

JASPER C. LENT POST 1442

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS



JOB SEARCH PAMPHLET

JOB SEARCH TIPS
(Revised November 2009)

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INTRODUCTION

Finding a job is an important job in and of itself and it can be hard work. Like any job, as you probably learned in the military, if it is worth doing it is worth doing well. An effective job search requires preparation. The purpose of this pamphlet is to help you begin your preparations. The better prepared you are, the easier the hunt will be, and in the end, more successful. This pamphlet does not pretend to provide all the answers. It will, however, provide a few tips on the different aspects of the hunt, and it will refer you to expert resources on each of the different aspects. It is intended mainly to whet your appetite for professional advice and guidance, and to motivate you to make the best possible use of such in your preparations.

As you use this pamphlet and spot errors or ways in which it may be improved, send your comments/suggestions to: Commander, Jasper C. Lent Post 1442, Veterans of Foreign Wars, 3405 SE 87th Street, Portland, OR 97266. Your constructive comments may benefit future job-hunting veterans.

On behalf of members of Jasper C. Lent Post 1442 of the Veterans of Foreign Wars we wish you the best in your search for a civilian job.

George S. Winslow
Adjutant

Marion L. Ellsworth
Post Commander

THE APPLICATION OR RESUME

There was a time when job seekers would simply visit a potential employer and be interviewed. With rare exceptions, that is no more. In the present fast-paced world, the application, resume, or curriculum vitae (hereinafter, resume) has become the most essential ingredient of the job hunt. It becomes your representative, the representative that hopefully will get your foot in the door for an interview. A sloppy, poorly prepared resume will get the door slammed in your face; such a resume will wind up in the round filing cabinet. A good resume stands a good chance of leading to an interview where you can personally represent yourself as a good bet to the employer. It is the rare employer, however, who will hire based only on an interview. A history of past achievements in the form of an application is the best indicator of future performance. It takes more than just being a good talker to get a job with a responsible employer. In fact, for public employment the application is crucial as it supports the employer's decision should such decision be challenged by a non-selected candidate.

The importance of a well-prepared resume or application is highlighted by certain findings of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) in its 2004 audit of employment of veterans by several Federal agencies. The June 2004 Veterans' Employment Audit Report reported a finding, for example, that several managers commented that strict adherence to veterans' preference impeded their ability to select best qualified candidates. Agency Human Resources officials, however, indicated "...that when veterans' are advised of the importance of responding to specific KSAs [Knowledge, Skills and Abilities] related to a vacancy, they do a better job of reflecting their qualifications, and selecting officials are less likely to view them as a hiring obstacle." The report also indicated that "[a]nother impediment is the way veteran applicants describe their work experience... Some veteran applicants do not effectively translate their military experience and training into civilian terms. They often use military acronyms that are not understood by HR [Human Resource] representatives and selecting officials..."

Before reviewing the attributes of an effective application, review some of the common deficiencies to be avoided:

- Misspellings, punctuation errors, poor grammar
- Too much military jargon and unknown acronyms
- Unclear purpose, irrelevant info
- Unexplained time gaps
- Too boastful thus leading to questions of integrity
- Poor layout, poorly typed

In preparing a winning resume, first, in a prominent place, comes your name and contact information. Seems simple but some people forget the contact information. If an application form is not provided, such as the Optional Form 612 for federal employment for example, your name and contact information should be at or near the top. Give the

name you normally use and complete contact information: mailing address, telephone number(s), and fax and email, if you have. If you plan on moving in the near future, give your future contact information. If you don't know at the time of application, update the application as soon as you know your new contact info. One telephone call answered, "Party no longer at this number" or "addressee unknown" ends your chances with that employer.

Excluding the electronic resume, which will not be discussed in this pamphlet, there are two basic types of resumes, the chronological (historical) resume and the functional resume. The chronological resume describes experience starting with the present or most recent experience and works backward in time. It is usually much easier to prepare. The functional resume dispenses with chronology and concentrates on skills, knowledge, and abilities (KSAs). The experience part of the functional resume should be no more than three to five short, tightly written paragraphs, each one headed by a particular skill or expertise, starting with the one most relevant to the position sought. Whichever type resume selected the finished product should contain the following:

- Identity and contact information
- Summary or objective statement
- Employment history (chronological or functional) to include volunteer
- Education history
- Awards, honors and citations
- Dates and branch of military service
- References, to include telephone numbers/addresses

The following publications, many of which, if not all, are available in public libraries, provide excellent guidance on preparing resumes:

- Barron's How to Write Better Resumes
- The Insider's Guide to Writing The Perfect Resume, Karl Weber and Rob Kaplan
- How to Prepare Your Curriculum Vitae, Acy L. Jackson
- From Army Green to Corporate Gray, Carl Savino and Ronald Krannich
- Gallery of Best Resumes, David F. Noble. PhD.
- Job Search and Career Checklists, 101 Proven Time-saving Checklists to Organize and Plan Your Career Search, Arlene S. Hirsch

THE COVER LETTER

Getting a job is all about first impressions; getting someone, usually a stranger, to take notice of your qualifications, interests and what you have to offer the organization. Following the guidance set forth in the preceding section, you have prepared a super resume. Now the challenge is to get someone involved in the hiring process to notice it, to really take an interest and read it. This is where the cover letter comes in. It is not unusual these days for firms to receive hundreds of applications for each vacancy advertised. The applications are usually received in the Human Resources Management

(HRM) department. Here they are screened to select only the few that appear to have the interests and KSAs the selecting official is seeking. The HR specialists pressed for time and faced with a mountain of applications, look first to the cover letter. The well-prepared cover letter will grab the attention of the HR screener, and more than likely lead to a serious look at the accompanying resume. The poorly prepared cover letter, on the other hand, will more than likely lead the screener to conclude that the applicant has little to offer – application goes to the stack of culls. Thus, no matter how well qualified the resume may show one to be, if it is not read it is wasted effort. It is the dynamite cover letter, plus the well-prepared resume, that will get your foot in the door. Listed below are some publications available in public libraries that will help prepare a winning cover letter. After you have drafted a letter with which you are satisfied, ask a friend that you can rely on to be straight with you to critique it.

- Cover Letters That Knock ‘em Dead, Martin J. Yate
- Gallery of Best Cover Letters, David F. Noble
- Dynamic Cover Letters, How to Write the Letter That Gets You the Job, Katherine Hansen
- Dynamite Cover Letters, Ronald L. Krannich & Caryl Krannich, PhDs
- Job Search Letters That Get Results, 210 Great Examples, Ronald L. Krannich

THE INTERVIEW

You have been called to report for an interview. This means, of course, that your resume and cover letter were winners in representing you. Now is your chance to represent yourself. This is probably the most crucial phase of the hiring process. This is the stage at which the hiring officials, whether the HR folks or the hiring manager, will have an opportunity to judge you, first hand; your demeanor, how well you express yourself, how you act and react under pressure, do you really have the qualifications shown by the resume, and can you apply them to the job and so on. At this stage the scores of competing applicants have been culled to a relative few. As one of the few, it is incumbent on you to be prepared. No sweat, you think, you know your job like the back of your hand. You know it in your head, but can you articulate it, convince the interviewers that you know it and can apply it.

There are many different kinds of interviews. For example, panel interviews are where a group of individuals conduct the interview. A group interview is where an individual or panel interviews you along with one or more of your competitors. And then there is the one-on-one interview. Different interviewers will use different tactics, one may try to stress and confuse you, another may try to anger you to see how quickly you anger, and another may simply seek information about your KSAs. You must be prepared for all of them. Some books which may help are listed below. In addition to reading up on the interview process, it is recommended you practice with a family member, friend or Legionnaire comrade. Again, you may have it in your head, but

practice helps to get your thoughts organized so that you can express yourself smoothly and effectively in the interview situation.

- 101 Great Answers to the Toughest Interview Questions, Ron Fry
- 201 Best questions to Ask on Your Interview, John Kador
- Dynamite Answers to Interview Questions by Caryl R. Krannich & R. L. Krannich, PhDs
- Job Interviews for Dummies, Joyce L. Kennedy
- Job Interviews That Get You Hired, Learning Express

SEARCHING FOR A JOB

There are many ways to search for a job. A good place to start is the OREGON EMPLOYMENT DEPARTMENT website, www.oregon.gov/employ or www.workinginoregon.org. These websites list job opportunities and provide links to sites which may of interest to job seekers. The Oregon.gov site also frequently lists Job Fairs and occasionally has articles of benefit to job seekers. For example, recently it carried an informative article on the Job Interview.

Another useful website is the US DEPARTMENT OF LABOR'S VETERANS EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICE (VETS). VETS has many responsibilities. The Department of Labor's website, www.dol.gov/vets, offers many services and links to many other helpful websites. You may reach the Oregon site by clicking on "By Location" in the upper right of the home screen and then clicking on the map of Oregon. A wealth of information is offered by the eVETS Resource Advisor, which may be accessed by clicking on that button on the home page.

INTERNET

The internet is undoubtedly the primary vehicle today for connecting job seekers and jobs. There are a multiple of websites that list vacancies; some more user friendly than others. Many of these same websites offers advice on the job hunt, to include preparation of resumes. Following is a list of websites which could prove helpful. Nothing should be inferred from the order in which listed.

- www.vetjobs.com An online placement service co-owned by the VFW.
- www.usajobs.opm.gov Many federal agencies list their vacancies on this website. OPM provides much other useful information pertaining veterans' rights and regarding federal employment.
- www.rileyguide.com Provides a free listing of employment opportunities and job resources.
- www.oregonlive.com Click on jobs.
- www.Jobtrak.com/help Has a job search guide.
- www.monster.com One of the better job search outfits.
- www.army.mil Under Quick Links click on "civilian personnel" and on that page click on "employment."

- www.chart.donhr.navy.mil The US Navy Civilian Human Resource website.
- www.airforce.mil Click on Air Force Personnel Center and then civilian job search
- www.halliburton.com Want to go to Iraq? Click on careers. Lists vacancies for Halliburton and Kellogg Brown Root in many countries, including Iraq.
- www.mpri.com/main/careers The Oregon Military Reintegration Team recommends this site for overseas jobs.
- www.hirevetsfirst.com Sponsored by the Veterans Employment and Training Service.

VETERANS' RIGHTS

As a veteran you have many special rights and employment related protections. For example, the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Act (USERRA) prohibits discrimination against persons because of their service in the Armed Forces of the United States, including the National Guard and the Reserves. USERRA makes unlawful an employer's denial of any benefit of employment (including being hired) because of an individual's membership, application for membership, performance of duty, application for or obligation for service in one of the uniformed services.

The Veterans Employment Opportunities Act (VEOA) provides a means of redress for a veterans' preference eligible who believes that a Federal agency has violated any law or regulation relating to veterans' preference. To pursue a complaint under either USERRA or VEOA a starting point is VETS, www.dol.gov/vets.

The Veterans' Preference Act of 1944 provides eligible veterans preference for federal civil service jobs. To read how the federal system works log on www.opm.gov and under Job Seekers click on Veterans Information.

Eligible veterans also have preference for Oregon public service positions.(Oregon Senate Bill 822 (2007) codified at Oregon Revised Statutes 408-225-235 The law granting such preference has been implemented by the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI). To see how it works log on www.oregon.gov/boli click on FAQs/Fact Sheets and then Veterans' Preference at bottom of screen.

Employees and applicants for employment (veterans and non-veterans) are protected from discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability and/or age. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) administratively adjudicates complaints of discrimination. For details: www.eeoc.gov

WE WISH YOU SUCCESSFUL JOB HUNTING!

Robert H. Thornhill
Life Member VFW
Member VFW Post 1442