The Jobseeker's Toolkit for Download

Introduction

The purpose of The Jobseeker's Toolkit is to help you acquire and build critical tools that will ultimately help you conduct a successful job search. Through a series of five courses with a focus on four key components, you will build your own toolkit that helps prepare you for the challenges of a job search.

The five courses are structured into modules and activities that build on the content and exercises of the preceding course. It is therefore imperative that you work your way through the series in chronological order and complete every assignment along the way. Once you feel that you possess the skills covered in each section, you will have an opportunity to apply what you have learned by completing the section "From Theory to Practice."

Throughout the series, you will find a number of lessons and assignments that will help you develop and hone your job seeking skills. In other words, the work you put into building your own Toolkit will provide you with a foundation for success.

The Jobseeker's Toolkit Course Series is built to accompany you through the job search and employment lifecycle, from building self-awareness to determining the best-fit career path, identifying employment opportunities, preparing for an interview, all the way to maintaining employment and advancing your career.

Courses 1 and 2 will help you discover your career interests:

Course 1: Self-Awareness covers self-assessment and evaluation.

Course 2: Career Exploration – Methods and Resources is all about helping you explore the career options that may be right for you.

Courses 3 and 4 will help you find job opportunities and hone the skills that will help you get a job offer.

Course 3: Finding Employment dives into the tools necessary for finding job opportunities.

Course 4: The Interview is about sharpening your interview skills and landing a desired position.

The final course in the series of The Jobseeker's Toolkit provides information on job maintenance and what it takes to be a successful employee. It will also point you to further resources that will help with continued professional development on your chosen career path.

Course 5: Maintaining Employment – Advancing Your Career will help you prepare for success once you have secured the position and will help you advance on your career path.

The Jobseeker's Toolkit was modeled after the American Printing House for the Blind *Transition Tote*, which was created by Dr. Karen Wolffe. Dr. Wolffe provided consultation on this project. We are grateful to all contributing parties and reviewers who helped create this resource.

Contents

COURSE 1: Self-Awareness

Module 1: Networking: Why and How

We all have different kinds of relationships with people: casual, familial, professional, intimate, etc. Throughout our lives, these relationships provide us with different types of support. Your parents, siblings, teachers, doctors, employers, coworkers, and even bus or taxi drivers are all part of your personal network of relationships.

Because most job seekers get hired through a personal connection of one sort or another, knowing who is in your network is extremely important to your job search. Throughout this course you will be asked to seek information, guidance, and advice from your network, so it's important to properly define and organize your relationships.

1-1　The Network Pyramid

A good way of organizing your network is to use the shape of a five-level pyramid, starting with a narrow peak at the top and broadening to a large base at the bottom. Each level of the pyramid contains a different group of people, based on their closeness to you.

The First Level (top of the pyramid or the point of the pyramid)

Since your personal network pyramid organizes relationships as they relate to you, the top level belongs to you alone. As the pyramid broadens toward the base, the levels also get further away from you at the top. Keep this in mind as you fill in the rest of the pyramid.

The Second Level (second from the top of the pyramid or fourth from the bottom)

Level two contains the people with whom you are closest. You might include your parents, close siblings, spouse, boyfriend or girlfriend, religious leaders you have come to know well, and very close friends. These are the people you feel comfortable sharing most of your thoughts and feelings, knowing any sensitive information would be treated confidentially.

The Third Level (the middle level of the pyramid)

Most of your friends, classmates, coworkers, and people with whom you often interact will be in the third level. This level is for established friends and solid relationships. Extended family members you enjoy spending time with are appropriate for this level as well.

The Fourth Level (second level from the bottom)

The fourth level is the place for acquaintances. Some examples are a former or current classmate, a neighbor, or a coworker.

The Fifth Level (bottom level and widest level or base of the pyramid)

The fifth level of your network pyramid represents people you rarely encounter. Here is where to place people you pay to assist you, your doctors, dentist, and hairdresser, or people who help you with shopping or transportation needs. The people here are not strangers, but they are also not likely to become your friends.
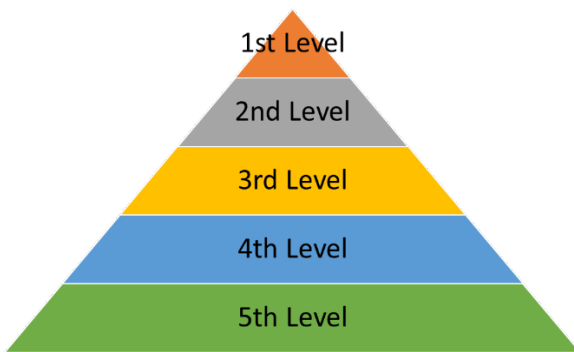
Insert Network Pyramid Image

Image of Pyramid with 5 Levels from 1ˢᵗ Level at the tip of the pyramid to 5ᵗʰ at its base.

1-2   Assignment: Your Network Pyramid

Read the APH CareerConnect article, Game On: Networking Your Way to Becoming a Brave and Brilliant Professional.

Write out who is included in your network pyramid, starting with you at the top level (level one) and filling in the names of your intimates (level two), friends (level three), acquaintances (level four), and paid helpers or casual acquaintances (level five).

1-3   Example Assignment: Denise's Network Pyramid

First Level (Top Level): Me (Denise)

Second Level: Parents, Jason (younger brother), Katie (older sister), Matt (brother in-law), Laverne (sister in-law), Freddie, Nicolas, George, James and Lisa (nephews and niece), Jacob, Jack, Tim, Tina, Olga, Nicole, Jessica (cousins), Mark, Dave, Amy, Tiffany, Jamie, Collin, Ryan (best friends).

Third Level: Jenny, Tiffany V., Sherlanda, Jermaine, Jacky, Meghan, Monica, Jeremy, Jason, Vinnie, Carl, Paul, Johnny, Cindy, Heather, Helen, Tim, Chris, Kevin, Rick, Jim, Hillary, Hal, Harvey, Sean, Lauren, Tilly, Tori, Sarah, Christi, Audrey, Elizabeth, Vicky, Sonya and Joan {classmates and friends).

Fourth Level: Mrs. Barbieri, Ms. Tiffany, Mr. Columbus, Mr. Salvador, Miss Bogota, Miss Frost, Mr. Turkeyham {teachers who I am close to and have had a lot), Courtney, Sarah, Jeremy, Jack, Josh, George, Billy, Kevin, Mike, Andy, Jon, Darren, Andrew, Barbie, Jackie, Roxy, Rebecca, Janet, Georgia, Amy, Jane, Jessica, Fred, Tom, Manny, Chenoa, Casey, Cassandra, Jennifer, and Jenna {people I have met at school and at the community center, and who I like, but are not yet friends).

Fifth Level: Dr. Susan Carrotosis {ophthalmologist), Mr. Tom {cafeteria worker), Mrs. Jacobs, Mr. Franklin, Mr. South, Miss Jonas, Ms. Frascator, Coach Longo, Mr. Sean Combs, Ms. Ray, Mr. Benny, Ms. Malik {teachers), Mr. Freise {Principal of my high school), Andre {taxi driver), Tara {bike store clerk), Silvio {pizza guy), Jack {landscaper), Jim {ice cream shop clerk), Ed {physical therapist), Jenny {religious schoolteacher), Mr. Nick Afflitto {drum teacher), Mr. Michaels {family doctor), Ms. Denise {nurse), Mrs. Jennings {dentist), Jeff {supermarket customer service representative), Ms. Jacky {librarian) and Frank {handyman in my apartment building).

Module 2: Building, Expanding and Maintaining Your Network

2-1   Lesson: Developing contacts that can help provide employment opportunities

All relationships offer some sort of benefit, whether it's friendship, knowledge, or simply a chance to know someone new. A network is a supportive system made up of these relationships, built around sharing information and services among individuals who have a common interest or connection.

Networking means to be actively cultivating relationships with people who might be helpful to you professionally, either in finding employment or moving to a higher position. Networking is an important skill particularly for an active job seeker. Just like any other skill, becoming a good networker requires much practice. Many opportunities to network will present themselves in your daily life, you just need to identify and act on them.

Expanding Your Network

Have you ever noticed people at a party who go from group to group introducing themselves, mingling and meeting everyone in the room? Most likely, these folks are skilled at networking. For some people, this kind of socializing comes easily. For others, especially if you're shy or think you lack the right social skills, it can be difficult.

Remember that expanding your network is a skill that requires practice. The more you practice, the easier it will become. Also remember why it's important to expand your network: the larger your network, the better chance you have of finding suitable work.

When meeting new people, be aware of how you present yourself. Practice carrying yourself in a positive manner and work on appearing confident and competent. Share agreeable, affirmative information about yourself.

Below are some ideas for how and where to meet new people for your network.

Organizations and Social Groups

Organized clubs and groups are great opportunities for networking. Joining church groups, local professional organizations, groups for student and young professionals, committees within your town, projects at your local library or schools, and community causes are all great ways to meet others.

Volunteerism

Volunteering is a great way to meet people and make connections. If you can find a volunteer position that is somehow related to the job you're interested in pursuing, even better.

Out and About

Networking occasions can occur at any time. You could be on a plane, train, bus, or at a subway stop when the next opportunity presents itself. Think of every new person as a new contact or a possible new member in your personal network.

Maintaining Your Network

It's important to maintain your personal network by keeping in touch on a regular basis so your contacts remember you. The best way to keep contacts engaged is to regularly communicate with them about what's going on in their lives. Though you might share information about yourself along the way, the most effective way to build relationships is to be curious and enthusiastic about what other people are doing. It would not hurt to keep a file of your contacts with some notes of things you've discussed. Keep the files

updated and look through them to refresh your memory before calling or emailing someone in your network.

Social Networking: Pros and Cons

Social networking sites like Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter make it very easy to share information with people. These tools can support and bolster your job search, but if used recklessly they can also do some serious damage to your relationships, image, and job prospects.

It's very common for potential employers to review social media to see how applicants represent themselves, so it's important to think about what you share and who might view it. How does it reflect you? Regardless of your privacy settings, remember that you have very little control over what happens to anything you choose to share online. It's always best to assume that anything you post will be visible to a potential employer. What might be a funny joke to your close personal friends could appear unprofessional or irresponsible to someone considering you for a position.

On the other hand, you can take advantage of using social networking sites to easily keep your contacts fresh, to keep informed about and engaged with what people in your network are doing, and to represent yourself in a favorable and positive light. Since the majority of jobs are filled through current employees who recommend someone from their network, careful and considerate social networking can be a great support for your job search.

Read the APH CareerConnect article, How can LinkedIn Benefit the Visually Impaired Job Seeker?

Key Take-away:

Never Stop Networking!
Even if you currently have a job, continue to expand and maintain your network. Getting a better job is easier if you're currently employed. Additionally, if you keep active with your network, your contacts will be more likely to think about you when an opportunity arises.

2-2   Assignment: Your Network Expansion Plan

Read the APH CareerConnect article, Principles for Expanding Your Professional Network When You are Blind or Visually Impaired.

In a paragraph or two, explain how you intend to expand your personal network. Are you going to join organizations or groups? If so, identify the organizations and discuss how joining will benefit you.

2-3   Example Assignment: Darlene's Network Expansion Plan

I plan to join the organization Distributive Education Cooperative of America (DECA) at school. DECA participates in marketing competitions at the regional and state levels. I have been taking a few business courses at my high school and DECA utilizes the skills we learn in those classes.

 The organization gives the chance to network with other students from my school and from schools throughout the state and possibly country. I'll also get to meet professionals from the field of marketing who serve as judges. There is also a possibility of winning scholarships to post-secondary schools. Joining DECA will allow me to showcase my skills in business and network with students and professionals interested in

the same occupational field.

There is another organization called Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) that I can join. The focus is more on general business strategies, skills and structures of business. Both organizations will be important in expanding my personal network.

Module 3:   Self-Assessment and Constructive Feedback

3-1   Lesson: Identifying your strengths and weaknesses through constructive criticism

The Self-Assessment

Self-assessment is a process of careful reflection, discovery, and analysis in order to articulate your strengths, weaknesses, interests, skills, abilities, values, personality, and goals.

Performing a self-assessment at the beginning of your career exploration is important for many reasons. A thorough self-assessment will help you focus your job search and preparation on those positions that hold the most appeal to you and are the best match for your skills. Self-assessment identifies the areas about which you can be confident in your abilities and the areas where you might want to work on improvement. Maybe more important, self-assessment helps you articulate your goals and aspirations, so you know what you're working toward both in the long- and short-term.

Seeking feedback from others

The first step in your self-assessment is to seek feedback in the form of constructive criticism from people you know and trust.

Why feedback?

Job market applicants are often judged by their presentation. The image you project to a potential employer often makes up a great deal of the information he or she will consider about you. It's important to get a good sense of how you are perceived by others so you can emphasize your strengths, improve your weaknesses, and take control of your image. In order for you to know how others see you, and what you might want to adjust, you need to ask for constructive criticism.

Constructive criticism

All of us need help and a variety of opinions when determining how we are seen by the people in our lives. Those who can best help us see ourselves objectively are the people with whom we interact most. In your assignment for this lesson, you will be asking a variety of people you know for their honest opinions of both your strengths and weaknesses. The goal of this exercise is to get an objective and accurate understanding of how you present yourself to the world.

The kind of feedback you will seek is called constructive criticism. The purpose of constructive criticism is not to make you feel bad or to focus on your flaws, but to celebrate your assets and identify those areas you might want to improve or change.

Knowing both your strengths and weaknesses can be a valuable tool for improvement. While it's always nice to hear what people think of as our strengths, it can be challenging to hear what people think of as our weaknesses. Focus on using this information to your advantage. Analyze each person's opinion, then take a good look to see how you can improve on the areas they've mentioned. Try to avoid becoming defensive when someone offers an honest opinion, even if it differs from your own. Remember that this is

a self-enrichment exercise. Being open and available to constructive criticism can really help you develop and mature as an individual.

Read the APH CareerConnect article, Negative Feedback: How to Handle it and How to Use It.

Choosing your participants

When you're thinking of people to ask for constructive criticism, remember that you want a range of opinions from people involved in different aspects of your life. Ideally, some people you ask will know you very well, like family members or close friends, and others will be familiar with you, but not intimate. Refer to your network pyramid: choose people from levels two, three, and four to get a good variety of opinions.

Remember that you are asking these people for their help and their time. Before asking someone for an opinion, take some time to think about how you will present yourself when you ask. If you are just coming back from the gym and haven't showered yet, this might have an effect on how you are perceived, and it also might not be the best example of how you would present yourself to a potential employer. Take the time to present yourself in a realistic light so that the person you're asking for help can offer feedback that is useful and relevant.

3-2   Assignment: Feedback

Part 1: Constructive Criticism

During the next two days ask five different people (family members, friends, classmates, teachers, former co- workers, or others) for feedback about you. Ask each participant to provide 5 to 10 comments that describe you, balanced between strengths and weaknesses: the things they think you do well and those that could use improvement. Collect responses digitally; you'll be using them later. Be sure to include the name of the respondent and their relationship to you.

Part 2: Analysis

Compile a list of the strengths and weaknesses you heard in your feedback. Describe what you liked hearing and what you did not like hearing. When listing areas for improvement, think about how you might go about making changes.

3-3   Example Assignment: Debbie's Feedback Notes

Part 1: Constructive Criticism

Feedback from: Mother
- Pretty hair
- Caring
- Organized
- Talkative, which can either be a good or a bad thing
- Well read, reads a lot
- Good with animals
- Dresses well
- Sometimes dozes off at inappropriate times
- Helpful at home
- Impatient at times

Feedback from: Mrs. Smith, English teacher
- Good technology skills
- Usually organized
- Well dressed
- Excellent reader
- Has a tendency to procrastinate
- Gets along with classmates
- Enthusiastic
- Tends to monopolize conversations
- Impatient
- Shy in new situations, takes time to become comfortable

Feedback from Mary, older sister
- Smart
- Reads a lot
- Nice
- Clean
- Good sister
- Talks a lot
- Good on the computer
- Opinionated at times
- Takes over conversations and interrupts

Feedback from Jana, friend and fellow club member
- Funny
- Dresses well
- Interrupts a lot
- Smart
- Well-read
- Shy sometimes
- Honest
- Too talkative at times
- Organized: She is our club's secretary

Part 2: Analysis

Strengths
- Affectionate
- Caring
- Dresses well
- Enthusiastic
- Excellent reader
- Funny

- Gets along with classmates
- Good technology skills
- Good with animals
- Helpful at home
- High level computer user, did well in our computer networking class
- Honest
- Inquisitive
- Nice
- Organized
- Smart
- Talkative
- Well dressed

Weaknesses
- Can be awkward in public situations
- Has a tendency to procrastinate
- Impatient
- Opinionated at times
- Sometimes dozes off at inappropriate times
- Takes over conversations and interrupts
- Impatient at times
- Shy in new situations, takes time to become comfortable
- Talkative, which can either be a good or a bad thing

The comments I liked hearing were smart, attractive, funny, organized, honest, high-level computer user, good sister, dresses well, gets along with others and pretty hair. I did not like hearing monopolizes conversations, too talkative, opinionated, and interrupts conversations.

Knowing that I am a bit on the talkative side I could make an effort to talk less and be more appropriate so as not to dominate conversations, even though I think I do this because I have a lot to say and have a lot of knowledge to share. I will try to work on this because I realize others have important things to say too and I could learn from them as well.

I believe that the interrupting thing is because I get so excited and want to express my opinions, not because I mean to be rude. Am I opinionated? I am not sure. I do have strong opinions about many things and express them. Maybe making an effort to sit back and listen more in order to improve on these areas over the next few weeks will be a good exercise for me. I will write something in my notetaking device's calendar so that it reminds me each day.

Module 4:   Identifying Career Interests

4-1   Lesson: Taking an inventory of what you like to learn about and do

The next step in your self-assessment is to take an inventory of your interests so that you can focus your job search on positions that are good matches for what you are naturally curious about. This inventory will help you direct your job search towards employment that will be meaningful and of long-lasting interest to you.

An interest is anything that you're independently motivated to find out about, think about, or do. Is there a subject in school you enjoy reading more about on the weekends? Do you have a hobby that you think about a lot and like to take part in every chance you get? Your interests may be specific and focused (World War II maritime history, flowers of South America, Florida State University women's soccer, venomous snakes of Australia), or they may be broad (music, dance, sports, nature). You may have been motivated to read a book or two about something that caught your attention, or you may have spent years learning about a favorite topic or taking part in an activity you love.

Interests broaden our engagement with the world. Enthusiasm in one area may lead to curiosity about another, related area. When you follow your interests wherever they lead, you can develop expertise in areas that seem incompatible or unrelated but may ultimately prove very valuable in combination.

George Will is a Pulitzer-Prize winning political journalist and author whose lifelong love of baseball has made him one of the top experts on the history of the sport. These areas of expertise-politics and baseball-in combination with his skills as a journalist, gave him the ability not only to write and publish many books and articles about both politics and baseball, but to do so in a particular way. One of the hallmarks of Will's journalism is that whenever he can use baseball to illustrate a point about politics, he does. Will's devotion to his two main interests have provided him with a unique way of thinking and writing about both.

Read the APH CareerConnect article, Self-Awareness is Essential to Career Success as a Person Who is Blind or Visually Impaired.

Read the APH CareerConnect article, When You Just Don't Know the Right Career for You.

4-2   Assignment: Interests

Make a list of your top ten interests. What are the things you enjoy doing at home, at school, and in the community? List your interests as they occur to you and then go back and specify what it is that you like about each interest area.

Next, take some time to brainstorm about the skills you use when you're pursuing your interests, and also what professions might use these skills. Write down all of your ideas.

4-3   Example Assignment: Dave's Interests

List:

1.   Mathematics
2.   Science
3.   Reading science fiction books
4.   Chatting online with friends

5. Old radio shows
6. Watching television
7. Hanging out with friends
8. Wrestling for the school team
9. Watching professional wrestling
10. Playing my guitar

Specifics:

1. Mathematics: I really enjoy the math classes I am taking in school and enjoy that a math problem is like a puzzle. I excel in math and would like to continue taking classes to help me progress. I know mathematics is used in many fields, including fields dealing with science.

2. Science: I also really enjoy my science classes in school, as I get to use math in these classes too. I also like problem solving and getting to do experiments.

3. Reading science fiction books: I enjoy reading science fictions books because it allows me to explore new and strange worlds. I get to escape school and meet persons and creatures with special powers. Reading is what helps me relax and allows me to learn. Reading is important to succeed in school and for a lot of professions.

4. Chatting online with friends: Chatting online with friends allows me to keep up with friends I have met, but I also get to make new and interesting friends around the world. This is helping me to expand my "personal network." I get to go into chat rooms or forums and talk to persons with similar interests or I just get to vent about the day. This shows that I have good technology skills as well.

5. Old radio shows: I listen to old time radio shows because they have a lot of really descriptive mysteries that I really get into. Sometimes they include some science fiction elements. They are entertaining and I can access a ton of them through the internet.

6. Watching television: I like to watch television at home, usually with my little brother. I like to watch the crime dramas because they tend to use science and investigation to solve the cases. They are really mysteries and are solved through modern techniques. You can learn a lot by watching those shows.

7. Hanging out with friends: Sometimes I hang out with friends. We will go to the mall or just go to our friend Tom's house. When we are at the mall, we fool around and try to meet girls. We really don't shop while at the mall, it is more about meeting up with friends. We will eat at the food court or catch a movie.

8. Wrestling for the school's team: I wrestle in the 135-pound weight class. I really enjoy being a part of the team, but also enjoy getting to compete one-on-one against someone. I have been wrestling for three years and have enjoyed it. We get to travel to other schools for matches and tournaments. I have also made some great friends who are teammates. The competition and practices force me to be in great shape physically and sharp mentally. You have to anticipate moves and to counteract your opponent's moves.

9. Watching professional wrestling: I enjoy watching professional wrestling with my friend Peter and my little brother. We are all into it because it is so exciting. You never know what will happen. The wrestlers will be doing an interview and a wrestling match will happen. Sometimes the wrestlers leave the ring and grab a chair or other objects to bring into the ring. All of the wrestlers have great personalities or characters. I know it is not like the wrestling I do in school, but it is really entertaining.

10. Playing my guitar: I learned how to play guitar in elementary school and have been playing ever since. When I am frustrated or need some time alone, I will go to my room and just play my guitar. It allows me to relax and not think about anything besides the music. I want to start a band with my some of my friends. We have talked about it. The guitar has also helped me make some friends. I have met other people who play instruments and discussed the types of music that we enjoy and what are our favorite bands or musicians.

Module 5:   Matching Skills and Abilities to Jobs

5-1   Lesson: Matching your skills and talents to specific jobs

Now that you've spent some time considering your interests, the next step in your self-assessment is to think about the abilities you currently have, which jobs your current skill set might best be suited for, and what adjustments you might want to make to better prepare for the type of job you want.

A skill is a learned and practiced ability. A skill can be used to create something (writing is used to create a poem, essay, or book), to provide a service (accounting is used to prepare tax returns, database design is used to organize information), to work with tools or equipment (driving a bulldozer, running a printing press, fixing a computer), or perform tasks (cooking a meal, planting a garden, playing hockey). Everyone has talents that can be developed into skills or abilities with practice and guidance.

Every job requires the mastery and application of some set of skills. The better you are at doing something an employer needs, the more attractive an applicant you'll be, and the more value you will have as an employee. Take a moment to review your interest inventory and the brainstorming you did about your interest-related jobs. What sorts of skills do you think those jobs require? What kinds of skills do you think an employer would want to see in applicants for each of those positions?

Here is an example of how one student was able to hone her talents and focus her interests into a marketable skill set.

Taking a thoughtful inventory of your current skills will help you

- Identify areas of proficiency and ability
- Assess how your skills might support work in your areas of interest
- Begin to think about how you might market your skills to a potential employer
- Identify skills you might want to spend the most effort on improving

5-2   Assignment: Skills and Abilities

Make a list of ten skills you currently have. Rank the list of skills, with one being the skill with which you think you have the highest competence and ten, the skill with which you have the lowest.

Once you have your list, write down the jobs you think use these skills. Notice if there is overlap with the jobs you brainstormed in your interest inventory. Are your strongest skills related to the jobs mentioned in your interest inventory? If there isn't any overlap, or if your weaker skills are those related to jobs in your interest area, write down the ways you might bridge the gap between your interest-related jobs and your current skill set.

5-3   Example Assignment: Andre's List of Skills

1. Public Speaking
    a.   Sales representative
    b.   Public relations/marketing
    c.   Teacher/professor
2. Computer applications and programming
    a.   Computer programmer
    b.   Technical support representative/customer Service/information technology support

- c. Computer Sales/electronics sales
3. Communication
    - a. Telemarketing representative
    - b. Customer service representative
    - c. Administrative Assistant
4. Woodworking
    - a. Carpenter
    - b. Contractor
    - c. Carpenter's assistant
    - d. Sales Representative at Home Depot e. Inventory Database Specialist at a wood yard
5. Organizational Systems
    - a. Administrative assistant
    - b. Applies to most jobs/careers
    - c. Office manager
    - d. Inventory Specialist/Manager
6. Fluent in the Spanish language
    - a. Translator
    - b. Customer service/help desk
    - c. International business work
    - d. Work Sales at a business in a Spanish speaking community
7. Pottery
    - a. Work in a pottery store
    - b. Art Teacher
    - c. Potter/self-employed
8. Mathematics at a general level
    - a. Sales representative
    - b. Cashier
    - c. Basic accounting or finance
    - d. Office Manager
9. Notetaking
    - a. Administrative assistant
    - b. Transcription
    - c. Paralegal
    - d. Reporter/writer
10. Creative writing
    - a. Writer (Novels, short stories, poetry)
    - b. Reporter
    - c. Copy editor
    - d. Sales Representative (use stories to sell to customers)
    - e. Public Relations/Marketing/Advertising

Module 6:   Bringing Your Values to the Job Search

6-1   Lesson: Determining How Your Values Might Influence Your Job Search

Values play a large part in how we make our ways in the world. Values can be expressed through what we say to and about others, they can determine how we behave in our daily lives, and they can shape our most fundamental and most complex decisions. When you have a clear sense of your job-related values, you can focus your efforts on finding a good career match for the things you find most important.

Happiness with your employment will be strongly influenced by whether your job matches with what you've decided is important for yourself and your lifestyle. If you value freedom over security, you might prefer self-employment over working for a single-location company run by others. If you value a good work-life balance, you will likely prefer a job that does not require long overtime hours or a lot of travel. If you value a high salary and fast career advancement, you will probably find more satisfaction at a large corporation instead of a small nonprofit organization.

You will be able to make a more informed career decision when you can thoughtfully weigh your values against the jobs you investigate. It's crucial to recognize that more than one of your values may be met or in conflict in any one position, and that negotiating these matches or conflicts is part of making a good employment decision. There are times when people choose to compromise on some values because their most important values are matched in a given position. Remember, it's easier to compromise on values of less importance than those about which you feel most strongly.

6-2   Assignment: Values

1. Make a list of ten of your values. Rank them from one to ten, with one being the most important and ten being the least important.

   Explain how one of your values may have influenced a recent decision.

2. Choose a person in your life whose values are important for you to take into consideration when deciding on a new job. Describe how this person's values influence your decisions.

3. Next, choose a person in your life whose values differ from your own. Explain how that person's values differ from yours, and what your relationship is with that person.

6-3   Example Assignment: Sylvia's Values

1. Family 2. Friends 3. Love 4. Health 5. Independence 6. Transportation 7. Work 8. Security 9. Leisure/free time 10. Education

Analysis

A decision that I made recently was whether to join the Young Writer's club that meets after school for an hour a day, three days a week. I was very interested in joining this club at school because I really do like to write. I had to weigh the decision because it was a big commitment; you have to make two meetings a week to stay in the club. I really value my friends and my free time; this commitment would take up a lot of that time. I had to think about whether I would rather write or hang out with my friends. I chose my friends over the club because I am a senior in high school and feel that most of us will lose touch after this year. I wanted to spend as much time as possible with my friends.

I had to think about whether I valued work and school more than my friends. I have talked to the advisor of the club and will be participating in the spring semester. I know I will make some new friends in the club as well, but I want to spend this time with my current friends.

Silvia's Analysis

I am considering my sister Aimee's feelings as I look at colleges. She is my best friend, and we are extremely close. The school I choose has to be close enough that she can visit often. Aimee is four years younger than I am. I have decided that I can only move at the most a two-hour bus ride away, so that Aimee can visit easily. I am taking her feelings into consideration, and I also value my family and that relationship. Aimee values travel; I really do not value traveling, and she will not mind traveling to visit me once I move.

I have a totally different relationship with my brother Jorge. He moved across the country last year, and I have only seen him once since then. Jorge does not value family as much as I do, but he did value warm weather.

If I were offered a job more than a few hours away, I would have to turn down that job. I know I would like to work near where I grew up. This is something that is important to me.

Module 7:   Your Work Personality

7-1   Lesson: Identifying your work personality type

The next step in your self-assessment is to identify your work personality. We will use vocational psychologist John Holland's system of personality typing. He has identified six work personality types, defined below. Though individuals may have a dominant work personality type, most of us demonstrate a combination of these types at any given time and so appropriately fit within two or three of these categories.

Definitions of Holland's Work Personality Types

Realistic: This personality type is mechanically inclined, likes to use tools, possesses good manual dexterity, is athletic, and/or enjoys the outdoors.

Investigative: This personality type often excels in mathematics, science, and other analytical fields. Investigative personalities like to think, experiment, analyze, and problem solve.

Artistic: This type enjoys performance, drawing, singing, writing, painting, music, and and/or other expressive and creative activities.

Social: This type enjoys acquiring, understanding, teaching, and communicating information.

Enterprising: This type likes to guide, influence, convince, or persuade others. Enterprising personalities enjoy managing or selling things.

Conventional: This type enjoys working with data or finances. Conventional personalities often excel in organizational tasks, are detail oriented, and like well-defined roles with clear goals.

Holland uses the following codes to identify his six work personality types: R = realistic; I = investigative; A= artistic; S = social; E = enterprising; and C = conventional.

7-2   Assignment: Work Personality

<u>Part 1</u>: The Cafeteria Experiment

Now that you have sense of how Holland has defined his work personality types, here is an activity that will help you determine which of these types are relevant to you. The following is an activity designed to help define your work personalities and was adapted from "The Party Exercise" from What Color is Your Parachute by Richard Bolles.

The Experiment

Make an empty list with three spaces numbered 1 through 3.

Imagine that you are in a cafeteria, where different groups of people are sitting at six separate tables. Each table is labeled with one of the personality types from this chapter: R for realistic, I for investigative, A for artistic, S for social, E for enterprising and C for conventional. The people at each table have personalities dominated by the labeled type.

You have to choose which table to sit at. You can't sit in between the tables or in the middle of the cafeteria. Review the personality definitions above and think about which personality type you would most like to sit with. Record this letter next to the number one on your list.

The people you are sitting with at the table all decide they are leaving the cafeteria after fifteen minutes and the table will be folded up and put away. You must choose to join a second table. What would be your second choice now that your first one has been eliminated? List a second choice next to number two on the list you have created.

After fifteen minutes, the people you are sitting with at the second table decide to get up and leave as well. This table will be folded up and put away. You will now have to choose a third table to sit at. Think about the work personality types available, and then think which would be your next choice? Remember, the prior two are no longer available. What table would you choose? List the third choice next to the number three on your list.

Using Mike's list of work personalities as an example, his work code is:

2. S

3. I

4. A

His work code is SIA and it shows that Mike's dominant work personality type is Social.

Now create your own work personality code, which would be your top three choices listed in ranked order. Make a note of your code because it will be referenced throughout the remainder of this process.

Part 2: Work Personality Job Analysis

For this assignment you should think back to your interests, skills and values to see how they relate with your work personality type. Use the work you have done in the other sections to help create a list of five jobs you believe would suit you. Consider all of the areas we have covered up to this point. You should put your work personality type and work personality code at the top, and then list the five jobs.

7-3   Example Assignment: Dan's Work Personality

Part 1: Cafeteria Experiment

  1. R
  2. I
  3. C

Work Personality Code= RIC

Part 2: Work Personality Job Analysis

Dominant Work Personality: Realistic

Five jobs or professions

Personal Trainer: This job matches the strongest part of my current skill set, it's a good match for my work personality, and I have really strong interest in it.

Mechanic: I chose this job because I have fairly good skills and it's a great match for my work personality.

Construction Contractor/Plumber: This job matches my skill set (though I would need to hone my plumbing skills a bit) and my work personality. I also like that I could be self-employed as a contractor, which suits my values.

Chef/Cook/Culinary Arts: This job is a great match for my work personality and my interests, but I'm a little weak in the skills department.

Civil Servant: I'm including this job because it matches some of my values, some of my (weaker) skills, and some of my work personality. It's not a great fit for any of them, however, so it's probably not the best path for me.

Module 8: Creating a Working Portfolio System

8-1 Lesson: Supporting your job search with an organized, flexible portfolio

Every job seeker needs a functional and current working portfolio. A portfolio is a collection of materials that are representative of work you have done. The work can be paid, volunteer, full-time, or part-time. Your portfolio is a central element of your sales pitch when applying for a job or during a job interview.

Your portfolio should:

- show your strongest, most relevant, and most recent work
- be made up of samples carefully selected for the position for which you are interviewing
- present your work in a professional manner

Since each job may require a different set of samples to best support your application and interview, it's a good idea to set up a system to organize your work samples so you can quickly change your portfolio when you need to.

Appropriate Work for a Portfolio

Your portfolio can present samples of actual work, examples of writing, positive written comments from teachers and/or other professionals, certificates, awards and endorsements, pictures of you working, and pictures of things you have created. If you were in a play, part of a show, or worked an event for an organization, hand-outs or brochures that include your name could be included.

You should save anything that you feel is a good representation of your skills, abilities, and talents. If you feel that you don't have enough examples of your work to support a portfolio, this is a prime indication that you need to get involved in more activities or volunteer. Doing so will help generate material for your portfolio and will also help build your always-important network.

Organizing your Portfolio Materials

It's best to select the portfolio items that you feel will best represent you for each specific position and interview. In order to make that selection process efficient, you should put together a system to keep your portfolio items organized and easy to find. It doesn't have to be complicated.

We recommend using a digital folder on your computer for each year, and within each folder setting up folders named with major categories (volunteer work, teacher's comments, waitressing, creative writing) or types of items (articles, programs, design projects).

Your Digital Portfolio

Digital portfolios can give a potential employer a quick sense of what you do and who you are before the interview. During an interview, handing potential employers tangible evidence of what you are capable of is an interesting, distinctive way to substantiate your answers to questions, and even initiate more detailed questions from the interviewer.

As we continue in this course you will be building a simple online digital portfolio that will be of use to you in the future. Be aware of the ways in which the digital portfolio can support your job search and remember to keep your online portfolio updated with your best work.

8-2 Assignment: Your Portfolio System

Create and organize your digital portfolio. The goal is to develop a system that will make it easy and fast to find your materials whenever you need to.

1. Identify the categories you will use to keep your files organized and provide a few examples of what will be contained in each category.
2. Explain how you will name the folders and categories.

8-3 Example Assignment: Jamal's Work Portfolio System

In designing my portfolio system, I spent some time thinking about all the information that has been discussed in this section and will explain my method of keeping these materials organized and easily accessible.

1. I will label the folders by year, and I will then have sub folders in each year using the following categories:

Work Examples

- reports, papers, assignments, projects, writing samples
- Certificates, Awards, and Evaluations
- Certificates, awards, evaluations, training verification forms, transcripts, report cards, and other credential materials
- Playbills that note my name as an Assistant Director, the brochure about the organization I volunteered for, flyers that mention me, and other promotional materials.
2. Any materials on paper I will collect in a large box with dividers similar to my digital structure.

Module 9:   Self-Analysis Report

9-1   Lesson: Looking back on the work you've completed in Course 1

During this course, you did a lot of work on self-assessment, including exploring your interests, strengths, weaknesses, skills, values, and work personalities. You also defined and organized your network and set up a portfolio system, both of which will help you a great deal throughout your job search.

Now it's time to look back at what you've learned and create a self-analysis report. This report will summarize of all of the areas we have covered in the Modules of Course 1. If you've completed all of your assignments, it should be easy for you to put together.

You will be able to use this report in later lessons to help you determine how certain careers might fit your interests, strengths, skills, values, and work personalities. In the future, when you are looking at jobs and their duties, you can refer to the self-analysis report to help you asses how suitable a given position is for you. When preparing for an interview, reviewing the report will remind you of your strengths and areas to stress when interviewing. Over time, it will be helpful to go back and update the report as your skills, values, strengths, interests, and career goals evolve.

9-2   Assignment: Self-Analysis

Using your prior work from this Course, create a comprehensive self-analysis in the following areas.

1. Personal network
2. Feedback from others
3. Interests
4. Skills/abilities
5. Values
6. Work personality

9-3   Example Assignment: Tania's Self-analysis Report

1. Personal Network: Mom, Jack (stepbrother), John (brother), Jim (boyfriend), Tim (cousin), Uncle Tom, Mark and Vanessa (Neighbors), Vincent and Loretta (neighbors), Jason, Mark, Tom, Joan, Sally, Marco, Sandra, Janet (friends), Mr. Pratt, Ms. Lacis, Mr. and Mrs. Correa (family friends).
2. Feedback from Others (Strengths): Talented at sewing, organized, hardworking, honest, helpful, dependable, practical, good with assistive technology, and good basic computer skills.
3. Interests: Sewing, watching movies with friends, reading mystery books, swimming, listening to punk rock music, camping with friends, going to concerts, doing research, clothing design, and computers.
4. Skills/Abilities: Sewing, designing and creating clothing, basic computer skills, swimming, teaching swimming, proficient in speaking German, good listener, and good math skills.
5. Values: family, friends, health, stability, and school.
6. Work Personality Code (Holland's Code): A, R, C

****

CONGRATULATIONS! You have reached the end of Course 1: Self-Awareness.

Please be sure to save the assignments you have completed.

Please continue to…

Course 2: Career Exploration: Resources and Methods

COURSE 2: Career Exploration – Resources and Methods

Module 1: Career Exploration Resources

1-1 Lesson: Identifying the best research resources to support your job search

Effective research is more about quality than quantity. If you gather a hundred resources, how likely is it that you will have the time to learn about each of them in order to fully use them for your purposes? A better way to frame your efforts is to ask the following question. What tools, media, or resources can most effectively be used to support your job research? Below you'll find a selection of commonly available resources, along with a discussion of what each has to offer. These resources are good starting points for the first phase of your research.

APH CareerConnect®

In the Introduction, you learned about the APH ConnectCenter website, APH CareerConnect, a free online resource for people who want to learn about the range and diversity of jobs performed by adults who are blind or visually impaired throughout the United States and Canada. APH CareerConnect is a great resource for job search information and tips.

NSITE Connect

The right job is out there, regardless of your field or skills. New opportunities for people who are blind, visually impaired, and/or veterans are posted all the time, each with the workplace environment, leadership, and accommodations to help you succeed. Use NSITE Connect to explore career opportunities and check out open positions nationwide shared by more than 40 employers. [Access the NSITE Connect Job Board](#)

Libraries

Libraries are an important resource for any job seeker. At your local library you can find books in audio or other formats, access major online research databases, and find additional information and guidance. Most of the resources at the library are available online.

If you are a student at a high school, vocational school, community college, college, or university, your institution's library may provide access to even more online resources.

Library staff are trained to help you find the information and resources that will support your research. Some universities and public libraries have staff trained to work specifically with persons with disabilities. Find out what is available at your local library and take advantage of whatever resources you locate.

Career Centers

Career Centers help people perform research to support professional goals. Colleges, universities, and vocational schools often have career centers, and many are available to the public. You may have to visit, call, or do some online research to find out what is available to you locally. Keep in mind that many of the career centers around the country maintain robust websites accessible to anyone with an Internet connection. Career Centers are often underutilized, and most are eager to have visitors.

Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies

Vocational rehabilitation agencies help people with disabilities prepare for entry or re-entry into the workforce. Your local vocational rehabilitation agency will offer a range of programs, resources, and services to help you get to work. The range of programs offered by these agencies varies from state to state, so

research your local vocational rehabilitation agency, determine what programs and services you are eligible for, and get registered.

In most cases, these organizations exist to help you become job-ready and find employment. Some may also train you in independent daily living, orientation and mobility, and access technology. These organizations will also know about other available resources in your community and state. To find a local or state agency near you, use the [APH Directory of Services](#).

O*-Net Online

The [0-Net Online](#) website provides the latest statistics about a wide variety of occupational fields. The site is a part of the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration.

1-2   Assignment: Career Exploration Resources

<u>Part 1</u>: Setting up a Resource Log Before you start investigating research resources in earnest, you'll want to establish a way of organizing the agencies and information you find by putting together a resource log.

It's likely that you've had to document sources when writing papers in school. When it comes to the job search, creating a resource log allows you to quickly find important information, sources, and contacts who provided information that helped you along the way.

Throughout your job search, there will be occasions when you will want to access or remember information that you've already collected. It's important to set up a resource log early so that you can record the information you find as you do your research.

First, create a folder on your computer called "Resource Log." Within that folder, create separate documents for each type of information you will be recording. Examples might be: "Contacts," "Organizations," "Books," "Articles," "Emails," "Websites," and "Miscellaneous." Make documents for each of the categories that you think you'll need. The key is that the system has to work for you, be easy to refer to and update, and simple to expand.

For each resource, you'll want to capture the type of information most useful for you. You want to make sure you know what the important information is associated with the resource, and also how to locate the resource again. The lists below will get you started, but don't hesitate to add or customize the information you record, based on your own experience.

Organizations

- Name of organization or agency
- Address
- Website
- Description
- Resources available

Books

- Title
- Author
- Page or Chapter
- Notes

Websites

- Web address
- Company/Organization
- Section of the site
- Title of the article or page
- Author (if attributed)
- Notes

Contacts

- First and last Name
- Organization
- Job Title
- Phone Number
- Email Address
- Notes

Part 2: Now that you have a system in place for keeping track of the information you're going to find in your research, familiarize yourself with the resources in your community and beyond. Where are your libraries, career centers, and vocational rehabilitation agencies? What services do these organizations offer? Fill out a resource log form for each of the resources you look into.

1-3   Example Assignment: Thomas's Resource Log: Organizations

Name of organization or agency: Florida State University Library

Address: 123 Tallahassee Ave

Website: http://www.lib.fsu.edu/

Notes: University Library system; access to almost all services is available to community members; limited borrowing privileges

Resources available: Librarians, online databases and periodicals, job boards, research assistance, digital references, and job postings

Name of organization or agency: Tallahassee Community Library

Address: 456 Main Street

Website: http://www.leoncountyfl.gov/library/

Notes: Local branch library and online resources through the Leon County Public Library System.

Resources available: DVDs, CDs, digital books, databases, librarians and workshops

Name of organization or agency: FSU Career Center

Address: 987 Franklin Ct.

Website: http://www.career.fsu.edu/

Notes: Online and in-person career assistance. Most of their resources are available to me. I have an appointment for an orientation.

Resources available: Everything except on-campus and on-line events organized for current students. Job boards, interview preparation, resume review, career guidance, online FAQs and advice.

Name of organization or agency: Florida Division of Blind Services

Address: 6578 Belloc Road

Website: http://www.myflorida.com/dbs/

Notes: I am a client of the Florida Division of Blind Services, which is my state's vocational rehabilitation agency. I am in the transition program and participate in the Lighthouse of the Big Bend's summer and year-round transition programs. I work with my transition counselor at the Florida Division of Blind Services, who helps me make sure that I am getting the services needed, including work experience, and who ensures I know what other opportunities are available. My counselor actually introduced me to this online course.

Thomas Malcum's Resource Log: Websites

Web Address: http://www.aphcareerconnect.org
Company/Organization: APH ConnectCenter
Section of the Site: APH CareerConnect
Title of Article or Page: For Job Seekers
Notes: Lots of advice, information, and guidance on job seeking and the status of various industries in the country. You can learn about successful professionals and learn how to be organized and in your job search.

Module 2: Starting a Job Analysis

2-1 Lesson: Laying the groundwork for a detailed job analysis

A job analysis is the process through which a job seeker collects information on the duties, responsibilities, necessary skills, growth opportunities, knowledge, and environment and atmosphere relating to a specific job.

A job analysis collects information from a variety of sources and creates a picture of a position that you can use to determine if a job is truly a good fit for you. In order to perform a thorough job analysis, you will need to first identify the job you'd like to learn more about, and then seek out information from online sources, people, and organizations.

At the beginning of your job analysis, you will look for basic information such as: job title, duties, field/profession, qualifications (training, certifications, and required professional experience), salary, and geographic locations (where these jobs are typically available).

Job Descriptions

Job descriptions, usually found in job postings, classified ads, and job boards, are a good entry point to learning about a specific position. A job description is the summary of an organization's expectation for what the job entails; the major duties involved; the types of skills, special training, certification, or degrees preferred or required to perform the job; the reporting structure; wage information; status (full-time/part-time; temporary/permanent); hours; location; and other important information. Understanding the information contained in job descriptions is a central aspect of job analysis.

The types of tasks, duties, and requirements detailed in a job description can tell you a lot. Jobs that may be considered higher level skilled positions are usually associated with higher wages and more extensive experience, training, and/or education.

Other Sources of Basic Information

In addition to posted or published job descriptions, there are other resources that provide both basic and detailed information.

Your Resource Log

Earlier you identified several research sources and set up records for the types of information located at or in each. Review your Resource Log. Where do you think you can find information on specific positions?

APH CareerConnect

APH CareerConnect can be a great resource for job analysis. You can read the article, *How to Find the Fastest Growing Industries in America*. Often the results of your search will provide detailed career information similar to what you would find in a job description.

NSITE Connect

You can use NSITE Connect to explore information about specific employers, peruse job descriptions, or access additional resources as well as testimonials shared by other jobseekers. NSITE Connect

2-2 Assignment: Job Analysis

The goal of this assignment is to begin to methodically collect information about the job that you are most interested in exploring.

Choose The Job You'd Like to Analyze

In Course 1, you did a lot of work to identify your skills, interests, personality, and values. In an earlier assignment you listed five jobs or professions that you thought might match with your work personality.

Revisit that assignment and think about which of those positions seem like the best fit for what you learned in your self-assessment. Choose the one you are most interested in.

The Job Information Form

To help you consider what information is critical to capture at the start of your analysis, a Job Information Form is reproduced below. The form is meant to be used as a guide. Customize the form so that it reflects any job- or field-specific information, or anything else you would like to know.

Not only will filling out a Job Information Form help you get a better sense of each position you're interested in, it will also help you prepare for much of the work you will be doing later in this module. In the next sections, you will be establishing a relationship with a mentor, setting up an informational interview, and finding an organization that will allow you to do an occupational observation. As you learn more about the position, you will want to keep a record of the questions you want to ask the people involved in these next steps.

Begin the assignment by finding a job description or descriptions and flesh out the information with APH CareerConnect, NSITE Connect, and O-Net information-or information you find through library, career center, or vocational rehabilitation agency research. Make sure you take accurate notes on the research you conduct, and don't forget to continue to add to your resource log as you identify sources of information.

JOB INFORMATION FORM:

Common Job Title (s):

Major Job Duties:

Required Education and/or Certification(s):

Required Professional Experience:

Other Qualifications (special computer skills, languages, etc.):

Position this Job Reports to:

Hours:

Location:

Salary:

Job and/or Industry Outlook:

Other Information:

Questions to ask a worker in this field:

2-3 Example Assignment: Laura Smith[1] Job Information Form

Common Job Title(s): Paralegal, Legal Assistant, Legal Investigator, Patent Agent

Major Job Duties: Assist lawyers via research, document and case preparation. Conduct research to support a legal proceeding. Handle legal correspondence, maintain organization of documents in an established paper or electronic system. Prepare briefs, pleadings, appeals, wills, contracts, etc. Contact witnesses, meet with clients. Investigate facts and law of cases and conduct background research. Direct and coordinate law office activity. File pleadings. Gather and analyze research data, such as statutes, decisions, and legal articles. Ensure law library is up-to-date.

Required Education and/or Certification(s): Training in vocational school, related on the job experience, or an associate's degree. Usually need one or two years of training.

Required Professional Experience: One or two years of experience; might have a formal apprenticeship structure

Other Qualifications (special computer skills, languages, etc.): Fluency with computers, hardware and software.

Position this Job Reports to: Lawyer, Partner in a Law Firm, Other Manager

Hours: Full-time

Location: Everywhere

Salary: $46,120

Job and/or Industry Outlook: 22.24% growth projected between 2006-2016

Other Information:

Questions to ask a worker in this field:

What access technology would be required for work in this field?

What are your hours usually like?

Is there a lot of variety in what you do from day to day?

Is your firm large or small?

How did you get your job?

What sort of preparation did you have?

What are your goals for the future?

Module 3: Finding a Job Mentor

3-1: Lesson: Making contact with a mentor

Most successful people will say that there have been important individuals who have influenced their career path, provided career advice, or offered support or an experienced perspective throughout their professional lives. These mentors are crucial members of any professional's support system. Some mentor relationships will develop naturally over the course of your career, but when you're job hunting for the first time it's a very good idea to actively seek out a mentor in your field of interest.

Contacting Mentors

Below is a list of tips on contacting mentors, along with some questions that you may want to ask your mentor(s) once you've established a connection. It's important to limit yourself to a few thoughtfully chosen questions so that your mentor can spend their time on the topics that are most important to you.

Let the mentor know that you would like to learn more about the work he or she does. You may ask your own questions or use some of those listed below.

Thank the mentor for his or her time and for answering your questions.

You never know where you will make good professional contacts. Spell check any written messages prior to sending.

Whenever you interact with a mentor, be appropriate in your behavior and language and act in a manner that demonstrates you are serious about your job search.

If you are contacting a mentor via the phone, it's just as important to be appropriate, gracious, and polite. Act in a manner that shows you are serious about your job search.

Sample Questions

Before contacting a mentor, you may want to write out a list of questions to ask. Earlier you started thinking about questions to ask someone in your job of interest. Review those questions and think about which are most important to you right now, at the beginning of your job analysis.

The following list may contain a question or two that you'd like to include at this stage. DO NOT copy and paste all of the questions below and send them to a mentor at once. Be thoughtful about what you really want to know about the mentor's job at this point and let the conversation evolve from there.

How did you find your job?

How long have you had your job?

Where did you receive your training for this job?

What jobs did you have before this one?

Did you take vocational courses in high school, college or trade school that you recommend I consider?

Did you participate in an internship or an apprenticeship?

Does your present company offer on-the-job training?

What is a typical starting salary for this job?

What is your typical workday like?

How do you get to and from work?

How do you perform your job duties?

Do you use specialized tools or equipment to perform your job duties?

How did you finance the purchase of any specialized equipment you use on the job?

Where and from whom did you receive training in how to operate the tools you use to perform your job?

What related jobs do you know of that I might want to investigate?

What are your current career goals?

After You've Contacted a Mentor

Some mentors will be quick to respond to your message or phone call. Others may take some time to get back to you, and some may not be able to respond to you at all. Be patient and remember that mentors are working professionals and often have limited time.

Don't Stop Now!

Fostering mentor relationships with people in all aspects of your life can be a great way to form a support system and build your network. There is no reason to limit yourself to only one, or one type of mentor. As your life progresses and your goals change, you may find new people to help guide and serve as role models for you. They may be in your field or outside of it, visually impaired or not, far more experienced than you, or only moderately so. Each of these relationships can prove valuable to you, either for providing different perspectives on the same subject, or for offering different types of advice altogether. The more varied your mentor relationships are, the more beneficial these relationships will be to you.

In addition to the benefits of advice and support, mentors have their own personal and professional networks. At various points along your career path, one or more of your mentors may be able to offer connections that could benefit your job search. We've discussed the importance of expanding your network; this is just another way to accomplish this task.

When you think about it, almost anyone can be a mentor: your parents, siblings, friends, teachers, colleagues, even acquaintances. Fostering a new mentor relationship can be easy-just ask for advice and guidance and be appreciative when you receive it. Most people are glad to share their experiences and support younger or less experienced colleagues or friends.

Get out there and get connected to other mentors!

3-2   Assignment: Job Mentor

Contact Mentors

Thank your mentor for their time and let them know you'd like to ask them a few questions. Ask a few thoughtful questions at the beginning of your interaction and see how things progress from there.

Make sure to set up a resource log record for each of your mentor contacts.

Expand on your Job Information Form with the information you learn in your interview. Fill in the gaps you were unable to locate through other means or start a new section for each mentor so you can record his or her background, training, education, past employment, and experiences with the job.

3-3   Example Assignment: Laura's Mentor Resource Log Record and Updated Job Information Form-After Mentor Interview

Contact Name: Karen Barlow

Organization: Barlow and Smythe

Job Title: Lawyer

Relationship to You: Mentor

Phone Number:

Email Address:

Description: Karen is a lawyer in Tallahassee. She is a partner in a law firm and was very responsive to my query for an interview.

Job Information Form: Updated

Common Job Title(s): Paralegal, Legal Assistant, Legal Investigator, Patent Agent

Major Job Duties: Assist lawyers via research, document and case preparation. Conduct research to support a legal proceeding. Handle legal correspondence, maintain organization of documents in an established paper or electronic system. Prepare briefs, pleadings, appeals, wills, contracts, etc. Contact witnesses, meet with clients. Investigate facts and law of cases and conduct background research. Direct and coordinate law office activity. File pleadings. Gather and analyze research data, such as statutes, decisions, and legal articles.

Required Education and/or Certification(s): Training in vocational school, related on the job experience, or an associate's degree. Usually need one or two years of training.

Required Professional Experience: One or two years of experience; might have a formal apprenticeship structure

Other Qualifications (special computer skills, languages, etc.): Fluency with computers, hardware and software.

Position this Job Reports to: Lawyer, Partner in a Law Firm, Other Manager

Hours: Full-time

Location: Everywhere

Salary: $46,120

Job and/or Industry Outlook: 22.24% growth projected between 2015-2025

Other Information: Karen Barlow says that her firm is constantly seeking good paralegals and that they have a system where someone like me can get on the job training as long as I'm getting at least an associate's degree in the field.

Questions to ask a worker in this field: What access technology would be required for work in this field?

What are your hours usually like?

Karen says that paralegals often work very long hours when the firm has a heavy case load. The paralegals at her firm are busy all the time and often come in early or stay late to make sure that everything is set for upcoming cases

Is there a lot of variety in what you do from day to day?

Is your firm large or small?

How did you get your job?

Karen herself started as a paralegal, in order to get a feel for the law field. She liked it so much she decided to become a lawyer. She got her first job as a paralegal through her personal network-her dad knew a lawyer who was looking for a legal assistant at his firm. She was about to graduate from college with a degree in English literature and took the job to see if she wanted to apply to law school.

What sort of preparation did you have? Karen learned on the job. She had very good computer skills and was highly organized, two things that are important for paralegals. She said that she had to learn a lot about basic law procedure very quickly in order to get up to speed. She read a lot at home because often there wasn't enough time at work to do so. Her firm was accommodating of her visual impairment and didn't have a problem with her using access technology.

Module 4:   The Occupational Interview

4-1   Lesson: Conducting an interview with a professional in your field of interest

Occupational interviews are meetings set up to answer your questions about a field or position. These types of interviews are conducted with workers who are willing to take the time to speak with you and share their experiences.

This type of interview is not a job interview. Rather, it's understood that the sole purpose is information gathering, much like the way reporters use interviews to find background information to support a story. People who are willing to talk to you will most likely be enthusiastic about sharing their knowledge and experience, but you will be expected to be prepared with a clear sense of what you want to know about the job.

Occupational interviews can provide a wealth of information about the duties and responsibilities required to work in your field of choice. They also give you the opportunity to find out how a real-world business defines the role for the type of position you are investigating. During an occupational interview, you may find that your expectations for a job are different from the daily reality of the position.

It will be important to be persistent and to contact multiple organizations in order to find a company or employee willing to take the time to speak with you. Not all positions with similar titles will have the same range of duties at different organizations, or even within the same organization. Businesses continuously tailor their positions to meet changing business needs and/or to take advantage of individual employees' strengths, aptitudes, and interests.

4-2   Setting up an Occupational Interview

Below are some tips to help you with the process of setting up and successfully conducting an occupational interview.

Tips

Finding Contacts

Think of the people in your network. Have you already made contact with individuals who might be able to help you connect with appropriate organizations or businesses? It's always easier to build on an existing contact than it is to start fresh with someone new. Ask around: you might be surprised by who has connections in your field of interest.

Use an Internet search engine to find businesses or organizations that have the type of job you're interested in learning about. Consider transportation to the location. Make sure that the businesses you choose to contact are accessible to you. Also consider the safety of the location.

Compile a list of the organizations you find that seem appropriate and accessible to you.

Before You Call

Think about what you want to say. Here are some questions to consider.

- How will you describe the purpose of the interview?
- What kind of experience you are looking for?
- Do you want to talk with one person, or would it be helpful to talk with a few different people at the company?

- How much time do you expect to need? (An informational interview is usually about an hour long. Remember that your interview will take time out of your interviewee's workday.)
- Are there specific responsibilities that you would like to be able to see firsthand? For instance, if the position requires customer contact, ask if you can hold the interview during standard business hours so you can see how customer interactions are handled.

Keep in mind that not all organizations or workers will be open to an informational interview.

When You Call

Remember to be polite and professional with everyone you speak to.

Take notes on the places you contact and who you speak with. Make sure to update your resource log, because you might make contacts that you might want to be in touch with again in the future.
If a company does not allow informational interviews, be gracious and ask if they might know of other local companies in the same field that you could contact.

If a company is willing to set up an interview, ask if they can supply you with any background materials that might help you prepare. If you don't know about the individual to whom you will be speaking, ask for some basic information: job title, history with the company, etc.

Before the Interview

Schedule your transportation well in advance of the interview date, and make sure that you will arrive early. If the company requires that you fill out paperwork for confidentiality or other matters, ask if it can be emailed to you before your appointment.

Make sure you have appropriate attire for the workplace you will be visiting. If you're not sure about the dress code, ask!

Preparing for and Conducting the Occupational Interview

Thorough preparation is important for a successful occupational interview. Do diligent background research about the company. Pay careful attention to their website, familiarize yourself with the products, services, or activities that are central to the business.

Have a clear understanding of what you want to learn. An hour might sound like a long time, but it can go by very quickly.

Put together a list of questions well in advance of the interview and review, edit, and add to it regularly. Take a look at the questions you've been compiling on your Job Information Form, and the questions you've been discussing with your mentor(s). Can you build upon these sources for your occupational interview?

Make sure to ask about job duties that may not be typical to the position, or that are shared by coworkers in the office. Note the tasks mentioned and think about how you might accomplish them.

Your clothing should be appropriate for the workplace where the observation is being conducted. Good hygiene should be followed prior to the observation or any interaction with the employers.

Important things to remember

- Be early or on time for your appointment
- Be positive

- Be polite and gracious
- Act in a professional manner
- Use appropriate language
- If allowed, take notes. If not, pay attention and take notes once the interview is over
- If you are using technology, be professional about it
- Make sure you are not a distraction
- Be prepared to answer questions

After the Interview

Keep track of the contact information for the person you spoke to. It's very important to send a message thanking the interviewee for taking the time to speak to you.

If you say that you will keep in contact and update the person on your job search, then keep in touch! You never know where job leads will come from, and this person could become part of your personal network. You could send a message to the organization, mentioning how great the person was for allowing you to do an occupational interview and how helpful the experience was for you. Employers always like to know positive information and hear compliments about their employees.

4-3 Assignment: Occupational Interviews

Find and conduct an occupational interview with a professional working in the job you are analyzing. Update your resource log with all of the contacts you make during this process and continue to flesh out your Job Information Form.

4-4 Example Assignment: Laura Smith[1]s Mentor Resource Log Record and Updated Job Information Form-After Mentor and Occupational Interview

Contact name: Lindsey Chapin

Organization: Barlow and Smythe

Job Title: Paralegal

Relationship to You: paralegal who agreed to do an occupational interview

Phone Number: Email Address:

Description: Lindsey is my first occupational interview subject.

Job Information Form: Updated

Common Job Title(s): Paralegal, Legal Assistant, Legal Investigator, Patent Agent

Major Job Duties: Assist lawyers via research, document and case preparation. Conduct research to support a legal proceeding. Handle legal correspondence, maintain organization of documents in an established paper or electronic system. Prepare briefs, pleadings, appeals, wills, contracts, etc. Contact witnesses, meet with clients. Investigate facts and law of cases and conduct background research. Direct and coordinate law office activity. File pleadings. Gather and analyze research data, such as statutes, decisions, and legal articles. Ensure law library is up to date.

Required Education and/or Certification(s): Training in vocational school, related on the job experience, or an

associate's degree. Usually need one or two years of training.

Required Professional Experience: One or two years of experience; might have a formal apprenticeship structure

Other Qualifications (special computer skills, languages, etc.): Fluency with computers, hardware and software.

Position this Job Reports to: Lawyer, Partner in a Law Firm, Other Manager

Hours: Full-time

Location: Everywhere

Salary: $46,120

Job and/or Industry Outlook: 22.24% growth projected for years 2015-2025

Other Information: My mentor Karen Barlow says that her firm is constantly seeking good paralegals and that they have a system where someone like me can get on the job training as long as I'm getting at least an associate's degree in the field.

Questions to ask a worker in this field:

What access technology would be required for work in this field? In the occupational interview, Lindsey spent some time describing to me the types of work that she has to do. She asked me questions about what sort of access technology I use and then we both talked about what would probably be required to be a paralegal. It seems pretty straightforward-I'd need a screen reader and OCR software and maybe some assistance with the paper filing system.

What are your hours usually like? Karen says that paralegals often work very long hours when the firm has a heavy case load. The paralegals at her firm are busy all the time and often come in early or stay late to make sure that everything is set for upcoming cases. Lindsey said that the hours are often really long but that it's fun if you like the feeling of working hard to meet a deadline.

Is there a lot of variety in what you do from day to day? Lindsey said that while there is a lot of variety in the work she does, often there are several days in a row that are consumed with filing, paperwork, and taking care of office management tasks. She said that every now and again it can get boring or repetitive, but that is more than made up for by the fact that you get to see some pretty interesting cases.

Is your firm large or small? Small firm. Lindsey talked about how she chose a small firm specifically because she wanted to feel like she was part of a team and not just a cog in a huge organization. The trade-off is that she doesn't make as high a salary as some of her friends at the larger firms.

How did you get your job? Karen herself started as a paralegal, in order to get a feel for the law field. She liked it so much she decided to become a lawyer. She got her first job as a paralegal through her personal network. Her dad knew a lawyer who was looking for a legal assistant at his firm. She was about to graduate from college with a degree in English literature and took the job to see if she wanted to apply to law school.

Lindsey found the job listing at her career center and after sending out some feelers to her network found out that one of her professors knew Karen Barlow. The professor put in a good word for Lindsey after she applied for the job. She said the interview was pretty tough, but everyone was nice.

What sort of preparation did you have? Karen learned on the job. She had very good computer skills and was highly organized, two things that are important for paralegals. She said that she had to learn a lot about basic law procedure very quickly in order to get up to speed. She read a lot at home because often there wasn't enough time at work to do so. Her firm was accommodating of her visual impairment and didn't have a problem with her using access technology.

Lindsey had spent a summer as a paralegal between her junior and senior year, so she had some training already. She's always wanted to be in the law field, so she majored in pre-law in college, so she had some good preparation and familiarity with a lot of basic law.

What are your goals for the future? Lindsey is applying to law school. She's going to become a lawyer and hopes to be a partner in her own firm one day.

Are there any special skills you need to do this work? Lindsey said that it would be best to have a good understanding of how Lexis/Nexus, an online law literature database, works. She said that she uses it all the time and you have to be fast and efficient when you're looking things up. She also said that since the lawyer she works for specializes in labor law, she needs to be able to support that work with good knowledge about the field as well.

Module 5: Job Observation

5-1 Lesson: Conducting a job bbservation

There are few experiences that will be more valuable to you than an opportunity to observe your job of interest being performed in the real working world. Aside from actually doing a job yourself, a job observation is one of the best ways to learn about the realities of any position.

Job observations require much more of a time commitment from both the employee who will be observed and the company for which he or she works. It might be challenging to find a company willing to offer this opportunity. Be persistent, use your network. Ask your mentor for contacts or ideas about places you might query.

During your observation, it's important not to judge, criticize, or comment on what you observe. Your goal as an observer is not to assess how the work is being performed, but to learn as much as you can about what the job actually entails on a day-to-day basis. Look at the duties and responsibilities that are required and think about whether or not the reality of the position is appealing to you.

Remember to express your gratitude and appreciation for the opportunity to observe. A thank you note is appropriate after this type of experience.

5-2 Assignment: Job Observation

Locate and set up an appropriate a job observation. Support your search for an observation with good research and requests for help to your network.

The points and questions provided below are offered as guidance for your observation. What else are you interested in learning? Make sure to take good notes, either while you are observing or immediately after the observation is finished or you're in a place where you can concentrate.

- Job tasks that are performed
- Methods used to accomplish job tasks
- Technology utilized in job tasks
- Specific computer applications utilized to accomplish the job
- Where is the job performed?
- Physical location such as lighting, space, desk set-up, number of people in the office
- What is the atmosphere or feeling in the work environment?
- Does the employee interact with coworkers?
- Does the employee interact with customers?
- Does the employee use the phone to perform their duties?
- Is the phone accessible?
- What percentage of the day is spent interacting with others?
- Does the person stand for long periods of the day?

- Is the employee required to lift things? If so, are these objects manageable for you?
- What hours and days does the employee work?
- Is this a typical day on the job?
- Are there tasks that you would find difficult to perform? Which? How does the employee perform the tasks?
- How quickly are tasks performed? Is speed in performing job tasks a requirement? Will speed in performing tasks be a requirement when applying for this type of job?
- What skills or training would you need to successfully fulfill the duties? Is the training something that you expected to be necessary? Could you get this training?
- Could you learn the skills you see being used in the job?
- Is the supervisor on site?
- How many employees work in the location?

For your assignment, take some time to think about how closely this observation paralleled your ideas about the job. Were there any surprises? What are you excited about? Any disappointments? Do you still think that this position is a good match for your skills, personality and values? Are you still interested in this type of work? Explain why or why not.

5-3   Example Assignment: Laura Smith[1] Job Observation Report and Reflection

I wanted to do an observation at a law firm larger than Karen Barlow's, because that's the sort of environment I thought I'd ultimately want to work in. Karen helped me set up an observation at Sato, Lomanaco, and Partners, where I was able to observe one of their paralegals, Simon Craig.

Simon was really patient and helpful and took a lot of time out of his day to explain everything to me, which wasn't something I was expecting. It was a totally different feel than the Barlow office. The firm is large enough. There are 8 partners, 2 junior partners and 7 staff attorneys-that the paralegals are all working in one section of the office. None of the paralegals had a real office, they were all at open workstations and cubicles. There didn't seem to be a lot of face time with the lawyers. Communication was either by phone or email.

I was really surprised by how much paperwork Simon had to do. His desk was piled with stacks of paper, and he said that I was seeing him on a good day! Just in the time I was there today, file boxes for three new cases were dropped off at his desk. He spent a lot of time filing, copying, and documenting various procedural issues for about seven cases. He said he really liked the job but found it very stressful at times because each attorney has a different way of doing things and it was hard to keep everyone straight sometimes. I had been thinking that each lawyer would have an assigned paralegal, but apparently the way this firm does it is that most paralegals work for all of the junior partners and staff attorneys.

The partners each have an assigned paralegal, but they also can pull from the paralegal "pool" any time they need extra support. There were about 20 paralegals, and everyone seemed really, really busy. The environment felt a little tense at times, and I overheard one of the paralegals talking to someone who seemed really angry about a mistake the paralegal had made. It also seemed pretty exciting, though. Simon said that he liked the cases he worked on-they were complex and interesting, and he'd learned a lot. His plan is to go on to be a lawyer, and he said that he felt his job was really preparing him well for the future.

I liked the energy in the office and the got the sense that everyone was working really hard and being productive. I observed Simon issue a subpoena and also make several calls to witnesses who will be needed for upcoming trials. It was all very interesting and varied work.

I am still interested in becoming a paralegal, though I think I might aim for getting hired at a mid-range firm. Sato and Partners seemed a little too stressful as a place to start. Maybe after I have a couple years under my belt in a smaller environment, I'll either move up to a larger firm or go get my law degree.

The work is definitely a good match for my skills, personality, and values. I like that there is a good degree of interaction with a variety of people and I also like how much organization is required. I think if I can find the right firm, I'll really enjoy working as a paralegal.

Module 6:   Discrepancy Analysis

6-1   Lesson: Determine whether you are moving in the right direction

Finding the Right Fit

Most people work in jobs or pursue careers where their skills, abilities, interests, values, work personality, education, and professional experience are a good fit for the duties they must perform on a day-to-day basis. In order to be hired, applicants for a specific position must already possess most, if not all, of the experience, skills, and education, required to perform the job.

In your assignment for this section, you will compare your self-assessment from Module 1 to the job analysis you've performed for your job of interest in this module. The purpose of this comparison is to determine how well the skills and traits you currently possess match those required for your job of interest. You will consider a number of things like your work personality, your education, your strengths and weaknesses, as well as your interests, abilities, and values. You may want to refresh your memory about the assignments you completed in Module 2, as this information will play an important role in this process.

What is a Discrepancy?

In the context of this lesson, a discrepancy is the difference between the skill that you possess and the skill that is necessary to be successful in a specific career or job. For example, if you have a typing speed of 40 words per minute and a job you're interested in requires a speed of 130 words per minute, there is a discrepancy between your typing speed and the speed required by the job.

Why are Discrepancies Important?

The purpose of identifying the discrepancies between your skills and those required by your job of interest is to help you intelligently decide your next step. Analyzing discrepancies will help you answer important questions. Is it possible to perform your job of interest given your current skills? Do you meet the minimum skill levels required, or do you need more training before you apply? Are there aspects of the job that, now that you know more about it, make it less appealing to you? Does the job take advantage of your strengths and interests? Are you overqualified for the position?

Discrepancy analysis allows you to take an objective look at what you might need to work on to make a given job or career a good choice for you. In order to be a successful job seeker, you must habitually compare your skills and aptitudes to those required by every job you consider.

Employers also always use discrepancy analysis when looking for employees. Many typically create a checklist of required skills and aptitudes based on the job requirements and will evaluate every applicant against this criterion.

Often employers have basic criteria that determine whether they disregard an application right away. Education, years of experience, a familiarity with specific software, or mastery of a specific type of machinery can be very crucial to success in a given job and it may not be reasonable for the employer to consider applicants who don't meet those criteria.

It's strongly suggested that you practice discrepancy analysis and utilize the information you have collected in prior lessons. A good way to get a lot of practice beyond that offered by your own job analysis is to take job listings from job websites, break each listing down into a checklist of requirements, and then compare this list to your self-analysis. You might find a great fit that you'd not thought of before!

6-2 Assignment: Discrepancy Analysis

Go back to your Self-Analysis Report and review your interests, skills/abilities, values, and work personality code. Take a moment to review your Job Information Form, which now should be quite fleshed out and full of the relevant information you've researched through job descriptions, the APH CareerConnect or NSITE Connect websites, and your occupational interview and job observation. Now write a detailed discrepancy analysis, taking into account the areas you think you are prepared for and the areas you need to work on in order to be a viable candidate for this position. The goal is to identify the places on which you should focus your attention to make this career a good fit for you.

6-3 Example Assignment: Laura Smith's Discrepancy Analysis

Job: Paralegal

Analysis: On the whole, I think I'm pretty well prepared for this job and the tasks and nature of the work seem like a good fit for my skills and traits.

I have discrepancies in the following areas: Legal database experience: I don't have any experience with Lexis/Nexus or any other of the main legal databases. I think I need to get up to speed on how to use these resources so that I can bring that experience and confidence to my applications and interviews.

Area of specialty: I was thinking that I could become a paralegal and then figure out what sort of lawyer I want to be, or that I would just get a good body of knowledge from whatever law the firm I got a job at specialized in. It seems to me now that I should probably figure out what sort of law holds the most interest to me and then direct my search based on that. That way my paralegal work can inform my ultimate goal of becoming a lawyer. This will require some research on my part before moving ahead with finding a job.

Paper filing systems: I'm a little concerned about how to manage complex paper filing systems that haven't been made accessible for people with visual impairments. Paralegals have to deal with a lot of paper really quickly, so I don't want this to be an issue for a potential employer. I'd like to have a solution ready if it comes up.

Education/experience: I'm going to be finishing up my BA this year, so I think I'm prepared, though I wish I'd thought to try to get some paralegal experience last summer. I wonder if there is a way for me to start part time somewhere during my last year.

Typing: while no one has overtly said there is a requirement for typing speed, so much communication happens via email in a law office that I think it might be a good idea for me to get my typing speed up just so I can save some time during the day. I don't think it will make much difference when applying for a job, but it might when it comes to keeping the job I finally land.

Module 7: The Vocational Action Plan Assignment

7-1 Lesson: Putting your research to work for you

In this module, you explored a job you're interested in and in your discrepancy analysis you compared the requirements of that position to your skills, abilities, and liabilities. Hopefully the job you've analyzed has proven to be a good fit for you. If not, you should move to a new job and start the analysis process over again until you find a position that feels right. Once you've found the job you'd like to pursue, your next step is to create a vocational action plan.

Creating a vocational action plan is a big step towards achieving your ultimate goal of employment. The action plan will help you maintain self-awareness, be realistic about goal setting, and break down your required progress into achievable steps.

7-2 Assignment: Vocational Action Plan

List the job that you are most interested in getting. This is your ultimate vocational goal. Based on your discrepancy analysis, think about the steps that will be necessary to reach that goal. Use the information from the discrepancy analysis to identify the requirements that you do not meet. Think about what is necessary to meet them-is it improving on an existing skill? Learning a new one? Getting certification? Finishing a degree? Now put together a step-by-step plan that you can implement in order to meet your goal.

7-3 Example Assignment: Laura Smith's Vocational Action Plan

Job: Paralegal

Plan

Discrepancy: Legal Database Experience

Action: See if I can access Lexis/Nexus through my university or branch library. See if there are librarians at these locations who could help me practice using these databases. Spend two hours per week working on Lexis/Nexus searches and gaining familiarity with how the database works. Talk to Karen, Simon, and Lindsey to see if there are any other common legal databases-or other online resources-I should familiarize myself with to make me a stronger candidate

Discrepancy: I haven't figured out what kind of law I'm interested in

Action: Talk to Karen about how she went about choosing her specialty. Before I call her, I'm going to do some research into types of law and see if I can narrow the field down a bit. I know I don't want to go the corporate route or be a bankruptcy lawyer.

Discrepancy: I don't have any work experience in the field

Action: I'm going to go to the career center to see if they have any leads on part-time paralegal, or related, work. Hopefully I can get some kind of real-world experience before I graduate.

<u>Concerns:</u>

Typing: I want to get my typing speed up a bit. I'm going to ask at the vocational rehabilitation center if they have any courses I can take to improve.

Paper filing systems: I want to talk to Lindsey about how realistic it is for a law firm to make their paper filing systems accessible to me. She seems to manage fine, but Karen's firm is really flexible and invested in making things accessible. If I'm going to be at a larger firm, I need to know how it might work so I can come up with solutions.

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CONGRATULATIONS! You have reached the end of Course 2: Career Exploration – Resources and Methods. Please be sure to save the assignments you have completed.

Please continue to…
Course 3: Finding Employment

COURSE 3: Finding Employment

Module 1: Disclosure

1-1 Lesson: Disclosure

Deciding when to disclose your disability to a potential or current employer is one of the most substantial issues persons with visual impairments and disabilities encounter during the employment process. It's also one of the most frequently debated issues. If you ask three people who have disabilities about disclosure, you will get three distinctly different points of view.

Disclosure decisions might be easier for a person with a more obvious physical disability, but for people with low vision, or less apparent disabilities, disclosure can present a challenge. It's important to put careful thought into disclosure so that you understand your options and their potential consequences, both positive and negative. This section will guide you through the process of thinking about when and how to disclose your disability.

Ultimately, it's your decision to disclose or not, though it's important to remember that you're not covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) until you disclose your disability to the employer. There is not one right answer to the disclosure issue; each situation and employer is different.

Disclosure Scenarios: Pros and Cons

Below you'll find a discussion of stages in the employment process when you might consider disclosure, along with a discussion of some possible reactions and consequences. These are typical situations that you are likely to encounter during your job search.

Disclosure prior to the interview, by email or phone call

Possible Positives:

The employer knows upfront and will not be caught off guard when you arrive at the interview.

The employer feels that you are being honest. The employer will have time to think about how a person with this type of disability would fulfill the job duties.

The employer may interpret your comfort with disclosing your disability at this early stage as a sign that you are confident you can do the job.

If the employer has had positive experiences in the past with persons with disabilities, they will be excited by the opportunity to hire someone with a disability.

If the employer has been given an initiative to hire competent persons with disabilities, they will recognize that your employment could be a great opportunity.

Possible Negatives:

The employer may be scared or intimidated and decide to ignore your resume or application due to misconceptions about people who are blind or low vision.

The employer may have never met a person with a visual impairment and thus be unsure or uncomfortable about interviewing you.

The employer may not intend to hire you because of the disability but will interview you because they are worried that you might accuse them of discrimination.

The employer may think they will not be able to afford the accommodations required to hire an employee with a disability and therefore may not interview you.

The employer may believe people who are blind or low vision always have multiple disabilities and that you will not have the intelligence to perform the job and the required duties.

Disclosure prior to an interview

By meeting the employer in person (going into the employer's office or place of business to retrieve or drop off an application) you may disclose that you have a disability.

Possible Positives:

Going in person demonstrates your ability to arrive at the employer's office and act professionally.

By entering with confidence and being dressed appropriately, you can make a good impression and your disability will not be an issue.

Whomever you meet will have the chance to interact with you and ask questions about accomplishing the job duties. This is an opportunity to sell yourself as a potentially valuable and capable employee.
In-person interaction will dispel any biases or misconceptions about your intelligence.

An in-person meeting is a good opportunity to educate a potential employer and promote yourself as a quality applicant in the process.

By disclosing at this stage, the employer can ask about possible accommodations that you would need to fulfill the duties of the job or to take an entrance test. Again, this is an opportunity to ease their worries by explaining what you need. You may have the opportunity to demonstrate a piece of technology that you have with you at that time.

Possible Negatives:

If the employer has a bias or holds prejudice against persons with disabilities, now that they know you are disabled, they might block you from getting an interview, even though your resume and supporting documents demonstrate that you are an appropriate candidate for the position.

The employer or staff might assume you will not be able to perform a job that sighted people typically perform. If they were to hire you, they think it would mean other employees would have to perform some or most of your responsibilities.

Some employers may think your disability disclosure is a scam to set them up for an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) non-compliance lawsuit.

Disclosure during the interview, in person, or on the phone

Possible Positives:

Open-minded employers will be interested in how you see your abilities fitting with the job duties.

Some employers may be comfortable hiring persons with disabilities, but still have concerns. By disclosing at the interview stage, you have the opportunity to address their concerns and demonstrate that you are a competent, qualified candidate who would be a superb addition to their company.

Some employers may need a little education on your visual impairment.

Disclosing at the interview stage will give you the opportunity to inform them about the reality of your disability. When you choose to go this route, it's important to talk about your situation simply, honestly, and comfortably without making the interviewer feel dumb or awkward.

Remember: employers are not supposed to ask about disabilities; if you choose to disclose, they will want relevant information. It's better to proactively and fully address their concerns.

Some employers may have other quality employees who have disabilities and will be excited to see how you could do the job effectively.

Waiting to disclose until the interview means that a possible biased employer doesn't have the opportunity to block you from interviewing. You have a better chance of being judged fairly and also have the chance to perform well during the interview.

Possible Negatives:

The employer might feel that waiting to disclose until the interview is a dishonest way to represent yourself. They might not hire you because they feel you aren't trustworthy.

The employer or staff might assume you will not be able to perform a job that sighted people typically perform. If they were to hire you, they think it would mean other employees would have to perform some or most of your responsibilities.

The employer may feel uncomfortable or embarrassed because they didn't expect a person with a visual impairment, and they have a lack of experience with persons with disabilities.

The employer may have had bad experiences with persons with disabilities in the past or have heard stories of bad experiences. Disclosing during the interview gives them the opportunity to apply these negative feelings to you and your application/interview before they've made a hiring decision.

The employer may see your disability as a legal liability and won't want to run the risk of hiring you because they think you have a higher chance of getting injured, or that you would accuse them of discrimination.

Disclosure right after you are hired and when already on the job
Possible Positives:

You are hired without having to negotiate biases or run the risk of getting excluded from consideration because of your disability.

Possible Negatives:

Waiting to disclose until after you're on the job might make your employer feel they can't trust you. They may work to accommodate your disability, but you may have damaged a professional relationship.

Because they don't want to accommodate your disability, or because they are biased, your employer may find a non-related reason to fire you.

Your employer feels they have been forced into something without complete knowledge of the consequences.

Your employer may interpret your delay in disclosure as a lack of confidence in your abilities.

Your employer may think you purposely waited to disclose so that you can pursue a lawsuit. This may damage your professional relationship and reputation.

Disclosure only when it becomes an issue on the job
Possible Positives:

You are hired without having to negotiate biases or run the risk of getting excluded from consideration because of your disability.

You are able to prove your worth on the job.

Possible Negatives:

You have to hide something that is a part of who you are.

Your employer may notice that you struggle with some tasks and begin to think that you have a cognitive issue.

Your employer may become unhappy with your performance and begin documenting these issues. You may eventually disclose your disability to your boss, but at that point the decision to fire you may have already been made.

Because the employer was not aware of your disability at the time they made the decision to fire you, you are not covered under the ADA.

Because you disclose late in the game, the employer feels you are simply making excuses for work performance issues.

Because you wait so long to disclose, the employer feels that you have misrepresented yourself and not been honest with the staff.

Your employer may feel you are not comfortable with having a disability and this may make them uncomfortable around you.

1-2   Assignment: Disclosure

In this section, several disclosure scenarios were discussed, along with their possible positive and negative consequences. What is your reaction to each of these scenarios and their consequences? Why?

• Disclosure prior to the interview, by correspondence (a letter or cover letter) or phone call

• Prior to an interview, by meeting the employer in person (going into the employer's office or place of business to get or drop off an application)

• During the interview, in person or on the phone

• Disclosure right after you are hired and when already on the job

• Disclosure only when it becomes an issue on the job

1-3   Example Assignment: Joe's Disclosure

I will be an asset to your company because I bring a good work ethic, reliability, loyalty, collaboration, and high standards to every job I do. I'm an excellent team player and have always been able to accomplish work tasks on my own.

My right field of vision is perfectly fine, but I've lost my left field of vision. This means I have fully functional, but partial, sight in both of my eyes. In order to adapt to this condition, I have to scan my surroundings in order to see everything. I'm able to read, type, and interpret visual information with no problem. As you can see, I get around easily and well in the physical world. I use the bus system to get around the city. I took a bus here today and the route is very straightforward. When the buses aren't running, I have alternative, reliable transportation.

Module 2   The Disability Statement

2-1   Lesson: Preparing for how to talk about your disability with a potential employer

At some point in the employment process, you may want to describe your disability and how it affects you in life and in the workplace. Doing so will allow you to be protected by the ADA and will also give you the opportunity to make your potential employer more comfortable and informed about what you can bring to the company. Whenever you decide to disclose your disability, it's important to think about how to talk about it in a professional, honest, and non-threatening manner.

As a person with a disability, it's important to express what your disability is and how it affects you. It's important to not use too many technical terms and to keep your explanation practical. Make sure to be clear about what you can see and explain how you accommodate limitations. Mentioning how you access computers or other information is usually a good idea.

Putting together a disability statement prepares you for the moment in the job-hunting process where you'll need to both emphasize your skills and potential and put an employer's concerns to rest. Using plain language to describe your ability to accomplish job duties or meet general goals is important.

You can talk about your disability by explaining how you will perform the job duties in question, or by describing how you have performed similar jobs in the past. It can be helpful to relate possible accommodations to specific job duties and to think about what the employer will want or need to know. Disclosure during the employment process is not an appropriate time to lecture someone about having a disability. Rather, your disability statement is an opportunity to promote yourself and to help a potential employer recognize how you will be a valuable member on their team.

Tips:

When you describe your disability or impairment, always use positive language, simple terms and phrasing, and include functional implications. Here are some examples:

"I have an eye condition that limits what I can see. It's like looking through a straw. I have to scan or look around more because of this loss of peripheral vision. I can look at you and see your face, but I do not see the rest of you or the surroundings."

"I use screen reading software called JAWS. It reads information from the screen to me. I use one earphone for listening to my screen reader; I can use the other ear to use the phone or listen to other information."

"Because of my visual impairment, I am unable to drive, so I use the bus system to get around. I took the bus here today. If the bus is not working, I have other methods of transportation."

"I use a device that enlarges paper documents to allow me to see them easily. Other documents can be given to me electronically or I can scan them into my computer."

"As you can see, I have great technology skills and I am very creative and will be able to meet the duties assigned to me."

KEY TAKE-AWAY:

When you describe your disability or impairment, always use positive language, simple terms and phrasing, and include functional implications.

Example: "I use screen reading software called JAWS. It reads information from the screen to me. I use one earphone for listening to my screen reader; I can use the other ear to use the phone or listen to other information."

2-2 Assignment: The Disability Statement

Write your disability statement. Think about which of these areas you need to address:

- Travel to and from work (reliability)
- Completion of routine tasks
- Technology (can offer possible demonstration or website to view a demonstration)
- Independence (complete tasks on your own)

Use these points to create your disability statement, memorize it, and then practice reciting it to a friend, family member, counselor, or teacher. Get started!

2-3 Example Assignment: Joe's Disability Statement

I am visually impaired, and I have an eye condition called RP or Retinitis Pigmentosa. This eye condition basically has deteriorated my retina from the outside to the inside. I see through a small "tunnel" of vision in each eye. The vision I have in the center is good usable vision. I can read with magnification on my computer by utilizing special software. I also use electronic speech through a screen reading feature on that software with one earphone to allow me to use the phone at the same time.

I use a desktop device to magnify print materials or scan them and read them on my computer. I also carry a small handheld magnifier in my pocket, just in case. I have great computer skills that will allow me to be an asset to your business. I can read braille as well, but typically read print. I can demonstrate some of the technology that I use, so that you get a better idea, or I can direct you to a few websites that show videos of it being used.

I know as a human resources representative that I will be organizing a lot of documents. I tend to scan them into my computer and save them in a file system. I always back up my information and feel electronic copies are the easiest. I am able to organize print as well. I label folders with braille labels I will provide. The labels are similar to a piece of tape with some bumps on it. I can show you an example.

Human resources personnel travel once in a while, and I know that will not be difficult for me. I pride myself on being punctual and reliable. I utilize public transportation to travel and have not had any issues getting any around. If a bus is delayed, I will use Uber or Lyft or find another method of transportation. I have built up a great transportation network. My vision is much better during the day than at night or in dark rooms. I use a white cane to help me travel efficiently through environments. I am very confident in my skills and think that I would be a great addition to your business. If you have any questions, please ask and I can answer them for you.

Module 3: Creating a Personal Data Sheet

3-1   Lesson: Developing a personal data sheet of basic information to support the job application process

In the early stages of the employment process, most employers require the same preliminary information from every applicant. It's important to have this information readily available, accurate, and organized when applying for a job.

A good way to ensure that you're prepared is to develop a Personal Data Sheet that you can refer to whenever you need to fill out an application. Having this information organized in one place will help you complete job applications efficiently and meet important application deadlines. This information will also help you build your resume as you will need to include most of the same data on your resume.

While employers may ask for a different order or use different words to describe this information, they will almost certainly require data from the following seven categories:

Personal Information: The category includes your full name, current address, past addresses, current phone number(s), email address, date of birth, place of birth, citizenship information, and parents' or guardians' names.

Education and Training: List the high school and college you attend or attended with the most recent first. Include the name, address, and phone number of the school and the years of your attendance at each. If you've graduated, include the year of your graduation and specify if you earned a diploma or degree. Include your GPA (unless it's below average) and any honors you received at each school.

Employment History: In this section you should list the locations of previous employers starting with the most recent. For each position include the following: name of the business, address, phone number, your position and duties, your salary at hire (per hour, per month, or per year), salary at the end of employment, the dates of employment, your supervisor's name and phone number, and the reason you left the job.

Keep in mind, employment history can tell an employer a few things about you. If you're a recent graduate, it's understandable you may not have a long work history. If you've been out of school a while and don't have a current work history, this may prompt some questions from a potential employer.

If your work history has many different businesses listed, but you only spent a short period at each, a potential employer may wonder about your loyalty or the quality of your work. Because filling a position and training a new employee requires an investment of an employer's time and effort, employers want to make sure that whomever they hire will stay in the position long enough to see a return on that investment.

In the employment history section of your personal data sheet, on any application, and during any interview, it's important to carefully phrase your reason for leaving each job. You should never lie, but you should think about how you can phrase things so that you are seen in the best light possible.

Never speak negatively about past employers, as the business world can be a small network, and information can be spread through friends and "friends of friends". You could easily and quickly damage your reputation in your local community, making it even harder to get hired. As you're developing your personal data sheet, try to think about your work history from the employer's perspective and start to prepare answers for questions that may arise.

Community Service/Volunteer Work: Use this category to list any internships, community service, or volunteer work you have done. Include the name of the organization, the address, phone number, contact person (for verification of your hours), the number of hours you donated, the dates you volunteered, and the duties and skills you acquired or learned as a result of your donation of time.

Awards: Keep a detailed log of the awards you receive while you are in high school and/or college. Awards demonstrate examples of your value to an employer. Do not describe an award using abbreviations or jargon which may be unfamiliar to an employer.

Special Skills/Additional Certifications: It is essential for you to list any particular skills that may make you more valuable or qualified. If you were captain of the golf team for two years, you may want to list your leadership skills as an example.

Additional examples of information you may want to include are your knowledge of foreign languages, computer programming languages, special certifications, or additional training. Keep in mind if you state you are proficient in using a software program, you are stating you are an expert and should be prepared to demonstrate your skill level to a potential employer if asked.

References: Include the name, job title, address, and preferred contact information of at least three people you've worked with or known well who can vouch for your work ethic and potential to be a valuable employee. Include your relationship to each of your references (supervisor, college professor, etc.) as well as the duration you have known your reference.

Your references should be reputable and be able to express why you would be a good candidate for a job. It's best for your references to be people with whom, or for whom, you have worked, volunteered, or done an internship. If you don't have an employment history yet, teachers or professors you have worked with often can also be good references. Avoid providing family members or friends as references.

Before including someone on this list, ask them if they would be willing to be an employment reference for you. If they are, ask for a written letter of recommendation (some employers will ask for such letters), preferably on business letterhead. Also ask them for their preferred method of contact and make sure that method is what you include on your personal data sheet.

3-2 Assignment: Personal Data Sheet

Open a blank document and create your Personal Data Sheet. If you have already created a Personal Data Sheet, then review and update it using the tips provided to you in this lesson.

Module 4:   Building a Resume

4-1   Lesson: Developing a crucial job search tool: your resume

Resumes are necessary in the job and internship seeking process. Regardless, if you are a teenager in high school with no work experience or a recent college graduate with experience holding a few jobs, it's important to always have a high quality and current resume prepared and on hand for whenever a potential employer might ask for one.

Your resume is a tool you can use to showcase your skills, abilities, and accomplishments. It's an advertisement of who you are and should convince an employer you'd be an asset to the place of employment as an employee or intern.

Most employers will formally require submission of a resume at some point in the application process. Even when it's not formally required, most businesses will be pleased to accept a resume accompanied by your job application when you are applying for a job or internship. Your resume may be your best opportunity to sell yourself to an employer before an interview, so it's a good idea to provide one, even when it's not specifically asked for.

It's normal to feel a bit intimidated by the resume development process. If you've been thoughtfully completing the assignments in this course, you've already done much of the legwork required to create a solid resume.

What Does a Resume Include?

Resumes typically have similar categories to those in the Personal Data Sheet such as personal information, educational and work history. Resumes may also include sections for awards, certifications, honors, special skills, and references. Unlike the listing in your Personal Data Sheet, the work history section will typically include an additional description of each of your jobs in order to provide a potential employer with a summary of the kinds of work accomplished. Important note: Never include your social security number on your resume.

General Format

It's important to consider resume formatting. Make sure you use consistent formatting that is easy to read. You want your resume to visually appeal to an employer who might have several resumes to review.

The font, spacing, and overall appearance of your resume are important to consider. Your resume should include the use of typographic emphasis such as bold, underline, and italic so the employer can quickly locate specific information about you. For instance, the headings on your resume should be typed in all caps to delineate new categories of information. In addition, bullets are often used in resumes to list important facts.

The following are key headings and the types of relevant information you need to include on your resume:

Personal Information or Resume Heading

This information is entered at the top of your resume and includes your full name, phone number, address, and email address. Because this identifies yourself to the employer, this information is typically a font size larger than the other text in your resume and is often centered on the page.

The goal is for your name to stand out to the employer. Keep in mind your email address should be formal and standard such as your first initial and last name or your first name and last name. If necessary, create a new

email address and use it just for applying for jobs.

It might seem like a small detail, but in a job search it's important to always present yourself in a professional manner. Employers will not hesitate to dismiss a resume with an inappropriate email address.

Objective

The objective is a statement which addresses what you are trying to accomplish or what you hope to get out of the job. Your objective may change depending on the type of job you are applying for so be sure to update this section of your resume when you apply for different jobs. Your objective should be clear and to the point such as "To gain part-time employment as a stocking clerk".

Summary of Qualifications

Your qualifications are skills and attributes you possess that can come from your experiences in school, volunteering, extra-curricular activities, training, etc. An example of a qualification you might list is as follows: "Excellent written and verbal communication skills". List 3-4 qualifications which are necessary for the job you are applying for.

Education

List the most recent and subsequent places you have studied at, the dates you attended, and specify what you were awarded such as a diploma, master's degree, etc.

Work Experience

Provide your current or most recent place of employment first, followed by additional places of employment in continued chronological order. Include the dates of your employment as well as key duties you performed. Always provide the same pieces of information for every job you list.

Community Service/Volunteer Work

Community service and volunteer work are great things to add to your resume especially if you do not have any paid experience to list. Listing volunteer experience on a resume indicates to an employer you take initiative, are self-motivated, willing to try new things, and that you support your community.

Honors and Distinctions

Under this heading accentuate your awards, certificates, and other credentials. Do not use abbreviations or terminology your hiring manager may not understand. This section can help you stand out and give you an edge on others applying for the same job.

Activities

If used right, the information in this section of your resume can help set you apart. Your activities can be professionally relevant as they will demonstrate your potential for leadership and teamwork. Some activities are not appropriate or relevant to list on a resume' such as reading or watching movies.

Additional Skills

This is an area to stress skills you have not highlighted on another part of your resume.

References

If your resume has not exceeded the recommended maximum length of two pages, include references on your resume. If you have exceeded the recommended length, notate under the reference heading that "references are available upon request" and have a separate reference page prepared to share.

Keep your references as professional as possible. In other words, it would not be appropriate to list your neighbor or your sister. Instead, list past supervisors, teachers, coaches, clients you have babysat for, etc. Overall, you want to list people who can attest to your reliability, your work ethic, and character as a person. Be sure you contact your references for their permission to list them on your resume as well as to find out how they would prefer to be contacted by a potential employer.

Length

For most job seekers in the early stages of their careers, a one-page resume will be the normal size required and preferred by employers. Employers often have dozens or even hundreds of resumes to review for a single job. They may not have the time to read through a long resume to make sure they've caught all of the important points.

One of the most critical parts of resume development is to make sure that you have made it easy for the potential employer to see everything about you very quickly. You might find that your first draft of your resume is longer than a single page. In that case, make sure your writing is as clear and to the point as possible. Then, take a look at your font size, margins, and other formatting options and make adjustments so your full resume fits completely and legibly on one sheet.

As your career progresses and your work history grows, longer resumes will be acceptable and expected.

Accuracy

Never lie on your resume. Businesses regularly perform fact-checking on applicants before hiring. If it appears you have misrepresented your accomplishments or the facts of your past employment, your application will be dismissed, and your reputation will suffer. If you're hired and it's later discovered that you lied or misrepresented yourself on your resume or application, your employment may be terminated.

KEY TAKE-AWAY:

ALWAYS BE ACCURATE AND CUSTOMIZE YOUR RESUME FOR EACH JOB!

Customization

Once you've developed a solid master resume, it's a good idea to customize each resume you submit to suit each specific job or employer.

Use keywords found in the job description to highlight in your resume.

Adjust and edit your work history based on the position for which you're applying.

Provide the most detail for the jobs that are most relevant and downplay positions that aren't relevant.

If you have gaps in your employment history, make sure you have thought about how to explain them.

Order the headings so you highlight your best qualifications for the position. Let's say for a specific job you have strong educational experience, but not as much relevant work experience. In this scenario, it would be a good idea to put your educational experience above your work experience.

Analyze your resume and decide what category is most applicable to the specific job you're applying for.

Additional Tips on Writing

Remember to keep writing short and to the point.

For past jobs, use the past tense: "Trained superiors on how to use the fryer; participated in a training; certified by the United Health Services; trained under an experienced chef; provided customer services; processed user applications".

For your present job, use the present tense: "Train coworkers on inventory practices; am responsible for copier maintenance and supply; work with experienced chef; supervise three interns".

Get Feedback from Others

Print your resume on standard printing paper and ask a person who does not have a visual impairment to review your resume for content and formatting. Editing is important for any person developing a resume, as they are difficult documents to perfect.

Keep It Current

Keep your resume up to date because you never know when a job opportunity will present itself. It's important to make sure your contact information is accurate and appropriate.

4-2 Assignment: Building a Resume

Use all of the information and tips you just learned to create a resume. Be sure to get feedback and edit, then revise your resume for a final, polished product.

Michael Smith

330-993-9877

smithm@gmail.com

446 Winding Way

Long Boat Key, FL 33445

OBJECTIVE

Reliable and mature high school junior seeking a part-time retail sales position in a company which offers opportunities for employee growth.

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- Quick and eager learner

- Ability to work as part of a team or independently

- Responsible, efficient, and flexible

- Goal-oriented

- Polite, respectful, and courteous

EDUCATION

High School Diploma, George High School, Winterville, FL**,** Expected June 2018

WORK EXPERIENCE

Bagger, *Kroger Supermarket,* Long Boat Key, FL**,** Summer 2016

- Prepared bagged groceries for customers

- Assisted customers with carrying out bags of groceries

- Verified prices of items

- Greeted customers and assisted them with locating items

Movie Theatre Usher, *Cinema 12,* Long Boat Key, FL**,** Summer 2015

- Greeted, directed guests, and collected admission tickets

- Counted and recorded number of tickets collected

- Answered questions from guests

- Paged individuals needed at the box office

COMMUNITY SERVICE
- Contributed 40 volunteer hours to *Sal's Thrift Store,* Summer 2014
- Volunteered 50 hours to *Suncoast Animal Shelter,* Summer 2015
- Volunteered 35 hours to the *Vet's Soup Kitchen,* Fall 2016

HONORS and DISTINCTIONS
- National Honor Society Member, 2014- Current
- Earned George High School Perfect Attendance Award, 2014 and 2015
- Achieved Honor Roll, George High School, 2014, 2015, and 2016
- Most Valuable Goal Ball Player, George High School, 2015
- First Place Science Fair, George High School, 2015

ACTIVITIES

Drama Club, 2015 and 2016

History Book Club, 2014, 2015, and 2016

Yearbook Committee, 2014

ADDITIONAL SKILLS
- Skillful in using Windows and iOS devices
- Proficient in software platforms including Microsoft Office and Outlook Express
- 40 words-per-minute typist
- Fluent in Spanish
- Certified in First-Aid and CPR

REFERENCES

Bob Parks

Kroger Supermarket Customer Service Manager

445 Winding Boulevard

Long Boat Key, FL 33445

parksb@gmail.com

330-993-2663

Mary Brown

Suncoast Animal Shelter Volunteer Coordinator

2234 North Shore Drive

Long Boat Key, FL 33446

brownm@sasvc.org

330-993-5566

Sheila Conway

National Honor Society Coordinator

George High School

446 St. Marks Trail

Long Boat Key, FL 33446

conways@ghs.org

330-993-8765

Module 5: Finding Job Leads

5-1 Lesson: Exploring several methods for finding job leads

The job search can feel a lot like searching for gold by sifting through wet mud! It can take considerable time and effort, often for seemingly little reward. Along the way, however, you may find rocks that seem worthless but turn out to be very valuable. Job leads can come in many forms, including as information about job openings, either in the form of ads, postings, information from your network, or even rumors or news items. Job leads are a crucial part of the job-seeking process. No job lead is a bad job lead; some just may not pan out for you. It's important to be diligent, patient, and prepared throughout the process.

The methods that most people use to find jobs are typically broken up into three categories:

1. Networking
2. Cold calls
3. Intermediary

Networking is typically used by persons who have more experience, while cold calling is commonly associated with positions that are lower paying and possibly paid an hourly wage. Intermediary is the method most commonly associated with conducting a job search. Intermediary goes back to searching online employment websites.

Below are several ways to explore or create job leads.

Your Personal Network

The majority of jobs acquired by job seekers are found via contacts and personal networking. Earlier in this course you were asked to think about your personal network and build a pyramid with five levels. We talked about expanding and maintaining your personal network. Now is when that work pays off.

If you have expanded your network and kept your contacts "fresh" by staying in touch with the people you've identified as potentially helpful to your job search, it will be much easier to contact them about job leads or possible connections. When searching for job leads, reach out to your network in an organized and appropriate manner.

Be tactful and professional and make contact with a phone call, in person, or via email.

Keep good records of whom you've contacted and the information each contact provided. If you told someone you would follow up with them at a later date, make sure you do so.

Social Networking

A very effective way to network is on social media websites such as LinkedIn, Twitter, or Facebook. Social networking is similar to reaching out to your network by phone, but you have the opportunity to do more to show off your skills and abilities. Learn more about using LinkedIn on the APH CareerConnect and NSITE Connect websites.

Always Thank Your Network

Be appreciative of the people who help you find job leads, whether or not their advice leads to a job. Take the time to thank everyone who helps you by phone, mail, or email. This is important etiquette and will pay off in keeping your network ready and willing to help you whenever they hear of something relevant to your career. If you end up getting a job from one of these leads then you should do something more than a thank

you, such as a gift or taking them out to lunch.

Remember: It's important to put in the effort planning your research and developing your job leads, particularly if you're looking for a job in a tight or highly competitive job market.

Professional Organizations and Associations

Many fields have professional organizations you can join in order to access job postings and employment information specific to that field or industry. Companies may pay these professional organizations to post jobs on their websites.

These organizations also may have an email list that is specific to professionals working in the field. Often, organizations and companies will send announcements of job openings to these lists because they know that the recipients are interested in the field.

You may also be able to email the list to see if any of the professionals working in your area have open positions. You can put yourself out there and sell yourself on these lists, but make sure that you know the etiquette for each list before you start posting. Be careful giving out personal information, and always remember to give a method to respond to your inquiry. Professional organizations can have both a national presence and local affiliates or chapters in each state or even certain cities.

Conferences, Workshops, and Meetings

Through your research, you might find announcements for conferences, meetings, workshops, or networking events. These types of gatherings are great places to network, find job leads, and learn more about the current state of the field you're interested in. When attending these events, be prepared, creative, professional, and outgoing. Dress professionally and attend with a game plan to network. Have several copies of your resume, along with a business card or something that you can give to the people you meet so they will remember you.

Career Centers and Job Fairs

We covered career centers and job fairs earlier in this course and they should be considered viable tools for finding job leads. Find out if you have access to career centers and job fairs through local colleges or universities and take advantage of these resources if available.

Employment Centers

Employment Centers are often underutilized resources when it comes to job leads. Employment centers in fact offer a variety of services that can be useful to a job seeker, such as vocational evaluation, skill training, resume review, or possible employment connections.

Employment Websites

There are many employment search websites. Some are more specialized (by industry or experience level, for example) than others. Many businesses post jobs on these sites. You can use these large sites to survey the businesses you are interested in and find out how they publicize their job openings. These sites can also lead you to find other job sites used in your field of interest.

It's a good idea to be skeptical of jobs posted online that sound too good to be true. There are a number of "work from home" and other scams commonly found online on all of the major lob listing sites. Another way to find out if something is fraudulent is to do a search for "scam" plus some of the information from the listing and see what you can find in the results.

Accessing Federal Jobs

Federal agencies have two job application methods available for people with disabilities: competitive and non-competitive placements. Job applicants must meet the specified qualifications and be able to perform the essential job duties with or without reasonable accommodations.

Jobs that are filled competitively are advertised on USAJOBS. USAJOBS is the official job-posting site used by the U.S. federal government. There are approximately 16,000 jobs available on the site each day. Registering on the website allows one to apply to the federal jobs. This takes some time but is worth the effort. The website allows you to select notifications of job advertisements related to key words. USAJOBS is a tremendous resource that all people with disabilities seeking competitive employment should explore.

Jobs filled non-competitively are offered to those with disabilities and who have appropriate documentation as specified under the provisions. For more details on these processes, please visit the U.S. Office of Personnel Management.

The U.S. Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) website offers useful connections to resources for self-employment, youth employment, employer advisement, the latest disability policies, and more. This office advises the U.S. Department of Labor and other government agencies on employment issues regarding people with disabilities.

Libraries

As we've already established in earlier lessons, libraries are extremely good sources for job research, and they're often underutilized and underappreciated sources for job leads. You can visit your local library and find out if they have any resources for an employment search or you can use their computers for Internet access.

It may be helpful to have someone with you to help use printed resources, but otherwise libraries do have staff members who can assist you. If you know that you will need assistance with your search and want to learn about the resources available, it would be a good idea to schedule an appointment with a staff member or librarian. Additionally, many of the search tools that you'll find at the library are available online and can be accessed from home.

Create Your Own Leads: Cold Calling

Creating your own job leads is usually done by "cold calling." Cold calling involves calling organizations where you're interested in working or that offer the type of position you are interested in holding. This method involves calling companies with no introduction or prior connection, and without responding to a specific job listing. Cold calling is probably the toughest method to find a job lead because you must build a relationship quickly in order to convert the call into a meaningful contact.

First, you must identify companies you'd like to cold call. Search online or ask friends and family for ideas. Once you've found a business you're interested in, visit their website and look for a human resources department contact and links such as "employment opportunities" or "job opportunities." More and more companies post their job openings online. Maybe there is a position posted that you're interested in, and you can respond to it.

Even if an organization doesn't have jobs posted on their site, it can be worthwhile to cold call them. Often businesses have jobs that are about to become open but are not yet posted. Some businesses may not post jobs or may not be quick about posting their opportunities. Often businesses are willing to hold on to

applications or resumes until a relevant job opens at a later time. This is something that you should ask a human resources or business representative when you call.

It's important to note that the employment divisions of companies can go by many names: human resources, personnel department, hiring division, etc. Smaller businesses may have a single person who handles their hiring.

When cold calling businesses, you may find that some organizations only accept applications on certain days and/or at certain times. For instance, restaurants will often reserve a slow day or a low traffic time of day for applicants to come in and meet with staff. Always respect these schedules.

Cold calling is typically more effective for lower wage jobs. This method is not as common for higher wage jobs, but it has happened for persons. It is just another method of job search and more commonly associated with jobs that are paid on hourly rate rather than a salary.

Stay Aware When You're Out And About

Some small businesses hang signs in their windows to advertise they are hiring. If you are interested in working in a small business or store, check the windows by the entry door to see if there is a "Help Wanted" or "Now Hiring" sign hanging there. If there is, go inside to inquire about the positions they are looking to **fill,** or call them when you get home to find out more.

Bulletin Boards

Online and physical bulletin boards can be great job lead resources. Physical bulletin boards with job postings are becoming rare, but you can still find them on some school campuses and at local businesses. If you are a college student, most colleges have databases or job posting web pages that list jobs on or off campus. Message boards or job posting lists on company and organization sites can also be good places to find leads. It's a good idea to be skeptical of jobs posted online that sound too good to be true. As with job listing sites, be aware of possible scams and do your research before pursuing something that sounds too good to be true.

5-2   Assignment: Finding Job Leads

An action plan can be a very useful tool when conducting a job search or trying to accomplish any specific goal.

Part 1. Develop a Job Lead Action Plan

A Job Lead Action Plan is a list of the methods you will use and the steps you will take to develop your job leads. The list is a document formatted as an outline. First, list the methods you will use. Then, beneath each listed method, detail the actions that you plan to take. List the people, organizations, and businesses you will contact, and include the method(s) you plan to use to contact each of them. Update your action plan as you receive responses.

Part 2. Put Your Job Leads Action Plan to Work

As you work through your action plan, create a Job Leads List with two categories. The first category will be "leads for jobs that have openings" and the second will be "leads for jobs without openings." As you find out about job leads, list each under the appropriate category. Once you've completed your action plan, order these lists based on your interest in each lead.

5-3   Example Assignment: Josie's Job Leads

Part 1. Methods

Personal Network

I will contact, via email, the following members of my network and ask for any information on jobs in the digital communications field, with an emphasis on website development:

- John Smith
- Kerry Hartford
- Akiko Tsuomo
- Lynn Pitchkin
- Aggie
- Mark
- Professor Danforth
- Lynn Paltrow

Library

I will make an appointment with a librarian at the University of Kentucky to see what resources they have available for finding job leads.

Professional Organizations and Associations

I found three organizations that I'd like to look into:

- Professional Association for Web Developers
- University and College Web Professionals
- Freelance Web Designer Network

I'm going to see if any of these associations have email lists and bulletin boards and find out what it takes to join and/or gather the information.

Conferences

The University and College Web Professionals association is having a conference in a month, and I am going to look into how much it costs to attend. If I can afford it, I am going to sign up and begin preparation for networking during the conference.

Cold Calling

Right now, there are three local businesses that I know I would love to work for:

- DBG design
- University of Kentucky, Louisville, Communications and Student Recruitment
- Fork and Spoon Web Services

I am going to contact each and talk to them about their hiring processes. I'm going to see if I can send them a resume now, even if they don't have any positions open. I'll ask them how long they hold resumes, and also ask them if I might come in to do an informational interview with someone.

Part 2: Job Leads List

Leads for Open Jobs

- Site developer II, Fork and Spoon Web Services
- Assistant web developer, Chrion Associates via Akiko Tsuomo
- Communications manager, XO Communications
- Digital asset manager, Getty Images-Lexington via Professor Danforth
- Digital asset assistant, Getty Images-Lexington via Professor Danforth
- Web intern, Lexington Post

Leads for Jobs Without Openings

DBG Design has the following positions in its employment structure: Web Developer; Assistant Web Developer; Web Manager; Digital Communications Assistant; Assistant Manager; Digital Asset Management; Web Intern (college credit only).

Univ. of Kentucky Louisville has a huge quantity of communications positions, and their human resources department says that the best way to learn about open positions is via their HR Website. Right now, there aren't any open positions, but they told me I should look every week.

I've signed up for the listservs and have reviewed the bulletin boards for Professional Association for Web Developers, University and College Web Professionals, Freelance Web Designer Network. Right now, nothing is available in my area, but it seems like the boards are active and the job postings are updated regularly.

Module 6:   Utilizing Job Leads

6-1   Lesson: Following up on job leads

Now that you have your list of job leads ordered based on your interest, it's time to follow up on them. Following job leads takes tact, poise, patience, and persistence. During this process you may feel like you're traveling through a maze where you have to explore many paths until you find the one that leads you to the other side. It might take some time but remember: the right path could be the start of a career!

Preparation

Preparation is the key to success. It's time to do a little research about each job lead you have. The idea is to have as much information as possible before contacting the employer so that you can make a good first impression. Take good notes and keep these notes organized. Remember to keep updating your Resource Log. All of this information can be useful if you get an interview.

If you found the lead through a contact, gather as much information from the contact as possible, while still being polite. Remember to thank your contacts!

Research the business for which you have a lead.

Explore the business' website.

Find out about the products or services they offer.

Do a general search for the business on the Web. You will likely find a variety of information available on the Internet.

Find any current news articles that mention the business and read them. It's important to be up-to-date with the business' current issues.

Find out who the business' major competitors are and a few basics about them.

Search the Internet to see if there are any current trends or major happenings in the field or market in which the business operates.

Practice what you will say by role playing with a friend, sibling, or parent.

Contact

Once you've done your research, you are to contact the business and follow up on the job lead. Always note the people who you meet at an organization whether via phone, email, or in person (this is a skill that can translate to many parts of your life.) Write thank you notes to anyone who helps you with this process.

Be polite when speaking to anyone. Proper manners go a long way when trying to create new opportunities.

Be persistent when pursuing a job lead, but not overly aggressive. You want them to know that you are eager to work for them, but you don't want them to feel harassed.

Questions you can ask:
- Who is their human resources/personnel contact?

- How or where do they post their job openings?
- How often do they post their job openings?
- What is their application process?
- Do they keep applications on file for the future?
- How long they keep applications on file before tossing them?

Most people, no matter their level of experience, are a little nervous when contacting potential employers. Following up on job leads can be an intimidating process, but you will become more confident with it the more you practice.

6-2   Assignment: Utilizing Job Leads

You now have a list of job leads and several tips on how best to follow up on them.

Choose a lead to investigate and contact. It may be best to start with a lead that you feel is either a weak lead or one that is less desirable to you. This will allow you to practice before you move on to the more desirable and reliable leads.

Once you have done your background research and preparation, role play how you will contact a job lead. Find a friend or relative who is willing to work with you on several scenarios and practice what you might say and how you might say it. Practice several times over several days if you can.

Once you feel that you've practiced enough, contact your lead and have a conversation with them.

Submit the following to your portfolio:

1. The job lead you are following up on for the assignment
2. A description of how you will contact that job lead
3. A script of what you will say when contacting this job lead
4. After contacting the job lead and initiating a conversation, create a description of your experience
5. Once you complete the contact, think about the areas you'd like to improve. What went well? What didn't?

6-3   Example Assignment: Josie's Job Lead Follow-Through

The lead I am following is a position I heard about from Professor Danforth: Digital asset assistant, Getty Images-Lexington.

I will be calling Marion Fishman, a colleague of Professor Danforth's by phone and say the following:

Hello, Ms. Fishman, my name is Josie Armentrout. Professor Cosmo Danforth gave me your contact information because he thought I would be a good fit for the Digital asset assistant position. I was hoping we might talk for a moment about the position. Is now a good time?

(If not, ask if there is a better time and schedule a call.)

Thanks very much for your time. I really appreciate it. I'm very excited to apply for the position. I have a resume right here. Can you tell me the best way to go about getting it to you?

Do you have the name of someone I can speak to directly at Human Resources?

Can you tell me a little bit about the type of person you think is best suited to this position?

Is there any other advice or guidance you would give me that would increase my chances for working at Getty Images?

Thanks so much for your time. This conversation has been very helpful, and I appreciate it.

In general, my contact with Ms. Fishman went well. I was nervous and sounded a little funny on the phone, but I managed to ask the questions I needed to. Thanks to my script and all the practicing I did I only rambled a little bit. She was nice and gave me a lot of good information. I'd like to be more poised and less nervous the next time I call a contact.

Module 7:   The Cover Letter

7-1   Lesson: Writing an effective cover letter

Now that you have identified several jobs that you would like to apply for, it's time to write a cover letter. The goal of a cover letter is to persuade an employer to review your resume. A resume can make a good case for your relevant preparation for a job, but it will not tell the employer why you would be a great candidate for a job. It also will not convey much of your attitude and personality.

A cover letter gives you the opportunity to point out specific experiences not fully covered in your resume that might make you a valuable or exceptional candidate or employee.

A cover letter is a formal letter submitted as an accompaniment to a resume. A standard cover letter should run no longer than three paragraphs, and be simple to read, clear, concise, typed without errors, and formatted properly.

Cover Letter Tips

Style tips and other basics:

- Use formal, professional language-don't use slang or casual phrasing or vocabulary.
- Be polite.
- Sell yourself: highlight your strengths and be positive.
- Use a standard and legible font such as Times New Roman or Arial.
- Use a word processing system with spelling and grammar checks.

Have someone else carefully review your cover letter for mistakes and phrasing and formatting issues before you send it. It's a good idea to get the assistance of a person without a visual impairment to review your cover letter and resume.

If you are emailing your letter and resume to the company, you should both copy and paste your letter into the email and attach it as a document along with the resume. Unless the employer requests otherwise, the cover letter and resume should be separate documents.

The cover letter should be no longer than three paragraphs and it should fit on one page.

Make sure the email address that you use in all correspondence, and the email address that appears in all of your documents is something formal like your first initial and last name.

Use formal letter format:

Single spaced, 10-point font, left justified, one-inch margins.

Return address on top right of the page.

Address of business or employer below the return address, but on the left side of the page.

Leave a line empty.

Greeting: "Dear Mr. Vicious:" or "Dear Ms. Torra:"

It's always better to address your cover letter to someone specific. If you have not spoken with an individual at

the company you are applying to, call the office and ask for the name of the human resources director or the name of the person who reviews applications. If for some reason you are unable to get the full name of a contact, you may as a last resort address your letter "Dear Human Resources Representative:" or "To whom it may concern,"

Leave a line empty.

First paragraph: Express your interest in the specific position at their company. Make sure to include the title of the position as it appears on the job posting and, if any reference numbers appeared on the posting, include those as well. If you were referred by someone in your network or at the company, mention them by name. Mention specifics about the job or company that interest you; tie in personal experience or something that shows the extent of your research into the company or the job.

Second paragraph: Describe how you are a good candidate. Be specific and highlight the most important parts of your resume, or something your resume can't cover. This is the time to describe why you are a great fit for the job. What can you bring to the position? What can you bring to the company? Think of skills, personality traits, knowledge, training, experience, enthusiasm, passion, strong work ethic, etc.

Final paragraph: Thank them for taking the time to consider your application and state that you hope to hear from them soon.

Leave a line empty

Close with "Sincerely,"

Leave two or three lines of space for your signature

Your full name: "Daniel Stevens" or "Mr. Daniel Stevens"

7-2   Assignment: The Cover Letter

Use the tips that were provided in the lesson to write a cover letter that sells your application to an employer for a specific job you found through your prior work. Use a word processor with spell check if at all possible.

7-3   Sample Cover Letters

Sample Cover Letter 1
To Nathaniel Strechay

Human Resources

I am applying for the Assistant Parts Inventory Manager position advertised on the City Times website. I have always had a passion for automobiles. I am extremely organized and have had prior positions that demonstrate my skills in inventory. As you'll see from my included resume, I have two years of retail inventory and tracking experience for a large retailer. I have a good knowledge of automobile parts and automobiles in general.

I feel that I would be a great fit for this position and would bring enthusiasm and a strong work ethic. I am experienced with computers, databases, and a variety of software. I feel my attributes would add to your already well-established business. Your reputation for great service precedes you, and I would be pleased to contribute to the continued success of your company.

I look forward to hearing from you in the near future. You can reach me at sreagan@genericemailaddress.com or at 201-555-5555.

Sample Cover Letter 2
To Stan Vanderslooth / Huffman & Huffman

I am writing to express my interest in the Administrative Assistant position posted on monster.com.

This position is a perfect match for my background and skills. I am a graduate of Huntington High School where I took vocational training in executive assistant and secretarial services. I completed a work experience internship at Moises Automotive where I served as an assistant to the executive assistant for three months. I received great on-the-job training there, and I am confident that with this experience I would be an asset to your organization.

I am skilled at using Microsoft Office and a variety of other computer programs that would be necessary for fulfilling the duties outlined in the job posting. I've handled the phones at two other organizations to get experience with different phone systems. I am extremely organized and meticulous about my work duties.

I would love the opportunity to meet with you or other members of your organization to discuss this job in more detail. You may contact me at j.taylormasterson@genericemail.com or contact me at 304-555-5555.

Sincerely

Jason T. Masterson

Module 8: The Application

8-1   Lesson: Filling out a job application form

When filling a position, employers use standard application forms to gather basic information about the candidates for every job. Applications may ask for much of the information you've included on your resume, but both are usually required in the hiring process. Most of the information you will need to fill out on an application can be found on your Personal Data Sheet and in your resume.

Seek Information

You will first want to find out how the employer usually handles-or prefers to handle-applications. Are the applications available online, by mail, or will you need to go into the office to pick one up? Do they accept applications only on certain days of the week or month or during certain hours? Do they prefer that candidates fill out the application at the office? Is it possible (or required) to complete and submit the application online?

When/If You Visit

When going to a potential employer's office to pick up or drop off an application, have a plan to deal with situations such as

- assistance traveling to, and orienting within, the location
- assistance filling out a printed application
- reading any documents that you may be required to review or sign

When you visit, your goal is to be as independent as possible and to make it evident to the business or employer that you are capable of handling any tasks while you are there. It can be tough to negotiate new locations with confidence; it may take some practice. If you need assistance, advise your helper to allow you to address any issues or questions that arise.

Be prepared to explain why you are using assistance. It's important to be direct, yet polite. If using portable assistive technology will enable you to accomplish tasks independently, use it. Technology can be an interest grabber and create an opportunity to educate. People are often curious about and impressed by the effective use of technology, and some may feel that your use of technology demonstrates you are competent and will be able to accomplish job duties.

Practice First

Ideally you will be able to obtain a copy of the application form before you need to submit it so you can practice filling it out. Everyone makes mistakes when filling out applications due to small print, strange formats, and unfamiliar phrasing used by each business. Make a copy of the application and practice filling it out prior to filling out the version you intend to turn in. When you are filling in your final application, be calm, take your time, and be prepared. If you are filling out a paper application, you will need to print legibly or have someone print legibly for you.

Keep a Record

Create a record system or journal to list your application submissions. Keep track of whom you contact on what date; when you picked up applications; when you turned in applications; when you followed up with employers; initial contact with employer; method of contact; contact information; whom you interacted with at the employer; and any other information you think is important.

Review Samples

Review the sample application included in this section and familiarize yourself with the kinds of information you'll need to provide.

8-1 Assignment: The Application
Part 1: Create an Application Log

Create a log to keep track of:

- date of initial contact with employer
- method of contact
- contact information
- whom you interacted with at the place of employment
- when you picked up an application
- when you turned an application
- when you followed up on an application
- information on all contacts following
- any other important information you'd like to keep track of

Create a sample record and list the important events that would be a part of your application process.

Part 2: Application Practice

Fill out the sample application

8-3 Example Assignment: Josie's Application Log, sample entry

Employer: Getty Images

Date of Initial Contact: April 22, 2020

Method of contact: telephone

Contact information: Marion Fishman, 999-444-1112

Picked up application: April 24, 2020 (online)

Turned in application: April 30, 2020 (online)

Follow up: May 3, 2020, Getty HR office, spoke to Eddie Harcourt on the telephone who said they had received the application, the cover letter, and the resume, and they will be in touch if they want to interview me.

Employment Application

NAME

First Name:

Middle Initial:

Last Name:

ADDRESS

Address 1 {number & street):

Address 2 {apt., suite, etc...):

City:

State:

Zip Code:

CONTACT INFORMATION

Phone Number {Home):

Phone Number {Business):

Phone Number {Mobile):

Email Address:

Position of Interest {Title):

Hours: {Select one)

　　Full-time

　　Part-time

　_　Other {Explain below)

Comment:

How did you hear about this position? _____

PAST EMPLOYMENT

{Most Recent)

Position Title:

Business Name:

Business Address:

Business Phone Number:

Website:

Supervisor's Name:

Supervisor's Phone Number:

May we contact this person? Yes/No

Hours per Week:

Start Date:

End Date:

Reason for Leaving:

Your Job Duties:

(Past Employment 2)

Position Title:

Business Name:

Business Address:

Business Phone Number:

Website:

Supervisor's Name:

Supervisor's Phone Number:

May we contact this person? Yes/No

Hours per Week:

Start Date:

End Date:

Reason for Leaving:

Your Job Duties:

EDUCATION/ TRAINING/ CERTIFICATION

(Please **fill** out applicable information)

High School:

Year of Graduation:

Diploma: (Yes/No)

College/Post-Secondary/Vocational

Name of Institution:

Years attended:

Degree or Certification:

Applicable Training:

REFERENCES

(List 2 References)

(Reference 1)

Name:

City/State:

Phone:

Relationship to Applicant:

(Reference 2)

Name:

City/State:

Phone:

Relationship to Applicant:

I, _____ certify that the information that I have listed is accurate. I acknowledge that any misinformation provided will eliminate me from employment consideration.

SIGNATURE: ⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯ DATE: ⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯

PRINT NAME: ⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯

****

CONGRATULATIONS! You have reached the end of Course 3: Finding Employment.

Please be sure to save the assignments you have completed.
Please continue to…

Course 4: The Interview

4: The Interview

Module 1: Disclosure Review & Disability Statement

1-1   Lesson: Reviewing and practicing your disclosure strategy and disability statement

Review of the information presented in Course 3 on disclosure and your disability statement is necessary at this point. Disclosure is an issue that persons with disabilities encounter throughout the employment process.

As you prepare for an interview you should be well versed on disclosure and have practiced your disability statement. Becoming successfully employed can depend on how well you explain and express appropriate information about your visual impairment, as well as how quickly you can make a potential employer comfortable with you and your blindness or low vision.

Take this time to review the information presented in the Course 3 lessons on disclosure and disability statements.

Module 2:   Company Research

2-1   Lesson: Taking your first step in interview preparation.

Before going to an interview with an employer, it's important to do some investigative work. Research can be the key to having a good interview and impressing an employer. Your standard interview preparation process should always include acquiring solid knowledge about the employer, the field, the market, competitors, and clients. This kind of research helps you gain knowledge about the company and determine what type of information to seek during the interview itself.

Most companies have websites that include background on the business and/or a staff directory, along with any positive media coverage the company has received. In addition to reviewing the company site, you should also search the web to find news or articles about the business. This kind of information can provide a glimpse into the company's current issues, past successes, and role in the community and industry.

Remember: Whenever you are using the Internet for research, it's important to determine if the information you've found is reliable and credible. Sites that consist mainly of user-generated or single-author content, such as Wikipedia, bulletin boards, or blogs, are often unreliable sources of information. A large part of the process of proper Internet research is understanding who the sources are and how much you can trust them.

Below are some preliminary questions to give you an idea of the kinds of information you should pursue in your pre-interview research. Make sure to note the questions you can't find the answers to so that you can ask them during the interview itself.

This information can be found by doing research on the Internet, reading articles about, or profiles of, the company from media outlets, and using your network of contacts to find people who have knowledge of your target company and/or industry.

Basic Business Facts

How large is the company?

How many employees does the company have?

Can you tell if employees remain with the company for a long time? Often you can find this information if the company publishes employee biographies on their site.

Does the company have more than one location?

Where is your position of interest located?

What is the basic purpose of the business?

What services does the business provide or what does it sell?

Is the business for-profit or non-profit?

How long has the business been in existence? Is it a new company? Old? Has it been owned by the same people the whole time or have there been shifts in ownership?

What is the basic history of the company?

Who are the people who currently run the company?

Who runs the division you want to work in?

Who works in the division you want to work in?

How large is the division you want to work in?

Where does your position fit into the company's structure?

What do the published employee biographies sound like? What sorts of backgrounds do the employees have?

Market Research

Can you find published annual reports for the company? What do they tell you about the company's health and history?

Where and how does the company make its money?

Who buys what the company sells? Other businesses? Consumers?

How does the company sell their products or services?

Has the company been selling the same thing for a long time, or has it changed and adjusted to trends, advances, or demand?

How much of a market share does the company have? Are they the major player for their products or services in your city? Your state? The country? Worldwide?

How much has the company grown in the past year? Five years?

Is the market expanding? Staying the same? Shrinking?

Competition

Who else is selling or doing the same thing?

Who are the major competitors for the company?

How do the competitors compare in terms of size, revenue, products/services offered, market share, history?

Is the main competition a new start-up or a long-established company?

Is there any difference between your target company and their competitors when it comes to consumers?

Can you find published annual reports for the competition? What do they tell you about the competition's health and history?

Workforce. Work Structure. and Schedule

Does the business have different shifts?

Does the business allow flextime to meet transportation or family needs?

How long is a typical shift?

Do the employees' shifts switch or rotate?

Does the employer operate on a set schedule?

Are there clues in the published material about what kind of worker does well at the company?

From what you've found, do you have a sense that workers at the company are happy and satisfied?

2-2 Assignment: Company Research

Create a list of the facts you already know about the target company. Then create a list of questions that you would like to find the answers to. Use the questions in this section as a guide; think of additional questions that are specific to the position, industry, company, or location.

Now use the Internet, the library, and your network to find the answers to as many of your questions as you can. Write up your research in a clear and easy to reference way. Remember: good research takes time and patience.

2-3 Example Assignment: Josie's Pre-Interview Company Research

Target Company: Getty Images-Lexington

What I know: One location of an international online stock photography and footage provider. Second largest stock imagery house. Main competitor: Corbis. Lexington location is data management only, sales and customer service are handled in New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago. They have another data management location somewhere in Florida and probably at least one or two locations in other countries.

Basic Business Facts

How big? Very big company. 13 locations total. 9,000 employees; 130 at Lexington. Revenues of $28 million last year.

Purpose: Getty is a for-profit company that sells royalty-free and rights-managed photography and footage to news organizations, companies and individuals.

History: They have been around since 1965. Their online business model was launched in 1999. Originally founded by the Getty family. Now a public company run by board-elected senior management.

Employee Information: Based on the published employee bios, it looks like many people have been with Getty for over 5 years, a few have been there longer than 10.

For the data management employees, it looks like most of them have extremely solid technical and computer science backgrounds, along with a high degree of fluency in database design and management.

Position Information: It looks like there are 10 Digital Asset Assistant positions. The next level up is Digital Asset Associates (10); then Digital Asset Managers (3); then Digital Asset Vice Director (1) and Director (1).

QUESTION: How does the work get divided among the assistants? Does each assistant work with a single Associate?

Market Research

According to the annual report I found on the Getty site, the company's performance between 2000-2007 was stellar. 2007-2009 was flat or declining. It looks like they are coming back from the recession like everyone else. In general, the financial picture looks strong at this point.

The market, particularly with royalty-free imagery, is expanding rapidly.

Getty sells all of their products online. They have an extensive retail and customer service team that supports the online outlet and a massive web design and data team that keeps everything moving and updated.

Getty has been selling stock imagery since its inception and has changed and adjusted to trends, advances, and demand by staying current with its artists and journalists and also keeping up with technology in terms of retail and delivery of their product.

The company has a 30% domestic market share and is a major player worldwide. Their main US competitor is Corbis Imagery who holds 38% percent.

Competition

Corbis Imagery is really the only serious competitor. Corbis is known for a more corporate, less artistic product. Getty and Corbis are in direct and close competition when it comes to current event imagery sales.

Corbis is also an old company with a massive and successful online retail business structure. Corbis is in good financial shape and their business took the same hit during the recession.

Work Structure

The data management division operates 24 hours a day in order to provide on the minute imagery for newspapers and online news outlets. It looks like their asset management teams run in three shifts: 7-3; 3-11; 11-7.

It looks like the employees are happy but also have a lot of work. The time pressure seems enormous and never ending.

QUESTION: What structures are in place to provide support when a massive news event happens, or some other circumstance arises where deadlines are tight and the workload is huge?

Module 3:   Self-Description

3-1   Lesson: Preparing an effective answer to a common and challenging question

In almost every interview, there will be an open-ended self-description opportunity, along the lines of: "So, tell me about yourself." Often the interviewer will begin the interview with this type of question, and your answer will be one of the first things the interviewer hears from you. How you respond can set the tone of the interview, provide some direction for further questions from the interviewer, and establish your personality and attitude.

It's important to be prepared to answer this question confidently, clearly, and precisely, and to use your response to cover ground that you have thoughtfully considered. You should aim for an answer that runs between 1.5 and 2 minutes long. Because this is such a standard interview question, it's crucial to appear well-prepared to answer it-   a rambling, disorganized response, or an answer that is either too long or too short, can indicate that you did not prepare well for the interview.

There is a method to designing a proper and appropriate answer to this question. Below is a bulleted list of areas to cover, with some tips to keep you on the right track.

- Remember that your answer should be under 2 minutes in length.

- Mention one or two positive personal traits: enthusiastic, hardworking, diligent, organized, patient, etc.

- Talk briefly about where you grew up and your family. Example: "I grew up in North Central New Jersey with my parents and two brothers."

- Mention any accomplishments (e.g., Eagle Scout, student body president, athlete, etc.), but keep it short and to the point.

- Transition to work-related information or information that will demonstrate why you would be an asset to the business.

- Speak about any training or related experience that would be relevant to the position: degrees, courses, certifications, work experience, etc.

- If you volunteer for any organizations or charities, include this information after you've talked about job- relevant training and paid experience.

- Have a clear closing for your answer.

- Only elaborate if the interviewer asks you to clarify something you mentioned.

Interviewers value concise answers that have specific points. Many interviewers must make sure that interviewees meet the requirements listed for the position. Keep this in mind as you craft your answer.

- Use appropriate language and grammar
- Do not share irrelevant or negative information
- Be calm and composed
- Pace your answer, don't rush

The preparation you devote to this answer will serve you well in any interview situation.

3-2 Assignment: Self-Description and Disclosure Review

Write a short self-description that answers the question: "So, tell me about yourself."

Keep your answer between one-and-a-half and two minutes. Once you have written and polished your answer, memorize it and practice reciting it to a friend, family member, or teacher.

NOTE:

Please remember to conduct a thorough review of your Disclosure Strategy and Disability Statement while you also create a list of the facts you already know about the target company. Then create a list of questions to which you would like to find answers. Use the questions in this section as a guide; think of additional questions that are specific to the position, industry, company, or location.

Module 4: Addressing Employer Concerns

4-1 Lesson: Addressing typical concerns for potential employers considering hiring a person with a disability

Unless they have done so in the past, employers may be unsure of hiring a person who is blind or low vision. Chances are that you will be the first person with a visual impairment your employer has interviewed or even met. It's natural to be nervous about something you don't understand or have no experience with. In the context of your professional relationships, your job is not to educate your potential employers, but to make them more comfortable working with you. By law, employers can't ask candidates about disabilities or impairments, but chances are that they will have concerns and questions. If you proactively address the areas that most employers have concerns about-and discuss your situation with tact, grace, and a positive spin-you increase your chances of getting hired.

There are three areas that should be considered when addressing an employer's concerns about visual impairment. Those areas are liability, accessibility, and transportation.

Liability

Liability can be broken into two parts: 1) safety on the job, and 2) productivity.

Safety

Businesses are always concerned about any employee getting hurt on the job or causing conditions that might lead to someone else having an accident. In today's world, employers must consider worker's compensation, liability insurance, and lawsuits. Typically, employers who are uneducated about disability will assume that if they should hire a person with a visual impairment, he or she will have a higher accident rate on the job. The truth is that persons with disabilities have no more accidents on the job than any other employee.

There will be employers who are not worried about such issues, but there will also be employers who are scared of you using the stairs. Employers who have safety concerns are not trying to be insensitive, they really just do not know the facts. Bringing up activities that you participate in such as sports, outdoor activities, or working out can help them get a more realistic perspective on safety issues.

Productivity

Productivity concerns can be handled in many ways. Having good references and recommendations who are willing to express to an employer that you were able to complete past job duties can make a big difference. Having a potential employer speak with a former colleague or supervisor is sometimes the most efficient way to communicate your abilities and potential. It's a good idea to talk openly about this with your references before you pass along their contact information to any potential employer.

Make sure that your references are comfortable vouching for your ability and make sure they know you are okay with them discussing your performance with a potential employer and answering any questions about your visual impairment in the workplace. If you do not have prior work experience, a club advisor, coach, volunteer supervisor, or someone besides friends and family who can vouch for your work abilities is a good substitute.

Some employers may believe that hiring a person with a visual impairment will be a liability because there will be a reduction in productivity. Maybe they think a person with a visual impairment would be a slower worker, or somehow wouldn't feel accountable for the work that he or she does.

The employer could think that a worker who is blind or low vision would constantly need assistance from other employees. Of course, this is not true, particularly with so many of today's jobs being computer-based and therefore more accessible to persons with visual impairments. Technology decreases the limitations in the workplace and can help to overcome most obstacles, but often potential employers might not understand this. You may be able to address this concern by giving examples from your past work experience, or by talking about the ways in which you use technology to help you be productive.

Accessibility

Accessibility can mean all sorts of things to an employer. A common concern is how you will be able to acquire the information contained in written materials. Will they have to provide braille versions? What do they have to do to make a computer system accessible to you? Will you need special equipment?

If you have low vision then you can explain about your use of a CCTV, video magnifier, handheld magnifier, or screen magnifier. Screen reader users will want to explain how the software works in simple terms and can refer employers to websites if need be. Braille should not be an issue because you should be able to convert your own documents if that is needed. There may be a need for an embosser or refreshable braille display depending on your needs. You don't need to go into detail about how the technology works-again, you are not trying to educate the employer-you should talk about it in a way that demonstrates you can join an established business workflow easily and with little disruption to your coworkers' standard business practices.

Transportation

Transportation is another area potential employers can have concerns about. Let them know that you regularly use the bus system, a car service, taxis, a private driver, trains, bikes, or good old foot power to get around. Mention how you got to the location on that day such as, "Oh, I took the bus here today and had time to stop to get a bottle of water in the lobby. It's great that your building has those vending machines downstairs." You want to ease their fears and show them that your transportation is not their concern.

Resources for Employers

An interview is a good opportunity to proactively ease these standard employer concerns. An interview can also be a good time to talk about the benefits of hiring a person with a disability-after all, persons with disabilities tend to be extremely reliable and loyal employees.

The For Employers sections of APH CareerConnect and NSITE Connect have information that employers may be interested in reviewing. When on a job interview, keep in mind that this is a resource you can recommend to them. It's a resource available to you as well-review the For Employers section to familiarize yourself with the facts and topics covered there.

4-2   Assignment: Addressing Employer Concerns

Write out what you would say to an employer to answer each of the concerns below.
- Liabilities
- Safety
- Productivity
- Accessibility
- Access to print materials (letters, forms, etc.)
- Messages between coworkers
- Transportation (getting to and from work)

Module 5: Answering Interview Questions

5-1 Lesson: Thinking about, and preparing answers to, common interview questions

Most interviews are structured around common questions designed to allow the employer to find out more about you and your potential to be a good fit with the organization. While speaking with you, the interviewer will most likely take notes on your answers. With good preparation for interview questions, you have the opportunity to portray yourself in the best light and to have clear and concise responses practiced and at the ready.

We've discussed preparing for the open-ended self-description question. In addition to this self-description category there are a few additional categories of common interview questions

- Strengths and weaknesses
- Future/commitment
- Work ethic/work personality
- Biggest accomplishment
- Ethics
- Psychology
- Fun/Leisure
- Your questions

Strengths and Weaknesses: "What is your biggest strength?" "Name three weakness and tell me how you are working to improve on them."

To prepare an answer to these types of questions, begin by referring back to section 1.5. Review the Skills and Abilities assignment. Think about which skills will benefit the organization and the position the most and think about how best to talk about these skills clearly and concisely.

The more challenging part of this question is talking about your weaknesses. It's best to start by phrasing positive attributes as weaknesses. Some interviewers will call you out on this and you'll need to have an alternate answer, but it's safest to begin with positives. How do you spin a positive as a weakness? Here are a few examples:

"I can become compulsive about performing well at work."

"Because work is something I am so passionate about, I tend to work too many hours."

"I have a hard time saying, 'no' to work assignments and I end up taking on a lot."

When developing an answer for weaknesses, make sure not to re-use a quality or qualities you're using as a strength.

You should also prepare a less-positive weakness so you can explain how you deal with or are working to improve. Here are some examples:

"I tend to overextend myself at times, but I'm getting better at achieving a good balance."

"My spelling is not the best, but I use spell check and an online dictionary to counteract this issue."

"I sometimes do not budget my time well, so now I use a personal planner to keep on top of things."

Future/Commitment: "Where do you see yourself in five (two, ten, fifteen) years?"

Companies want to hire people who are interested in making a long-term commitment and who want to grow with the company and participate in its success. Be imaginative when answering this question: what are your aspirations, ambitions, and vision for yourself at the company? They're not going to follow up with you in five years to see if you've accomplished what you state in your interview, so don't be shy! One example of an answer:

"In five years, I see myself in an upper-management position that allows me to have a wider influence on the company's growth and direction."

Work Ethic/Work Personality: "How would you describe your work personality? Can you give me examples from your prior positions?" "Why did you leave your last position?" "What did you like about your last job? What did you dislike about it?"

Employers ask these sorts of questions to try to get a sense of the kind of employee you'll make. The interviewer is looking for qualities that will be a good fit for the position and the company, and a personality that will fit in with the professional culture of their workplace.

If you do not have prior work experience, you should answer these questions by explaining how you have demonstrated work-appropriate skills through volunteering or participating organizations, clubs, school, and other activities.

Beware of over-sharing in your answer to questions about your prior positions. If you were fired, then you should be honest about it, but portray it as a learning experience that has made you a better employee.

If you resigned or moved on to a different position, here are some examples of short answers that don't give too much information:

"I left the organization because I felt underutilized."

"I felt it was time to move on to a better opportunity."

"I was offered a better opportunity."

"I went back to school."

"I relocated ..."

Ethics: "If you found out another employee was stealing or lying about their hours, what would you do?"

Some employers have had issues with employees taking advantage of the company or being dishonest while on the job, e.g., lying about the hours they work, skimming money from the register, stealing company supplies, using company resources (cars, credit cards) for their own needs, or observing coworkers doing these activities without reporting them.

While most applicants will not admit if they've done these things, employers will try to get a sense of your ethical sensibilities by talking about your standards for reporting coworkers. An example of an answer:

"I would report any employee I felt was behaving dishonestly in the workplace. I think trust between an employer and employee is very important and I'm not comfortable working in an environment where employees take advantage of an employer."

Biggest accomplishment: "Name the one accomplishment of which you are most proud so far in your career."

Choose an accomplishment that shows your work ethic, determination, or skills related to the job. If you don't have a work history yet, choose an accomplishment such as completing training or getting a degree. An example:

"My biggest accomplishment so far is successfully completing my training as a chef. It took a lot of discipline and hard work, but I learned a tremendous amount and feel it has left me well-prepared for my chosen career."

Psychology: "If you were a tree, what kind of tree would you be?" "If you were an animal, what animal would you be?"

Psychological questions can be hard to prepare for and may seem strange. They have become less common in the interview process because most employers don't know how to grade an answer to this type of question. If you do get this sort of question in an interview, take it seriously and keep in mind that the employer is looking for an answer that shows who you are or how you see yourself as a person or employee. Some possible answers could be:

"Palm, because they are flexible, yet strong."

"Teak, because it is considered one of the hardest trees and I can bear a lot of weight on my shoulders."

"Ebony, because it is considered one of the strongest and can produce extremely beautiful wood."

"I would be a Jack Russell Terrier because they are considered the most intelligent dogs."

"I would be a German Shepherd because they are loyal and obedient working dogs."

"I would be a work horse such as the Clydesdale because I mean business when I am at work and intend to get the job done."

Fun/Leisure: "What are your favorite hobbies? What do you do with your free time?"

These questions help employers get to know more about you. Choose a hobby or leisure activity that is appropriate and not controversial. Remember that this is a job interview, and you will be judged on your answer. Some safe areas are typically sports, music, literature, crafts, movies, theatre, hiking/camping, writing/arts, and philanthropic work. Philanthropic or volunteer work is always a thing good to mention, as it shows you are interested in helping other people.

Your questions: "Do you have any questions for me?"

Usually, interviewers ask this sort of question towards the end of the interview. If you are meeting with multiple people, each person may ask you this question. You should always have a list of questions prepared for the interview. Some may be answered as you work your way through the interview, but some will not. Here are some sample questions:

"Is this a new position? If yes: Why did you feel the need to add it? If no: How long had the prior employee held the position? Why did he or she leave the position?"

"What are the hours typically?"

"What is the turnover rate like for this position?"

"Why do you like working here?"

"Describe the ideal employee for this position."

"Does this position have the opportunity to grow?"

"What is the possibility of advancement within the business?"

"Can I provide you with any more information to help you get a better idea about the quality of work that I would provide?"

"Does the company offer benefits? What kind?"

"What is the next step in the hiring process (only if they have not mentioned this prior)?"

It's extremely important to prepare for an interview by making sure you have good answers to the most common questions. Your goal is to make sure you are not caught off-guard in an interview and therefore likely to give a less-than-ideal answer, and also to be able to conduct the interview with less anxiety because you'll know you are well prepared.

5-2   Assignment: Answer common interview questions

Write an answer for each question below and practice responding to these questions and any others you think an interviewer may ask. There are many internet resources that you can find that list common interview questions. Aim to answer each question in under two minutes. Once you feel prepared, ask a friend, family member, instructor, counselor, or teacher to ask you these questions and any others they think might come up in your interview. Practice answering-from memory-in a calm and collected manner.

Self-Description

"Tell me a little about yourself."

Strengths & Weaknesses

"What is your biggest strength?"

"Tell me two of your weaknesses and how you compensate for them."

Future/Commitment

"Where do you see yourself in five years?"

"Where do you see yourself in ten years?"

Work Ethic / Work Personality

"What prior experience do you have that would relate to this position?"

"What would you do if a big project was coming due the next day and it is not finished?"

"How do you handle deadlines and meeting them? Give me an example."

"Can you give me an example of what you did when you had to deal with an extremely angry customer on the phone?"

Biggest Accomplishment

"What would you say is your biggest accomplishment and why?"

"What is your biggest accomplishment and how did you accomplish this task?"

Ethics

"If you found out another employee was stealing or lying about their hours, what would you do?"

"If a customer mistakenly gave you a $20 bill instead of a single, how would you handle this matter?"

Psychology

"If you were a tree, what kind of tree would you be and why?"

"If you could be any animal, what animal would you be and why?"

Fun/Leisure

"What is a hobby or leisure activity that you participate in?"

"Do you participate in any charities or volunteer work? If so, what?"

Any Questions?

"Do you have any questions for me?"

5-3   Example Assignment: Josie's Answers to Common Interview Questions

"Tell me a little about yourself."

I was born and raised in Southern California. My parents are both hard-working university professors and I have two younger brothers, both in college right now. Even when I was really young, I was always really interested in computer programming, math, and databases. I have this natural instinct to look for improvements to existing solutions, or to making something work more efficiently. For example, back in junior high school I put together a little database that organized the refreshment schedule for my volunteer service organization. You could make adjustments really easily and print out an updated schedule whenever you needed it. I think I apply the same drive to the professional challenges I have now, only the challenges are more complex than a refreshment schedule! All of my educational interests and independent training have gone into getting the knowledge and background I need in order to solve more and more complicated data-centered situations.

My fluency with Cold Fusion, SQL, and even Access helps me think of fast solutions and workarounds to data problems and I'm sort of obsessed about learning more and keeping my skills up to date. During my senior year, I completed three extra certifications for C++ just because I felt like I had some weak spots in my knowledge base. I'm also really invested in maintaining good data protocols and I love working with huge amounts of data and complicated databases. Last summer I interned at Apex Systems and helped them whip their inventory database into shape. I restructured and customized the system they were using, imported the data from the old structure, did a quality check, and then wrote some custom interfaces so that their inventory clerks wouldn't have to deal with a lot of technicalities. It was a huge improvement and I loved it. That's why I think I'd be such a good match here at Getty-it's the kind of data environment that I thrive in.

"What is your biggest strength?"

My biggest strength is the passion and commitment I bring to the job. I love database management and asset management and I'm invested in performing at a high standard in this kind of work. I understand the consequences of mistakes in large database management, and I think that gives me a good perspective and intensity in what I do. Passion is also my main motivator. I'm passionate about constantly improving the work that I do, and helping others improve the work they're doing.

"Tell me two of your weaknesses and how you compensate for them."

I can have a tendency to get a little almost over-focused when I'm working on a problem. I think that this tendency can work to my advantage because it means I can really tackle difficult problems and I don't stop until I've arrived at a solution, but I recognize that in some cases it would be better to back off and take a wider view. I'm really working on taking an assessment in each work situation so that I can apply my tenacity and direction appropriately and effectively.

I love solving problems with computers, so my tendency is to always approach a challenge by applying a computer-based solution. Sometimes, though, a faster or more elegant solution is available in the "analog" world. I recently realized that I had complicated my mom's life by setting her up with a digital calendar. It's so much easier for her to just write something on a paper calendar, and for her it's clearly a more reliable way to keep track of her life.

"Where do you see yourself in five years?"

In five years, I hope that I will be a Digital Asset Manager at Getty. I really admire this company and I can tell by the biographies you have on your site that you have a committed and talented workforce. I want to work for a company like yours and to make a long-term commitment. I think that I will learn very quickly and show myself to be a good leader and great worker.

"Where do you see yourself in ten years?"

I would love to be Director of Digital Asset Management-or at least the heir-apparent to the position. I love this kind of work and I want to apply my skills to areas of broader and deeper influence.

"What prior experience do you have that would relate to this position?"

All of my experience and education relates to this position. I've been a tech/math/computer nerd my whole life. It's just who I am. I've interned every summer at various local businesses helping them with computer issues, from setting up networks to overhauling inventory databases. I recently helped the library at my school troubleshoot a database problem they were having. You'll see on my resume that I have a lot of certifications-all of that was purely self-motivated. I didn't do it for school, I did it because I wanted to learn and then apply that learning to solutions."

"What would you do if a big project was coming due the next day and it is not finished?"

If the situation were in my or my team's control, I would keep working until it's finished. That's actually my natural tendency anyway. I don't like leaving things unfinished and I hate missing deadlines. If the situation involved other constituencies, I'd work with them to come up with a plan and I would provide whatever work or service was needed to help finish the project. I'm very much a roll-up-my-sleeves sort of person-I'll Xerox, staple, make deliveries, whatever it takes-I don't mind going outside of my job description if it's going to help the team or company.

"How do you handle deadlines and meeting them? Give me an example."

As far as I'm concerned, deadlines are as much a part of a project's requirements as something like the data structure is. I take deadlines very seriously and while I know that every now and again something can come up that's beyond everyone's control, for the most part I feel that with proper planning and commitment, deadlines should be reachable. The most recent deadline example I can give you is that I had to turn in a final database design for my SQL programming certification and my little brother dropped his coke on my laptop and killed it. It was 9 at night with the project due the next day. I drove over to my friend Kate's house, who was the only other person I know who has SQL and she let me work in the living room until I was done. I had to start the project from about mid-way, but I managed to complete it by 2 am. It was a good database design, too!

"Can you give me an example of what you did when you had to deal with an extremely angry customer on the phone?"

I haven't had to deal with angry customers, but I have had to deal with upset clients. Not upset with me, but just upset and frustrated by the fact that their computer situation isn't working. I've found the best way to handle it is to be a very proactive and calm problem solver, to get them confident that I'll fix it, and to get them out of the frustrating situation as soon as possible.

"What would you say is your biggest accomplishment and why?"

My biggest accomplishment is probably the database overhaul I did for Apex. It's not the most complicated

database I've worked on, but there were a lot of different people I had to talk to, a lot of different priorities to organize and address, and a lot of negotiation. I was really proud of the end product because I think it really helped them and made their work easier.

"If you found out another employee was stealing or lying about their hours, what would you do?"

I would talk to my supervisor about it. I don't want to work in an environment where that's going on. It's just not my style.

"If a customer mistakenly gave you a $20 bill instead of a single, how would you handle this matter?"

I would tell them they gave me a $20.

"If you were a tree, what kind of tree would you be and why?"

I think I'd be an oak tree. To me, oak trees have a kind of quiet confidence. They're not showy, but they are impressive. Plus, they grow old well and have long lives!

"If you could be any animal, what animal would you be and why?"

Well, I've always been a bit jealous of cats because they seem to not mind being lazy, but I think that's just not in my constitution. I think I'd be a sea tortoise. Again, the quiet confidence and they are very wise-seeming creatures. They're the kind of animal that makes everything around them get a little quieter and calmer, not because of slowness, but because of intelligent poise. They know what they need to attend to, and that's what they pay attention to. They don't get caught up in "drama" and I really like that.

"What is a hobby or leisure activity that you participate in?"

I like kayaking. It's really fun to be out on the water.

"Do you participate in any charities or volunteer work? If so, what?"

I volunteer at a food pantry, and I am a relief caller for a peer-to-peer helpline.

"Do you have any questions for me?"

Can you tell me more about the structure of the DAM division? Has the current structure been in place long?

What are the company's priorities when it comes to digital asset management?

Would you describe the DAM division as working well right now?

What does the future look like for Getty and the stock imagery industry as a whole?

I'm just curious about how you would describe the difference between Getty and Corbis.

Module 6: Preparing for the Interview

6-1 Lesson: Getting ready to present yourself to the potential employer

You've written out and practiced your answers to all of the questions you can think of. You've printed out clean copies of your resume and you've reviewed the published job posting so the published requirements are fresh in your mind. What's left to do?

Bringing Technology to the Interview

You should be prepared to demonstrate the technology that you use for work or will need to bring to the interview. Create a checklist that lists all of the devices (high- and low-tech) you would use on the job. Next to each device listed, indicate whether you will bring the actual device or what you will bring to explain or provide as an example. It's ideal to bring the devices with you, but if you can't, bring pictures, video, website links or a description of each one. You could even create a short video or list of links to videos or sites that demonstrate your devices. The ultimate purpose is to demonstrate your methods of accessing information and completing work tasks.

We always have to keep in mind that most employers do not know how persons with visual impairments perform jobs. It's best to be able to show these methods or technologies quickly and efficiently. It's less likely that an interviewer will review these materials at a later point in time.

Presentation

Dressing for the Interview

Dressing appropriately can make the difference between getting a job and being eliminated as a candidate. Wear clothing that is clean (no stains), neat (no holes or tears), pressed (not wrinkled), and appropriately sized. Use a person you trust to view your clothing to see if it fits well. You should go to stores and try on clothing to find out what looks good and is comfortable. Trying on clothes is a necessity because clothing from different brands will fit differently even in the same sizes.

Different employers will have different dress codes. If you can ask someone what the dress code is before your interview, do so. If you can't, always err on the more formal/professional side.

Below are some general guidelines and tips for dressing appropriately for an interview. All organizations and jobs are different, but it's safest to dress conservatively, especially for a job interview. The best bet is to dress in a formal/professional manner when attending an interview. Review, try on, launder, iron, and hang your clothing a week before your interview so you have time to make adjustments or get things dry cleaned if needed.

Dress Tips

Formal/Professional

Men:

- Conservative suit (black, navy blue, or gray)
- Sports coat, dress shirt, slacks, dress socks, dress shoes, tie, and belt (or suspenders)
- Colors should match

- Shirts should be a conservative solid color with a tie that matches
- Shirt patterns should be subtle and minimal
- Belt should be the same color as your shoes. If wearing a black or navy-blue suit, wear a black belt, black shoes, and black or navy-blue socks
- A watch and/or one ring can be appropriate if formal If you have a talking watch, the alarm should be silenced; talking watches can be a distraction and should be used cautiously
- Dress shoes should be polished and in good condition

Formal clothing does not have to be expensive or a top brand: look for sales or shop at a local thrift store. Know your sizes and try things on both before purchasing and prior to an interview- clothing that fits properly is important to presenting a professional appearance. A tuxedo is not appropriate for an interview. Men should always wear a white undershirt beneath their dress shirt to present a conservative appearance and prevent sweating through the shirt. Undergarments should not be visible, and clothing should not be transparent, nor form fitting.

Women:

- Dress suit/pant suit
- Jacket with slacks and an appropriate blouse
- Jacket with a knee-length or longer skirt
- Jewelry should be minimal and subtle: small earrings (if any), one necklace
- Clothing should be conservative and fit properly
- Formal clothing does not have to be expensive or a top brand: look for sales or shop at a local thrift store
- Neckline should be conservative and not low. (Very little skin should be showing)
- Shoes should be a dark color (black, brown, navy), closed toe, with a low or flat heel

If stockings are worn, they should be a neutral shade or one that matches your skin tone. Undergarments should not be visible, and clothing should not be transparent, nor form fitting. Handbags should be well-kept, moderate in size, neat in appearance, and devoid of distracting ornamentation.

Business Casual (varies from business to business)

Men:

- Dress shirt (button down shirt that is striped or a solid color) and slacks (Docker/khaki type pants), socks, belt, and dress shoes
- Some businesses will require a tie
- Certain businesses may allow a polo shirt as part of business casual instead of a dress shirt (if you're unsure, stay conservative)

Women:

- Conservative blouse or shirt, knee-length or longer skirt, dress of an appropriate length and neckline
- Slacks can be substituted for a skirt/blouse or dress
- Pantyhose/stockings might be required or recommended, depending on the company culture or

location

- Minimal jewelry

Casual

For Men and Women:

For most interviews you should never dress any more casually than the business casual guidelines above. You may adjust your wardrobe as appropriate after you've been hired. If dressing to do a more labor-intensive job, ask what is suggested to be worn to the interview. You should stay away from any inappropriate or very casual clothing even if you are interviewing for a more labor-intensive job.

Regional/Cultural/Organizational Differences

Some regions of the country and world have different professional dress conventions. It's important to respect the values of the organization and culture that you are applying to work within. Some regions are more casual about their dress because of the climate. For example, pantyhose would less likely be worn in Miami, Florida or Honolulu, Hawaii. Businesses in a region of the country that is known to have a traditional culture may be more conservative about dress codes. All of this is important to research and understand prior to an interview. Many businesses have written dress codes for employees (and interviewees) to follow.

6-1 Assignment: Getting ready

Create a checklist of materials and technology that you will need to demonstrate, describe, or relay resources for at your interview.

Make sure you have an appropriate interview outfit, clean and ready to wear. If you don't, make a list of the items you need to find and go shopping.

Module 7: Interview Coaching and Role Play

7-1 Lesson: Preparing for the real thing

When preparing for an interview, it's not enough to know your material and understand the skills involved in a successful interview. You need to be able to actively apply these skills in an interview setting, where you'll need to respond to unexpected questions and situations. There is no "pause" or "stop" button in a live interview, nor are there "do overs." When it comes to interviewing for a job, you have only one opportunity to make a good impression and present your strengths. Practicing your interview skills through role-playing and mock interviews is important for preparation.

Role-Playing an Interview

Role-playing an interview is a great way to practice your interview skills. Find a friend, family member, teacher, rehabilitation professional, or other person you trust to help you-someone who has experience with interviews, and who will be comfortable giving you constructive feedback that identifies your strengths and weaknesses. Once you've found someone willing to help, prepare information on a job that you would be interested in getting and provide it to him or her, so that your helper can accurately represent the kind of interview you might encounter. Ask your helper to come up with a range of interview questions, from the most basic to the most challenging.

When you conduct the role-playing exercise, have your helper start off as the interviewer. Try to put all of the skills you've learned so far into practice when you answer questions, and don't forget to pay attention to how you are presenting yourself. If you have trouble answering a question, you and your helper can talk about improvements, try out different answers, and hone your responses until you feel comfortable. If you're stuck, switch roles and see how your helper would answer the question, then try it yourself. It may be helpful to record these role-plays to help you identify what you can improve on. Role-playing situations from an interview can help you feel more comfortable with difficult questions and can help you prepare to address a variety of issues that may arise during the interview.

Mock Interviews

A mock interview is a more formal role-play with someone who will be nonpartisan and more critical of you as an interviewee. Preferably, your mock interviewer will be someone you do not interact with often. Use your personal network, friends, and family to find a business professional who would be willing to do a realistic interview with you. It would be preferable if the person has experience with interviews, either as an interviewee or interviewer. Provide your mock interviewer with as much information as possible about the job you're interested in, and make sure that you answer any questions they may have about the exercise before beginning the mock interview. Your mock interviewer should understand that the goal is to make the exercise as realistic as possible, and you should explain that you are looking for feedback on any and all aspects of your interview skills, from appearance and first impression down to how you answer specific questions.

The mock interview should be a full run through with no stopping. The more authentic the experience, the more valuable it will be. Dress appropriately, arrive on time, and conduct yourself from start to finish as if you were in a real interview.

Once the interview is over, it's important to obtain your mock interviewer's feedback, whether directly or through another person. It also could be helpful to get written notes or points to improve on, as well as areas that you

excelled in. It's extremely important not to take any notes for improvement personally, nor to get upset if the mock interviewer has identified an area of your interviewing skills that needs work. The information provided by your mock interviewer is valuable and, if you pay attention to it, can help you grow as an interviewee.

Tips for Role Plays and Mock Interviews

- Remember to greet the interviewer and thank him or her for the opportunity to meet.
- Sell yourself.
- Listen to the interviewer and answer all of his or her questions.
- Include necessary information and information that will represent you appropriately.
- Be enthusiastic.
- Be prepared to ask at least one or two questions about the job or business.
- Allow the interviewer time to speak; do not monopolize the conversation because the interviewer may have specific questions for you.
- Provide the interviewer with a resume at the beginning of the interview.
- Thank the interviewer for taking the time to meet with you.
- Note the names of all the persons that you meet with for thank you messages and other purposes.
- Use appropriate eye contact (do not stare into their eyes, try to aim for right above their eyes when you look at the interviewer).
- Shake the interviewer's hand in the beginning of the interview and at the end.
- Prepare well.

Often successful interviewees have specific points about themselves, their training, or job experience that they want to make sure to deliver to the interviewer. Identify the points you want to make in your interviews and practice talking about them in your role-playing and mock-interview exercises.

If you have to turn in documents or information to the interviewer, make sure these are in good condition (no interviewer likes crumpled pieces of paper).

Refer back to information on appropriate dress and hygiene.

It's important to note that the business world is small, and businesses have relations with other businesses-take mock interviews seriously and treat everyone professionally and respectfully. You might make a good impression on someone who can help you with your next steps or recommend you for a job. Alternatively, if you do not behave professionally or respect the mock interviewer's time and efforts on your behalf, you might damage your reputation within his or her network.

7-2   Assignment

This lesson prepared you for role plays and mock interviews. Utilize the Example Scoring Sheet to help you get accurate feedback from the persons you select to help you practice your interviewing skills. Answer the following questions to help yourself reflect on your experiences post role play and mock interview.

What were the positives? (What did you do well?)

What were the negatives? (What do you need to improve on?)

7-3 Example Scoring Sheet

Mock Interview Scoring Sheet

This is an interview scoring sheet developed to help the interviewer review the interviewee's performance. The feedback should be given in an honest and constructive manner in order to help the interviewee identify strengths and weaknesses. Rate the interviewee in the following areas using the scale of 1 to 5 (1-Needs More Improvement, 2-Needs Improvement, 3-Satisfactory, 4-Distinguished, & 5-Excellent).

1. Was the interviewee dressed appropriately? Score: 1 2 3 4 5
    Comments:

2. Did the interviewee act in an appropriate manner for an interview? Score: 1 2 3 4 5
    Comments:

3. Did the interviewee seem prepared for the interview? Score: 1 2 3 4 5
    Comments:

4. Was the interviewee punctual? (Answer if appropriate) Score: 1 2 3 4 5 Not Applicable
    Comments:

5. Did the interviewee answer the questions appropriately? Score: 1 2 3 4 5
    Comments:

6. What do you think the interviewee did well during the interview?
    Comments:

7. What do you think the interviewee could improve upon?
    Comments:

8. Overall Score: Did the student interview well? Score: 1 2 3 4 5
    Comments:

Module 8: Thank You Letters and Emails

8-1 Lesson: Paying attention to post-interview etiquette

You might think you can sit back and relax because you've completed your interview. Actually, it's time to get back to work! You should be writing thank-you letters or emails to all of the people you met with during your interview and to all of the people who provided you with leads or information on the position, business, and industry. This is why it's so important to keep information on everyone you met with and everyone who has helped you along in the process.

Sending thank-you letters or emails to interviewers is a social expectation when interviewing for a job. It's also another way you can stand apart from the rest of the candidates. Thank-you notes give you the chance to demonstrate proper etiquette, writing skills, and follow-through, and also show that you are aware of, and grateful for, the time and energy people have spent helping you and considering you for a position.

Write and send these thank you letters or emails promptly (within 48 hours of the interview) and compose them in a professional format. The recipients are not your friends and one of them may hold the key to you getting the job, so be formal, polite, and respectful. Send a message to each person you interacted with during your interview, including assistants and secretaries. You never know who has influence in the hiring process.

Here are some tips for writing thank-you letters or emails:

Write the thank-you message in a word processing program so you can use spelling and grammar checks.

Letters should be composed in formal business letter format (you may want to review the 3.7 lesson on cover letter writing).

For emails, the letters should be both attached as a document and pasted into the body of

the email. Here is an outline for guidance:

For the structure of the letter, review the lesson on cover letters.

Opening paragraph: Thank them for their time and express your appreciation for the interview.

Second paragraph: Offer a final sell of why you would be a great fit for the position. Keep this brief and respectful.

Closing paragraph: Thank them again and say that you look forward to hearing from them in the near future.

Remember to thank all of the people who provided assistance to you in this process. This can be tedious, but this effort will pay off as you demonstrate professionalism and respect. Get started on those thank you letters or emails!

8-2   Assignment: Sample Thank-You Letter

Write thank-you letters or emails. Submit one letter to your portfolio to keep on file for your future reference. You can write your letter in a word processing program and paste it into your assignment. Get thanking!

8-3   Example Assignment: Josie's Sample Thank-You Letters

Josie Armentrout 123 Main Street, #34
Lexington, KY 10000
999-444-1111
jarmentrout@gmail.com May 13, 2016

Ms. Marion Fishman, Store
Manager John's
Supermarket
123 Corporate Loop
Lexington, KY 10000

Dear Ms. Fishman:

Thank you very much for meeting with me on Tuesday to discuss the opening for the bagger position at your store. I appreciate the opportunity to learn more about the standard of excellence you hold your employees to at John's Supermarket. I am very excited about the possibility of joining your team.

You mentioned you need a reliable employee who works well with others. My experience as captain of my high school's Goal Ball team has helped me to develop the attributes you are looking for in an employee. I would go the extra mile for the store and work when you need additional assistance, such as when employees are out or during peak shopping times during the Holidays. Having grown up in our local community, I am familiar with many of the customers who shop in your store and would contribute to providing a high level of customer service with my friendly and outgoing personality.

Again, thank you for considering me for the open position on your crew. I would love to spend my afternoons after high school and weekends working and learning in your store. Please feel free to call me if you have any questions. Thank you again for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Josie Armentrout

Module 9: Following Up After an Interview

9-1 Lesson: Responding strategically to good and bad news after the interview

Now that you've completed and sent thank-you letters, it's time to follow up on your interview. Following up with an employer demonstrates you are interested in working for them and eager to get started. Not all employers contact you to let you know what decision they made, or where they are in the process, so it's important that you be proactive in keeping in the communications loop.

There are standards to follow when following up after an interview. Unless advised otherwise during the interview, it's typical to wait three days after the end of interviews to contact the employer. If you have been communicating mostly by email, it's acceptable to follow up via email-though typically businesses will share more detailed information over the phone.

At a larger organization, contact the personnel or human resources department. At a smaller organization, you should reach out to the person who has been your main point of contact. Be polite and gracious when speaking to anyone at the business. If they don't have an answer for you when you call, yet say that they will call you back, ask for a timeframe to expect a response. If you don't hear from them within the timeframe, follow up again. It's important to appear eager and enthusiastic, but not overly aggressive or demanding.

If you did not get the job, don't cry or share your emotions when you get the decision. Thank them for giving you the opportunity to interview. Remember, not everyone gets the opportunity to interview for a position and this shows that they valued you as an applicant. You never know if they will have any future openings that would fit your qualifications, so you want to make sure to maintain a professional demeanor. State your continued interest in the company.

It's appropriate to ask if they keep applications and resumes on file for future openings.

If you get the job, try your best to be calm and reserved. Express your gratitude. You can ask when they would like you to start. This can be negotiable in some cases. If you are presently employed, you can tell them that you would like to give your current employer the courtesy of two weeks {or whatever your company's standard notice period is), if possible.

If the employer wants you to start sooner, then you may have to leave your current position earlier. Jobs can be hard to find, and most employers will understand if you explain that you tried to get them more transition time.

You do not want to burn bridges if you are leaving another job. You never know if you will end up working with that employer again or interacting with them in your new position.

Leaving a job on good terms can provide a good reference in the future.

If you have prior commitments scheduled such as a vacation, this will be something you have to discuss. Some businesses will be okay with you taking that vacation, but many will not. Sometimes you will have to choose your job over personal life.

Confirm your pay or wage. How many hours does this business consider full time employment? Will they be providing any type of benefits? If you are receiving benefits, what kind of deduction from your pay will you have to contribute?

These are just a few points to consider when calling to follow up with a business that you have interviewed with. It's suggested that you practice what you will say and even make notes to make sure that you cover all bases.

9-2   Assignment: Your Interview Follow-Up Plan

Write a detailed script of what you will say when following up after an interview. Write out what you will say and the questions you will ask if you did not get the job. Write out what you will say and the questions you will ask if you did get the job.

Remember to be polite and gracious no matter what the decision is.

9-3   Example Assignment: Josie's Interview Follow-Up Plan

Script:

Hello, my name is Josie Armentrout. I came in to interview with Ms. Fishman for the Digital Assets Management Assistant position on May 1 and I wanted to check on the status of the hiring process. Ms. Fishman told me that interviews were scheduled to be completed on May 22. Do you know if a decision has been made yet?

If I got the job:

That's great! I'm thrilled.

Do you have a moment to answer a few questions? Or is there someone who I can speak to about things like benefits and start date?

I'd like to give my current employer three weeks, which is their standard request for notice. Would that schedule work for you?

Can you tell me what benefits are available to me?

Is there an orientation for new employees?

Can I confirm the salary for the position?

Is there anything I need to do before my first day?

If I didn't get the job:

Well, I am disappointed, but I really do appreciate the opportunity to interview. I really do want to work for Getty Images. Does the HR department hold resumes in case an appropriate opening comes up?

Thanks again for your time.

****

CONGRATULATIONS! You have reached the end of Course 3: Finding Employment.

Please be sure to save the assignments you have completed.

Please continue to…

Course 5: Maintaining Employment – Advancing Your Career

COURSE 5: Maintaining Employment – Advancing Your Career

Module 1: Ideas, Tips, and Resources for Success in Your New Job

The journey is not over yet! Once you've been hired, it's important to stay in your position. Often, new employees do not identify and use the tools necessary to remain employed. These tools are just as important to your success as the ones you've used to find and land that great job.

Here are some ideas, tips, and resources that will help you stay on the right track to success in your new job.

1-1   Do Some Research

Read through the articles on the APH CareerConnect and NSITE Connect websites to continually sharpen your skills. You can also read through relevant articles on LinkedIn for the latest in industry news and trends.

1-2   Succeed at Your Job

Building Positive Work Habits

The Perfect Worker: A discussion of work habits that help employees succeed on the job. You will learn what work habits are common in most successfully employed individuals. These habits are developed and practiced through experience. If you practice these in your everyday life, it will be easier to use them in a work setting.

Preparing for Your First Month at Work

This article addresses the expectations that employers have for new employees during the first year on the job. As a new employee, it's important to demonstrate your value and competence on the job to your supervisor and coworkers.

The Key to Improving Relationships on the Job

Most conflict in the workplace is due to communication problems. This article explains the "Dos" and "Don'ts" of communication on the job and provides tips that you can follow both in your workplace and in your everyday life.

Solving Problems at Work

We all encounter problems on the job. This article explores some common on- the- job-problems and the strategies you can use to solve them.

Quick Tips

Talk about it. Contact your mentors to discuss what makes a successful worker. Ask successfully employed members of your personal network what the secrets are to maintaining a job.

Establish and manage expectations proactively. Unrealistic expectations can be an issue for any new employee, whether it's your unrealistic expectations of what a job will be or an employer's unrealistic expectations of you and your performance. Part of successful employment is managing others' expectations.

As you no doubt have found in the job descriptions you've encountered during this course, employers expect many job duties to be completed by each employee. In a tighter economy, job duties multiply even more and it can be difficult to keep things on track and productive. Manage your time and effort by completing the most important tasks first. Because each manager is different, you'll need to make an effort to find out what your supervisor values and what he or she specifically expects from you.

Perform all job duties to your best abilities. No task is too small or menial.

Complete your duties and tasks on time. This should seem obvious, but missing deadlines is a quick way to lose your job. The saying "time is money" is no lie. Many people lack crucial time management skills.
Something as simple as consistently using a personal calendar can be the difference between a paycheck and an unemployment check.

Dress appropriately. Make sure to monitor the clothing that you wear to work. Clothing wears out, develops stains and discoloration, stretches out or shrinks over many washes. It's important make sure that your wardrobe is maintained to meet appropriate standards for the workplace.

Practice your skills. The skills you have learned in this course are not just job seeking skills, they are professional skills for success. Regularly review and practice these skills.

Maintain a professional demeanor. Don't become too familiar with your coworkers or boss. Workplaces can be friendly, but you must remember that your primary relationships and responsibilities at work will always be professional ones. Your behavior should reflect that understanding at all times.

Be Discreet. Personal information you share may haunt you in the future. Often your coworkers become friends, but it's important to keep information that could be damaging to your image or career to yourself.

Regularly review your job description. Most organizations have mandatory work or performance evaluations. Typically, these evaluations monitor your level of performance on the job in the areas and tasks defined in your job description. Regularly review your job description to make sure you're fulfilling your duties, and make sure that you're working on addressing any areas you know are weaknesses.

Practice common courtesy. Proper social interactions with coworkers and consumers is a MUST on the job. All workplaces require that social norms (typical expected behaviors) be maintained at some level. These social norms may not be the same at every business, but it's best to be safe by

being courteous, appropriately social, and professional at all times. Remembering to say "hello," "goodbye," "good morning," "have a good night," "please," and "thank you" are small actions that help a workplace feel friendly and establish good relations with your colleagues.

Your first job is just the beginning of your professional life. Once you are employed, we encourage you to volunteer as a mentor for someone else so you can share your experience and advice with others.

Module 2: Professional Development and Continuous Career Planning

2-1   Identify Appropriate Professional Development Opportunities

Take initiative of your professional development to ensure you are able to continuously hone your skills and set yourself up for success in the current position and for potential future career advancement.

Your new employer may offer **internal professional development** (opportunities within your workplace) that are required and/or optional. Make sure you discuss what training you should complete and build a professional development calendar for yourself. Make your professional development an integral part of regular performance conversations with your supervisor.

You can also pursue **external professional development** opportunities. Seek occasions and undertakings which will help you remain relevant in your career field and equip you for leadership opportunities. Acquire up-to-date research and skills by attending relevant conferences, workshops, or webinars; complete related coursework; subscribe to pertinent newsletters, magazines, publications, and journals; network with professionals in your field to idea-share; and seek mentorship from individuals who have skills-sets which you can learn. Consider, too, teaching a course or presenting at a conference—you will be highly motivated to remain current in your field.

Lastly, you will likely be tasked with a work responsibility that will stretch you, or your manager will likely ask your team for a volunteer to tackle a substantial task; consider accepting the opportunity if you're willing to learn and be committed to success. You'll develop skills and your supervisor will learn you're flexible, hard-working, and you rise to the occasion.

2-2   Maintain Focus on Your Career Path

Consider your career goals. Would you like to develop leadership skills? Increase your job responsibilities? Acquire a new work-related skill? Network? After ensuring you are providing accurate and quality work and are spending your time on tasks you're expected to accomplish, consider how you can assume additional responsibilities or pursue professional development which will enable you to progress on your career path.

Module 3:   Resources and Professional Development Opportunities

You may find the following resources and associations valuable as you journey along your career path. Peruse the list, which will be periodically updated, and utilize the resources which will assist you in reaching your career goals. The list is designed for the sole purpose of providing recommended resources, not as part of a mandatory activity.

APH CareerConnect:	https://aphcareerconnect.org/
NSITE:	www.nsite.org
NSITE Connect:	https://nsiteconnect.jobboard.io/
NSITE Professional Development Opportunities:	https://nsite.org/training/
NSITE LinkedIn:	***Follow APH, NSITE, NIB, etc.***

Consumer Groups and Professional Associations:

- American Council of the Blind (acb.org)/ Blind/Low Vision Resources | American Council of the Blind (acb.org)
- National Federation of the Blind (nfb.org)/ Resources | National Federation of the Blind (nfb.org)
- American Foundation for the Blind (afb.org)
- The American Printing House for the Blind/APH ConnectCenter (aphconnectcenter.org)
- Welcome to NIB | Careers for the Blind/ Career Resources | National Industries for the Blind (nib.org)
- World Services for the Blind (wsblind.org)/ Resources — World Services for the Blind (wsblind.org)
- AbilityOne
- Consider career-specific consumer groups and professional associations.

Professional Publications:

- JVIB | American Foundation for the Blind (afb.org)
- Consider career-specific professional publications.

Continuing Education and Support Resources:

- Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) (ed.gov)
- State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies
- APH ConnectCenter Transition Hub (aphconnectcenter.org)
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act | U.S. Department of Labor (dol.gov)
- American Job Centers | U.S. Department of Labor (dol.gov)
- Resume and Employment Guide for People with Disabilities - ResumeBuilder.com
- Welcome to Our Webinars and Podcasts: Employment Insights with the NRTC | National Technical Assistance Center (msstate.edu)
- For People who are Blind or have Low Vision | National Technical Assistance Center

(msstate.edu)
- JAN - Job Accommodation Network (askjan.org)
- Careers | Khan Academy
- Manage People and Processes | Careers | Life skills | Khan Academy
- Hadley Vision Resources | 100 Years of Empowering Adults with Vision Loss
- Working Skills-Hadley Vision Resources | Free Resources For Living with Low Vision
- Consider career-specific continuing education opportunities and resources.

Financial Resources:
- The Work Site (ssa.gov)
- Using Your PASS - Ticket to Work - Social Security (ssa.gov)
- Social Security Online - The Red Book - A Guide to Work Incentives (ssa.gov)
- Financial Education and Incentives | U.S. Department of Labor (dol.gov)
- ABLE Accounts - Tax Benefit for People with Disabilities | Internal Revenue Service (irs.gov)
- The Ultimate Guide to Financial Literacy (investopedia.com)

Assistive Technology Resources:

- Visual Interpreting – Get Live, On-demand Access to Visual Information (aira.io)
- How to Contact Apple for Accessibility Support
- AppleVis
- Be My Eyes - See the world together
- Computers for the Blind
- Disability Answer Desk Support | Microsoft Accessibility
- Fusion training from Freedom Scientific
- HIMS Support | (hims-support.com)
- Humanware - Home - Low Vision & Blindness Solutions
- iBlind Users Group
- NV Access: Empowering lives through non-visual access to technology
- ViewPlus Technologies - Braille Embossers & Tactile Graphics
- ZoomText Training from Freedom Scientific
- MaxiAids | Independent Living, Low Vision, Blind, Mobility

Dog Guide Resources:
- Guide Dogs for the Blind
- The Seeing Eye

- [Leader Dogs for the Blind](#)
- [Guide Dogs of America](#)
- [Guide Dogs of the Desert | California](#)
- [Southeastern Guide Dogs](#)
- [Guiding Eyes for the Blind - Guide Dogs for People with Vision Loss](#)
- [Freedom Guide Dogs for the Blind](#)
- [Pilot Dogs](#)
- [Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation](#)
- [Guide Dogs of Texas](#)
- [OccuPaws](#)

Mainstream Career Resources:

- [LinkedIn](#)
- [Job Search - Millions of Jobs Hiring Near You | ZipRecruiter](#)
- [The Wall Street Journal - Breaking News, Business, Financial & Economic News, World News and Video (wsj.com)](#)
- [Forbes](#)

3-2 Additional Resources: Articles/ Videos

- [Personal Employment Stories: People Who Are Blind or Low Share Their Employmnt Stories (APH CareerConnect)](#)
- [Public Transit Tips for the Visually Impaired and Blind — World Services for the Blind (wsblind.org)](#)
- Department of Labor Video Series: [Videos | U.S. Department of Labor (dol.gov)](#)
  Here is a sample of the *U.S. Department of Labor Videos*

[Communication Skills](#)

[Professionalism](#)

[Apprenticeships](#)

CONCLUSION

Congratulations! You've completed the Jobseeker's Toolkit. You've no doubt learned a lot about yourself and the types of jobs you want to pursue, as well as how to research jobs and prepare for, and participate in an interview. You have a very robust file system of assignments, contacts, job leads and more. You should be proud of yourself for accomplishing these tasks.

We would love your feedback. Please send us an email at connectcenter@aph.org or info@nsite.org and let us know what you liked about this course and areas where you think we can improve. Your opinions will help us make this toolkit the best it can be. Thank you so much for taking the time to participate in this course. We hope you've found it valuable.