

# *The Job Seeker's Toolkit*



# *Table of Contents*

## *The Job Search*

1. The Social Media Rulebook for Job Seekers
2. Writing a Cover Letter That Will Get You Noticed
3. The 5 Habits of Highly Successful Job Seekers
4. Four Ways to Use LinkedIn for Your Job Search

## *The Job Interview*

1. What to Ask When You're In the Room
2. How to Prepare for a Video Interview
3. What to Do In a Panel Interview



# *The Job Search*

Searching for a job is hard work. Whether you are unemployed and looking to get back into the workforce or are employed and searching for your next career opportunity, it's important to remember not to get discouraged. By being persistent and staying positive, you will be able to land the right job at the right time. Job hunting can turn into its own full time job, but when you are organized in your search, you will soon find yourself taking the next step in your career journey.

## *1.*

### *The Social Media Rulebook for Job Seekers*

The Internet is a large piece of today's job search puzzle. Even if you don't find your job through an online channel, there are plenty of ways that a potential employer can see your social media activity and make a snap judgment about you (and your employability). Are you ready for that?

Here are a few rules all job seekers should follow when it comes to social media:

Rule 1. Don't post negative comments about your employers (this means any employer, whether past, present or prospective). Follow the same rule with regard to managers and co-workers. Hiring managers will be turned off if they find that you have a habit of speaking disparagingly about your employer. Before you hit send on a social media post, imagine being in a conference room with all of the company's "higher ups" while your message is displayed on the wall with a projector. Do you still want to press the 'send' button?





Rule 2. Don't post incriminating material online. Did you take a "sick day" and then post a photo of yourself at an amusement park? If you're connected on social media with your boss or co-workers, that could be a problem. Think before you post.

Rule 3. Keep things to yourself online. Don't post about your job search while you're employed or complain that you need a raise. Your boss won't want to read those posts. If you're unemployed, reaching out to your network about your job search can be a good tactic, but keep it strictly professional.

Rule 4. Check your digital footprint. Type your name into the most popular search engines online and see what pops up. (Tip: Use the name you put on job applications and your resume.) What results come back? What are people seeing when they look for you online? Is everything positive, or are there any results that need to be remedied? Also remember to search through your own photos or photos your friends may have tagged you in. Take a good look at these photos and decide if this is how you want to be seen by potential employers.

Rule 5. Change your privacy settings. The default privacy settings for many social media sites often leave a lot to be desired. In fact, many of these default settings are actually set to be public, allowing anyone (including your employer) to see what you've been up to online. Adjust your settings on each network to ensure that you're putting the best foot forward. ■



## 2.

### *Writing a Cover Letter That Will Get You Noticed*

Some job seekers might ask themselves, “Do people even write cover letters any more?” The answer is, of course, YES! Cover letters are an essential part of the job search and can even have the power to make or break your application with an employer. This is why it’s so disappointing to see so many job seekers failing to spend the required amount of time and energy on creating a successful cover letter.

While it’s true that a cover letter is not necessary for every job application, it’s important to understand how to write one properly. In the case of a referral, for example, you will want to write a cover letter that explains why you are being referred for the position and how you know the mutual connection. A cover letter should not just be an attempt to match the job description and should not be phrased to be what you think the hiring manager wants to hear.

A personalized, well-thought-out cover letter can make the difference in whether or not you secure an interview with a company, so don’t just grab a stale template off the web.

Here’s what you need to do to write a cover letter that works:

*Make it new every time.*

Every job application requires a brand new cover letter that’s specifically tailored to the job and the company. Yes, this can be a lot of work, but the pay-off is worth it. Don’t use the same cover letter for every application. The cover letter should detail why your experience makes you the perfect fit for the position and show your excitement for working at this particular company.

*Keep it simple.*

A cover letter isn’t a novel. Keep your cover letter brief, generally one



page or less. Use only as much space as is needed to touch on your qualifications and what excites you about the position.

*Don't just copy your resume.*

The employer has your resume. They know what's on your resume... so don't put all that information in the cover letter. The cover letter should add a new dimension to your application. Remember to highlight your greatest work-related achievements and any other relevant information that isn't on your resume.

*Stay humble.*

You might be tempted to say something like "I'm the best candidate you'll find" or "I'm about to blow everyone else out of the water." The truth is, however, that you can't know that you're the perfect person for the job, so all you're doing is filling your cover letter with empty words. Instead, be specific with your accomplishments and relate them to the position and how you can use these skills to help the company. Be confident, but don't exaggerate. ■

## 3.

### *The 5 Habits of Highly Successful Job Seekers*

While the job market is improving, it can still be a difficult task to land the job you want. Thankfully, job seekers themselves can have a big impact on the way their job searches turn out – all by changing a few of their behaviors. By becoming proactive and adept at facing new challenges, a job seeker can positively influence what happens in their job search.

The following are a few good habits that can help job seekers see better results in their search:

*Networking.* Start nurturing your existing business relationships and make the effort to form meaningful new ones. Expand your network by attending industry events and simply by meeting new people. Don't be



afraid to strike up conversations. Be supportive and helpful to people within your network, even if you don't think they can be beneficial to your job search. After all, they might know a guy who knows a guy. Become a go-to resource in your network and connect with people one-on-one.

*Always be prepared.* Job seekers could learn a thing or two from the Boy Scouts. You should be ready for anything when it comes to your job search. Make sure you always have your job materials (resume, portfolio, etc.) regularly updated and easily accessible, whether digitally in the cloud or printed out. Keep a spare set of your job materials in your car, briefcase, or backpack so that you'll always have them handy in case you run into someone that wants to have a look.

*Educate yourself.* Stay on top of the latest developments and advancements in your field. Is there something new you could learn? Take advantage of any educational opportunity that pops up, whether it's a seminar, online course, or even a quick chat with someone in the industry. Understanding the trends in your field can help you determine where growth might be in the future and it will also guarantee that you'll be up to date on the latest happenings. You can leverage this personal growth later in job interviews.

*Don't wait.* Start practicing for interviews now, not just when you have one scheduled. You can hone your job interview skills by doing practice interviews with friends, family, and fellow job seekers. With so much preparation under your belt, you'll breeze through actual interviews because you know your stuff. You can also record your practice interviews and use the recordings to critique and improve your interview technique.

*Stay healthy.* Don't forget to take care of yourself. Job hunting can be exhausting and stressful at times. Don't let yourself become overwhelmed. Eat healthy, exercise, get enough sleep, and keep in regular contact with friends and family. Staying healthy and maintaining your energy level will be a crucial part of your job hunt. When you feel better, you'll do better. ■



## *Four Ways to Use LinkedIn for Your Job Search*

Are you leveraging your LinkedIn profile correctly? Today's job seekers think that they're making the most out of their LinkedIn profiles, but in truth many aren't using LinkedIn to its full potential. Some job seekers don't use every part of their LinkedIn profiles to their advantage and others are missing out on some of the networking opportunities that LinkedIn makes available.

Here are four ways to ensure that your LinkedIn profile is primed and ready for your job search.

*Write a strong headline and include keywords.*

Think of your LinkedIn headline as your online branding statement. When another LinkedIn user performs a search, your name and headline will be the only things they see. Your headline should be strong and attention grabbing to inspire people to click through to your full profile. "Mobile Developer looking for a new opportunity" is a weak headline. Consider your value proposition. What do you have to offer and what problems can you solve for an employer? Also consider the keywords an employer will use when searching for a candidate and incorporate these into your headline.

*Include relevant experience.*

Most LinkedIn profiles list full-time and paid work experience, but job seekers should think beyond that. A thorough LinkedIn profile will include internships, volunteer experience, part-time jobs, and other projects. Include all relevant experience that demonstrates your real world skills. This extracurricular experience can be especially important if you are transitioning into a new field or trying to move into a new position in which you don't necessarily have direct experience.

*Become an expert.*

Use LinkedIn as a platform to share your expertise with others. Market





yourself as an industry expert appropriately by sharing first-hand knowledge as well as articles and resources from trusted sources. In addition to posting on your own LinkedIn page, join relevant groups and share your insights there. By sharing quality content and helping others with their industry problems, you'll develop a reputation as someone who knows their stuff.

### *Make connections.*

Build your network by sending personalized connection requests to everyone you know on LinkedIn – family members, friends, classmates, co-workers, and more. As you build up your network, you'll begin to see how these contacts connect you to job opportunities. Most jobs are found through networking. When you connect with someone on LinkedIn, send them a personalized message and let them know you're on the job hunt. You can ask them for advice, an informational interview, or see if they can connect you with anyone in your field. Don't afraid to be specific. If you are looking for a job at Company X and see that one of your LinkedIn contacts is connected to a hiring manager at the company, reach out to your contact and ask them to make an introduction.

LinkedIn is a powerful job search tool, if you are willing to put in the work. You can save valuable time on your job search by being an active participant on LinkedIn and reaching out to contacts. ■

# *The Job Interview*

A successful job interview is a critical step in landing your next job. If you're not properly prepared for the interview, you may not perform at your best and could lose out on an exciting new opportunity. Successful candidates will ensure that they put their best foot forward in every interview they attend.

## *1.*

### *What to Ask When You're In the Room*

The good news is that you've landed a job interview. The bad news is that you're nervous and not sure what questions to ask once you're in there. Many candidates get stressed about job interviews and forget that just as the employer is interviewing them, they should also be interviewing the employer. Just like the job interviewer needs to be convinced that you are the person for the job, you need to be convinced that this is the company for you.

At the end of the interview, when the employer asks if the candidate has any questions, candidates should be ready to ask a series of questions to determine if their goals are aligned with the company's initiatives.

Here are five of the best questions a candidate can ask their interviewer, and why:

*How would you describe the company's culture and management style?*

**Why Ask:** By asking this question, you are able to learn more about the working environment as well as some of the company's systems and



processes. Learning more about the culture can help you decide if your personality is a match for the company and vice versa.

*What does a typical day/week look like in this position?*

Why Ask: This question allows you to get a better feel for how the company operates. For example, is there frequent overtime or do projects often pop up at the last minute? You will also get a better feel of the expected responsibilities for the position and what the person in the position will likely focus their time on. You can get insight into the day-to-day happenings as well as overall expectations for the role.

*What is needed to succeed in this position? What did past employees do well and what could they have improved upon?*

Why Ask: If you ask this question you will get some insight into what the company values in an employee and how they measure success. By knowing this information you can assess on your own whether you have the skill set needed to meet the company's goals and expectations for the position.

*What is the most important thing that you'd like to see someone accomplish within the first 30 days in this position?*

Why Ask: By asking this question you will learn about the most pressing issues associated with the position and learn the company's pain points. It's likely that much of the job interview will be related to your strengths and what the company does well, so you can take an extra moment with this question to reiterate how your skills can positively impact the company.

*How does this position affect the company in the short- as well as long-term?*

Why Ask: When you ask this question, the interviewer will see that you're





thinking beyond the short-term – you’re a candidate that cares about the business as a whole. This question can also start a conversation about what you specifically can do for the company.

You may be wondering what to do if all of your questions are answered during the course of the interview. It’s crucial to make sure you have your questions written down in advance. If you feel that all your questions have been answered during the interview, pull out your list of questions, look them over, and tell your interviewer, “From checking my list, I see that all my questions have already been answered.” By having the questions written down and allowing the interviewer to see that, you’ll demonstrate that you came prepared.

The questions you ask your interviewer should be thoughtful and illustrate that you’ve done your homework on the company and the job. ■

## 2.

### *How to Prepare for a Video Interview*

In today’s world, just the push of a single button can have you in contact with someone halfway around the world. With technology making communication so available, more job seekers than ever are being asked to hop online for a video interview. While many people chat with friends and relatives through Skype, FaceTime, and other software, these conversations won’t prepare you for a formal job interview. Even if you’re comfortable in front of a camera, there are still a few things every job seeker should take into consideration before taking a call with an interviewer.

Here are our tips for preparing for your next video interview:

*Wear headphones.*

Sure, your computer’s speakers work great, but why take the risk? Headphones will eliminate echoes and other distracting background noises,



plus they'll help you hear your interviewer much more clearly. Also remember to check your settings and your sound inputs and outputs before the call.

*Download any necessary software and do a test run.*

On the day before the interview (not ten minutes before it is scheduled), make sure your software and all plugins are updated. Make sure to download everything in advanced and be sure it's the latest version designed to work with your operating system. Call a friend or family member to do a test call, if possible. Doing all of this in advance will let you work out any kinks in the technology before your interview.

*Think about your background.*

Where will you sit? Once you've chosen a location, take a good look around and make sure there is nothing embarrassing or inappropriate within view. Your background should be neutral, but not too boring if you can help it. A blank wall is better than one plastered with inappropriate artwork, but sitting in front of a bookcase or another appropriate setting is best.

*Position the camera and consider the lighting.*

Position the camera so that it is at your eye level. This will be a more flattering angle. When you have the camera in place, check the lighting. How do you look on screen? If you look washed out or too dark you may need to reposition the camera or adjust the lighting in the room.

*Dress professionally.*

Don't thin that just because this is a video interview you can wear your pajamas. It's still a job interview! Wear the same professional clothing you would to any other interview, but be careful to avoid stripes or patterns as they can render badly on screen. (And, yes, wear pants. What if you need to get up to retrieve a paper or other document? Your interviewer would be able to see your pajama pants... or worse, your underwear! When in doubt, wear pants.) ■



## 3.

### *What to Do In a Panel Interview*

Job interviews are stressful enough, but what happens when you're told you'll be doing a panel interview? Many job seekers would likely panic and let their nerves get the best of them. Panel interviews can be difficult to navigate, but it is possible to ace a panel interview and demonstrate that you're a good fit for both the role and the hiring organization.

The first thing to remember is that you shouldn't stress over your panel interview. In fact, a panel interview can be a blessing - you are able to give the interview your best shot on the first try, without having to repeat yourself about the same questions over and over with different managers or department heads. Panel interviews are great opportunities to streamline the interview process.

A panel interview might be a nerve-wracking experience, but building rapport with multiple interviewers is within reach of most job seekers.

Here are a few tips on passing any panel interview with flying colors.

*Prepare as thoroughly as you would for any interview.*

You might think that preparing for a panel interview is too enormous of a task and decide that you're just going to fly by the seat of your pants on the day of. Don't do this! You should prepare for a panel interview with the same dedication as you would for a one-on-one interview. Thoroughly research the job and the company, practice your responses to common interview questions, prepare your follow-up questions, and do everything else that you would for any other interview. Don't let your nerves get the best of you. Being prepared will allow you to shine during the interview.

Always visit your interviewers' LinkedIn profiles before an interview. With a panel interview, visiting LinkedIn will help you remember each person as an individual and create a connection in your mind that keeps things





moving.

*Learn who your interviewers are.*

If possible, find out who your interviewers will be and do some research on what they do for the company. In a panel interview, you will probably find that each interviewer represents a different department of the company that the person in the position will interact with. You should be prepared to speak with team leads from across the company. As soon as you find out you will be having a panel interview, try to get a list of their names from your company contact.

*Pay attention to each person on the panel.*

Introduce yourself and learn each person's name. Make eye contact with each person you are talking to and don't spend too much time focused on one individual. Use names when answering questions and try to refer back to answers you gave to different panel members. Speak to everyone and don't just focus on the interviewers that seem to be "on your side."

*Stay mindful of your body language.*

You won't just be communicating with your words. Shift the upper half of your body so that you're facing the person you are speaking to and make regular eye contact.

*Control the pace of the interview.*

Take a moment and pause before you answer each question. Doing this will help keep you in control of the interview and avoid a "firing squad" situation where questions and comments are flying at you from every angle. If an interviewer interrupts your answer to ask a different question, think about your answers. If the new question is more important, sum up your current answer quickly and move on to the new topic. You can also bring a pen and notepad to the interview to make notes and keep track of what's being discussed. It's important to remember not to be writing too much, but you can say, "I would like to write down your questions so I can address everyone's priorities."



If you feel that questions are being fired at you at a rapid pace, you might write down the questions that are being asked and say, "I'm writing your questions down so I can answer them in an organized format."

When it comes to the end of the interview, it's customary for the interviewee to ask questions to the panel. Make sure you have your questions written down in advance. If you feel that the interview has answered all of your questions, you can look at your list of questions and tell the panel, "From checking my list, it seems we covered everything I was curious about." By having the questions already written down, you'll show the panel that you came prepared.

Even though panel interviews can be stressful, proper preparation and practice beforehand can really pay off and help you feel more comfortable in the room. ■

---

*MAIN OFFICE*

Equis Staffing

Address: 27001 Agoura Road, Suite 160  
City/State/Zip: Calabasas, California 91301

Phone: (818) 444-0100

Fax: (818) 444-0101

E-Mail: [info@equisdifference.com](mailto:info@equisdifference.com)

[www.equisdifference.com](http://www.equisdifference.com)