



**Career Resource Guide**  
**Information for candidates in today's job market**

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**West Los Angeles 310.445.2727**  
**Woodland Hills 818.883.0440**  
**Pasadena 626.304.0353**  
**Irvine 949.251.8811**  
**Inland Empire 909.230.4504**  
**San Diego 619.640.2250**  
**Phoenix 602.955.5811**  
**Las Vegas 702.368.2363**  
**Denver 720.489.1053**  
**Seattle 425.746.0388**

Dear Candidate:

We understand that finding a job is not easy. Finding the right kind of job opportunity in the existing employment environment involves presenting yourself in the best light possible. To do that, you must be fully prepared from the very beginning of the interview process.

Whether you find employment through Career Strategies, or on your own, we hope you will find our resource helpful. We have compiled information on the following:

PREPARATION OUTLINE  
HOW TO WRITE A RESUME  
ACTION WORDS TO CATCH EMPLOYER'S ATTENTION  
A SAMPLE RESUME  
A SAMPLE COVER LETTER  
A SAMPLE THANK YOU LETTER  
COMMONLY ASKED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS  
QUESTIONS TO ASK IN AN INTERVIEW  
EIGHT KEYS TO GETTING A "YES"  
NINE STEPS TO MAKING A GOOD DECISION  
YOUR CLOTHING AND BODY LANGUAGE SEND A MESSAGE

Most importantly, you must research the companies with which you are interviewing, ask questions to determine if the position is right for you, and make your own decisions based on what you feel in your heart. Don't be afraid to say "NO" if you feel that a company or position is not right for you.

If you have any questions or if we may be of further assistance, please don't hesitate to give us a call. Good luck in your career endeavors.

## PREPARATION OUTLINE

- Step 1      A proper resume is your FIRST step in presenting yourself to a prospective employer. Remember that the resume will create the interview opportunity.
- Step 2      Having secured the interview with your resume, you must now make yourself as prepared as possible. That begins with understanding the business environment/culture of the prospective employer and how you'll "fit in". You want to present yourself professionally as there is never a second chance to make a first impression.
- Step 3      Learn as much as you can about the "business" of that prospective employer. What is their product or service? What is their mission statement and work philosophy? You must research and/or get the assistance of your recruiter to find out all that you can about a potential employer.
- Step 4      Be prepared to have questions/situations posed to you during the interview process. Set the tone early by being professional; a firm handshake and maintaining eye contact are only two of the many things you can do. Be prepared to ask questions, use common sense, be succinct, when appropriate, and use some of the background information of the company to help you formulate questions. Always try to accentuate the positive aspects, stay away from a negative stance, when possible.
- Step 5      Finish strong by reiterating your interest in the opportunity. You can usually expect to go through the interview process with several people in the company. Your purpose with every interview is to get an offer. Always ask for the job.

To recap, BE PREPARED, turn negatives into positives, ask questions, listen to the content and intent of the questions asked, ask for the job and follow-up (always send a thank you note to those who have interviewed you).

## **HOW TO WRITE A RESUME**

Your resume is your first impression. It should be a simple summation of your qualifications and skills geared toward getting your foot in the door for an interview. Keep it short, simple, concise, and on one page. For example, you should include your accomplishments and achievements that lead to increased profits for your company. Those bottom-line examples of your success will create interest on the employer side. Avoid attempts at humor or a contrived synopsis of your skillset. Do not include personal information such as: marital status, height, weight, age, etc. Always be prepared in the interview to have a few clean copies of your resume and even though you are submitting a resume, always fill out applications completely as companies are evaluating your attention to detail and your ability to follow directions. Do not write phrases like “see resume” on the application.

### **Objective:**

An objective is not necessary, however, if you include an objective at the beginning of your resume, do not make it so specific that you may exclude yourself as a candidate for other positions that might interest you.

### **Experience:**

List in chronological order (your present or last job first). List the company name along with location (city and state). List dates as months and years to avoid being perceived as though you are trying to hide something. Go back a maximum of 10 years (unless previous experience pertains to a job that you are applying for). List your exact job title. Include a brief description of the company industry. NOTE: Do not include salary information.

Be precise about your duties. State the capacity in which you were employed and exactly what you did. Indicate your level of responsibility and if in a supervisory capacity, for how many individuals. Include office skills, office equipment and computer skills. Make sure to grammatically keep the same tense when defining duties. Remember, your results and accomplishments set you apart. Everyone has responsibilities, but not everyone fulfills them to the same degree. Results often speak volume above and beyond a title. Look for bottom-line results that will get an employer excited to meet you: problem solving abilities and techniques to help save time or money for the organization. Do not wait to disclose reasons for leaving until the interview.

### **Education:**

List the name and location of the college and high school along with your degree, class standing, if superior, and honors. It is not necessary to provide dates of attendance which can draw age assumptions. Provide information that will encourage an interview.

As a general rule, the more time that has elapsed from school, the less educational detail you will need to provide. Recent grads have little but education to show, therefore, cover this area thoroughly listing majors and minors and all subjects relating to the field of interest. Extra-curricular activities are important. State jobs you have had while in school.

Do not omit your education because it is limited. Expand wherever possible by listing company courses, home study courses, etc. This indicates a desire for self-education and continued development. Be factual in the information you present.

### **References:**

List “References available upon request” on the bottom of the resume and always be prepared with at least three work-related supervisory references with addresses and phone numbers. Make sure you speak with your references so that they are aware that potential employers may be calling.

## **ACTION WORDS THAT DRAW AN EMPLOYER'S ATTENTION**

Accepted	Consulted	Implemented	Programmed
Accomplished	Contracted	Improved	Promoted
Achieved	Controlled	Increased	Proposed
Acquired	Coordinated	Initiated	Provided
Acted	Counseled	Inspected	Recommended
Adapted	Created	Installed	Reconciled
Administered	Demonstrated	Instructed	Recorded
Advised	Designed	Interpreted	Recruited
Allocated	Developed	Interviewed	Reduced
Analyzed	Directed	Invented	Referred
Approved	Displayed	Issued	Reorganized
Arranged	Distributed	Judged	Repaired
Assembled	Drafted	Launched	Reported
Assessed	Edited	Located	Researched
Assisted	Enlarged	Maintained	Resolved
Attended	Equipped	Managed	Restored
Audited	Established	Manufactured	Reviewed
Balanced	Estimated	Monitored	Revised
Budgeted	Evaluated	Motivated	Sanctioned
Classified	Exhibited	Negotiated	Scheduled
Coached	Expanded	Observed	Secured
Collected	Expedited	Obtained	Sketched
Communicated	Extended	Operated	Sold
Compared	Facilitated	Organized	Studied
Compiled	Followed	Participated	Supervised
Completed	Formulated	Performed	Supported
Composed	Founded	Planned	Taught
Computed	Fulfilled	Prepared	Trained
Concluded	Gathered	Presented	Translated
Conducted	Generated	Printed	Updated
Confirmed	Guided	Processed	Won
Constructed	Helped	Procured	Wrote
Contacted	Illustrated	Produced	

## SAMPLE RESUME

**Suzy Que**  
123 Fourth Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90010  
213-123-4567

**OBJECTIVE:** To secure a position with a progressive, dynamic company where my skills and experience can be utilized to their fullest.

**EXPERIENCE:**

9/06-Present

ABC Company, Los Angeles, CA

**Administrative Assistant to the CEO**

Provided administrative support to the Chief Executive Officer of a top tier residential real estate firm. Responsibilities included organizing executive office, coordinating corporate functions, scheduling meetings and taking minutes, overseeing administrative staff. Extensive coordinating of travel, ground transportation, hotel and meeting accommodations. Daily use of Microsoft Word for correspondence, typing of minutes and statistical reports. Weekly use of Microsoft Excel for expense reports and forecasts. Extensive phone contact with corporate executives and clients.

5/02-9/06

XYZ Company, Glendale, CA

**Executive Administrative Assistant to the President**

Provide the administrative support to the President of a fast-paced software consulting company. Duties included taking minutes of meetings, scheduling personal and business meetings, directing the employee safety and illness prevention program, composing correspondence, coordinating seminars and employee events and processing weekly expense reports for management. Managed the purchasing of office supplies and equipment for a staff of fifty-five.

6/99-5/02

Entertainment Studios, Burbank, CA

**Administrative Assistant**

Provided Administrative support to the Vice President of Theatrical Development and Vice President of Human Resources. Responsibilities included composing and typing correspondence, expense reports, initiating and receiving heavy phone calls, organizing schedules and filing. Acted as a liaison between corporate executives and clients.

**SKILLS:**

Typing 75 WPM, IBM PC with Windows 98 and Office 2000, Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Access.

**EDUCATION:**

California State University, Long Beach  
Bachelor of Arts, Art History

**REFERENCES:**

Available upon Request

**SAMPLE COVER LETTER**

Introduce your resume with a cover letter explaining why you are submitting your resume, and if necessary, to discuss any salary requirements.

**Suzy Que**  
123 Forth Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90010  
213-123-4567

August 4, 2007

Mr. George Howe  
Howe Realtors  
20 Prospect Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90010

Dear Mr. Howe:

I am interested in applying for the Administrative Assistant to the CEO position at your company.

As my resume indicates, I have nine years of experience. I have strong technical skills including typing of 75 WPM, extensive knowledge of Microsoft Word and Excel as well as an exposure to presentation packages and Access databases. My real strengths, however, are in organization, client relations, and supporting top-level executives.

I look forward to meeting with you at your earliest convenience to discuss the position. I will call you next week to determine when we can get together briefly.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Suzy Que

**SAMPLE THANK YOU LETTER**

**Suzy Que**  
123 Fourth Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90010  
213-123-4567

August 4, 1998

Mr. George Howe  
Howe Realtors  
20 Prospect Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90010

Dear Mr. Howe:

I want to express my thanks to you for the time and courtesy extended to me today. After learning about the exciting career opportunities in your firm, I am even more enthusiastic about working for Howe Realtors.

I believe my interests and capabilities would permit me to make a valuable contribution to your team.

I will follow-up with you shortly on your decision. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Suzy Que

## COMMONLY ASKED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. **Tell me about yourself.** Know your resume details and state them concisely.
2. **Why do you want to work for us?** Do any research possible ahead of time to be ready for this question. Explain that you were impressed by the company's policies, reputation, working conditions, etc.
3. **Why should I hire you? What are your strengths?** Take a personal inventory; take time to think about events in your life. Think about ways in which you've saved your company money, how you've reorganized and raised productivity, how you get along with your boss and co-workers, how you developed new systems or improved old ones.  
  
Put together a list of your strengths: leadership, work ethic, ambition, loyalty, determination, dependability, efficiency, ability to work under pressure, to cope, to get along with people, steady work history, extraordinary abilities. Use qualities that would be beneficial to the employer for this job.  
  
If you have limited work experience, think about how you've organized your life: how you've managed on a limited budget and how you made decisions for major purchases or important life choices. Perhaps you're a mother who organized a playgroup for the preschoolers in your neighborhood, or maybe you volunteer for Big Brothers.
4. **What are your weaknesses?** Proceed cautiously with this question. Either turn a weakness into a positive or talk about a personal weakness rather than business or work-related.
5. **What did you like most/least about your last job?** What you like most should fit the job for which you are applying – if you are applying with a conservative company, don't answer, "a casual environment." Be careful that negative feedback about your manager, your boss, or your co-workers may send a message about your interpersonal skills so be prepared to explain further..
6. **Why did you leave your prior job?** Be honest, be brief, but be diplomatic. Keep it simple; don't get overly detailed or ramble. Don't make excuses for yourself. If you were fired say so – they will find out eventually. Try to keep things positive. Don't talk negatively about your past employer.
7. **Where do you see yourself five years from now?** This can be translated as "are you going to be around for the long haul?" A company is looking for stability. Keep it realistic and tie it into their company.
8. **Where do you see yourself 10 to 20 years from now?** Companies like to see people with a plan of action. Again, keep it simple and realistic. It is safe to say that you expect promotions and salary increases in line with productivity.
9. **What are your salary requirements?** Always give a range – go low and go high. "I'm interviewing in the range between \_\_\_ and \_\_\_." Don't negotiate until they are going to make you the offer. Wait until you have put some substance behind your background and the company is actively interested. That might mean waiting until the second or third interview. Remember - establish value and then talk price.
10. **When are you available to start?** If you're not working, immediately. If you are working, it is important you give two weeks notice – more if you are in a management or supervisory position.

## **QUESTIONS TO ASK IN AN INTERVIEW**

Remember, just because a firm likes you, doesn't mean you are required to accept the job. You, too, are there to learn about the opportunity and determine a level of interest. You need to be comfortable with your decision and the only way to get information is to ask questions.

1. What do you feel is the ideal candidate for this position?
2. What are the key responsibilities of this job?
3. What changes or improvements would you like to see in these responsibilities?
4. What is a typical day on the job like?
5. What do you foresee as possible obstacles or problems I might have?
6. Why is the position open?
7. What would you like most for new employees to bring to this job?
8. Who would I be working for?
9. What are they like?
10. How long have they been with the firm?
11. How many people have had this job in the last 5 years?
12. Of the people who have had this job before, what were the characteristics of those who performed well? Of those who didn't?
13. How long have the other people been in the department?
14. Tell me about the best employee in the department.
15. What do you like about this industry?
16. What don't you like?
17. What do people look for when hiring in this field?
18. What qualifications are essential to success in the industry?
19. How did you get into this industry?
20. Is there a "normal" career path for people in this industry?
21. How is job performance evaluated here? How is it rewarded?
22. How many women and minorities are in middle to upper management?
23. If you hire me, what will your specific expectations be?
24. Can I provide you with any additional information to help evaluate me for this position?
25. May I ask when I can expect a decision regarding this position?

## **EIGHT KEYS TO GETTING A “YES”**

1. Be prepared.
2. Be ready to turn negatives into positives.
3. Ask questions to keep control.
4. Listen actively to content and intent of questions you are asked.
5. Do not answer questions you do not fully understand.
6. Ask for the job.
7. Follow up.
8. Practice so much that you will be relaxed and comfortable enough to let your best shine through.

## **NINE STEPS TO MAKING A GOOD DECISION**

When searching for a new job, everyone will offer their opinion on what you should do. The only opinion that matters is yours.

1. Pinpoint the decision that needs to be made. Make a list of what your ideal situation would be.
2. Try to get as much information as possible and be sure it is reliable.
3. Ask for suggestions and advice. You don't have to follow it, but you may discover some valuable tips along the way.
4. Make a list of the pros and cons of the job – see which one tips the scale.
5. Ask yourself what would be the best and worst – case scenario of this decision.
6. Determine the value of each of the previous six steps and their consequences. List the pros and cons of each one; then compare them all to find the best solution in its proper perspective. If you make this decision, where will you be six months from now? In a year? In five years?
7. Trust your intuition. Learn to trust your deeper instincts instead of following your immediate impulse.
8. Recognize and honor mistakes throughout the process and use them to improve your decision-making skills the next time.

## **APPEARANCE AND NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATIONS SEND A MESSAGE**

People make judgments within six seconds about everything from your economic level and self-confidence to your trustworthiness and honesty. Make sure you are sending the appropriate signals!

### **Appearance/Attire**

The general rule is all articles of clothing must be neat, clean, pressed, suitably matched and of a fabric and color appropriate for a professional office. Socks or hosiery should be worn at all times. Extreme styles of makeup or dress should be avoided.

Today's variety of fashions, together with the rate in which they change, make it impractical to list all attire that is appropriate, however, listed below are guidelines to keep in mind with regard to your attire:

- Do not wear excessively tight, sheer, short or revealing clothes
- Avoid clothes that are soiled or wrinkled
- Tennis shoes or sandals are inappropriate
- Nails should be short, neat and clean
- Keep perfume or cologne use to a minimum
- Avoid too much jewelry. Piercings, tattoos or other artistic impressions should be kept unexposed while in a professional business environment
- Hairstyle, hair length, facial hair, make-up, hair color and body hygiene should be neat, clean and well groomed, not eccentric.

### **Non-Verbal Communication**

Maintain direct eye contact with the interviewer during your interview. Shifting eyes and avoidance all together can send a message of distrust.

Be cognizant of your hands and other body language that may send an inaccurate message (e.g., putting your hands behind your head, putting your fingers under your chin, folding your arms, fiddling with something, and swinging or tapping your feet).

A handshake says a lot. A firm grip is important (although avoid squeezing too aggressively) while a weak handshake can convey a lack of confidence. Avoid using a two hand grip which culturally is too personal for the business environment.