



**IN-STEP**

**The IN-STEP Guide  
to successful Job Seeking**

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**‘Nurturing our youth, their future is in our hands.’**

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IN-STeP



## Write a Winning Resume

### *What is a resume?*

It is a summary of who you are and your career achievements. An informative document to describe, what you have done and how well you have done it.

A resume is a working document which you should adapt to suit the job being applied for to *sell* yourself, skills and abilities to get your foot in the door for an interview.

Having a standard ‘one-size-fits-all’ resume *will not* address selection criteria, skills or experience requested by different organisations for different job advertisements.

Tailor your resume detail (without lying) to suit the advertised vacancy describing the skills and experience you have developed that are relevant to the position.

A general rule is to keep a resume short and concise, around two or three pages in length containing necessary information.

Employers and recruiters quickly read through resumes, so keeping it short with direct information is suggested to make every point count.

Take care with the content and design layout of your resume. Ask someone else to look at your resume to give you advice on;

- how easy it is to read
- is it well set out - does it look good
- are there any mistakes

Usually you would include two referees on your resume, one work related (if possible) + one personal referee.

Think carefully about who you will choose and your relationship with that person. If a potential employer is to contact them you will want them to portray you in a positive light.

Make sure you ask these people *before* including them on your resume.

Use a presentation folder to put your resume and any other certificates, achievements etc. into.

This will show a potential employer you have personal pride.

Also it will keep these important documents neat and tidy.





## *Resume Tips*



Ensure your resume is 100% error free.

- ✓ No spelling or grammar errors.
- ✓ Correct contact details, especially phone numbers.

Use white paper with a common, easy to read font.

- ✗ Do not waste space.
- ✗ Do not include photographs, borders or clip art.

You don't have to include personal details, such as;

- gender
- age
- health
- religion

if you do not wish to, as this information has no relevance to your ability to do the job.

**Sell yourself**, make sure you include your achievements, don't just list tasks and responsibilities.

Include positive words like – *excellent* communicator, *strong* team player.

Only include information such as interests, licences, awards, training, professional memberships etc if they are relative to the role or you think they will strengthen your application.

Use a simple, easy to read, plain font (avoid italics and mixing font styles) and use page numbers.

Headings can be in bold, using bullet points for information presented in a list is a great way of keeping your resume simple.

# Searching for a job

Looking to find your dream job?

Then start planning your future!

As the old saying goes;

**Failing to plan - is planning to fail !**



Take the time to think about what your needs are, what do you want, such as;

- Hours of employment
- Location of work
- What type of role you are looking for
- What company or employer you would like to work for

Your answer to these requirements and more, will help you narrow down your search.

## Where to search?

There are numerous ways to find a job to apply for, here are some ideas to get you started.

### Printed Media



Newspapers advertise various job vacancies in the classifieds section of the paper.

Or you could reverse market, advertise yourself in the 'wanted – jobs' section.

## World Wide Web

Increasingly popular for job advertisers as well as job seekers is the internet.

An internet search allows you to customise your job hunt by location, job type/category, industry etc. You can even apply whilst on line and register for job alerts to be emailed to you.



- ✓ Check out websites such as;
  - [www.seek.com.au](http://www.seek.com.au)
  - [www.careerone.com.au](http://www.careerone.com.au)
  - [www.mycareer.com.au](http://www.mycareer.com.au)
  - [www.linkme.com.au](http://www.linkme.com.au)

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## Company Websites



Have you chosen a company you would like to work for?

Chances are they have a web site, check out the recruitment / positions vacant section of their site.

## Recruitment Agencies

Recruitment agencies provide recruitment services, they find the right people to fill job vacancies whether they be part-time, full-time, casual, permanent or temporary positions. Recruitment agencies often specialise in certain industry groups, so job vacancies and types will vary between different agencies.

There are quite a number of Recruitment Agencies in the Townsville region. Check out the Yellow Pages Directory under; Employment – Labour Hire Contractors & Employment Services.

You will need to register with the agencies you choose, they may want you to complete a skills aptitude test as well as fill in their forms with your details.

### **TIP!**



- Register with more than one agency
- Ask questions, get advice
- Keep in contact with them

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## Employment Agencies

Employment agencies are likely to be linked with Australian Government programmes, such as Job Network.

Access to these providers may require job seekers to be registered with Centrelink.

They provide various support services towards self improvement as well as facilities for job seekers to search for job vacancies.

## More ways to *find work ...*

Target businesses you would like to work for, *send them a letter* with your details, *knock on their door* and enquire if there are any vacancies



Approaching your ‘employer of choice’ directly will indicate your interest in wanting to work for them.

Make sure you prepare yourself well, research the organisation and their core business. Plan and practice how you will introduce yourself, and why you are there.

Ensure you have prepared an excellent introduction letter and resume to leave with your potential employer.



Tell everyone you are looking for work, ‘word of mouth’ helps.

Sometimes it’s ‘not what you know, it’s who you know’.

Many jobs are never advertised and are discovered through word of mouth networking.

Some companies even encourage existing workers to recommend a suitable candidate. So ask around and let friends, family etc. know what sort of job you are looking for.



# Cover Letters



Writing a great cover letter with your job application is another chance to *sell yourself* to your potential employer.

You should tailor the letter to provide the employer with an overview of your skills and experience in relation to the vacant role.

It will show that you are serious about the available position and have taken the time to prepare your application.

You may like to use the cover letter as a way of highlighting your Employability Skills and Personal Values, for example;

## **Employability Skills**

- Communication
- Team Work
- Self Management

## **Personal Values**

- Loyalty
- Personal presentation
- Commitment

# Job Interviews

You have landed yourself a job interview, WELL DONE !

Your hard work so far has paid off and you have made it to a short list of applicants.

You still have a little more work to do, don't let yourself down now that you have got this far.

Prepare for the interview to maintain that competitive edge and win the position you are applying for.



**Prior Preparation and Planning will Prevent Poor Performance**

**Preparing for you interview will reduce a lot of nerves and stress.**

**It will give you confidence and help you to answer questions easily.**

## Do some Research

Find out about the company from their website, other published material (brochures, company newsletter etc) or they may provide a contact phone number for you to speak with someone and ask questions.

Learn about what their core business is, who they market their products to, are they a small business or a multi national etc. You may uncover some handy information that can be used during your interview.

## Be prepared

Ask what interview style will be used, it is better to know in advance so you are not in for any surprises.

Various different interview forms are used such as;

- One-on-one (one interviewer and one interviewee)
- Group (one interviewer and several interviewees)
- Panel (several interviewers and one interviewee)
- Phone Interview

Invest in a presentation folder to put your resume and any supporting documentation in. This will show the interviewer that you are organised.

Have a trial run to get to the location of the interview so you can see where it is. For example if it is at a large hospital, or a multi-storey office block, check the *exact* location.

## Practice Questions and Answers

Focus on your response to some common interview questions and practice your answers. Perhaps a trusted friend or adult may help with some 'role play' practice.



### Common Interview Questions

- ◆ What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- ◆ Why are you applying for this job?
- ◆ What can you offer the company?
- ◆ Why should I hire you?
- ◆ Demonstrate your skills, experience and competencies by providing practical examples of past behaviour

This is just a few examples of different questions that an interviewer may ask you.

Practicing your responses to questions like these will allow to you stay focused during the interview.

During the interview, if you do not understand the question the interviewer has asked you, *don't* be afraid to let them know that.

Be polite and let them know you are unsure of what they are asking, could they please repeat the question. This is much better than answering incorrectly.

Questions ?

Questions ?

Questions ?



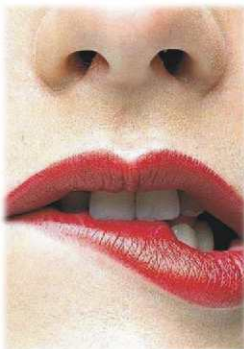
**\*\* Remember \*\***

**An interview is not just about the employer choosing a suitable candidate, you are also screening them to see if you want to work for them, if you like the role, company etc.**

*So make sure you have some questions to ask them!!*

What is the average work day for this position like?  
Why is the position available?  
Are there training and development opportunities?  
Will I be required to work on weekends or do overtime?

**HOT TIP!**



**Do Not Mumble**

Make sure you speak clearly so the interviewer can hear everything you say



## Body Language

Your preparation and practice of questions prior to the interview will help you to stay calm. No doubt you will still be a little nervous though, so be aware of what your body language is communicating to the interviewer.

### *What is Body Language?*

**It is the way you sit, your facial expressions, gestures or mannerisms etc. (Non-verbal communication)**



Some helpful hints to demonstrate positive body language;

- Maintain eye contact
- Sit comfortably and breathe easily
- Smile , look interested and listen
- Have a *firm* handshake

Avoid negative body language cues;

- Slouching, crossing your arms
- Fiddling, biting your nails or lips
- Using your hands when talking
- Nervous gestures like tapping feet or hands

*I don't have a thing to wear!*



Have you ever heard the saying,  
*'First impressions count'*

Your appearance (hygiene, hair, clothing, jewellery, make-up...etc) make a strong statement about who you are and will influence the 'first impression' an employer will have of you.

Take the time to plan what you will wear to an interview. An employer is likely to be more conservative than you, so take that into consideration when deciding what outfit to wear.

Ask a trusted adult for their opinion on your appearance. You may think their advice screams;

*'that is so my mother dressed me!'* BUT

it is likely they will be closer in age to a potential employer and hence share similar ideas about personal presentation.



*Dress for  
Success !*



Express your fashion flair in your personal time, *not* at your job interview, following are a few examples to get you started;

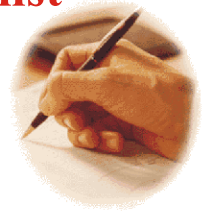
## Presentation

- ✓ ***Ditch the Denim!***
  - it will send the wrong message (even if it cost you a lot of money, an employer may think you look too casual and don't care about the job)
- ✓ ***Cover and Conceal!***
  - bare midriffs, sleeveless tops, short skirts, revealing cleavage, pants that sit below your underwear line, exposed tattoos, a swim-wear look are not appropriate for an interview
- ✓ ***Jettison some Jewellery!***
  - keep it simple, one set of earrings and one neck chain. No dangly earrings or noisy jangling pieces, save these for your personal time. Guys, may be best to avoid jewellery altogether
- ✓ Choose solid coloured clothing over loud patterns that may distract the interviewer
- ✓ Job interview day is Shower, Deodorant and Brush Teeth day!
  - Aim for a clean and tidy appearance, keep hair off your face, minimal jewellery, clean ironed clothes, guys should shave - girls wear light makeup
- ✓ Turn *off* your mobile phone, iPod etc.  
Your attention needs to be with your potential employer, you don't want any embarrassing interruptions,

**\*\* Remember \*\***

***First impressions can be lasting, so take care with all details of your appearance.***

# The Interview Overview **Checklist**



## *Before the interview day*

- Organise your resume in a display folder. Include a copy of your application, selection criteria etc.
- Do your research, find out about the company.
- Ask what interview style will be used; eg Panel, Group.
- Have a trial run to get to the interview location.
- Choose what you will wear, is it clean and ironed.



## *Interview day*

- Double check your resume and supporting documents are organised.
- Check your appearance, hair is neat, clothes are OK.
- Arrive 10-15 minutes early.
- Switch off your mobile phone, ipod etc.
- If there is a receptionist, ensure you are polite to them. Remember this is your first impression and they could be your interviewer!
- While waiting sit neatly and quietly, definitely no slouching – think about your body language.

## *When invited in*

- Greet the interviewer/s politely and shake hands (firm handshake)
- Only sit down when invited to and sit where they have asked you to. You don't want to leave a bad impression by sitting in the boss's chair
- Look the interviewer/s in the eye, if more than one interviewer, try to give each person equal eye contact
- Speak politely and clearly, definitely no mumbling
- Be keen and confident BUT never cocky
- Remember your interviewer/s names and use them throughout the interview (They will be impressed that you have remembered)



## *Answering questions*

- Stay calm and breathe.
- Listen to each question carefully.
- Think about your answer before you start talking.
- If you don't understand what is being asked, let the interviewer know, they are likely to re-phrase the question in a way that you understand.
- When answering questions, expand on the answer giving examples of what/how you did... and what the outcome was (if you really do not know the answer to a specific question *do not* make something up. You will come off second best as the interviewer will know you have no idea).
- Being honest always pays off.

## *Asking questions*

- Always* have some questions to ask, this shows your interest in the position.
- Never* mention wages, unless you are negotiating a management position (most positions are covered under awards enquire at Wageline E - [www.wageline.qld.gov.au](http://www.wageline.qld.gov.au) ( Telephone - 1300 369 945 )

## *Closing the interview*

- When the interview is finished, thank the interviewer/s for their time, you have remembered their name/s so call them by their name.
- Shake their hand (ensure your handshake is firm) and say I look forward to hearing from you.

## *Leave directly*

- Do not chat to people on the way out, even if you know them.
- Walk out with integrity (calmly and positively).

*Make sure in the next few days while you are waiting for **the** phone call, to answer all phone calls in a professional manner – do not just pick up the phone and say G'day.*

**GOOD LUCK**

# FINAL TIP!



## *This is really important*

Regardless of how you think you performed in the interview, or how your job application was received, do not be afraid to *follow-up*.

You can do this by phone, letter, email or in person. Take the time to put together a few words covering the following;

1. Thanking the employer for their time.
2. Briefly repeat what you think you could bring to the position and the organisation.
3. Cover any points you may not have got across at the interview or job application.
4. End on a positive note.

This follow-up may just be what is needed to give you the edge to be successful in gaining the vacant position.

Often there are several candidates that are *right* for the role. An employer will be looking for something that sets you apart from the rest.

**ENJOY YOUR WORKING CAREER, YOU'VE EARNED IT**



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# WHERE TO FIND US



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