether you're wrestling with security and big data issues, developing a new mobile app or evaluating your company's enterprise infrastructure.



hdc

[AIM HDC](#) (Heartland Developers Conference) is a 3-day software design and development event for tech professionals. The event consists of hands-on workshops, a keynote address and other speakers, breakout sessions and networking events. Attendees learn from national industry experts plus regional and local leaders, who share the latest knowledge and demonstrate new techniques.

> [Visit Careerlink.com for a complete calendar of upcoming events.](#)

# PASSIVE JOB SEEKING

Looking for a job can (and should) be a constant thing. If you're currently employed, that doesn't mean you should drop everything you're doing and go out to look for a new job. Rather, you should consider taking the approach known as passive job seeking.

## ● What is Passive Job Seeking?

Passive job seeking is when someone is currently employed, yet open to the idea of taking on a new job/career opportunity. Passive job seekers aren't necessarily unhappy with their current job (in fact, most passive job seekers are pretty content with what they have), but they're open to new opportunities to move up and further their career should they arise.

Passive job seeking requires more than just waiting for a potential employer to offer you a job.

## 🕒 10 Dos and Don't of Passive Job Seeking

- ✓ **Update your resume.** The first thing you are going to want to do is update your resume and make sure it can do a lot of the talking for you. You'll also want to update your social media profile (i.e. LinkedIn) and personal website since many employers are now using these forums to seek out potential employees.
- ✓ **Stay informed.** It's always a good idea to stay informed on all of the latest trends and innovations going on in your industry so when a potential employer does approach you, you appear knowledgeable and informed.
- ✓ **Network.** Networking is still important as a way to stay informed about what is going on in your industry and gives other people the opportunity to get to know you and your potential.
- ✓ **Keep tabs on potential employers.** While you may be in passive mode, it never hurts to keep tabs on the employers you would like to work for. Just take a moment every so often to see if a company you want to work for is hiring. If you really think the opportunity is right, then reach out to them.
- ✓ **Do look into your current company.** Depending on how big your current company is, there could be opportunities there for you to move up. Take the time and see what your current company has to offer, whether it is a step up in your department or an entirely different position that has potential for growth. Finding a new job within your current company can have a lot of perks since you've already established a base with them.
- ✓ **Stay positive.** Your phone might not be ringing off the hook, but that doesn't mean you should worry. Passive job seeking can be hard for both parties. Remember, employers don't necessarily know that you are looking for a job, so it can be a pretty big gamble for them to just call you up and offer you a position – you obviously wouldn't want to be turned down in that situation, and neither do they.
- ✗ **Don't let it take up all your time.** Since this is a passive job search, it is best to keep it as low key as possible. You are currently employed, so there is no need to for a sense of urgency.
- ✗ **Don't over think it.** Passive job seeking should be as stress free as possible. Try not to overthink it. If you are really dissatisfied with your job and want to make a change, then you should consider making the step towards active job seeking.
- ✗ **Don't be too forward.** While it is good to let people know you are interested in expanding your career, you should never give away too much information or be too open about your intentions. A good rule of thumb is to avoid airing your grievances about your current position and stick to positive remarks about bettering yourself and your career.
- ✗ **Don't jump the gun.** If you do happen to get an offer from a company, then we suggest taking the time to really think about whether or not you want to switch jobs. Sit down and weigh the pros and cons. As great as the new job may sound up front, there are obviously a lot of factors that could come into play later on.



# SEARCHING FOR A NEW JOB

## *while at work*

Looking for a job while employed can be nerve-wracking. You might wonder what the protocol is in certain scenarios like checking personal email accounts, using your lunch break for job searches, and what to say if someone at your current job approaches you about it.

The biggest question of all is, “Can I look for a job while at work or while I still have a job?”

Nearly all career experts will say yes, job-hunting while you’re still employed has many advantages. It alleviates any unwanted pressure and financial risks on your end and prospective employers look positively on people who are currently employed. It shows employers that you are dissatisfied with your current position and are looking to be challenged by their company.

Looking for a job while you’re actually working, though? That’s a tougher question.

- X** | **Don’t use company resources.** While this might seem like an obvious recommendation to most, it isn’t as easy as it looks. Company resources can be a number of things: your office phone, company email, fax machine for resumes, copier/printer, paper, and more.  
  
Stick to using your own personal email and cell-phone for the job search, and keep the faxing and printing at home or use a public library. We suggest limiting your use of company computers to search for jobs or check your email to break times.
- ✓** | **Do take time off to interview.** When it comes to accepting interviews, your best bet is to pick and choose the ones you want the most. Take appropriate time off for the interview rather than calling in sick. Taking off time is much more respectful and responsible. If you feel bad or are afraid of coming up with an excuse, simply tell your boss that you are taking time off for personal reasons; chances are they won’t even think twice about it.
- ✓** | **Do use your network (carefully).** Networking is an important part of job searching but when it comes to searching for a job while at work, things can get tricky. Trying to make sure that when you reach out to others, you aren’t inadvertently network with someone who has connections (personal or professional) with your boss or employer.
- X** | **Don’t leave your company without enough notice.** This is definitely a post-job search do and don’t, but it is a big one nonetheless. After you’ve done your careful job search, gone through all the interviews, and decided on a new job, make sure you give your company enough notice to replace you, or at least as much notice as possible. Almost all people completely understand the formalities of looking for a new job, but leaving on short notice can burn bridges to your past employer.

## ● Getting the Most Out of Your Job Search With AIM Careerlink

[AIM Careerlink](#) makes it easier for job seekers to not only see what's available in their career field, but to be proactive in their job search. [Creating a free AIM Careerlink account](#) helps you connect with employers that best match your skills, interests and abilities.

### **Use Our Free Resume-Building Tool**

By creating a profile on AIM Careerlink, you become a searchable candidate for employers posting new positions. The more information you provide, the easier it is for employers to connect with you.

### **Customize Your Job Search**

AIM Careerlink makes it easy to tailor your job search results so that they reflect you as an applicant, rather than an endless list of job openings.

### **Save Your Searches**

AIM Careerlink allows you to save your favorite job postings on your mobile device. By clicking the star in the right corner of the job listing, AIM Careerlink generates a customizable list of your starred openings under the "Saved Jobs" button on your dashboard. You can also enable push notifications daily, weekly or monthly to your device, to stay up to date on job openings in your career field.

# RESUMES

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Resumes are a reflection of you, your work and your accomplishments and should display how you want others to perceive you. There is always room for improvement on a resume, not to mention countless ways to make your resume stand out.

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## **At a minimum, your resume should be:**

- Properly formatted—be sure it doesn't look like a template
- Updated frequently with completed projects and accomplishments
- Free from grammatical errors
- Results-driven with quantified results of your projects



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*how & why you should*

# REVAMP AN EXISTING RESUME

Writing your resume can definitely be a cumbersome task, and for most people, once they land a job that they like, they tend to forget all about what their resume says until it is time to go job searching again.

In reality, updating your resume should happen once or twice a year, whether or not you are considering leaving your job.

## Why Update Your Resume?

- 01** | **It's a great networking tool.** You should think of your resume like you think of your social media profiles. This is especially important if you have a personal website or LinkedIn profile, a place where people are able to view your credentials frequently. If they see that your resume hasn't been updated in years, then they probably won't go out of their way to connect with you.
- 02** | **It helps you get a promotion.** Updating your resume shouldn't only be reserved for finding a new job. In fact, an updated resume can do a lot to help you get a promotion in the current company you are in, as a way of ensuring that your boss or anyone else who happens to be reviewing your case for the promotion is aware of all your accomplishments.
- 03** | **It saves you the trouble in the long run.** Maintaining an updated resume saves you the trouble of having to go back later on to add in all of the details you missed since you got hired. If the time comes to change jobs, you'll have one less thing to worry about and will be ahead of the game.

## How to Update Your Resume

- 01** | **Add on projects as they happen.** If you happened to assist on a big project at your company, then why not write it down while it is still fresh in your mind? Doing so will help you keep track of your achievements and save you time in the long run.
- 02** | **Integrate your goals into your resume.** When working on your resume, try to think about what you'd like others to see on it, whether it is an achievement or characteristic you'd like to work on, and make a goal to have it on your resume within a set time frame.
- 03** | **Accentuate ROI.** ROI stands for Return on Investment and reflects how much revenue you, as an employee, brought to the bottom line. While it may be difficult to record exactly how much revenue your work contributed to previous projects, it should be less difficult to illustrate just how you brought value to those projects. Focus on your accomplishments and accomplishments made in collaboration with others like hitting deadlines early or increasing traffic to your website.

# AVOID THE RESUME SHREDDER

— with this grammatical insight...not incite —

One of the biggest mistakes you can make in your job search is to submit a resume riddled with grammatical errors.

## 🕒 Tense

This may seem obvious, but it is important to keep your tense consistent. Think past, present, and future. When talking about previous positions and job duties, pay attention to the tense you are using. While it is understandable to use the present tense for a current position and past tense for a previous position, switching between tenses haphazardly looks messy and unprofessional.

**Example:**

*Interviewed potential candidates.*

*Focus on hiring best practices.*

## 🕒 Subject-Verb Agreement

Subject-Verb Agreement is an easy grammatical misstep. When writing a list of duties on your resume, write in "I" form or first person. After you write your list, go back and read your list aloud. Say "I" before each listed item. For example: "I manages various employees.", versus "I managed various employees."

**Error:** *Manages various employees.*

**Proper:** *Managed various employees.*

## 🕒 Homophones

Homophones often fall into the realm of most-popular grammar faux pas. Homophones are the tricky words that sound identical but spelled differently and carry different meanings.

*Affect - Effect*

*Insightful - Inciteful*

*Its - It's*

*There - They're - Their*

*Too - Two - To*

## 🕒 Overall Consistency

Consistency of punctuation, date/time formatting, and abbreviations can make or break your resume. While these can be personal preferences, it is vital to present a professional, cohesive, and consistent resume. It always helps to go back and reread your resume and have others look it over. Even the best writers need editors. Reading aloud can help you identify any grammatical errors.

# HOW TO SHOWCASE IT SKILLS

## *on your resume*

As IT skills become more of a requisite than a bonus to your resume, it is important to properly communicate any IT skills you may have to potential employers.

But showing off those skills on your resume requires more than just listing them in the “skills” section. If you really want to make an impact, you’ll have to make sure you strategically place your IT skills throughout your resume.

- 01** | **Use specific examples.** Don't simply list your positions and experience on your resume. It may seem like a great way to showcase your skills in a short and simple fashion, but if your resume reads like a grocery list then it won't do much to catch the employer's eye.
- 02** | **Avoid overloading your resume.** Employers don't have time to sift through all of the great skills you have in order to find the ones required for the position. Don't make the mistake of overloading your resume. If an employer has to work hard to find out whether or not you're qualified, they will probably just move on to the next applicant.
- 03** | **Custom fit your resume to the employer.** Try your best to tailor your resume to the position and company you are applying for. If you are going out for a web-developer position then try to focus on that. For example, if the employer wants you to be proficient in Java, then make sure you are highlighting everything you've done that is specific in Java. Be brief when including skills not highlighted by the job posting and focus the most on the skills the employer explicitly wants.
- 04** | **Include a portfolio.** It doesn't get any more specific than including a portfolio with specific examples of your work, just make sure your portfolio is applicable to the position you are applying for. If the company you previously worked for owns the rights to any of the projects you worked on, make sure you ask their permission before including the work in your portfolio.
- 05** | **Write with a sense of ownership.** Even if you were not the leader on projects you worked on, you can still highlight those projects in your resume. Take a moment to think about how big of an impact your role made in developing the projects. Chances are, it is a lot bigger than you first realized and you have every right to include projects you helped with on your resume and showcase them with a sense of ownership. Avoid simply stating the obvious like “part of the team that developed...” and focus on what you did specifically, and then how important it was to getting the project off the ground.
- 06** | **Keywords.** Using keywords interspersed throughout your resume can help you avoid snags with those recruiters and employers who run resumes through an application tracker. Remember to review every job description and match your resume to the description.

## 🕒 Upgrade Your Tech Skills With AIM Interface School

Skills are the new currency in job recruitment. While college degrees are still highly valuable, becoming an IT professional takes ample skills, some of which aren't easily acquired inside the classroom and change rapidly.

[AIM Interface School](#) offers part-time, accelerated tech training in highly marketable, in-demand skill sets for today's job market. Whether you're looking to brush up on your current IT skills or learn something entirely new, Interface can help you maintain your competitive edge in today's job market.

### Skills training programs include:

- Java
- WordPress
- .Net
- Digital Literacy and Social Media
- Software Design and Development
- Data Science

> [Visit interfacedschool.com](https://interfacedschool.com) for a complete list of available courses.



INTERFACE  
SCHOOL

## — *taking care of your* — **SOCIAL MEDIA RESUME**

With employers using social media to post jobs and developing their employer brand, and job seekers using it as a tool to seek out the companies they want to work for, there is no doubt that social media plays a huge role in today's job market.

The downside of social media is that employers can use it to screen their candidates. According to [one survey](#), one in three employers have rejected someone based on what they found out about them online. In the HR world, the sides are pretty divided over whether or not to use social media to screen candidates, with some people arguing that it doesn't work, while others considering it part of the public space.

Regardless of where you stand on the matter, as a job seeker, you should probably abide by the “better safe than sorry” rule.

- ✓ **Clean things up.** Try your best to refrain from posting anything that may come off as too outlandish or pictures that may seem distasteful to a potential employer. For social media platforms like Facebook, you can also make it so whatever is posted on your page has to be approved by you before it goes public.
- ✓ **Keep it private.** If you’d rather not have to worry about cleaning up your social media profiles, then consider making them private. This will eliminate a lot of headache for you in the long run and ensure that no one has the ability to snoop around your profiles.
- ✓ **Keep your career social media separate from your personal social media.** LinkedIn is specifically meant to help you enhance your career networking, so take the time to make that page as professional as possible and leave your Facebook and Twitter accounts to more personal things.

## DESIGNING ONE EPIC RESUME:

*what you need to know*

First impressions last forever, especially in situations that can make or break a successful career. As resumes trickle in, hiring staffs sift through and eliminate candidates based on the design and professionalism of each resume. Regardless of what industry you’re searching in, typos and unfortunate design choices can push you to the back of the list, or even off of it completely.

Especially if you are a technical professional in the field of IT, there is an expectation (or there should be) that you are exceedingly capable of using a computer beyond that of someone learning Microsoft Word for the first time. Designers face even steeper design expectations.

- 01** | **Design your own template or revamp an existing one.** If you don’t have the access or ability to use software such as InDesign to truly design your resume, that’s okay. Go ahead and use a template, but remember to personalize it. Move elements around and accentuate what is most likely to get you noticed.
- 02** | **Edit. Revise. Have someone else edit. Revise again.** We know it sounds exhausting but typos and grammatical errors symbolize a lack of attention to detail and may make your resume look much less admirable.
- 03** | **Save various file types.** Nothing is more frustrating than designing a winning resume then getting to the online application and they ask you to insert your resume through an unformatted cut and paste. Sometimes, there will be an upload option as well but if there isn’t, you should have a very minimal text document ready to go.

*(continued on next page)*



## 04

**C.R.A.P.** In Robin Williams' book, [The Non-Designer's Design Book](#), Williams offers four fundamental design principles for those new to the world of document design.

- **Contrast.** Contrast refers to the use of color scheme, shape, and size of font to differentiate between headers and lists, etc.
- **Repetition.** While repetition of text can become a definite resume no-no, using repetition of lines and shapes to emphasize cohesion is a must.
- **Alignment.** Centering in document design is poor form. Instead, use a baseline grid to align all elements of your resume and double check that margins are correctly set. Make sure all elements are visually connected to avoid the viewer from having to figure out what belongs where.
- **Proximity.** In designing your resume, ensure that your design tells a story by placing each element in close proximity to complementary information and avoid making your interviewer search for information.

### ● **AIM Careerlink Resume Builder**

The [AIM Careerlink resume builder](#) is a valuable tool that allows you to keep up to 5 resumes organized and available for quick use when applying for jobs.

There are 3 options with the AIM Careerlink resume builder:

#### **Build a New Resume**

The AIM Careerlink resume builder provides step-by-step assistance in creating a new resume. Simply input your general information, education, work experiences, and referrals in the labeled fields and AIM Careerlink will format your resume for you.

#### **Upload Your Completed Resume**

If you already have a completed resume, upload a PDF, DOC, DOCX, TXT, RTF copy of it to AIM Careerlink for easy access when applying for jobs.

#### **Copy and Paste Your Resume**

You can also copy and paste the text from your resume directly into the AIM Careerlink resume field and edit it as needed throughout your job search.

# USING WORK PORTFOLIOS

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When it comes to applying for jobs, you want to do all you can to let your potential employers know you are the best. More often than not, that includes revamping your resume, updating your social media profiles, writing an awesome cover letter or getting a really good recommendation.

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But one thing that seems to get neglected all too often is the work portfolio.



# WHY YOU SHOULD CONSIDER

## *putting together a work portfolio*

Work portfolios can be a great asset when it comes to job-hunting. However, as with anything you want to show your future employer, a work portfolio requires more than just slapping together a few work samples and hoping for the best.

- 01** | **They provide a more in depth look at your work.** Cover letters and resumes are a great way to pique the interest of hiring managers and employers, but they rarely tell the whole story. Once you get your foot in the door, having a work portfolio to back up your claims in your resume or cover letter will help solidify your chances at getting a job.
- 02** | **They are eye-catching.** Portfolios are more than just words on a piece of paper. More often than not, your samples will include some sort of picture or image. Visuals are a great way to help an employer picture the work you've done.

## *things to keep in mind when*

# CREATING A WORK PORTFOLIO

- 01** | **Tell a story.** While your resume and cover letters are brief, your work portfolio can have a little more room to tell the story you want. Take the time to get a little more in depth on your projects, how you assisted in them, and the specific outcomes of each piece of work. You should not include every project you've ever worked on. Make sure you choose wisely and as always, try to stick to specifics.
- 02** | **Visuals, visuals, visuals.** Your work portfolio doesn't need to be a piece of art, but including some visuals is a great way to help tell the story you want the employer to hear. You've probably already mentioned the work you've done in your resume, so now make sure the employer can see it in your work portfolio.
- 03** | **Skip the paper and go digital.** These days, portfolios don't need to come in physical form, especially since most of the hiring is done online. Take advantage of this by creating an online profile or a .pdf that you can attach to your resume. In turn, you won't have to worry about spending money on printing out a bunch of portfolios to give away or risk having it mistaken for junk mail that will just be thrown into a pile on the hiring manager's desk.  
  
A digital portfolio can also be seen as another sample of your work, especially if you are in the IT field. What better way to show your skills as a web developer than to send an employer your own website?

# how to transform your resume into an **ONLINE PORTFOLIO**

## ● **How to Get Started**

Before you pick a user-friendly platform like [about.me](#) or [Contently](#), think about the audience you want to draw in and the jobs you are interested in. If you're looking to catch a certain employer's eye, think about the networks that those recruiters are using daily.

For example, [Spiceworks](#) is another user-friendly platform. It allows you to create a clean-cut online portfolio. Plus, its tech-centered audience makes it ideal for tech professionals, such as developers.

## ● **Show, Don't Tell**

Many people tend to fixate on a bulleted list of employment history instead of the results-driven projects they completed at their place of employment.

Think about all of the different mediums you can utilize to tell your story. Whether it's a video clip from YouTube, high-resolution photos from Flickr or a sound bite from SoundCloud, employers love to see interactive displays of a job seeker's work.

## ● **Get Creative**

Even if your work isn't particularly visual, you can make it eye popping by adding infographics, charts, news clippings or blog entries about your work. If your projects require more than just a computer screen, employers may be interested in your processes as well. Take pictures and display those hard-working actions that make your work great.

## ● **Be Organized**

Be careful to not go overboard. You want to make sure your portfolio is clean, concise and user-friendly. Also, make sure all of your elements have an overarching theme, and that they are projects that got results.

Everything on your resume and portfolio should be as quantified if possible. For example, did you hit any record sales? How many programs have you coded during your employment? How many readers did you attract to your past employer's website? The more numbers, the better.

## ● **Include a Mission Statement**

Another important detail to include in your online portfolio is your motto or your mission statement. Pick something that shows off your work ethic and says something bold about the way you like to do business.

# PERSONAL BRANDING FOR JOB SEEKERS

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A brand is a collection of elements that a company uses to distinguish itself from its competitors and creates a lasting impression in the minds of its customers. How can you apply those same concepts to create an effective personal brand?

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With a personal brand, your goal is to stand out among your colleagues and create a lasting impression with potential employers. According to [Forbes Magazine](#), a strong, appealing personal brand can help job seekers in the interview process.



# PERSONAL BRANDING

## *for job seekers*

- 01 | Learn your personality type.** Learn more about yourself by taking a combination of personality assessments. This is a great place to start when you're trying to discover a career path that fits you. Check out [Gallup's StrengthsFinder](#) and the [16 personalities assessment](#).  
  
For those of you looking for a more in-depth career exploration, organizations like the [Rockport Institute](#) offer great workshops and one-on-one guidance.
- 02 | Highlight your values.** Are you the type of person who is always on time? Do you strive to always do what's right? Think about the qualities that make you special.
- 03 | Examine your personal passions.** What are your passions? Chances are they are as unique as you. What topics can you talk about endlessly? What part of your job do you love the most? Potential employers want to get a sense of who you are and what matters most to you. Knowing the answer to these questions will give you interview talking points.
- 04 | Share your superpowers.** What can you do awesomely that others can't? If you were about to receive an award, what would it be for? Highlight these traits in your resume and during interviews.
- 05 | Evaluate your brand.** Take stock of your reputation. What do others say about you? The tips below will help you figure out what characteristics people associate you with, which can help you better define your personal brand.
- 06 | Google your name.** Do you like the results? Is it just your old LinkedIn account with some tweets from a few years ago? You may find that your online presence needs some major updating.  
  
The goal is to have your past work shown in the results. If the majority of your work is done for an internal website, find side projects you've worked on and try republishing them to a WordPress blog. This will help potential employers see some of your work prior to an interview.
- 07 | Examine your reputation at work.** Take a look at your performance feedback. What garnered you high praise? Don't hesitate to bring up those qualities in an interview and showcase them in your online profiles. The things you do well will also help define your personal brand.

*(continued on next page)*

## 08

**Communicate your brand.** After you've defined and evaluated your personal brand, it's time to share it with the world. Start posting content that aligns with your brand on your social media profiles. Share links, images and videos that communicate your personal and professional passions and values.

Remember, weekly posts to your Twitter and LinkedIn accounts will ensure more results when someone Googles your name.

### 🕒 How often should you post?

The frequency with which you post depends on you and your followers. Check out this [HubSpot article](#) for guidance on the relation between the quantity of posts and how many followers you have.

## WHAT SHOULD YOU POST

If you are new to social media, [Sprout Social](#) suggests posting the following:

- Post unexpected Tweets
- Give a glimpse into your private life
- Post beautiful content
- Stick to a narrative

If you're still having writer's block, remember that you can post things in a variety of different ways such as:

- Sharing events
- Asking a question
- Telling the world what you're up to
- Promoting your projects
- Giving your opinion on a subject

A solid knowledge of your passions, superpowers and growth opportunities can help you to be more self-assured, which is always helpful when you're job searching. Knowledge is power, right? Having your personal brand defined can also guide your career choices and help potential employers to assess if you fit the position and company culture. But, remember, your personal brand isn't static. Your brand develops over time and will evolve with you.

# CULTURAL FIT:

## *should you apply for that job?*

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These days, everyone seems to be talking about cultural fit. Many times, the focus on cultural fit is from the employer's point of view. It's not often that people talk about cultural fit from the candidate's perspective.

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Cultural fit for employees is important, if not essential. Getting acclimated to the culture of the company you want to work for can make or break your experience with the company. Even if you're exceptionally qualified, a poor cultural fit can turn a great offer sour very quickly.





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# *figuring out what you want in a* **COMPANY CULTURE**

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The first thing you need to do is figure out what you are looking for in a company's culture. Here are a few things to consider:

## 🕒 **Small Business or Big Business?**

How big of a company do you want to work for? Do you value company benefits or knowing everyone you work with?

Knowing everyone you work with is certainly possible in a big company, but if you like being able to intimately know each and every coworker and client, a small company may be a better choice for you. If treating your co-workers as family isn't as important to you and you're more focused on the big picture, you may want to consider working for a corporate company who can provide you that kind of path.

## 🕒 **Tech-Savvy or Traditional?**

While most companies are moving towards the digital age, not all will give you the chance to whip out your phone or use social media as a platform to get the word out about your company. The goals and fundamentals of your company will dictate how, and when, you use technology. Everything may be headed in the direction of all-digital, but some company cultures just don't prioritize that push as much as others.

## 🕒 **Customer-Focused or Customer-Centric?**

How the company treats their customers is also a big deal. If you like to make sure you take care of a customer every step of the way, it makes sense to look for a customer-focused company. If you are more focused on working with a customer to make sure your company gets the most out of them, then go for a company that is customer-centric.

# — TAKING THE COMPANY'S CUES —

Now that you know how to decide what you want, here are a few ways to figure out if a company is the right cultural fit for you:

- 01 | Look into their mission statement.** A mission statement can tell you a lot about the company. If you read their statement and find it relatable to you, then you are heading in the right direction.
- 02 | Ask around.** Talk to the recruiter, friends who work for the company, the hiring manager, etc. Don't be afraid to ask in an interview what each person values the most about the company. They are looking to see if you are the right fit, and you should feel compelled to do the same.
- 03 | Pay attention to your surroundings.** Look around the office: does it match the photos on their website or the motivational plaques they have up on the walls? The environment you'll be working in will definitely influence the culture, so make sure you pay close attention to it.
- 04 | Pay attention to their mannerisms.** Do the employees look like they are having fun, or do they seem miserable and bored out of their minds? Since you'll be working closely with these people, you need to make sure you will like them. How each person interacts with one another says a lot about them and what the company is looking for, so don't ignore their mannerisms!

# ARE YOU A GOOD FIT

## *for the position?*

Deciding if a position is going to be a good fit for you is a difficult task. A good fit goes beyond basic roles and responsibilities and there is a lot to consider when answering this question.

### ☉ **Are You a Good Fit for the Work?**

Analyze your past work experience and know your talents. Reflect on the big projects you've worked on that have led to this point in your career. How similar is this position to other positions you've had? Understanding your past work experience is very important to figuring out if you'll thrive at the position you are applying for.

### ☉ **Are You a Good Fit for the Organization?**

What size of a company have you most enjoyed working for? What values do you hold closely that you want reflected in your next position? What are your "deal breakers" when it comes to work environment? Research the organization's mission and figure out if it aligns to your personality and values. Knowing what kind of organization you want to work for is key to finding meaningful work.

### ☉ **Are You a Good Fit for the Manager?**

What were the best qualities your previous managers had? What were the worst? A good relationship with your manager is key to your success. A good manager will want to see you succeed and will do everything they can to help you.

If you're one of the final candidates, try setting up a time to grab coffee with the hiring manager so you can really get to know them. Most importantly, ask questions. You can ask what their big goals are for the organization or what the company's culture is like. Asking questions shows the hiring manager that you are interested in more than just finding a job. It shows that you are serious about finding the next position in your career.

### ☉ **Are you a good fit for the team?**

When being interviewed for a position, sometimes it's a good idea to ask the interviewer if you can meet the team you'll be working with. We learn and grow with our teammates, so seeing if you can get along with the other members is very important to your success as an employee.

Asking yourself these questions prior to accepting an offer is crucial if you want to find a job that is the right fit. Remember that it's okay to be picky during your job search. Hiring managers will actually respect you more as an applicant if you know the answers to these key questions because it shows that you really care about the position.

## ◎ Set Your AIM

With [AIM's Career Exploration](#), you'll not only learn about yourself, but you'll also identify and explore exciting occupations, and craft a strategy to help you meet both your personal and professional goals.

### [I's in Tech](#)

IT provides amazing career opportunities in some exceptional work environments, and IT careers aren't for just any one type of individual. Explore our exclusive I's in Tech and learn more about the right IT path for you.

### [Career Clusters](#)

Sometimes we don't know what we want to do or what careers we would be successful in. Whatever your interests, you can use the Career Clusters assessment to help determine what pathway you might be best suited for. With sixteen total pathways, the possibilities are vast.

### [Assessments](#)

Whether you're a great test taker or you're not sure exactly how to prepare for larger exams like the ACT, our assessment section is filled with information and advice designed to help put your mind at ease.

### [Tech Concierge](#)

The AIM Tech Concierge program is a free service for job seekers and will help them establish a pathway to a successful career in tech. One-on-one guidance is provided by patient, experienced AIM career coaches who can't wait to hear from you.

### [Internships](#)

Immerse yourself in your future career as part of your education and development. Our resources can help you find the perfect internship for you whether you're just getting started or you've interned before.

### [College Search and Planning](#)

Choosing the right college can be one of the most difficult and personal choices you've made up to this point in your life. How do you pick the right one? We've assembled a list of helpful resources designed to help make your college selection and planning easier.

### [Scholarships and Financial Aid](#)

Funding your college education can seem like an impossible task. No matter your GPA or the number of after-school activities you involved yourself in, there's a scholarship for you. That's why we've assembled a list of amazing scholarship opportunities for every type of student.

### [Study Tips](#)

We never stop learning. In fact, learning is one of the most important factors leading up to achievement and success. That's why we've created a list of tools built to help teach you how to study in a way that will work for you.

# NO INTERVIEW?

*— maybe it was the prescreening questions —*

Have you ever applied for a job online and wondered why you never received a follow-up interview? This may be a result of the prescreening process.

Prescreening questions (PQs) are a basic set of yes or no questions that some employers use during the prescreening process to determine if a job seeker is the ideal candidate for a job. PQs are a way to establish basic information about a person, but this process can have negative effects for job seekers when employers rely on this online format too strictly.

A common use for PQs is to quickly eliminate job seekers that are not legally eligible for a position. For example, if the job requires the potential employee to be a certain age, the PQ may read, "Are you 18 years of age or older?" If the applicant clicks "No," their application could be considered a "knock-out," which means the employer may never see this candidate's application.

Another use of PQs is to separate job candidates into smaller and smaller groups so the employer can narrow their search to a candidate that is closest to their predetermined preferences. For example, if an employer prefers the candidate to have a higher level of education, a PQ may read, "Do you have a master's degree in a communications-related field?"

Maybe the candidate doesn't have a master's degree, but instead, 10 years of communications-related experience.

While it may be tempting for you to manipulate your PQ answers to stand out, AIM Careerlink advises job seekers to always answer PQs honestly and to use a cover letter to highlight personal qualifications. Even if you don't have a perfect PQ score, you could still be the best-suited candidate for the job, you just need to communicate your strengths in a different way.

# NAILING THE INTERVIEW

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It's no secret that job interviews can be pretty nerve-racking. You've put lots of time and work into networking, perfecting your resume, building your personal brand and portfolio, and applying for jobs you feel are a perfect fit. But now comes the make or break interview.

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With the right preparation, you can calm your nerves and walk into your interview confident and ready to make a great first impression.



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*decoding the*

# INTERVIEW DRESS CODE

When it comes to job hunting, we've all heard the sayings: "dress to impress" and "dress for success." However, with companies beginning to loosen their dress codes, the classic suit and tie may not be the right choice anymore. Lots of different dress code terms get thrown around without any clear definitions.

## 🕒 Interview Dress Code Depends on the Company

"Dress for the job you want." That's the golden rule of interviews. But, this rule shouldn't be taken at face value. Yes, you want to dress appropriately for the job you want, but you also want to make a good first impression.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) cited a study on clothing conducted by Michael W. Kraus, an assistant professor of organizational behavior at the Yale School of Management, that revealed clothes with high social status can increase dominance and job performance in "high-stakes" competitive tasks.

The takeaway for job seekers is that when you dress appropriately the part of a confident and capable employee, hiring managers will view you as such.

That means you need to gather some intel on the company you're interviewing with. Get to know what the standard business attire is for your potential new role. Once you know the dress code, you should aim to impress by dressing up a level.

Your first goal should always be to make a good first impression. If it's a traditional corporate environment (i.e. suit and tie), then you should wear a suit and tie in conservative colors. If you're interviewing for a bartender job at a beach-side bar, don't show up in shorts and flip-flops. Even if that's what you would wear if you worked there, you should step up your game. Wear khakis, a button-down shirt and closed-toe shoes.

## 🕒 Business Casual vs. Business Formal

Business casual and business formal are the most common dress codes. Unfortunately, these terms can mean different things at different companies. Business casual presents the greatest room for interpretation. Let's take a closer look at business formal and business casual dress codes.

### **Business Formal**

Business formal attire requires a full (matching) suit in conservative colors (i.e. black, dark gray, or dark blue), with a tie. Shoes should be closed toe or low-heeled shoes in similar colors, and the shirts should be either a classic button-down or formal blouse in white or cream. Women, however, may wear a black or dark blue shirt underneath their jacket. For both men and women, all jewelry should be minimal and conservative.

## Business Casual

Unfortunately, the business casual definition is a little less clear. For the most part, men should consider wearing a button down or collared shirt, blazer or sweater, slacks and closed-toed shoes. For women, consider a formal blouse, paired with a sweater or blazer, slacks or a knee length or longer skirt and open-toed (but low-heeled) shoes.

### 🕒 When in Doubt, Just Ask

If you are unsure about how you need to dress, then just go ahead and ask. Putting yourself out there and ensuring that you get things right is much better than going into an interview and making a bad impression. If you'd rather not ask, or if you don't have the opportunity to, then just dress business formal. No one is going to look down on you for going the extra mile.

# — THE IMAGE YOU PROJECT —

The image you portray in an interview goes beyond what you wear.

### 🕒 Body Language in an Interview

Aside from dressing to impress, there are some other things you should consider, like posture and body language. For example, [Business Insider](#) contributor James Rosebush stresses the importance of pulling your hair out of your face so you aren't caught fidgeting with it in the middle of an interview. Sitting up tall and straight is always better than slouching, but be careful not to look too stiff.

### 🕒 Tattoos and Piercings in the Workplace

An article from [Psychology Today](#) says that, "Tattoo acceptance in the workplace is a matter of company culture, executive ruling, and perhaps even the need to attract, hire, and retain employees that fit a certain demographic."

Although body art is now more broadly accepted than in the past, covering up your tattoos and removing non-traditional jewelry for an interview is a good idea if you are unsure of the company's policy. You want the interviewer to be focused on you and the value you could bring to the company. Tattoos and piercings may cause a distraction in the hiring process.

Some experts suggest taking a "cover-and-tell" approach. Cover your tattoos during the interview process, but tell the potential employer about your tattoos if they are in a place that would be visible during normal day-to-day work.

### 🕒 What to Wear for an Interview at a Career Fair?

The career fair is perhaps the most confusing place when it comes to an interview dress code because of the sheer volume of employers you'll be meeting throughout the day. Your best bet in this kind of situation is to figure out which company booths you plan on going to and based off that, figure out whether you'll need to suit-up or relax a bit. If you aren't sure about the companies you plan on visiting then assume that you'll need to be dressed in business formal attire.



## 🕒 What About the Weather?

If you are interviewing for a corporate job, a suit may be your best option. But if you think the weather is too warm for a wool suit- it probably is. When it is 100 degrees outside, try something more breathable like a fitted polo or button up shirt with some khakis or a simple cotton dress with a sharp cardigan.

Wear something that you feel somewhat comfortable in, that you won't sweat through. Just make sure you still look neat and put together. If you have no idea what to wear, call the receptionist or HR department of the company and ask what the typical dress code is.

Lastly, while preparing for your interview, make sure you block out extra time if you are taking public transportation. There is nothing worse than frantically rushing to your interview covered in sweat.

# FINDING BALANCE

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## *in an interview*

Often times, you'll find that interview tips can be conflicting. Typically, conflicting tips are neither right or wrong. The key is to find balance in the information presented.

- 01 | Rehearsed but not over-rehearsed.** It's always a good to have a plan when going into an interview. Coming prepared and having at least a base idea of questions you want to ask, or what you want to say about yourself, can really make things go a lot smoother for you and the interviewer. Where this fails, however, is when you've over-rehearsed the interview and it comes off sounding like you are reading from a script. That can make you come across as insincere, as well as make you seem like a terrible interviewee.
- 02 | Casual but not too casual.** Interviews are definitely a professional matter, but that doesn't mean you need to be so formal that you come off as stuffy. Most interview tips tell you to be personable and authentic so the interviewer can actually get the feel for who you are as a person, and how you will work with others. However, being too casual can really give off the impression that you aren't serious about the interview or the job.
- 03 | Not too late or too early, but right on time.** So it goes without saying that you should never be late for an interview, but what about being too early for an interview? Unless someone tells you to show up early so they can get a few things squared away beforehand, try to arrive only a few minutes before your interview starts. If you want to make the best first impression, simply leave the guessing out of the equation and come when they asked you to—it makes it easier on everyone.

# HOW TO ANSWER

## *the “reason for leaving” question*

What should you say when your interviewer asks why you are leaving your current position? Honesty is usually the best policy but some situations call for a slight omission.

In short, you should never bash your boss or former employer. It’s important to remember the old adage “If you don’t have anything nice to say, don’t say anything at all.” Stay positive and refrain from becoming defensive when explaining why you left your last job. If you feel it is necessary to explain the situations that led to your resignation, do so in a tactful, upbeat manner being sure to comment only on situations and not on the people involved.

What are some appropriate responses to the age old question of why you’re seeking new career opportunities?

You should make your reasons honest while focusing on your desires and skills rather than the pitfalls of your current employer. Remain upbeat and positive, accentuating the reasons your potential interviewer may better suit your goals rather than the way your present employer falls flat.

- 01 | “I’m looking for new growth opportunities.”** This can apply to various situations without you having to go into detail.
- 02 | “There is no room for advancement in my current job position.”** If you are stuck in a dead end job and are seeking opportunities to enhance your skills and grow with a company, say so. These reasons illustrate determination and will.
- 03 | “I’m concerned about the possibility of company layoffs.”** The fear of mass layoffs, especially when your employer is experiencing financial instability, is a substantial reason to seek new employment. Most companies understand the threat of mass layoffs and will respect your honesty.
- 04 | “I’m looking to change the scope of my career.”** If you’re looking to change and feel like your current employer does not offer that opportunity, articulate this in a way that is more about your career goals than the lack of opportunities present at your current employer.
- 05 | “I’m interviewing for my dream job.”** If that’s true, don’t hesitate to vocalize it. Interviewers love when you are excited about their company and what added value you can contribute. This also detracts from why you’re leaving the previous company by spotlighting the strengths of the interviewing company.

— *questions successful job seekers ask themselves* —

# BEFORE AN INTERVIEW

We all know the typical questions employers ask candidates to find out if they are the right match for a position, but what questions do successful job seekers ask themselves before they talk with a potential employer?

## 01 | **What Do I Know About the Company?**

If the answer is nothing, a good candidate will do their research before applying for the job or scheduling an interview. The job seeker who knows more about his or her potential employer is one step ahead and won't be caught off guard by new information during the interview.

## 02 | **What Does the Company Know About Me?**

A successful job seeker knows what is on their resume as well as what information they have made available elsewhere. Be aware of the information that pops up when a potential employer Googles your names and tidy up your social media profiles.

## 03 | **Why Do I Want the Job?**

Job seekers who have asked themselves this question are prepared to talk about their response in detail to a potential employer. They have taken the time to truly question why this particular position is something they want and how they are a good fit for it.

## 04 | **What Can I Handle?**

Individuals who know the answer to this question are more likely to find a job that perfectly fits their abilities and will not take a job that is too difficult or seek a position beneath their set of skills.

## 05 | **What Motivates Me?**

Both the job seeker and the employer benefit from the job seeker's ability to answer this question. When a job seeker knows their abilities and what motivates them, it makes working with the job seeker easier, more enjoyable and productive.

## 06 | **Am I Prepared?**

No individual, no matter how personable, talented or intelligent, can completely recover from showing up to an interview unprepared. Employers would rather choose a candidate who has made the proper preparations before an interview than one who hasn't. The individual who comes prepared shows that he or she knows what is required and truly cares about the position.

## 07 | **What Makes Me Special?**

This doesn't need to come up in an interview. In fact, a person who immediately says why he or she is special may seem conceited. However, when a job seeker knows what his or her special talents are, they appear more confident when talking to a recruiter or employer.

# *the importance of* **ASKING QUESTIONS** *during an interview*

For many job seekers, the most dreaded part of an interview is the infamous, “So do you have any questions for us?” at the end of the interview.

Some people dread it because they just don’t know what to ask. For others, it’s because they’re afraid of asking the wrong things. Regardless, asking questions during an interview is an essential part of landing a job. In fact it is often what sets you apart from all the other candidates. More often than not, this is the part of the interview that really allows the employer to know what kind of person you are and what they can expect from you.

As such, it’s important to know both how and when to ask the questions you have on your mind.

✓ **Come prepared.** Off the cuff questions can be great because they show the interviewer that you are able to think on your feet but it’s not always possible to come up with the best questions at a moment’s notice. In order to avoid putting yourself in a bind, come up with a few ideas before stepping into the interview.

These questions can be based on the company’s goals, or perhaps a recent development at the company. Keep in mind that you need your questions to be organic. Make sure it doesn’t sound like you’re reading off of a script and avoid asking a question that was already answered in the interview. The best approach is to have an idea of what you’d like to ask or a general topic you’d like to touch on, and as you go throughout the interview, develop the question based on the current conversation.

✓ **Ask what they need and show what you can do to help.** The most important thing about asking questions in an interview is following up with an appropriate response that shows you can fulfill the wants and needs of the company. A question like, “What would you like to see this position develop into several years from now?” is a great way to find out what the employer wants and needs from someone like you and also shows that you are willing to help the company meet their goals.

✓ **The more specific the question, the better.** Try your best to ask questions that relate specifically to the position you are applying for. Ask questions that pertain to the department you are getting hired in or the individual position itself. This puts you in a better standing with the interviewer because you are giving them concrete examples of how you can execute the job you are interviewing for.

## ◎ AIM Tech Concierge

The AIM Tech Concierge program is a free service for job seekers to establish a pathway to a successful career in tech. We offer one-on-one guidance provided by experienced AIM career coaches.

### AIM Tech Concierge benefits:

- One-on-one career coach to assist in creating a custom career plan
- Introductory tech courses and workshops
- Career and resume support

### It's time to make a change.

AIM Tech Concierge is available to anyone interested in beginning or expanding their career in tech.

> [Contact the AIM Tech Concierge team to get started today.](#)



tech concierge

# AFTER THE JOB OFFER

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After a series of applications, phone calls, and interviews, you've finally succeeded in landing your first job offer.

But what comes next?

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An illustration showing two hands shaking over a document. The document is white with the word 'CONTRACT' in large, bold, black letters. The hands are rendered in a stylized, flat style with shades of brown and tan. The hands are wearing dark grey or black suit sleeves. The background is a solid teal color.

**CONTRACT**

# DO I NEGOTIATE MY SALARY

## *before I accept?*

Most people admit to not negotiating their salary. First-timers especially may have trouble deciding whether or not to negotiate.

- 01 | There's always room to negotiate.** According to the same survey by NerdWallet and LookSharp, nearly three-quarters of employers who were surveyed said they raise starting salary offers by 5 to 10% during negotiations. Most, if not all employers take into consideration the possibility that their candidates might want to haggle their pay, so there is no reason why candidates shouldn't think the same.
- 02 | A little risk won't hurt.** If that isn't enough to convince you, here's something else: out of those surveyed who did ask for an increase, 80% were somewhat successful. And while the risk was there, nearly 90% of the hiring managers surveyed have never retracted an offer due to negotiating. From the point of view of the hiring managers, 76% said candidates who negotiated came off more confident.
- 03 | Negotiating now is better than negotiating later.** Most people think that experience will get them the salary increases they need over time, but that isn't necessarily the case. According to a report put out by the New York Federal Reserve, lifetime earnings are determined in your 20s, and the average salary growth begins to slow down after the first 10 years. By negotiating earlier on in your career, you may end up actually making more in the end than if you were to start negotiating down the road.

### 🕒 **Dos and Don'ts of Successful Salary Negotiating**

- ✓ | Be modest.** The key to negotiating a job offer is to make sure you are always modest when doing so. This should happen before the negotiating process begins. Be open and enthusiastic to the opportunity/offers they are giving you and from there, you can begin negotiating and expressing your concerns.
- ✗ | Don't use others to negotiate.** You should never bring anyone's name or their salary to the negotiating table. Not only could that be a breach of privacy, but bringing up another (new) co-worker can jeopardize their reputation in the company and bring tension among your colleagues.
- ✓ | Use other job offers.** If you happen to have another job offer in line, there is no reason why you can't use that as leverage to negotiate with the employer, just make sure you bring it up tactfully. Flaunting all the amazing job offers you have can make you seem arrogant in the interviewing process.
- ✓ | Go beyond salary.** Pay isn't the only thing you can negotiate. If the employer seems reluctant to bump up your salary, consider discussing with them other benefits such as paid time off, work schedule, bonuses, and stock options. Seeing what else they have to offer can sometimes be more worthwhile than just negotiating for a higher salary.

# MONEY ISN'T EVERYTHING:

*hiring negotiations go far beyond salary*

Many people don't realize they can negotiate job offer terms beyond salary. Many companies will offer alternative benefits in place of those that they're not capable of providing, whether it be equity, experience, or learning opportunities.

If an employer does not have the means to negotiate salary, what other benefits are up for negotiation?

## 01 | Title

While it may seem vain, some may prefer a better job title in place of a salary increase.

## 02 | Vacation Time

Who doesn't like a little extra vacation time? Requesting additional vacation days, especially for a pre-planned trip makes a whole lot of sense.

## 03 | Schedule Flexibility

Today, we are all faced with scheduling conflicts. Flexible scheduling allows for work/life balance.

## 04 | Job Scope

Sometimes, salary cannot be increased without increasing the role of the candidate. If your hiring manager mentions that you must move up one level to receive increased salary, ask how taking on that role would alter the scope of your position and go from there.

## 05 | Relocation Expenses

If the new opportunity involves relocation, requesting assistance with the cost of moving is not unheard of and can be a huge help.

## 06 | Teleworking Options

Requesting to work from home or out of the office is often a shot in the dark, but everything can be discussed and negotiated.

## 07 | Severance Packages

Even severance packages can be on the table when negotiating a new job offer, especially for higher-level and better-compensated positions. If you are leaving a promising position, you may want to leverage this as a means of safeguarding in case the new role does not work out.



# EXITING A JOB:

– *should you stay in touch with your former employers?* –

For some, looking back at former employers is kind of like thinking back to a relationship with an old flame—“it was good while it lasted.” However, moving on with your career does not have to mean completely letting go of the relationship with your former boss or employer. In fact, there are a lot of really great reasons why you may want to consider keeping in touch with your former employers.

## 🕒 When to Stay In Touch

- 01 | Former employers make great mentors.** Mentoring someone can be a lifelong process and by no means should it stop simply because you and your mentor no longer work together. If you truly value the advice and wisdom your manager has given you during your stay with the company, then there is no reason why that cannot be a lasting relationship. Be upfront and let them know how much you've valued the time they've spent teaching you. If they truly want you to succeed beyond their own company, then chances are they'll be more than happy to keep in touch with you long after you have left.
- 02 | Potential for re-hire.** Keeping in touch with your former employer can give you the opportunity to get rehired again which can have a lot of benefits. First, you have already established a good relationship with your employer. Second, you know your way around the company. Having another opportunity can potentially help you expand your career and move up quickly in the company.
- 03 | Great references.** Staying in touch with your former employer can also provide you with some great references as you move forward. Keep them in the loop as you expand your career so when it is time for you to apply for a new job, they'll be able to back you up and give you a great reference.
- 04 | Great networking.** Former employers can also be a big part of your network. Since you've already established a good relationship with them, there is a good chance that when a friend of theirs is asking for new hires, you'll be one of the first people that comes to mind.

## 🕒 When to Not Stay In Touch

There are also plenty of reasons why you may not want to keep in touch with a former employer. If you really did have a hard time working for them towards the end, then the chances of you forming a good relationship after you leave is pretty unlikely.

That being said, there is always the opportunity to mend those kinds of relationships and if the opportunity presents itself, it is something you should definitely consider. Weigh out the pros and cons and be sure to feel out how you think your employer will respond. No one ever wants to feel like they are being used.



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