



# Maximize your job search

Your guide to career success:  
tools for your next move

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**IDAHO**  
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# First things first

Before beginning your job search, take time to assess your situation and goals. Are you looking for a better fit, reentering the workforce, just starting your career or recovering from a job loss? Knowing where you stand helps you plan your next steps. This workbook will help you through the job search process.

## Finding work takes effort

Job hunting can be challenging, especially if you are changing careers or returning after a break. Treat it as a developing skill you will use throughout your life. The Idaho Department of Labor is here to help you.

# Identifying skills

A resume highlights your skills, knowledge, accomplishments and experiences. It shows an employer your ability to do the job and serves as your first impression. The goal of a resume is simple: To get you an interview.

## Soft skills

Below are some examples of soft skills:

### Communication

Are you able to express yourself clearly and professionally and listen to others?

### Leadership

Are you able to guide or support a group when needed?

### Initiative

Are you self-motivated? Do you notice what needs to be done and take action without being asked?

### Time management

Are you able to stay on task and meet deadlines?

### Flexibility

Can you adjust when plans or tasks are changed?

### Conflict resolution

Will you remain calm while handling stressful and tense situations?

### Positive attitude

Do you remain optimistic, productive and engaged for as long as it takes to get the job done?

## Showing soft skills to employers

Demonstrate your soft skills through your everyday actions.

Examples include:

- Arriving on time and being reliable
- Following directions carefully
- Communicating clearly and respectfully
- Being honest and trustworthy
- Working well on a team
- Staying positive and polite
- Assisting customers or coworkers with patience and always demonstrating a positive attitude

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## Transferable skills

These are skills and abilities you have developed through work, school, projects, hobbies, parenting or life experiences that can be applied to many different jobs and industries.

Examples include:

- Administrative and organizational skills from work or school projects
- Leadership and team building from jobs, volunteer work or group activities
- Budgeting, planning and multitasking from parenting or managing personal projects



# Networking

Most jobs are never advertised — they are filled through referrals and personal connections. While online job boards and ads are helpful, tapping into this “hidden” job market can greatly improve your chances of finding the right opportunity.

## Why network?

Think of networking like hiring a trusted mechanic through a friend’s recommendation. Employers prefer candidates they know or who come recommended because:

- Hiring strangers is risky.
- Employees directly impact a company’s success.
- Recruiting, hiring and training are costly — referrals save time and money.

## The long-term benefit

Networking isn’t only for job seekers. By building and maintaining relationships while you’re employed, you can expand your network and open doors for future opportunities or career changes.

## How to develop your personal network

Connect with as many people as possible in fields related to your interests. The broader your network, the greater your chances of finding the right opportunity.

### Start with us

Idaho Department of Labor offices across the state coordinate a variety of hiring events, workshops and networking opportunities. Go to [labor.idaho.gov](http://labor.idaho.gov) to view the department’s calendar of events.

### Volunteer

Join volunteer organizations, community service centers, volunteer to serve on a board or council or work with nonprofit organizations that may have some connection to the type of work you are interested in. Besides helping people or groups, you are also meeting new people. If you are currently unemployed, it keeps you involved and productive.

## Interview someone in your desired job role

Schedule an informal meeting to do an informational interview with someone who has a job you might like or works in an industry you are interested in.

## Why do informational interviews?

- You'll gain first-hand knowledge about a business, giving you a competitive edge for your resume and cover letter and the potential interview.
- You establish a rapport, and the prospective employer begins to gain a basic understanding of you as a potential employee.
- You expand your network and increase opportunity.

## How to do informational interviews

Identify who you want to see, such as an owner or manager. Call or email that person explaining you are doing personal research for a career transition and would like to know who might be able to meet briefly for an informational interview about the business or industry.

- Schedule the interview.
- Develop a list of open-ended questions to encourage conversation.
- Follow up with a thank you note.

## Sample informational interview questions

- What are the organization's main goals?
- Which skills are most important for success in this organization?
- What education or experience is typically required?
- What personal qualities help someone succeed in this field?
- What type of positions does the business offer?
- What do you like most about your position?
- What are some challenges you face in your role?

## Prepare your 30-second elevator pitch

The 30-second speech helps you clearly explain your skills and experience during networking events or job interviews.

Write it down to organize your thoughts, identify the types of work you are seeking and focus on the key skills you want to share.

- Develop a professional, courteous and personal introduction.
- Practice speaking out loud to build confidence.
- Speak in a positive and enthusiastic manner.

# Social media

When you're job searching, social media networking is just as important as your resume — sometimes more. Employers often hire based on connections and referrals. Here are some practical tips to use social networking effectively.

## Check your online presence

- Google yourself to see what pictures or information appears.
- Remove or adjust anything that could give a negative impression.
- Employers often research candidates online, so make sure your online profiles show your best professional self.

## Networking tips

- Share helpful resources, comment positively or congratulate people on achievements before reaching out for help.
- Let people know you are looking: For example, post: "I'm exploring opportunities in program management and workforce development. If you know of openings, I'd love to connect."
- Tap into alumni networks: People are often happy to help fellow graduates.

## Email etiquette

Do you have an old or unprofessional email address (for example, `imsocool171@gmail.com`)? You may need to create a new professional email address just for your job search activities.

If you receive an email from an employer, make sure you treat your response as professional communication, not as a text message — don't use abbreviations or text shortcuts, instead use appropriate greetings and closings, complete sentences and correct punctuation and grammar.

## Choose the right platforms

Besides LinkedIn, use other platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or blogs, depending on your career goals and who you want to reach.

### LinkedIn

#### Polish your profile

Use a professional photo, headline with keywords (e.g., Program director | Workforce development | Talent strategy) and a strong summary.

#### Be active

Share relevant articles, comment on industry posts and celebrate others' successes. This keeps you visible.

#### Connect strategically

Send personalized connection requests to recruiters, industry leaders and colleagues. Mention common interests or shared experiences.

#### Join groups in your field

This could include groups like workforce development, healthcare and program management. Make sure to take part in discussions.

## Other platforms

### Facebook

Join local or professional job groups, alumni groups and industry communities.

### Instagram and TikTok (if relevant)

Some industries (creative, marketing, education and nonprofit) share opportunities here — use hashtags like `#jobsearch` `#hiring`.

# Job applications

Your job application is often the employer's first impression of you. Make it neat, complete, accurate and professional.

## Application tips

### Complete carefully

Fill out all sections neatly and completely using blue or black ink. Write "N/A" if something doesn't apply. Read all instructions carefully and double-check required fields, especially on online forms.

### Be positive and honest

Focus on your skills and experience. Avoid negative comments about past jobs. Give accurate, truthful information about your work history and qualifications.

### Tailor your answers and be specific

Highlight the experience and skills that best match the job. Clearly state the position you are applying for — avoid vague answers like "any."

### Salary question

If asked, provide a researched range or write "open" or "negotiable."

### Reasons for leaving

Try to make your reasons for separating from previous employment positive or neutral. Examples: better opportunity, not enough hours, relocated, promotional opportunity, seeking growth, better work-life balance, seasonal work, returned to school, contract ended, lack of work, etc.

## Application do's and don'ts

### Do

- Upload your resume in PDF format to prevent formatting issues.
- Use a professional email address (e.g., yourname@email.com).
- Use professional file names (e.g., Jane Doe\_Resume\_2025.pdf).
- Save login info for job portals you frequently use.
- Check grammar and spelling before clicking "submit."
- Keep a copy or screenshot of your submitted application.

### Don't

- Skip required fields — your application might be rejected.
- Use slang, emojis, acronyms or casual language.
- Use an unprofessional email (e.g., partyguy99@email.com).
- Guess job history dates or job titles — be accurate.
- Submit sloppy handwriting (paper) or messy formatting (online).
- Rush through the application.



# Resumes

A resume highlights your skills, knowledge, accomplishments and experiences. It shows an employer your ability to do the job and serves as your first impression. The goal of a resume is simple: to get you an interview.

## Before you start

- Gather your work history, dates, references and contact details.
- Check the “careers” or “jobs” section on company websites.
- Save usernames and passwords when creating accounts on job websites.
- If your resume links to LinkedIn or other social media, make sure those profiles are professional.

## Formatting tips

- Keep it one to two pages.
- Use clean, simple fonts like Arial, Calibri or Times New Roman.
- Use 11 or 12-point font size.
- Set margins to 1 inch.
- Avoid text boxes, photos, graphics or fancy designs.
- Depending on the employer’s request, save and upload your resume as a PDF or Word document.

## Resumes do’s and don’ts

### Do

- Tailor your resume for each job.
- Address all requirements in the job description.
- Highlight accomplishments, not just job duties.
- Demonstrate how you solved problems, quantify results where possible.
- Include volunteer experience.
- Leave out salary expectations and references unless requested.

### Don’t

- Use a generic resume.
- Include personal interests unless they are relevant.
- Create an untargeted work history.
- Describe your jobs using general terms.
- Include irrelevant volunteer experience.
- Send out your resume without a second opinion.

# Resume content



## Heading

Keep it simple but informative. Include your name, city and state only, phone number and a professional email address. Add a LinkedIn profile if you have one.

## Highlights of qualifications, summary and objective

Grab their attention. This may be the most important section of your resume. Most employers spend only 15-20 seconds scanning a resume. If they don't see a connection to the job description quickly, they may stop reading.

Emphasize in a few brief statements the skills and experience you have that match what was asked for in the job description. Use a strong, active voice.

**Example:** Dedicated and reliable professional with a proven ability to contribute, learn quickly and support team success.

## Education

Location: City, State (can omit if applying nationally and space is tight).

Graduation year: Include if recent or if it helps; omit if you want to avoid potential age bias.

## Certifications and volunteerism

Include any certificates or licenses you've earned, especially those needed for certain types of jobs (examples: food safety or equipment operation).

## Examples of common certifications and training:

- CPR and First Aid Certification
- Food Handler's Card and ServSafe
- Microsoft Office or Google Workspace Training
- Customer service training certificate
- Basic computer skills certificate
- Forklift certification
- Commercial Driver's License (CDL)
- Security guard license
- Childcare certification (examples: babysitting, Home Health Aide (HHA), Certified Nursing Assistance (CNA))
- OSHA 10/30 safety training
- Warehouse, inventory or logistics basics training
- General hand tool or safety training (for maintenance and trades)

## Relevant experience

This section tells the rest of your story. It expands on the strengths you highlighted earlier and shows employers what you've actually done on the job.

- Explain what you accomplished, what you contributed or what results came from your work.
- Use past-tense action verbs (managed, supported, created, assisted, improved or organized).
- Whenever possible, use numbers or measurable results to help your achievements stand out.

**Example:** Increased annual sales by 20% in 2021, resulting in an additional \$85,000 in revenue compared to the previous year.



## How far back should you go?

Generally, listing the last 10 years of work experience is enough — unless older experience is directly related to the job you are applying for.

## Work experience

This section answers the basic who, what, when and where of your past jobs.

List your positions in reverse chronological order (your most recent job first). Include your job title, company name, location and dates of employment.

**Example:** December 2019 - Present | Data Entry Clerk  
| XYZ Company | Boise, Idaho

## Soft and core skills

These show how you work with people and adapt on the job.

### Examples:

- Communication
- Teamwork
- Time management
- Problem solving
- Adaptability
- Customer service
- Microsoft Office and Google Workspace
- QuickBooks and data entry
- Salesforce and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tools

**PRO TIP:** Proofread your resume. Always check spelling, grammar and formatting. Ask someone else to review your resume. One small mistake can cost you an interview.

## Other resume concerns

### What if I don't have any work experience?

You can still create a strong resume. Focus on the skills you've gained through non-work activities. Include things such as working a concession stand for a club or group activity, volunteer work or other life experiences which have given you job-ready skills.

### What if I have gaps in my work history?

Use your cover letter to briefly explain any gaps.

### How can I avoid age discrimination?

Avoid using dates such as your high school or college graduation date. Also remember you don't have to use your entire work history. Pick the relevant parts and label it "Recent Work History" or "Relevant Work History."

Unless specified in the job description, avoid using terms such as "35+ years of experience."

### What about hobbies, interests or beliefs?

Don't include them on your resume. Unless they clearly support your career objective, they don't belong on a resume.

**PRO TIP:** Idaho Department of Labor local offices can print your resume on resume paper for no cost.

# Applicant tracking system tips

An applicant tracking system (ATS) is software employers use to scan and sort resumes based on keywords, skills and qualifications that match a job description.

**PRO TIP:** Many online systems scan resumes for keywords. To improve your chances, use industry keywords. For example, if the job listing mentions project management, customer service, retail sales or similar terms, include them in your resume wherever they apply — such as under skills, certifications or relevant experience.

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## Formatting and structure

### Stick to simple formatting

Use a clean, traditional layout with standard section headings (examples: Work experience, Education and Skills). Avoid text boxes, graphics, headers/footers or complex tables — ATS often can't read them.

### Choose bullets over paragraphs

Short bullet points are easier for ATS and human recruiters.

### Use a standard font

Arial, Calibri, Times New Roman or Helvetica are safe choices.

### Save as a Word document (.docx)

Only save as a PDF if the job posting allows.



## Keywords and tailoring

### Mirror the job description

Use the exact words and phrases from the posting (example: if they say “talent development” don’t change it to “employee training”).

### Include both acronyms and spelled-out versions

Example: applicant tracking system (ATS)

### Quantify achievements

“Reduced onboarding time by 30%” reads stronger than “Responsible for onboarding.”

### Hard skills matter most

ATS gives more weight to measurable, technical skills than to soft skills alone.

### Place skills in multiple sections

Using a dedicated skills section and weaving skills naturally into job descriptions increases keyword matches.

## Ways to make your resume easy to skim

### Align left

Keep all text, headings and dates left-aligned for easy reading.

### Organize information clearly

Put job titles and dates on one line and company, city and state information on the next.

### Use consistent formatting

Use the same font size throughout; only your name and headings should be larger.

### Bold job titles

This helps readers quickly see your career progression.

### Use action words

Start bullet points with strong verbs and keep them under two lines.

### Use numbers

Quantify results with digits (example: increased sales by 30%).

### Keep white space

Avoid clutter — extra space improves readability



# Choosing a resume template

<b>Format</b>	<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>	<b>Best used for</b>
<b>Master</b>	Comprehensive history of employment, skills, training, education and accomplishments		Your eyes only (never sent) Copying and pasting information into a targeted resume
<b>Basic</b>	For those with limited work history and skills Easy to read, versatile Applicant Tracking System friendly	Feels generic Might not stand out	People new to the workforce Students Entry level jobs
<b>Chronological</b>	Most widely used format Targets accomplishments to employer's needs Logical flow, easy to read Showcases growth in skills and responsibility Shows promotions and impressive titles, shows loyalty	Emphasizes gaps in employment Highlights frequent job changes Emphasizes employment but not skill development Emphasizes lack of related experience and career changes Points out demotions and career setbacks	Individuals with a steady work record Individuals with experience that relates directly to the position applied for Individuals pursuing the same or similar work as they had in the past
<b>Skills-based</b>	Highlights relevant skills and accomplishments Deemphasizes work history in less relevant jobs Combines skills from a variety of jobs Minimizes employment gaps and lack of directly related experiences Organizes variety of experience (paid and unpaid, other activities) Disguises gaps in work record or series of short-term jobs	Confusing if not well organized Requires more effort and creativity to prepare Deemphasizes growth and job titles	Career changers, those in transition or with frequent job changes Individuals re-entering the job market after some absence or with gaps in employment Individuals who have grown in skills and responsibility Individuals who have developed skills from activities other than employment

# Basic resume sample

## **Lindsey Lucas**

208-555-8989

LCL512@aol.com

### **Skills**

- Proficient in Microsoft Word and PowerPoint (2019)
- Works well with others
- Excellent leadership

### **Work experience**

#### **Child Caretaker**

- CPR and First Aid certified
- Played games, read stories, put puzzles together with children to entertain them
- Monitored children's behavior and reported to parents
- Fed and cooked meals for children

#### **Landscaper**

- Mowed lawns
- Used a weed eater along fence lines and curbing
- Weeded flower beds and gave them proper nourishment
- Raked and shoveled dirt and debris
- Collected payments

### **Education**

Timberline High School – Boise, Idaho

Expected to graduate June 2021

- General Studies
- Spanish 1 and 2
- Web Design
- Basic Photography
- Yearbook Club
- Marching Band

# Chronological resume sample

## Ben Turner

208-555-5555 | username@email.com

### Summary of qualifications

- Active United States government security clearance level
- Bilingual — fluent in English and Spanish, both written and spoken
- Superior performance award for past four years in security management

### Employment history

#### **Security Specialist, U.S. Marine Corps; Denver, CO; May 2019 – present**

- Supervised \$100 million worth of highly sensitive equipment — security efforts led to zero loss in a three-year period.
- Implemented new security system plan that led to increased lockdown protection for personnel.
- Provided leadership, instruction and supervision of 25 personnel — efforts resulted in 30% decrease in staff turnover and a 10% increase in promotions.
- Expertly managed investigative reports — recognized as Non-Commissioned Officer of the Quarter for efficiency and accuracy of written instructions and documents.
- Proven ability to communicate effectively in diverse environments — efficiently managed a diverse workforce and inmate population resulting in a 10% decrease in inmate violence.

#### **Warehouse Supervisor, Micro Chemical Inc.; Denver, CO; February 2008 – May 2019**

- Supervised crew of 15 in daily operations and evacuation — efforts led to company-record promotion rate for staff and a 10% decrease in staff turnover.
- Monitored complex cataloging and ordering systems; implemented a fast-track procurement system for office supplies resulting in a 20% decrease in supply ordering turn-around.
- Helped develop and implement an effective security system — efforts led to \$85k savings annually by reducing pilferage and damage.
- Proficient at using Windows 10, Microsoft Office and PeopleSoft databases.

#### **Security Guard, Mayfield Malls; Denver, CO; August 2003 – January 2008**

- Coordinated work assignments, evaluated performance and managed a four-member security team.
- Recognized as “Security Supervisor of the Quarter” for boosting morale and encouraging an innovative and safe working environment.
- Investigated security and safety violations and wrote detailed incident reports — led to Mayfield Mall being recognized as the “Safest shopping facility in the mountain states” in 2006 and 2007.
- Helped diffuse conflicts in a public environment with regard to everyone’s safety — consistently recognized through customer feedback for excellent customer relations.

### Education

**U.S. Marine Corps**, Specialized Training: Explosives, Firearms, Leadership, Diversity, Communication  
**Metro State College**, 42 Semester Units in Administration of Justice; Denver, CO

# Skills-based resume sample

## Bill Gates

10 Emerson Dr.  
Norfolk, VA 33333  
101-555-1234  
Email: username@email.com

## Objective

Service Representative for Accounting Software International, specializing in conversions.

## Highlights of qualifications

Excellent teacher/trainer; patient and effective when working with a wide range of personalities  
Successful in identifying and solving computer related problems  
Project oriented, sticking to a task until completed  
Successful in learning and comprehending new systems and methods

## Relevant experience

### Bookkeeping

- Reconciled loan payment records between servicing company and 150 lending institutions.
- Reconciled cash records to computer records for over 200 accounts on a monthly basis.
- Prepared monthly payroll, paid bills and processed tuition payments for private preschool.

### Teaching/supervising

- Trained nine people in investor accounting.
- Wrote an Investor Reports Instruction Manual minimizing training time for new employees.
- Maintained cordial working relations, while explaining and clarifying others' errors.
- Interviewed and hired four staff members.

### Computer usage

- Worked with computer analyst in development of computerized specialty reports.
- Assisted in implementation of a new PC program for accounts payable.
- Input monthly account records on a PC and generated trail balance.

### Problem solving

- Balanced seven months of critical reports for a large federal agency involving \$350,000 of equipment for six major divisions.
- Designed an account coding system to eliminate dual coding and time wasted.

## Employment history

1999-2001: Treasurer/Bookkeeper, Little Tikes Preschool, Cole, VA  
1995-1999: Investor Accountant Supervisor, First Bank Corp, Pleasanttown, VA  
1991-1995: Account Reconciliation, Donzall and Associates, Monton, CA

## Education

B.A. in Accounting and Business from Norwest College, Santa Rosa, VA

# Combination resume sample

## **Buster Keaton**

Boise, Idaho

208-555-6984

username@email.com

### **Highlights of qualifications**

Ten years of sales and marketing experience with people from all cultures and economic levels

Consistently surpassed sales quotas in retail clothing and housewares departments

Demonstrated strong interpersonal and presentation skills

Proven ability to solve customer issues

Self-motivated and confident in making independent decisions

### **Relevant accomplishments**

#### **Sales and marketing**

- Marketed Christmas ornaments and gift items imported from the Philippines by making presentations to over 20 retail storeowners and buyers.
- Cohosted monthly sales seminars for potential real estate partnership investors.
- Answered up to 100 customer questions daily regarding project details.
- Followed up by phone to verify client's commitment to invest in the partnership.
- Raised funds for a nonprofit organization by cold calling local businesses.
- Co-led voter drive and personally persuaded 2,000 citizens to sign petition in support of placing community improvement initiative on the ballot.

#### **Customer service**

- Gathered information about products, complaints, policies and accounts by phone and in person.
- Examined customer claims for errors. Made any corrections or changes to customers' accounts.
- Determined charges for services requested; followed up with customers to ensure satisfaction.
- Provided information on products and kept records of all transactions.
- Referred unresolved complaints to other departments or supervisors.
- Applied diplomacy and assertiveness to delivery delays and resolved budget problems.
- Interacted with those with cultural and communication barriers.

### **Relevant work experience**

**Sales Director**, PacBell, San Francisco, CA, 2010 – 2018

**Customer Service Manager**, Grothe and Associates, San Francisco, CA, 2006 – 2010

**Marketing Director**, Beneficial Finance, Bay Area, CA, 2004 – 2006

**New Sales Developer**, Microsoft, Bay Area, CA, 2002 – 2004

### **Education**

Bachelor of Arts in Accounting and Business

Norwest College, Santa Rosa, CA

# Sample reference sheet

Only when requested by employer. Do not attach to every resume.

## **Eric Clapton**

Middleville, Idaho 83700  
208-555-1640  
oldrocker@yahoo.com

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## **References**

### **Professional**

Julia Silvers  
Administrative Manager  
Colonial Kitchens  
123 W. 32nd St.  
Boise, ID 83703  
208-111-2222

Robert Williams  
Department Manager  
Pots and Pans Inc.  
1234 Jefferson Ave.  
Meridian, ID 83707  
208-456-7899

Joseph Mitchell  
Director of Marketing  
Nickel and Dimes Department Store  
12 Wheeling Circle  
Meridian, ID 83707  
208-539-7622

### **Personal**

Joy Smith  
1234 E. Park  
San Francisco, CA 12345  
415-456-7899

Jason McMurphey  
11 Market St.  
Stockton, CA 94546  
209-456-789





# Cover letters

Cover letters are an additional opportunity to introduce yourself and outline some important aspects of your resume to potential employers.

## Do I really need a cover letter?

Yes. Even if not required, a cover letter helps market your skills, showcase attention to detail and address unique situations like relocation, employment gaps, criminal records or career changes.

- Make it compelling, personal and brief.
- Keep it specifically related to the position.
- Be positive.
- Include contact information as shown on your resume.
- Proofread it and ask another person to proofread it, too.
- Remember to sign it.

## Cover letter basics

Cover letters are typically two to four paragraphs in length. The following is the basic structure for a cover letter:

Date  
Name of contact (if known) title  
Name of company  
Mailing address city, state zip code

Dear Mr. / Mrs. / Ms.,

### Paragraph 1: opening and introduction

- Give your reasons for writing the letter.
- Tell the employer the position you are interested in.
- Tell the employer where you found out about the job opening.
- Tell the employer why you are interested in the company.

### Paragraph 2: body and hook

- This is one or two paragraphs that tell the employer why you are qualified
- Identify specific qualifications from job posting to address (usually the first three qualifications)
- Match what you have accomplished to three key qualifications and requirements listed in the job posting.

### Paragraph 3: closing

- Tell the employer you are interested in interviewing for the available position.
- Thank the employer for considering you for the position.

Sincerely,

*Signature*  
Name

# Cover letter sample

**Mike Brown**

1113 Oak St., Lakeview, ID 55555  
208-555-5555  
username@email.com

**Sept. 1, 2026**

Mr. Phillip Moore Production Manager  
XYZ Corporation  
21 Industry Lane  
Lakeview, ID 55555

Dear Mr. Moore,

I am applying for the position of Production Assistant that was listed with the Idaho Department of Labor. With a high-tech background in Fortune 100 companies, I am well qualified to represent your company in this position. I am accustomed to a fast-paced environment where deadlines are a priority and handling multiple jobs simultaneously is the norm.

With five years of experience in production, I supervised up to 35 personnel, often making decisions quickly and effectively. Constant communication with all levels of management and employees has strengthened my interpersonal skills.

Please consider my qualifications for this position. I look forward to hearing from you to discuss how I could provide value to your organization. I can be reached during the day at 208-555-5555 or in the evening at 208-555-5555. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

*Mike Brown*  
Mike Brown

# Interviews

An interview is your opportunity to bring your resume to life and show employers why you are the best fit for the job. Preparation, professionalism and confidence are key — knowing how to present your skills and experience effectively can make all the difference in landing the position.

## Before the interview

### Research the company

Review the company's website and materials, speak with individuals who know the organization, and take note of its dress code, employee attitudes and overall workplace culture.

### Navigate

Determine the company's location and plan your route using tools like Google Maps or MapQuest. Print the directions, allow extra time for unforeseen delays and if possible, do a practice trip to gauge traffic patterns and parking availability.

### Write it down

Record the date of your appointment along with the company's name, address and phone number. If you know your interviewer's name, include that as well and keep that information with you.

### Take employment portfolio

Prepare a portfolio with copies of your resume, certificates, references and examples of your work.

A simple dark-colored folder is sufficient and don't forget to bring a pen and notebook.

### Dress for success

Ensure your appearance is professional. Wear clean pressed clothing suitable for the interview. Keep hair and nails neat and avoid strong fragrances. Aim to dress on a level more formal than the company's everyday attire, opting for neutral colors like black, brown, gray or navy and choose appropriate shoes to complete your look.

### Be punctual

This is your interview. Attend on your own. Arrive 10-15 minutes early and politely inform the receptionist of your name and the person you're scheduled to meet.

### Final notes

Consider leaving personal electronic devices in your vehicle. Remember, your interview begins the moment you arrive in the parking lot.

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## During the interview

### Be yourself

You got the interview because of your skills and qualifications.

### Show up with a friendly, direct and confident demeanor

When meeting the interviewer, greet them, smile and remain standing until you are invited to sit.

### Make yourself at ease

Stay poised and professional. Place your purse or other personal items on the floor beside your chair.

### Stay professional and tactful

Don't argue or discuss personal issues. Avoid jokes or gossip. Speak with proper grammar. Avoid slang like "ok" or "yeah" or "um."

### Maintain eye contact

Be aware of body language. Be attentive and express genuine enthusiasm.

### Avoid criticizing past employers

Present any difficult situations in a constructive and positive way.

## Top 10 interview questions

### **Tell me about yourself.**

A classic opener — summary of your professional background, key accomplishments and what brings you to this opportunity.

### **Why do you want to work here?**

Focuses on company research — your alignment with the company's values, mission and current projects.

### **What are your strengths?**

Choose strengths that align with the job and back them up with real examples.

### **What is your greatest weakness?**

Use a genuine but non-critical weakness and show how you're improving it.

### **Why should we hire you?**

Summarize your key selling points — skills, experience and fit — tailored to the job description.

### **Tell me about a time you faced a challenge at work.**

A behavioral question. Use the STAR method (Situation, Task, Action, Result).

### **Tell me about a time you worked on a team.**

Another behavioral question focused on collaboration, communication and conflict resolution.

### **Where do you see yourself in five years?**

Show ambition and alignment with the company's growth and potential paths.

### **Why are you leaving your current job (or why did you leave your last job)?**

Stay positive and avoid blaming previous employers. Focus on growth and opportunity.

### **Do you have any questions for us?**

Always say yes. Ask smart, informed questions that show engagement. "Are there any of my responses you need clarification on?"



# After the interview

Do people really send Thank You notes anymore? Serious job seekers can gain an edge by sending a Thank You note. It shows professionalism, thoughtfulness and genuine interest in the position.

## Tips on emailed Thank You notes

- Send a personalized email to each member of the interview panel.
- Avoid using the same template. Make each message unique to the recipient.
- Keep your tone professional. Don't write as if it's a casual text.
- Send your Thank You note promptly. Ideally within 24 hours of the interview.
- Reference the interview date and the position you applied for.
- Express gratitude for the interviewer's time and consideration.
- Reinforce your enthusiasm for both the role and the company.

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**PRO TIP:** Stay positive and enthusiastic. Finish strong and make your case. Show your strengths. Highlight your capabilities.



## What else can we do for your?

### Professional development

We can help with career and life transitions, apprenticeships and job training, online profiles and resume building, job listings, mock interviews, hiring events and networking opportunities.

### IdahoWorks.gov

Set up an account at IdahoWorks.gov to create multiple resumes and make them searchable by employers. Search through the database for all sorts of occupations.

### Veterans services

Find out what Priority of Service means and the employment benefits that are available to veterans and their families. Meet with one of the several veteran representatives located throughout the state.

### Adult and Youth education and training programs

Having trouble looking for and finding work? We can help. Adults and youth who meet certain criteria may be eligible for help earning a GED, finding employment or accessing training, education or tutoring resources.

### Farmworker services

Idaho is committed to ensuring farmworkers know what laws protect their rights to fair wages and working conditions.

### Reentry services

In the reentry services program, we assist formerly incarcerated individuals reenter the state's workforce.

### Resource center

Our local offices and mobile locations offer personal computers for our customers, resume templates, internet access and career planning along with fax, phones, copiers and information about community services.

## JobScope brings it all together

JobScope is an easy-to-use tool to help job seekers and students make informed career and educational decisions through access to education, career and labor market information.

You don't need an account, there's no login. Type in a job title, occupation or industry and click search.

Information you will find on occupations:

- Related job titles
- Demand (high, average, low)
- Required education level
- Typical hourly and annual wage
- Annual job openings statewide
- Current number of people employed
- Programs of study in Idaho





# Veterans

Veteran resumes can differ from civilian ones as they require the translation of military language into civilian terms that employers will understand.

## Translate your military skills into civilian terms

Some veterans may find a difficult match between their military skills and civilian employment.

In these cases, showcase the valuable soft skills you learned in the military.

### Leadership and teamwork

- Leads and motivates individuals and teams to achieve objectives
- Works effectively as part of a diverse and cohesive team
- Mentors, coaches and develops subordinates
- Fosters collaboration and accountability among peers

### Discipline and dependability

- Demonstrates a strong sense of responsibility and reliability
- Follows through on commitments and completes tasks on time
- Maintains focus and composure under stress
- Upholds high standards of performance and conduct

### Adaptability and flexibility

- Adjusts quickly to changing priorities, environments or missions
- Learns new technologies, systems and procedures efficiently
- Thrives in dynamic, fast-paced and high-pressure settings
- Remains effective during uncertainty or crisis

### Problem solving and critical thinking

- Analyzes complex situations to identify practical solutions
- Thinks strategically and anticipates potential challenges
- Makes quick, sound decisions with limited information
- Innovates and adapts to meet mission objectives

### Communication skills

- Communicates clearly and respectfully across ranks and backgrounds
- Listens actively and provides constructive feedback
- Writes concise, accurate reports and correspondence
- Interacts effectively with diverse groups, including civilians and international partners

### Time management and organization

- Prioritizes multiple tasks and meets tight deadlines
- Plans and executes complex operations with precision

- Manages logistics, schedules and resources efficiently
- Maintains documentation and operational records accurately

### **Integrity and ethics**

- Demonstrates honesty, accountability and trustworthiness.
- Acts in accordance with core values and professional ethics.
- Protects confidential and sensitive information.
- Displays respect for authority and organizational rules.

### **Resilience and emotional intelligence**

- Perseveres through adversity and maintains a positive attitude.

- Manages stress and pressure constructively.
- Demonstrates empathy and understanding toward others.
- Maintains professionalism during difficult or emotional situations.

### **Attention to detail**

- Follows detailed procedures accurately and consistently.
- Identifies and corrects potential errors before they escalate.
- Ensures precision in documentation, reporting and operations.

## **More resources**

### **ONetOnLine.org**

On the O\*Net OnLine front page, navigate to the "Crosswalks" section then click on "Military." Enter your branch and MOS, AFSC or Rating and click "GO."

### **TAonline.com**

Use TAOnline's Military Skills Translator to convert your MOS code to a civilian occupation.

### **USAJobs.gov**

The USAJobs website is the U.S. federal government's official employment portal. It lists available federal jobs with the option to view by veteran status. USAJobs also provides additional job seeker guidance and resources to veterans.

### **CareerOneStop.org**

CareerOneStop's toolkit helps people make better, more informed career decisions. Check education, knowledge, skills and licensing against job types.



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