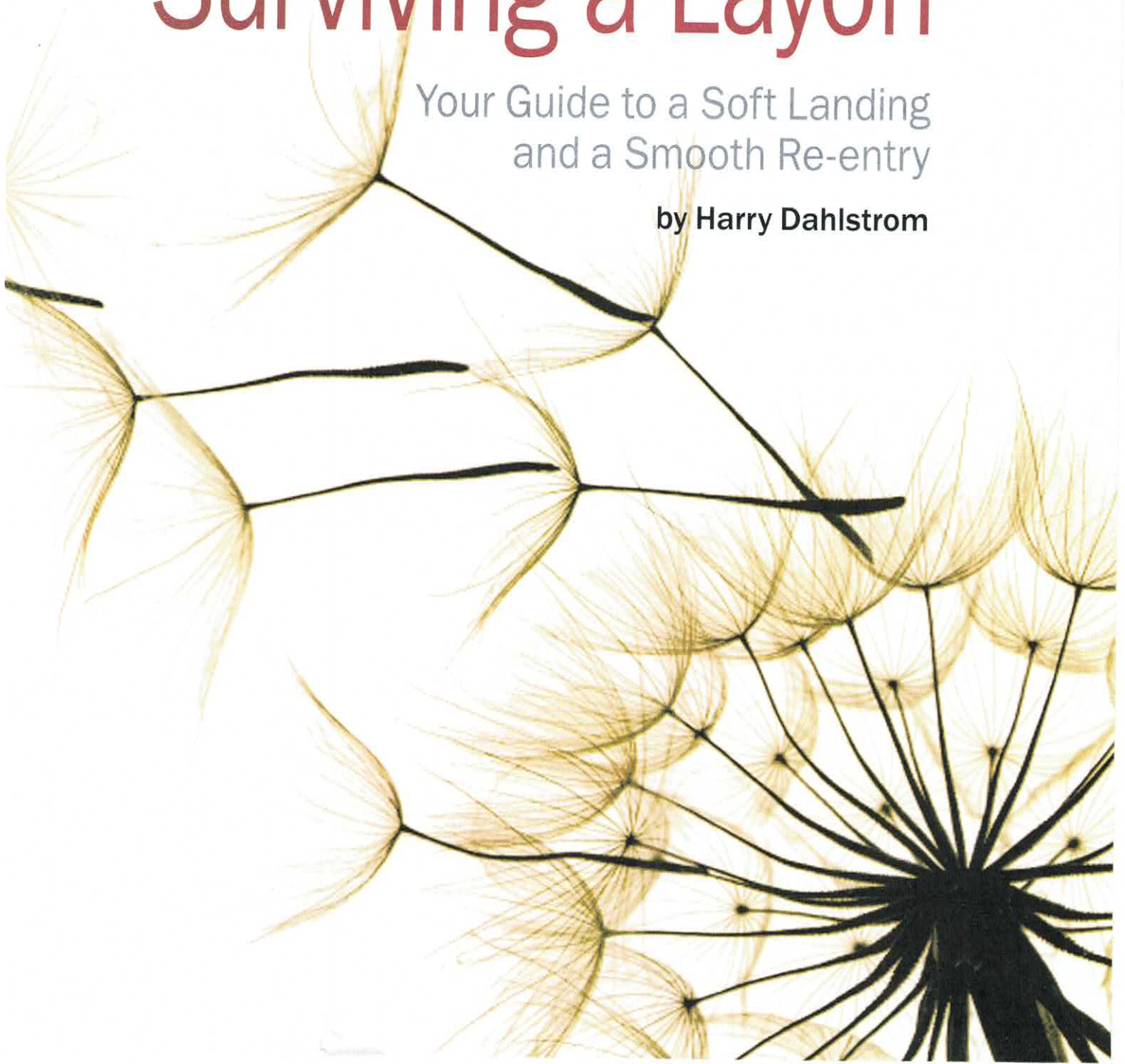


How to cope with the emotional stress of losing your job
How to pay your bills when you have no paycheck or savings
The three sources that account for 76% of all new job hires

Surviving a Layoff

Your Guide to a Soft Landing
and a Smooth Re-entry

by Harry Dahlstrom



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and many also find better jobs.

Plus, if you were burnt out by the kind of work you've been doing, now is a great time to look into a new line of work.

What if you handled the news badly?

Everybody takes the news differently. Some clam up and say nothing. Some plead and beg. Some sob and cry. Some get angry and say things they later regret. Some are glad and can't wait to start something new.

The person who told you that you were being laid off is a professional. He or she knows that losing a job is traumatic and that people react emotionally, not rationally. They try not to take your reaction personally.

After a week or so, if you still feel guilty about how you reacted when the manager gave you the news, consider sending her a short note. Simply say that you were surprised by the news and that you became emotional. Say that you regret taking out your feelings on her.

A short, hand-written apology says more about your character than all the tears and cursing of that emotionally charged meeting.

The stress you feel from losing your job is real.

Each of us lives in a "comfort zone." A comfort zone is an emotional place. It's a place where your work, your coworkers, and the demands of your job are routine and comfortable.

Suddenly, your "comfort zone" has been shattered—and you can't fix it. You're in a mild state of shock.

As you can see from the chart on the right, losing your job is stressful. It's right up there with learning that you have a serious illness.

Most of us will need a few weeks to heal and get back on our feet. Those who were deeply wounded by the layoff might need a few months to heal.

During this healing time, each of us will experience four different emotions. Turn the page—we need to talk about them.

COMPARING LIFE'S MAJOR STRESSES

If losing your spouse is the greatest stress, how do other stressful situations compare? Here's a partial list:



Source: Journal of
Psychosomatic Research

Anger.

Once the shock of losing your job wears off, you may experience bursts of anger. After all, you were good to them and letting you go is unfair.

In your anger, you may fantasize about punching the boss in the nose, filing a lawsuit, or writing a letter to the newspapers.

Fantasizing is one thing. Following through with it is another.

Keep in mind, that you are going to need another job. If you file a frivolous lawsuit, write libelous letters, or assault someone—it could haunt you for decades. Background checking is big business these days. Future employers will learn about your mischief and they will shun you.

Instead, find a good sounding board. A sounding board is someone who will listen to your complaints—over and over again.

Don't use your spouse, parents, or kids as a sounding board, though. They'll get sick of it.

The best sounding boards are people who have also lost their jobs. Find those fellow victims. Get together, scream, shout, cry, and vent that anger together.

Mourning.

You're going to miss your friends, your coworkers, and your old gang.

So give them a call or meet them for lunch. Stay in touch.

Don't forget those other people who were laid off with you—the grumpy lady who ran the

copier, the funny guy who worked in payroll, and that kid with the tattoos who taught you all those computer tricks.

Get in touch with them too. Tell them you were thinking about them. Ask how they're doing. Feed them some encouragement. You'll feel good for reaching out and they'll think you're special because you cared.

Then, try this—send two hand-written notes, one to your old boss and the other to the CEO of the company. Thank them for your old job and all the great things you learned there. Add a short personal story about an opportunity you were given and what it meant to you.

When you need a reference for a new job, that note will speak volumes about your character.

Acceptance.

Some experts think most of us will need a week or so to cycle through the grieving process.

But, if you still have difficulty coping with daily life two weeks after losing your job, you may be suffering from clinical depression.

Clinical depression is a serious but treatable illness. Some of the symptoms include: low energy, poor appetite, can't sleep, feeling worthless, feeling hopeless, can't concentrate, worrying, blaming yourself.

If you have several of these symptoms two weeks after losing your job, call your doctor.

ON THE HOME FRONT

This is a touchy subject. Like it or not, here it is.

Some men who lose their jobs become jealous of their working wives. They no longer see themselves as breadwinners. So, they belittle their spouses and minimize the importance of their jobs.

Then too, some wives become resentful of their unemployed husbands. They see themselves single-handedly supporting the family and it can seem overwhelming.

Women who lose their jobs cope better than men. They are less likely to resent their working husbands.

Jealousy almost always stems from a lowered self-esteem. That is, not thinking you're very important.

The best way to handle jealousy is to talk about it. Find out what's expected of you, what's expected of your partner, and create some temporary roles. Then, make an effort to show respect for the other person and how he or she might feel.

How much money will you get?

It depends on how much money you earned while working and how long you worked. Plus, each state pays different amounts and the amounts change year to year. The benefits agent will explain how much you are qualified to receive when you register.

Keep in mind, though, these benefits are only a financial cushion—they will not replace your full paycheck.

How much money will you need every month—

Use the worksheet on the right to tally up the numbers. It's as easy as 1...2...3...

What if your benefits aren't enough to make ends meet?

Then, you'll have to dip into your savings.

So, remember that emergency fund with three-months pay that you stashed away for a rainy day? Well, it's raining. You're going to need that money to make ends meet.

What? You never got around to creating that emergency fund?

You have four options:

1. Reduce your spending and live within your new means.
2. Find extra money to reduce your cash gap.
3. Ask your creditors to reduce your bills until you find another job.
4. Get help from a non-profit credit counselor.

Let's walk through those options—

Turn the page.

REVIEW YOUR FINANCES

1. Add up your monthly income

Unemployment Benefit	\$	_____
Spouse's Paycheck		_____
Other Income		_____
Total Income ¹	\$	_____

2. List your monthly expenses

Figure what you spend monthly for each of the following items. On credit cards, list your current minimum monthly payment.

Rent or Mortgage	\$	_____
Heat		_____
Light		_____
Phone		_____
Food		_____
Clothing		_____
Insurance		_____
Taxes		_____
Auto Loan		_____
Credit Card		_____
Credit Card		_____
Credit Card		_____
Other Loan		_____
Donations		_____
Medical, Healthcare		_____
Transportation		_____
Entertainment		_____
Other		_____
Total Expenses ²	\$	_____

3. Establish the gap

Subtract your Total Expenses² from your Total Income¹ to see whether you have a positive or a negative cash flow.

Total Income ¹	\$	_____
Total Expenses ²		_____
The Cash Gap	\$	_____

2 FIND EXTRA MONEY TO REDUCE THE CASH GAP

Collect old debts

Stop and think—does anyone owe you money? If someone owes you money, now is the time to ask for it. If they don't have the cash to repay you, put them on a time payment plan. Get them to make weekly or monthly payments to you until the debt is repaid.

Turn unwanted things into cash

Take a walk through your home and take an inventory of the things you no longer need or use—baby furniture, old kitchen set, golf clubs, air conditioner, power tools, stereo equipment, cameras, musical instruments. Look through your closets, basement, attic, garage, or storage space too. Run an ad on eBay and unload those unwanted things for cash.

Turn stuff into cash

If you have boxes of stuff that aren't worth the cost of advertising, have a yard sale or a sidewalk sale. People are always willing to spend a few bucks on books, clothes, hand tools, toys, dishes, lamps,

fans, appliances, and anything else of small value.

To pull in the paying customers, wait for a nice weekend, pile the stuff outside where people passing by can see it, and hang a "yard sale" sign out front and at the street corners.

Unload the family jewels

Do you have valuables that you'd like to sell? If you have jewelry, a coin collection, silver service, a gold watch, antique furniture or rugs—have them appraised. After you get the written appraisal, ask the appraiser to recommend the best way to sell the item.

If the items have strong sentimental value, offer them to your relatives first.

Change your lifestyle

Are you living beyond your means? Are your home, your car, or your dining habits leaving you broke? A smaller home, a smaller car, and more home-cooked meals could leave you healthier, wealthier, and wiser.

HOW TO CASH IN ON YOURSELF

1. Do you have a talent or skill?

Can you give music lessons, write resumes, take wedding photos, draw or illustrate, decorate cakes, tutor students, create web sites, network computers, sew or do alterations?

What talents do you have that people or local businesses might need?

2. Do you have any free time?

You don't need a special talent to make extra money on your own. Lots of people are looking for someone to do odd or routine jobs—babysit, run errands, check on an elderly relative, prepare a meal, clean things, move things, fix things, pull weeds, detail the car, or walk the dog. What services could you offer?

3. Bring in the paying customers:

- Use social media to get the word out to your friends
- List your service in local online bulletin boards, like Craigslist.org.
- Distribute flyers to homes and businesses in your area.
- Hang flyers on the bulletin boards at supermarkets, places of worship, and community centers.
- Leave a flyer beneath the windshield wiper of cars parked on the street.
- Ask friends to refer you to their friends and employers.

4 GET HELP FROM A NON-PROFIT CREDIT COUNSELOR

You don't have to be in debt to get help from a credit counselor

But, if you are in debt, the sooner you call a credit counselor the better off you'll be. Sadly, too many people wait too long and the only option left is bankruptcy. So, if you lost your job, if you survived a natural disaster, if you went crazy and bought something you cannot afford—call a credit counselor. You'll be amazed at what they can do to help you.

Credit counselors are good listeners

A good credit counselor will listen to your story. She'll encourage you to talk and get things off your chest. She'll ask lots of questions. She'll tell you about other situations where people faced the same problems you face. She'll tell you what they did—what worked and what didn't work. She'll help you figure out a plan. She'll help you put that plan into action. She'll become your coach, your cheerleader, your friend.

Depending on your situation, credit counselors can—

- Create a plan that lets you live within your means
- Rebuild your reputation with your creditors
- Stop the collection calls

and legal notices

- Reduce your monthly payments
- Reduce your interest rate
- Waive late fees
- Re-age your account so that it's not in default
- Consolidate all your bills into one payment
- Offer motivation, education, & encouragement
- Prevent bankruptcy

Counseling is surprisingly affordable

Counseling from a non-profit agency is usually free to the needy. The not-so-needy might be charged \$75 for a one-hour counseling session.

Creditors prefer to work with a counselor

Over the years, credit counselors have built up solid relationships with local creditors. The counselors have a history, a track record, and a reputation that creditors trust. If a counselor calls a creditor on your behalf, it says that you are serious about taking control of your bill—and that's good enough for most creditors.

HOW TO CHOOSE A CREDIT COUNSELOR

All credit counselors are not the same. Some businesses masquerade as credit counselors but they're really selling debt consolidation loans, bankruptcy services, or debt negotiation programs.

Where to find a credit counselor

- The U.S. Bankruptcy Court maintains a list of their approved credit counseling agencies at—www.usdoj.gov/ust
- The National Foundation for Consumer Credit maintains links to their member agencies at—www.nfcc.org
- The Better Business Bureau can tell you if an agency has a history of consumer complaints—www.bbb.org

Call three agencies. Compare services and fees

Here are some questions to ask—with straight answers to expect:

- Is your agency a non-profit organization? (Yes.)
- Is your agency licensed? (Yes.)
- Are your counselors certified or enrolled in a certification program? (Yes.)
- Will I receive a thorough financial interview, a written evaluation, a best-case solution, and education to help prevent future financial problems? (Yes.)
- How long will the session take? (About an hour.)
- What is the cost of the session? (About \$75.)
- Are there any monthly fees for joining a DMP—Debt Management Program? (About \$50 a month.)
- What if I can't pay your fees? (No one has ever been turned away due to an inability to pay.)
- Do you also offer affordable workshops, classes, or free educational material? (Yes.)
- Are your employees paid more if I sign up for certain services, such as a DMP? (No.)
- Would I get a written contract with free information about services, payment terms, total cost, and the time needed to achieve results? (Yes.)

and training for that occupation.

Then, visit www.dol.gov. That's the U.S. Department of Labor's web site. Click on "Occupational Outlook Handbook." There, you'll find detailed job descriptions on hundreds of different occupations.

Once you've zeroed in on a career that excites you, go out and talk to people who work in that occupation. The idea is to learn what they like and dislike about their work.

To find someone who works in that job, talk to your friends, relatives, teachers, preachers, politicians, beautician, barber, realtor, police officers, and local business owners.

Ask if they know someone who works in the job you want. Then, ask if they would call that person and set up a telephone meeting for you so you can talk to them. Or, even better, meet them for a cup of coffee.

Do people really get together and talk about their jobs?

You bet they do. It's called "informational interviewing" and it's one of the best ways to learn about the real job.

What kind of questions should you ask this person?

When you meet, be friendly and inquisitive. Here are some questions you might ask:

- How did you get into this line of work?
- What are your duties and responsibilities?
- What skills are needed to do this job?
- Tell me about your typical day at work.
- What do you like most about what you do? Why?
- What do you dislike most about what you do? How do you cope?

- What do employers really look for when hiring?
- Who are the major local employers?
- Does the future look healthy for employment in this field?
- Any advice for someone looking for a first-time job in this field?

After the meeting, be sure to send a short thank-you note to the person you met as well as the person who introduced you. These people might become important contacts when you begin searching for a job.

Is there a career counselor you could talk with?

Absolutely. Did you know that there are over 2,500 American Job Centers across the USA? They've helped millions of people find work—and their services are free and open to the public.

Call or visit your local Job Center and make an appointment to speak with an employment counselor. To find a local office, Google *American Job Centers* or *One-Stop Career Centers*.

Your counselor will begin by asking questions about your work interests. She might also ask you to take a career test to uncover possibilities you aren't aware of. The counselor could then explain the local opportunities for your career choices—who the major employers are, which skills they want, and how to develop a job-hunting plan. If you need job training or retraining, she can recommend several approved providers.

Now, employment counselors have worked with lots of people and they have lots of contacts. So, ask your counselor if she could arrange for you to talk with someone who works in the job you want. You could learn a lot in a 15-20 minute telephone chat.

WHAT ARE THE PROS AND CONS OF YOUR NEW CAREER?

Will you enjoy the work for the mere pleasure of doing it?

YES ☐ NO ☐

Will the work be interesting enough that problems become challenges instead of frustrations?

YES ☐ NO ☐

Is the product or service you'll offer needed, worthwhile, and reputable?

YES ☐ NO ☐

Are the people you'll work with and the customers you'll serve, the kind of people you'll be proud to be associated with?

YES ☐ NO ☐

Will you feel respected for the work you do?

YES ☐ NO ☐

Will you make a comfortable wage and be able to provide your family with the things they want and need?

YES ☐ NO ☐

Are there opportunities for personal and professional growth in this field?

YES ☐ NO ☐

Is this a growing occupation with a good outlook for employment? (See pages 16 and 17)

YES ☐ NO ☐

Business & Financial Operations Occupations					
Accountants and auditors	1424	146	BD	\$71	
Buyers and purchasing agents	432.2	40.2	BD	\$63	
Claims adjusters & examiners	328.5	25.8	HS	\$66	
Compliance officers	313.9	30.7	BD	\$69	
Cost estimators	217.4	24.2	BD	\$64	
Financial analysts	329.5	30.9	BD	\$86	
Human resources specialists	625.7	67.7	BD	\$61	
Loan officers	316.2	29.9	BD	\$63	
Logisticians	174.9	17.9	BD	\$75	
Management analysts	876.3	99.9	BD	\$84	
Market research analysts & specialists	681.9	90.7	BD	\$63	
Personal financial advisors	271.7	23.2	BD	\$89	
Training & development specialists	306.4	37.3	BD	\$61	
Community & Social Service Occupations					
Child, family & school social workers	339.8	36.9	BD	\$46	
Clergy	234	27.5	BD	\$49	
Educational & vocational counselors	324.5	37.3	MA	\$56	
Healthcare social workers	180.5	22.2	MA	\$56	
Social and human service assistants	413.7	57.5	HS	\$34	
Substance & behavioral counselors	304.5	41.5	BD	\$45	
Computer & Mathematical Occupations					
Computer network support specialists	191.3	17.4	AD	\$63	
Computer programmers	250.3	15.1	BD	\$84	
Computer systems analysts	633.9	53.4	BD	\$89	
Computer user support specialists	671.8	65.1	SC	\$51	
Network & systems administrators	383.9	29.3	BD	\$82	
Software developers, applications	944.2	99.2	BD	\$104	
Software developers, systems software	421.3	35.4	BD	\$110	
Web developers	160.5	15.1	AD	\$69	
Construction & Extraction Occupations					
Carpenters	1006.5	116.3	HS	\$47	
Cement masons and concrete finishers	191.1	23.3	NF	\$43	
Construction laborers	1405	179.3	NF	\$36	
Electricians	715.4	94.6	HS	\$55	
Operating engineers	402.4	52.5	HS	\$48	
Painters, construction and maintenance	375.6	41.4	NF	\$39	

Nurse practitioners	189.1	16.9	MA	\$107	
Pharmacists	314.3	14.1	DP	\$126	
Pharmacy technicians	420.4	38.3	HS	\$33	
Physical therapists	247.7	16.9	DP	\$88	
Physicians and surgeons	756.8	28.5	DP	\$208	
Radiologic technologists	210.5	14	AD	\$60	
Registered nurses	3059.8	210.4	BD	\$72	
Healthcare Support Occupations					
Dental assistants	346	44.8	PS	\$39	
Home health aides	831.8	140.8	HS	\$24	
Medical assistants	686.6	99.7	PS	\$34	
Nursing assistants	1513.2	190.7	PS	\$29	
Installation, Maintenance & Repair Occupations					
Automotive technicians & mechanics	770.1	74	PS	\$41	
Bus & truck mechanics	285.3	28.4	HS	\$47	
HVAC mechanics & installers	367.9	42.8	PS	\$48	
Industrial machinery mechanics	381.5	37.8	HS	\$52	
Maintenance and repair workers, general	1488	156.9	HS	\$38	
Telecom equipment installers & repairers	232.9	23.6	PS	\$56	
Legal Occupations					
Lawyers	823.9	45.7	DP	\$121	
Paralegals and legal assistants	325.7	40.4	AD	\$51	
Management Occupations					
Administrative services managers	300.2	28.1	BD	\$96	
Architectural and engineering managers	192.5	14.6	BD	\$141	
Chief executives	263.2	16.8	BD	\$190	
Computer & information systems managers	414.4	38.8	BD	\$143	
Construction managers	471.8	40.2	BD	\$93	
Education administrators, K-12	275.4	22.9	MA	\$95	
Education administrators, postsecondary	192.6	16.8	MA	\$94	
Farmers, ranchers & agricultural managers	975.4	95.6	HS	\$68	
Financial managers	653.6	64.9	BD	\$128	
Food service managers	356.4	46.9	HS	\$54	
General and operations managers	2376.4	230	BD	\$101	
Industrial production managers	186.5	13.8	BD	\$103	
Marketing managers	259.2	26	BD	\$134	
Medical and health services managers	406.1	42.2	BD	\$100	

Bakers	191.9	28.1	NF	\$27	
Out, punch & press machine operators	188.8	18.6	HS	\$34	
Electrical & electronic assemblers	279.6	30.5	HS	\$34	
Helpers—production workers	354.6	57.7	HS	\$28	
Inspectors, testers, sorters & weighers	574	54.4	HS	\$38	
Laundry and dry-cleaning workers	218.6	29	NF	\$23	
Machinists	395.2	41.6	HS	\$44	
Packaging & filling machine operators	394.9	46.7	HS	\$30	
Printing press operators	175.7	15.8	HS	\$36	
Welders, cutters, solderers, and brazers	424.7	48.8	HS	\$41	
Protective Services Occupations					
Correctional officers and jailers	434.3	33.8	HS	\$44	
Firefighters	332.4	25	PS	\$50	
Police and sheriff's patrol officers	687.1	52.9	HS	\$61	
Security guards	1143.8	153.8	HS	\$28	
Sales & Related Occupations					
Cashiers	3648.5	661.3	NF	\$22	
Counter and rental clerks	436.1	58.7	NF	\$27	
Insurance sales agents	475.9	53.4	HS	\$51	
Parts salespersons	258	30.5	NF	\$30	
Real estate sales agents	369.2	38.9	HS	\$49	
Retail salespersons	4510.9	641.3	NF	\$24	
Sales reps, wholesale & manufacturing	1406.4	151.1	HS	\$59	
Sales reps, technical & scientific products	325.9	36	BD	\$80	
Securities & financial sales agents	442.4	44.6	BD	\$64	
Telemarketers	167.7	21.4	NF	\$25	
Transportation & Material Moving Occupations					
Bus drivers, school or special client	497.5	66.3	HS	\$32	
Bus drivers, transit and intercity	183.8	25	HS	\$42	
Cleaners of vehicles and equipment	408.5	63.7	NF	\$25	
Driver/sales workers	447.8	48.8	HS	\$25	
Heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers	1958.8	238.4	PS	\$44	
Industrial truck and tractor operators	615	73.4	NF	\$35	
Laborers & material movers, hand	2953.8	434.7	NF	\$28	
Light truck or delivery services drivers	1001.3	120.7	HS	\$33	
Packers and packagers, hand	673.4	93	NF	\$25	
Taxi drivers and chauffeurs	370.4	51.3	NF	\$26	

Source, US Bureau of Labor Statistics

Where can you find the job requirements for your occupation?

If you are responding to an advertisement or a job posting, look for a statement in the ad that says, "The ideal candidate will be able to ..." or "Job duties include" That's where the hiring managers tell you exactly which job requirements they want.

If you are not responding to a specific advertisement and you want a general idea of your occupation's requirements, visit several job sites, like Indeed, Careerbuilder, LinkedIn, and Glassdoor. Then, read a dozen help-wanted advertisements for your occupation. Pick out the 5 common job requirements that all the ads seem to want. That's the stuff most hiring managers are looking for.

You can also dig out those job requirements in the US Department of Labor's, *Occupational Outlook Handbook*. It includes the job descriptions for hundreds of different occupations. It's free online at <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/>.

How much detail should you include?

Mention the important facts, but keep them simple. Use the names of things. Instead of saying, "I made sandwiches," say, "I made grilled cheese sandwiches, egg salad, baloney...." Also try to include numbers to describe the volume, percent, size, money, time, effort, or the result of what you did—"I made 6 dozen baloney sandwiches..." Names and numbers are specific. They allow the managers to visualize what you accomplished.

Oh—don't get into the why or how of each project. That's the back-story. Save those interesting details for your job interview.

Now, you try it—

1. Name the job you want

2. List the job requirements

- 1st _____
- 2nd _____
- 3rd _____
- 4th _____
- 5th _____

3. Select the **1st** job requirement from your list above and write it down

4. Give an example of when or how you performed it

5. Add details

Continue on the next page—

SUBSTITUTE SKILLS

If you don't have one of the needed job requirements, offer a substitute. A substitute shows that you have similar knowledge.

Similar knowledge shows that you can learn the requirement quicker than if you had no knowledge of the requirement.

For example, if you don't have the sales experience required for a given job, you might talk about your non-profit fund-raising accomplishments instead.

If you don't have the interior decorating experience needed for a job, show pictures of the decorating projects you created for your own home.

If you don't have the public speaking experience needed for another job, talk about the PowerPoint presentations you gave in high school or college.

Reach into those other areas of your life to find those substitute skills—military, school, sports, volunteering, hobbies, and home projects.

TECH SUPPORT SUPERVISOR**Select a requirement**

Supervise personnel

Give an example

Supervised tech support team

Add details

Supervised tech-support team of 7 people who resolved about 900 cases a month

EMERGENCY MED TRAINER**Select a requirement**

Train and coach

Give an example

Trained and coached a military squad

Add details

Trained and coached a military squad to provide life-saving emergency-medical treatment in combat: gunshot wounds, explosives, bone fractures, burns, more

ASSISTANT BOOKKEEPER**Select a requirement**

Assist with accounts payable and accounts receivable

Give an example

Assisted bookkeeper with AP and AR for a retail store

Add details

Assisted bookkeeper with AP and AR for a retail store with over 500 accounts and annual sales of \$2 million.

Select a **4th** requirement from your list

Give an example of when or how you performed it

Add details

Select the **5th** requirement from your list

Give an example of when or how you performed it

Add details

Congratulations!

You just turned the job requirements into your accomplishments. Accomplishments impress employers. They show that you are the kind of person who delivers results.

2. Your goal

In one short sentence, tell what kind of work you want.

- "Seeking full-time position as a dragon slayer."
- If you're switching careers and have little experience, say that you are: "Seeking a full-time, junior position as a dragon slayer."

3. Your education

Start with your most recent school or program.

- On the first line in this section, name the award, certification, or degree earned plus the date of the award. If you haven't graduated, simply give the number of credits earned toward the award (36 credits earned toward a BS degree in magic).
- On the second line, give the school's name and city/state address.
- On the third line, list any classes or activities you participated in that would help you in the job you want.
- Repeat for additional schools.

4. Work experience

Start with your most recent employer.

- On the first line in this section, give your job title plus your beginning and ending dates of employment. If you are still employed there, give your starting date and the word "Present" to show that you still hold that job.
- On the next line, give the employer's name and city/state address.
- On the next few lines, list the job requirements with examples from your past (see your notes on pages 19 through 21).
- Repeat for additional employers.

5. Your skills list

Create a section called "Skills."

Then, simply list the names of any important tools, devices, programs, procedures, skills, licenses, and systems that you can operate or perform.

6. Additional information

Create a section called "Additional Information."

You don't have to include this section in your resume. It's optional. But, it is a great place to mention any special talents, skills, abilities or awards that might interest an employer.



On the next page, you'll find a resume you can use to model your resume on.

Notice how simple and clean it looks. Bold headings, short sentences, and plenty of white space help the requirements jump off the page. Plus, each job requirement is phrased as an accomplishment with an example of what the writer did and numbers to show the size of the projects.

Creating your resume is even easier than you think. Just use the fill-in-the-blank worksheet on page 25.

WHY YOU NEED A SKILLS LIST IN YOUR RESUME

Having a skills section in your resume can be important. Many large employers download the resumes they receive into a database. A database is a computer file that can hold millions of resumes and job applications.

Databases are searchable. That means, if a hiring manager searches her database for "Final Cut" or "Avid" the computer will pull up only the resumes of people who have that film-editing software in their resumes.

So, if you want the hiring manager's computer to pull up your resume, help it find you by including the names of all the important tools, programs, and systems you can operate or perform.

Worksheet

Your full name
Your address, city, state, zip code
Your cell, text, or email

BASIC RESUME WRITING TIPS

- Use standard 8.5" by 11" white paper
- Keep a one-inch margin on all four sides of the page
- Avoid fancy fonts like outline, script, or other difficult-to-read styles
- Keep sentences short and to the point
- Bold or CAPITALIZE important headlines so they stand out
- Single space within sections
- Double space between sections
- Use bullets (•) at the beginning of a list
- Whenever possible, use numbers to show the size, volume, time, money, effort, or result of the projects you worked on
- Proofread for spelling and factual errors

GOAL

Give the job you are seeking

EDUCATION

Give your diploma or degree and the date of award

Give the school's name and city/state address

- List several courses you took
-

Repeat for additional schools or training

WORK HISTORY

Give your job title with beginning and ending dates

Give your employer's name and city/state address

- Give a job requirement, with an example
 - Give another job requirement, with an example
 - Give another job requirement, with an example
 - Give another job requirement, with an example
 - Give another job requirement, with an example
-

Repeat for additional employers

SKILLS

Name the important tools, devices, procedures, programs, systems, and licenses you can operate or perform

ADDITIONAL

Mention any special talents, abilities, or awards

Here's a script you can use to call your insiders—

1. Choose the first friend from your list and make the call. Spend a few minutes catching up on the news to rekindle your friendship.

2. Then, mention that you would like to apply for a job where she works—just in case something opens up.

3. Explain that her company's online job application asks, "Do you have a friend or relative who works at our company?" Ask your friend if it's okay to list her as a friend on your job application.

4. Then, ask a few questions about the hiring manager—her name, personality, interviewing style, the kind of person she tends to hire, questions she is likely to ask, and any important issues you should know about.

5. Finally, ask your friend for a big favor. Ask if she would give your resume and cover letter to her manager and put in a good word for you—again, just in case something opens up.

Thank your friend for being so helpful. Be sure to let her know when the manager contacts you and invites you to an interview.

Then, move on to the next friend on your list and make the call. Call them all.

Employer career sites

Do you have a list of employers where you would love to work? Visit their web sites and see what kind of job openings they have.

How to get started:

Start with the first employer on your list. Visit their website and navigate to their employment page or career page.

Look through their job postings. When you find a job that interests you, bookmark that web page so you can find your way back to it later.

Now, reach out to your friends. Ask if they know a mutual friend, a common friend, a friend who

works inside that company, someone you both know. Dig—you are more likely to get a job interview if you know an insider.

When you find that inside friend, ask if you could list him as a friend on your job application.

Then, ask a favor. Ask if he would give your resume and cover letter to his manager and put in a good word for you.

Thank your friend for his help. Be sure to let him know when you are contacted by the hiring manager and invited to an interview.

Then, move on to the next employer on your list and repeat the process.

Job boards

Job boards like CareerBuilder, Monster, Craigslist, Indeed and SimplyHired are very popular ways to find job openings.

But don't stop there. Check your area's online newspapers for help-wanted ads, plus the help ads posted on Facebook, and LinkedIn too.

How to get started:

Apply for the jobs you are qualified to do. Don't waste time applying for jobs you cannot perform. The employer's computers are programmed to ignore weak application.

Submit a strong job application. Identify the requirements the advertisement says are important and include them in your application. Turn the requirements into your accomplishments by adding details and numbers, see page 18.

Always submit a clean job application. Don't let misspellings, wrong numbers, missing information, and information typed in the wrong spaces disqualify you.

To boost your chances of getting a job interview, attach your resume and cover letter to your job application. Your resume and cover letter will offer detailed accomplishments and a touch of personality that a job application cannot include.

CREATE A SIMPLE JOB-HUNTING PLAN

Every employer is not hiring today. You have to knock on a lot of doors to find the ones that are. Here's a simple plan that takes only an hour or two a day. Give it a try and see how many interviews you can get.

- Monday through Friday, contact five employers every day. That's 25 employers a week, 100 a month. To reach them, use a good mix of all the ideas in this chapter.
- Now, you may not get a job interview the first week or so because it takes time for employers to respond.
- But, after two weeks, your phone should start to ring.
- When you begin to get job interviews, don't stop contacting five new employers every day. Stick with your plan right up until the day you accept a job offer.
- If you do stop, your flow of interviews will dry up in about two weeks. Then it will take you two more weeks to get the pipeline flowing again.

Working for a temp agency is a great way to get your foot in the door at a good company. You'll learn new skills, gain experience, make contacts, and build references. Every year, about 9 million people find work through employment agencies—and 79 percent are placed in full-time positions.

How to get started:

Google—*employment agencies* for a list of agencies in your area. You might also ask your friends if they've ever worked with an employment agency. Maybe a friend can recommend a good agency for you.

Call the agency and ask to register for employment. The agent will ask a few questions about your background and skills. If you are a good fit for the agency, the agent will ask you to come in for a meeting.

During the meeting, the agent will go over your resume and ask questions about your skills and abilities. For some occupations, like clerical or graphic design, the agent may ask you to take a skills test to measure your abilities.

The agent will also ask about your needs. Do you want to work for a large company or a small one? How far are you willing to commute? Are you looking for full-time, part-time, or seasonal work? What wage or salary do you expect?

The agent will then try to match you to a job opening with one of their employer clients.

Job Centers and Career Centers

The six activities we just discussed are do-it-yourself activities. You can use those activities to contact an employer yourself.

But, what if you need some help with your resume, getting interviews, or if you have a difficult question you need to discuss?

Well, there are employment counselors you can

talk to. Here are two great resources that have helped millions of people—

1. American Job Centers. Your state government operates several Job Centers. They are open to the public and their services are free. Google—*American Job Centers* or *One Stop Career Centers* to find a center near you.

2. School Career Centers. Most schools and colleges have career centers. Their services are available to their students and alumni, and their services are also free.

How to get started:

Lots of employers are loyal to local Job Centers and Career Centers. They regularly post job openings and recruit new hires there. Job counselors have good working relationships with recruiters, hiring managers, and business owners.

Visit your Center's online help-wanted site. Search for jobs in your occupation. Build a list of employers with jobs you are qualified to perform and apply for those positions online.

Then, ask to speak with a counselor. See if she can offer you a few referrals. Referrals are the names and addresses of recruiters, hiring managers, and business owners who hire people at the companies you've chosen.

When you have someone's name, send an email, text message, or mail a letter with a copy of your resume to introduce yourself and request an interview. Be sure to mention that you were referred by the job center in the opening paragraph of your letter.

By the way, if you are sending an email, use the body of your cover letter as the text in your email. Include your resume as an attachment. On page 30 you'll see how to write a solid cover letter.

CREATE A 15 SECOND SALES PITCH

A sales pitch is a short speech. It's a 15 second sound-bite that sells you to hiring managers and anyone who can help you get a job interview.

A good sales pitch includes your name, your occupation, your accomplishments, your goal, and your USP (Unique Selling Point). Your USP is what separates you from the competition.

Spend some time thinking about your sales pitch. Here's a good example to go by.

"Hi, my name is Mason Stone."

"I've been an apprentice stone mason for the past year and I've learned both wet and dry masonry."

"I've built walkways, terraces, retaining walls, and patios for residential customers. They've been very happy with my work."

"Now, I'm looking for a full-time junior masonry job."

"Let me also add that—I'm a hard worker and I give more than a minimum effort. I'm reliable and I'll show up on time every day. I'm a quick learner and I'm easy to coach. I also have a good sense of humor and I get along with people. I would love to interview with your company."

If you are answering an advertisement or job posting that gives no contact person's name or no company name, address your letter to *Hiring Manager*.

How long does your cover letter have to be?

Keep your cover letter short and simple. One page is perfect.

Need some help writing your cover letter?

Okay, but first, I'd like you to meet AIDA.

Who's AIDA?

The folks who write professional sales letters use a magic formula. It's called AIDA. That's short for—Attention, Interest, Desire, Action.

AIDA sells billions of dollars worth of goods and services every year. If it can work for business, it can work for you. So, let's use AIDA to convince a hiring manager to give you a job interview.

1. Attention

In the very first paragraph of your letter, grab the hiring manager's attention simply by telling her why you are writing. Below are several solid reasons for writing to a hiring manager. Adapt the ONE that works best for you.

- "I would like to apply for the sous chef's position I saw advertised in..."
- "My friend, Frieda Friendly, works in your department. She recommended that I write to you..."
- "We spoke at a job fair last..."
- "I stumbled upon your website. Wow. I'd like to interview for a position with your firm because..."
- "I shop at your store and..."

2. Interest

In the second paragraph of your letter, rouse the manager's interest by explaining what makes you special. Here are a few examples. Adapt the ONE that works best for you.

- "I have three-years experience as a..."
- "I worked on the Slingshot project at David's and..."
- "I just graduated from school and..."
- "I have three special abilities I can bring to the job..."
- "I have an idea I'd like to discuss with you..."

3. Desire

If you are responding to a help-wanted advertisement or a job posting, be sure to talk about the job requirements the ad says are important. Otherwise, create a desire for the hiring manager to meet you by offering three solid accomplishments.

- "I am very familiar with..."
- "I know how to use..."
- "I also have experience with..."

4. Action

Finally, ask the hiring manager for a job interview. Adapt ONE of the following statements that works best for you.

- "I would like to interview for your nursing position. Please call. You can reach me anytime on my cell phone at 555-666-7777."
- "I would like to interview for your nursing position. I hope you won't mind if I call in a few days to see that you received my resume and hopefully to schedule an interview."

ONE MORE THING— PLAN B

Not getting a good response from all the help-wanted ads and networking you've tried? Maybe you should try some old-school job hunting.

Suppose you want to work for SawBuck Bank. Why not mail the hiring manager a letter and resume through the US Postal Service and ask for a job interview?

Or, suppose you want to work for any bank. Why not pull together a list of all the banks in your area and mail each hiring manager a letter and resume asking for a job interview? You could do this with the employers in your industry too.

This used to be an important way for people to get job interviews. Today, few job hunters will make the effort.

Keep in mind that 60 to 80 percent of all job openings are never advertised. Mail a cover letter and resume to the hiring managers in your industry. Instead of facing 200 competitors for an advertised job opening, you might be the only one who's applying.

Worksheet

Your name

Your address

Your city, state, zip

Your phone number

Your email address

Today's date

Manager's name and title

Department's name

Company's name

Address

City, state, zip

Re: (Job code, if listed in an ad or job posting)

Dear (Mr. or Ms.):

(Get the manager's attention)

(Rouse the manager's interest)

(Create a desire to meet you)

- ---
- ---
- ---

(Ask the manager to take action)

Sincerely,

Your Signature

Pat Perfect

So, be prepared. Have your resume, cover letter, job advertisement, and notes from the employer's website in front of you.

You can't know which questions a hiring manager might ask, so look over these common questions plus those on page 44.

- Are you currently employed? Where?
- What is your job title?
- How long have you been working there?
- What are your duties and responsibilities?
- Tell me about your job skills.
- Do you get along with your supervisor?
- Why are you leaving?
- When are you available to begin work?
- Why do you want to work for my company?
- What motivates you to do a good job?
- What are your career goals?

4. Try to relax

Try to visualize what the manager looks like based on the sound of his or her voice—maybe a favorite cousin, friend, or teacher. This will help make the manager seem more familiar and less intimidating.

Don't forget to smile—even on the phone. Smiling helps project a personality that comes across in your voice. You should also stand up while speaking on the phone and use your hands to gesture. Thinking on your feet and gesturing helps with your thought processes. They'll also help slow down your speech so you don't slur your words and start to spit.

5. Use your best manners

Always refer to the manager as Mr. or Ms., unless the hiring manager asks you to use their first name. Be sure to say please and thank you.

Don't sip a drink, chew gum, or nibble on food, the manager will hear it and it's rude.

Don't use foul or inappropriate language—this is the workplace not the schoolyard.

Try not to say, "No problem," "Uh-huh," "Like," or "Ya know," too often. They can become annoying.

Also, don't ask about money, benefits, or vacations—they are usually discussed when a job offer is made.

Be willing to accept the hiring manager's interview schedule, even if you have to reschedule the cable guy.

Confirm the date and time of the interview by repeating it back to the hiring manager—"That's Thursday the 13th at 3:13..."

Thank the hiring manager for showing an interest in you—"Ms. Hireyou, thank you so much for this opportunity. I look forward to meeting you on Thursday. Bye."

And here's a big one. Don't take another phone call or try to read your text messages during a phone interview. It's the #1 reason a hiring manager will hang up on you. So, turn off the dings and rings before your phone interview begins. Let the manager feel that she is your most important phone call.

Okay, one more tip—

If the manager doesn't offer you a job interview, ask for one. That's what this phone call is all about. You might say something as simple as this—"I'm very interested in this position. I would love to visit your company. Could we schedule an interview?"

DON'T LET YOUR SOCIAL-MEDIA SITES KEEP AN EMPLOYER FROM CALLING YOU

A CareerBuilder/Harris Poll reports that most hiring managers will Google a job applicant's name to see if he or she has a social media presence on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and other sites.

Hiring managers aren't looking for negative information. They simply want to get a sense of the job applicant's personality.

A friendly and helpful online personality, a professional image, good communication skills, and a little creativity will make a very nice impression.

However, inappropriate photographs, content about drug and alcohol use, bad-mouthing a previous employer or coworker, vile language, and negative comments about race, religion, or gender are real turnoffs.

email. You need to see each person's face or hear their voice when you ask.

When you do ask, don't just ask for a recommendation. Ask for a "positive recommendation."

You might say, "Elmer, I'm applying for work as a ballerina. I would like to list you as a reference. Would you be able to give me a positive recommendation?"

Most people are flattered when asked. They'll be happy to give you a good recommendation and they'll say so.

Others might not be interested in singing your praises. So, listen to their voice. Notice their body language. What does your gut tell you? If you don't think they'll give you a good recommendation, don't use them.

What if you know a former boss won't give you a good recommendation?

Do you have to list him as a reference? Could you ask your boss's boss for a recommendation instead? Or maybe ask a senior coworker?

You could also just tell the hiring manager that you and your boss didn't get along.

The manager will admire your honesty.

Here's a big tip—never badmouth a former boss. It screams that you are a troublemaker.

Instead, put a positive spin on a negative situation. Try this: "Mr. Pumpnickel was the most demanding boss I ever worked for. We

had our moments. But, I learned more from him than anyone I've ever worked for. I'm sure, over time, I'm going to miss him.

Should you list references on your resume?

No. Your resume will pass through lots of hands— employers, friends, friends-of-friends, and probably a few people you might not even know. You don't want the names of your references to fall into the wrong hands. So, keep them off your resume. Another thing, if you put your references on your resume, you are inviting hiring managers to call your references before they've even met you.

Instead, list your references on a separate sheet of paper. Include each person's name, address, phone number, employer, job title, and best times for the hiring manager to call. Hand your list of references to the hiring manager during your job interview.

Send a copy of your resume to your references.

Don't let them struggle to remember who you are and what you did on the job.

Once someone agrees to give you a positive reference, refresh his or her memory of you. Send a copy of your resume plus a list of the projects or assignments you worked on together. Be sure to include your duties, responsibilities, accomplishments and any other information that might help them write a good recommendation for you.

QUESTIONS A HIRING MANAGER MIGHT ASK YOUR REFERENCES

- Were you Heidi Hopeful's immediate supervisor?
- What was Heidi's job title?
- What were her dates of employment?
- What were her duties and responsibilities?
- What were her most significant accomplishments?
- Did Heidi receive any promotions or awards?
- What was Heidi's attitude toward work?
- What was her level of energy at work?
- Did she get along with her coworkers and managers?
- How often was she late or absent?
- What were her job strengths?
- In which skills does Heidi need improvement?
- Why did Heidi leave the job?
- If possible, would you rehire her?
- Is there anything I didn't ask you, that I should have asked?

Look the other person in the eye. Smile. Pump two or three times. Release.

Show respect for the manager's position.

Address the manager as Mr. or Ms., unless they ask you to call them by their first name. Once you're in the manager's office, don't sit down until you're invited to sit. Be sure to look at the manager whenever she speaks.

Show some curiosity.

Ask for a short tour of the workplace before the interview begins. Look around. Ask questions about the cool things you see. Talk shop—ask what the manager thinks of the latest software, the newest gadget, or the hot new trend in your industry.

Have a sense of humor.

We are drawn to happy, optimistic, humorous people. When appropriate, offer a clever quip, a one-liner, or an interesting tale. Keep it short, positive and upbeat. Don't forget to chuckle at the manager's attempts at humor.

Think, "can do."

If a manager says you don't have a certain skill or enough experience, don't just shrug your shoulders. Most managers want to see whether you'll fight for what you want or whether you'll just give up.

So, tell the hiring manager that you're a quick learner, a hard worker, and that you always deliver more than what's expected. Let her know that you will become one of the best employees she will ever hire.

Let your body language do some talking.

Sit up straight. Sit near the edge of the chair with both feet on the floor. Visualize your ideas and use your hands to illustrate what you mean. Look the manager in the eye. Use facial expressions to emphasize important points.

Show a little empathy.

Empathy means that you understand how the other person feels. When the manager talks about an important issue, look at her eyes to show that you are listening, use facial expressions to show that you understand, and ask for details to show that you care.

Have a reason for wanting to work there.

Visit the company's website and Google the company name for news. Find out who they are, what they do, and why you want to work there.

Participate in the conversation.

The interview should be a 50/50 conversation. Don't be a motor-mouth who never stops talking. And don't be a zombie who hardly says a word. Listen. Ask questions. Give generous answers.

Become a storyteller.

You probably have a great reason for choosing your line of work. When the manager asks, "What made you decide to become a puppeteer?" Tell your story. Include lots of detail and use body language to bring your story to life.

TRY A LITTLE MIRRORING

Mirroring is a body-language dance where you copy the hiring manager's actions. It creates a bond. It says, "we're in sync."

Mirroring is not new. Everybody does it. If you smile at someone, they'll usually smile back. Like the smile, most mirroring is unintentional. But, if you are aware of mirroring, you can boost its effectiveness.

Here are some simple mirroring tips:

- When the hiring manager smiles or frowns, you should smile or frown too.
- If the manager uses hand gestures to add emphasis, you should use hand gestures when you want to add emphasis.
- If the manager sits up straight or leans toward you, then you should sit straight or lean too.
- If the manager speaks quickly or slowly, you should match her pace when speaking.
- If the manager uses special job-related words or technical terms, you should use them too.

Seriously. A Harvard psychologist, Dr. Amy Cutty, found that power posing reduced stress and increased confidence by about 20 percent.

Okay. Looking good? Feeling good? Phone turned off? Take a seat in the waiting area. Sit up straight. Try not to fidget. Run through the interview in your mind. Visualize the important points you'd like to make—like an athlete might visualize an upcoming event.

The greeting

The hiring manager will usually come into the waiting area to meet you. Sometimes an assistant will greet you and escort you to hiring manager's office.

Either way, when someone mentions your name, stand up. Smile and say, "Hi, I'm Luke Atmenow." The hiring manager will smile, walk toward you and introduce herself.

Offer your handshake and say, "It's so nice to meet you, Ms. Hireyou. Thank you for inviting me to this interview." Saying her name will help you remember it.

As you are escorted to the hiring manager's office, make small talk to show that you are friendly and sociable. But, find something other than the weather or the traffic to chat about. Hiring managers hear the same weather/traffic chatter from hundreds of different job hunters.

Instead, explain why you are so thrilled to be interviewing with this company—and mean it. Make a good first impression and you'll set the tone for a good interview.

Another tip: If the hiring manager is escorting you to her office, ask for short tour to see the inner workings before the interview starts. Most people won't ask for a tour. If you do, the hiring manager will be impressed

that you're interested—and that you asked. Plus, a short tour will give you a chance to establish a rapport with the hiring manager and gain an insight into her personality, before the Q&A starts.

The start

Once you're both seated in the hiring manager's office, the manager will lean forward, smile and say, "Okay, tell me a little about yourself."

That's one of the most common opening questions. And, it's the perfect time to deliver your fifteen-second sales pitch from page 29. Your pitch is quick, to the point, and it will show the hiring manager, right off, that you have the stuff she's looking for.

When you've finished delivering your pitch, offer the hiring manager your typed list of references. In return, ask for her business card. Asking for her business card is important—her business card will have all the information you'll need to follow-up after the interview is over.

Next, ask the hiring manager this— "Why did you invite me here today? What was it about my resume that led you to bring me in?"

Dr. Robert Cialdini, of Arizona State University, is an expert on influence. He states that the hiring manager will then glance at her notes and say, "Because of x and because of y."

Now you know why the hiring manager favors you.

The hiring manager will likely continue by saying, "I see here, on your resume, that you were the over-and-under guy at Round & Round. Can you tell me about your duties there?"

BECOME A STORY TELLER

Instead of explaining how or why you did something, try telling it as a story. Stories bring events to life.

A good story has three main parts, the beginning, middle, and end.

Another way to look at a good story is problem, struggle, outcome.

The problem, struggle, and outcome raise the energy of the story and make it more interesting.

Here's a little format you can use to craft your story.

- **Problem.** "I worked with some very difficult customers. For example..."
- **Struggle.** "I tried... I tried... I also tried..."
- **Outcome.** "Then one day..."

Keep your stories short and simple, about a minute each. Use your hands, facial expressions, and voice to bring them to life. Add a little humor whenever you can.

Stories can help you stand out. Long after you've left the interview, the hiring manager may not remember your name, but she'll remember your interesting story. "Hmmm," she'll think, "Maybe I should call that person who worked with all those difficult customers."

final questions up your sleeve. A good final question leaves a good final impression. Here are two:

- You could offer the manager a thirty-day trial period to prove yourself. It's a gutsy move that very few job hunters will offer. But it tells the hiring manager that you really want this job—and she'll remember that.
- You could also ask, "How much autonomy or self-direction would I have on the job?" This shows that you're responsible, a self-starter, the type of person who gets things done—a rare breed, a good catch.

When the hiring manager stands up, the interview is over. You should also stand. Then, look the hiring manager in the eye, smile, offer your handshake, and thank her for taking the time to meet with you.

Now, most job hunters never say whether they want the job or not, so make sure you do. You could simply say, "I'm pleased with what I've learned today. I want this position. Where do we go from here?"

The manager will probably say, "I'm still interviewing other candidates, I'll let you know."

Ask if you could follow up in a week, by phone, to see if she's made a decision.

As she walks you to the door, say thanks again and mention that you hope she'll call.

And that's it.

SO, HOW'D YOU DO IN THERE?

Grade your interview with this easy scoring system:

- 1 = Needs more work
- 2 = Just OK—room for improvement
- 3 = Total win

Did you do your homework and know who the employer is, what they do, and why you want to work there?

1 2 3

Did you know which skills were required for the job and show the manager that you are a good fit for that job?

1 2 3

Did you offer examples to show that you are a hard worker and that you deliver more than the minimum?

1 2 3

Did you answer tough questions without stumbling or getting flustered?

1 2 3

Did you ask questions to learn more about the company and the job?

1 2 3

Did you look the manager in the eye and speak clearly?

1 2 3

Did you wear the proper clothes and look your best?

1 2 3

Did you show enthusiasm, a sense of humor, and a positive attitude?

1 2 3

Were you polite and respectful throughout the interview?

1 2 3

Did you ask for the job?

1 2 3

Add up your score. A perfect score is 30. Work on those areas where you need improvement. Think of every interview as practice for the next one.

turn a negative into a positive. "That would be Mr. Gray. He was a demanding, detail-driven perfectionist. But, I learned more from him than anyone I've ever worked with. For example..."

10. "What salary or wage are you looking for?"

Get the manager to throw out the first figure. Ask, "What salary or wage do you usually offer someone with my skills and abilities?"

11. "Tell me about your current (or last) job."

Give the company's name and what they do. Give your job title. List your duties and responsibilities. Explain your accomplishments.

12. How did you feel about being laid off?

Don't bad-mouth your old employer. Admit that you miss the job and the people. Say that you are grateful for the opportunities and the skills you learned there.

13. How long have you been looking for work?

"A few weeks. I wanted to spend some time with my family. Now I'm ready to get back to work." Also, see page 48.

14. "Did you enjoy school?"

The manager wants to know if you enjoy learning and whether you might benefit from a training program.

15. "In school, which course did you find most difficult?"

The manager wants to know if you have perseverance: "My first term in history, I got a D. My study skills were all wrong, so I joined a study group. By second term I pulled it up to a B and kept it there."

16. Did you participate in any school activities?

School activities show that you're sociable. They show that you enjoy being part of a group and that you can work with other people. This is important in the work place.

17. "Do you plan to continue your education?"

Adding to your education says that you want to grow and prosper, professionally as well as personally.

18. "What do you hope to get out of this job?"

Try this—"A fair and reasonable wage, responsibility for doing something that matters, a say in how my work is done, recognition by my coworkers for being good at what I do, and a pat on the back from the boss for doing a good job."

19. "Last year, how many days of work did you miss? How many days were you late?"

This will tell the manager whether you're going to show up for work on time every day. If you've missed more than a few days, have some good explanations ready.

"I chose a good mix—a former boss who can tell you about my skills and job performance—a coworker who can tell you about the hard work and extra effort we put in as a team—and a former coach who can tell you that I'm not only a good team player, I can work independently and I always complete my share of the work."

29. "What are the three things you look for when considering a new job?"

The things that make people happiest at work are not always about money and benefits. Experts say that the following things are often more important: being appreciated, having respect, being trusted, taking on new challenges, having a good boss, working with people you enjoy, and making a difference.

30. "How are you unique?"

Try this: "I'm a quick learner, a hard worker, I'm easy to coach, and I always deliver more than what's expected. I could be one of the best employees you'll ever hire."

31. "What isn't on your resume?"

Go ahead, do some bragging.

► The following include some behavioral questions. Behavioral questions help the manager see how you might act or behave in certain situations.

32. "Tell me how you keep a positive attitude when the job gets stressful?"

Here's how positive people stay positive: They know that attitude is a choice. They choose to plan ahead and schedule the time needed to get things done. They choose to be around other positive people. They choose to laugh and have a sense of humor. They choose to be friendly and helpful to everyone. They choose to offset negative thoughts by looking for the positive points.

33. "Please tell me about a time when you had to motivate a coworker."

Some of the best motivational tools include praise and encouragement, giving a helpful demonstration or example, explaining the rewards of the job, and brainstorming for better ways to do the job.

34. "Can you tell me about a goal you set for yourself?"

The manager wants to know if you set goals. People who set goals are more productive than those who do not set goals. The best goals are specific, measurable, and plausible. For example, "I want to pay off my \$1,000 car loan in six months," is a better goal than, "I want to pay off my car loan quickly."

35. "Describe a problem you faced and how you solved that problem."

Think of something related to work, school, sports, or volunteering. Tell it as a story. The manager wants to see how you: 1). Define the problem, 2). Identify options and, 3). Decide on a solution.

describe the goal you hoped to achieve, describe the failed outcome, explain what went wrong, and explain the lesson learned from the failure.

44. "Describe a time when you had to work with a difficult person."

The manager wants to see how you interact with moody, lazy, or obnoxious people. Ideally, you are a peacemaker who tries to resolve conflicts. When provoked, you have a private talk with the person. You remain pleasant. You explain how the behavior makes you feel. And you try to reach an agreement with the culprit.

45. "Please tell me about a time when you were disappointed."

The manager isn't so much interested in what happened, but what you did about that disappointment. Try something like this: "When I didn't get the promotion—I was surprised and hurt. But, I swallowed my pride and congratulated the winner—she earned that promotion. The next day, I reviewed my work performance. I redoubled my efforts, and I haven't missed a promotion since."

46. "Tell me about a project you worked on."

The manager wants to know about your role in the project, specifically what you did. Begin by describing the project and the project's goal. Then, describe the team you worked with, specifically your duties, your responsibilities, your contribution, and any new skills you learned. Finally, tell whether the project met its goals.

47. "Tell me where you expect to be 5 years from now?"

Try this: "It's hard to tell where anyone will be five years from now. But, I am looking for a company where I'll be appreciated, trusted, and able to make a difference. I want to work with people I enjoy, people who challenge me, and a good boss who's not afraid to tell us we did a good job. I think your company might be the one I'm looking for. That's why I'm here today."

48. "Are there any questions I didn't ask, that I should have asked?"

This is a great time to bring up any special skill, ability, or accomplishment that wasn't discussed.

49. "Okay, you've got one minute to convince me that you're the best person for this job. Begin."

Do it in only 30 seconds and you'll make a big impression. Start by delivering your 15-second sales pitch. Then, spend 15 seconds explaining why you want to work for this company. End by asking for the job.

50. "Do you have any questions for me?"

On page 42 you'll find a several questions to ask the hiring manager. Add a few questions of your own to the list.

Come up with a few suggestions. Then, send the manager a short note explaining your ideas.

Your suggestions don't have to be brilliant, just good. The point is, the manager will see that you're a problem solver and that you were the only one who made an extra effort to win the job offer.

Send your idea note a day or so after your thank-you note, but before you follow-up on the telephone.

3. Call the manager

A week after your interview, call the manager to see if she's made a decision. Yes, everybody hates making these calls. But, it shows that you're the kind of person who gets things done—even if the task is unpleasant.

Pick up the phone and make the call.

"Good morning, Ms. Hireyou. This is Emma Gogetter. I wanted to call and thank you for meeting with me last week about your lion tamer's position."

Ask if the manager has made a decision.

"I'm very interested in that position and I thought I'd follow-up to see if you've made a decision."

If you got the job—

"Really? Yikes—Thank you! (Hey Ma...!)"

"When would you like me to start?"

"What time should I report?"

"Where should I report?"

"To whom should I report?"

"What do I need to bring with me on the first day?"

If the manager hasn't yet made a decision—

"Am I still a candidate for consideration?"

"I'd love to have this job. Would you consider giving me a trial period to prove myself?"

If she needs time to think it over, ask—"Would it be okay if I call back on Friday?"

If you didn't get the job—

Don't beg, don't lose your cool, and don't close any doors. You might say—

"Gee, I'm sorry to hear that."

"Ms. Hireyou, I'd like to thank you for your time and consideration. It was a pleasure to meet you and to learn about your company."

"If the person you chose for this job becomes unavailable, please call me. I'd be happy to come in for another interview."

IF YOU DIDN'T GET THE JOB— STAY IN TOUCH

Once or twice a month, send every hiring manager you've met a short note and another copy of your resume. Let them know that you are still available and that you are still interested in working for them.

Remember, jobs open up all the time. Some people decline job offers. Some change their minds and quit. Other people don't work out and management replaces them.

Sometimes jobs also open up in other departments as well. Most managers are eager to refer solid applicants to other hiring managers.

So, stay in touch with all your hiring managers. They are your inside connection—and a gentle persistence can re-open doors. The idea is to become the first person they think of when something new opens up.

10 tips to make your layoff a little easier

- 1 **Don't feel guilty about being laid off.** A layoff is not a firing. You did nothing wrong. Future employers know that, "lack of work," is the main reason people are laid off.
- 2 **Tell your family.** Tell them as soon as you get home. You might say, "I have sad news about my job. I've been laid off. The layoff is effective today and the decision is final."
- 3 **Acknowledge the emotions of losing your job.** You may feel waves of anger and sadness following your layoff. These emotions are common and usually pass after a week or so. But, if you are still grieving after two weeks, talk to your doctor. You may have a touch of depression, which can be treated. If you have thoughts of hurting yourself, or hurting someone else, call 911. Help is only minutes away.
- 4 **Relax and do the things you love to do.** Try to get your mind off, "the job." Spend time with people you enjoy. Take a day trip. Volunteer. Take a class. Learn to play a musical instrument.
- 5 **Sign up for unemployment benefits.** Contact your state's Unemployment Insurance office to see if you are qualified to receive payments. Google, *Unemployment Insurance, plus your state's name*, for office locations and requirements.
- 6 **Extend your health-care coverage.** Ask your former employer about the rules and costs for extending your health-care coverage under the COBRA plan.
- 7 **Conserve your money.** Hold a family meeting. Ask for ideas to cut unnecessary spending. Get everyone to agree on a spending plan—and stick to that plan.
- 8 **Call your creditors.** Mortgage, rent, auto loan, insurance, utilities, credit cards, taxes—call them all. Explain that you have been laid off. Ask if you could go on a reduced monthly-payment plan until you find another job.
- 9 **Work on your resume.** Read some help ads and job postings to see which skills today's hiring managers really want. Build your resume based on the skills today's employers need.
- 10 **Line up some job interviews.** Make a list of all the people you know who work in the same occupation or field as you. Ask if they would give your resume to their managers and put in a good word for you. Also, visit the web sites of your favorite companies and apply for jobs posted on their employment pages. Apply for jobs posted on job sites like Indeed, Careerbuilder, and Monster. If you have questions or you need some help, visit your local American Job Center for career counseling, job search workshops, job listings, career fairs, and other services.

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