**Job Hunting 101: A Guide**

***from Let’s E­­­at, Grandma***

*When you decide to start looking for a new job, it’s common to get overwhelmed with the process. Whether you want to move up in your field, change careers, secure a livable wage, or pursue a new industry, job hunting can get complicated*

*This insider’s guide to career development will help you learn to the job searching process from start-to-finish, including a step-by-step breakdown of professional documents, workplace etiquette, interviewing tips, and additional resources to further your education or advance your career..*

***This guide includes:***

1. Common Questions & Concerns……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….……2.
2. The Job Search Process…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….……2.
   1. Things to Consider.
   2. Reading Job Descriptions………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..…3.
      1. Example: Administrative Assistant Job Posting
   3. Common Job Posting “Red Flags” …………………………………………………………………………………………………………….4.
3. Communicating Professionally……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….6.
   1. Writing Professional Emails
   2. Professional Verbal Communication (Face-To-Face & Over The Phone) …………………………………………………..7.
   3. Interviewing Tips……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….8.
   4. General Workplace Etiquette
4. Professional Documents………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………11.
   1. Your Resume
      1. Header & Summary
      2. Areas of Expertise.
      3. Professional Experience
      4. Supplemental Sections
   2. Your Cover Letter…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….14.
   3. Your LinkedIn Profile……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….15.
5. Additional Resources……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………17.
   1. Trade Schools & Internships
   2. Education & Certifications
   3. Let’s Eat, Grandma Network

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| ***Common Questions & Concerns for Job Seekers*** |
| * **Having strong professional resumes and cover letters** * **Being confident during interviews and with recruiters** * **Professionalism/etiquette at work (dress codes, writing professional emails, etc)** * **How to find the right job to fit skills, pay needs, education, and lifestyle** * **How to use LinkedIn and why it’s important** * **Red flags for job postings, recruiter communications, and company values** |

***The Job Search Process***

*The job search process starts the minute you decide you want a new job. Whether you’re currently employed and unhappy, under-, or unemployed, recently graduated, or looking for a career change, the process is the same. In this section, you’ll learn how to efficiently search and apply for jobs, how to be competitive in any job market, and the best ways to set yourself up as the ideal candidate for any position.*

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| ***Things To Consider*** |
| There are several things to consider when you’re searching for a new job. The obvious ones are the rate of pay, requirements of the role, career field or specialty, and your qualifications. The less obvious considerations are a bit more complicated, and there are no right or wrong answers. It’s always good practice to ask yourself some of these questions before applying to a new position.  **CURRENT LIFESTYLE**  How will this new role fit into your life? What should you expect in the adjustment period? If you’re employed, consider how the transition from your current role to the next role should go. If you are unemployed or underemployed, consider your current lifestyle and availability.  Do you have children? Volunteer responsibilities? Part-time work or other hourly commitments? This could impact your ability to work specific shifts or commit to full-time employment.  **FINANCIAL NEEDS**  What is your cost-of-living? What’s the average rate of pay for your current role?  Is your current pay sufficient, or are you struggling to make ends meet?  Identify your ideal pay range, and (if applicable), decide on a minimum pay rate for you to accept the role.  **PROS & CONS**  What do you like about your most recent job? What do you dislike? What aspects of your current experience do you want to strengthen? What work do you enjoy the most?  What is your biggest concern for starting a new position? What are your weak points in your existing skillset?  **IDEAL WORKPLACE VALUES**  What are your priorities in a new position? Higher pay, work/life balance, commute times, and industry can all impact your overall workplace experience.  What are your dealbreakers? What are your concerns about your most recent employer?  You can learn a lot about a company by doing your research before you apply. Glassdoor, Google, LinkedIn, and Indeed reviews are priceless, and will give you a better idea of what current staff thinks of the company. Some factors to consider are the company’s turnover rates, rate of pay, overall satisfaction, and customer or client reviews. |

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| ***Reading A Job Description*** |
| Reading a job description carefully will help you determine what skills you already have and how to communicate your qualifications to potential employers.  These descriptions are also helpful when you write your resume. In resumes, the *Areas of Expertise* section is all about keywords. Recruiters who write the job descriptions also set up Applicant Tracking Systems to monitor all applications, and those keywords become the filters. These filters are used across their internal websites and external hiring boards to filter out and automatically disqualify resumes that do not match the parameters.  80-90% of resumes submitted online will get rejected by automated tracking systems like this. If you get past this system, you are already in the top 10% of candidates. These Applicant Tracking Systems are picky, and you might get rejected from an applicant pool for anything from using a table instead of plain text, naming your skills incorrectly, or not including enough relevant keywords to make it past the disqualifiers.  If you can read a job description and target your professional documents to that description, you will automatically set yourself up as an ideal candidate. When you review a job listing, highlight the key information about the recruiter’s expectations for the role, common responsibilities and skills, and required experience. Use these to inform your job searches, professional documents, and priorities. |

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| ***Example: Administrative Assistant Job Posting*** |
| Administrative Assistant  Administrative Assistant: work with leadership and other administrative staff in preparing documents, greeting clients and answering questions, use a multi-line phone system in a high volume environment, manage projects and deadlines for business executives, handle all mail and filing, maintain executive calendars and contacts, and schedule business meetings  Key Responsibilities: excellent verbal and written communication skills, be able to solve problems, be accountable for daily operations, expertise in Microsoft Office and Google Documents, strong computer skills, personable attitude with clients and staff, highly organized, and great under pressure. Must type 75+ wpm and have meticulous attention-to-detail.  Based on this description, here are keywords directly from the posting.  Job Description Keywords: Work with Leadership | Preparing Documents | Greeting Clients | Multi-Line Phone System | Manage Projects | Mail and Filing | Calendars | Contacts | Communication | Microsoft Office | Google Documents | Computer Skills | Personable Attitude | Organized | Great Under Pressure  The next step is to tweak these keywords and list them as skills, rather than descriptions. Always include any specific programs (like Microsoft or Google) that you know how to use. These specific programs and products always stand out to a hiring manager.  Areas of Expertise: Document Preparation | Client Success | Multi-Line Phone Systems | Cross-Functional Collaboration | Project Management | Filing | Microsoft Suite | Google Documents | Communication Skills | Troubleshooting | Organization | High-Volume Environments | Professional Writing (84 wpm) | Calendar Management | Attention to Detail | Creative Problem-Solving | Leadership | Accountability | Office Organization | Daily Operations | Appointment Scheduling  List them in order of importance to the role, and make sure not to repeat skills or add more than necessary. Do not include skills you’re unsure about, or require more training than you’ve had. You only want to list skills that you can confidently do from Day 1.  For more general skills, identify a specific, professional name for those qualities. For example, to demonstrate that you have a “personable attitude”, you’d list something like “Client Success” or “Customer Service”  Identify the general themes for these skills to sort them into separate, unique categories in your Areas of Expertise section.  Administrative Skills: Document Preparation | Project Management | Filing | Microsoft Suite | Google Documents | Troubleshooting | Organization | Professional Writing (84 wpm Calendar Management| Attention to Detail | Office Organization  Communication: Multi-Line Phone Systems | Daily Operations | Client Success | Cross-Functional Collaboration | Communication Skills | High-Volume Environments | Creative Problem-Solving | Leadership } Accountability | Scheduling |

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| ***Common Job Posting “Red Flags”*** |
| We have all worked in environments that make us miserable or motivate us to seek new employment. There are “red flags” for workplaces, and it is good practice to look out for them and manage your expectations. These are not necessarily dealbreakers, but can alert to potential concerns to consider before applying.  **JOB DESCRIPTION RED FLAGS:**   * No salary range, or a very low salary for the industry (“pay commiserate to experience” can sometimes mean that you’ll be paid the lowest possible amount for your skillset) * Experience expectations are too high for the position * No mention of sick leave, PTO policies, healthcare, or other benefits * An unreasonably long list of job qualifications (or responsibilities that could apply to several jobs at once) * Vague or generic mentions of additional overtime, weekend, or unscheduled work   Another type of “red flag” to look out for are those of the workplace itself. There are common buzzwords companies use that can indicate a toxic work environment, unrealistic demands, or deceptive role expectations.  **WORKPLACE RED FLAGS:**   * Unlimited/Vague PTO or hourly requirements: Not having clear information about the PTO expectations can lead to resentment, judgment, or shame when requesting time off. Unlimited PTO makes employees request LESS time off than they would with a clear allotted amount. * Negative or judgmental language: If a company describes itself in rude or hostile language, it is unlikely to be a positive experience. Phrases like “leave your feelings at the door”, “lazy workers need not apply”, and “if you have time to lean, you have time to clean” are all indicators of a toxic workplace. * Poor reviews online: Check the company’s reviews, including workplace-specific sites like Glassdoor and Indeed, and general sites like Google and Yelp. Are there frequent criticisms? What are current or former employees saying? How are client experiences?   Some companies use buzzwords or phrases to engage potential applicants or blur boundaries between employee expectations and leadership demands. These are not always “red flags” or even negative qualities, but should clue you in about potential concerns.  **COMMON BUZZWORDS:**   * “self-starter”: this could imply that your responsibilities are vague, or you will be expected to do additional work with no increase in pay or promotion * “we’re a family”: this could mean unrealistic or inappropriate emotional boundaries between coworkers, or might indicate workplace drama or no boundaries between work and personal life * “highly motivated”: this can indicate a competitive environment that builds resentment between employees or requires overworking to get ahead * “work hard, play hard”: this could indicate an unprofessional work environment, or a workplace that requires office politics or “rubbing elbows” to fit in * “fast-paced environment”: this could indicate a workplace that requires employees to do the work of multiple people at once, or commit to unrealistic work/life balance   As a reminder, these are not always negative! These are prompts to make you think about your priorities and what kind of workplace you want to target. |

***Communicating Professionally***

*There are a few key elements in any communication with coworkers, superiors, and clients. Business communication is often done through email, phone calls, face-to-face communication. In this section, you’ll learn the different forms of communication and how to sound professional, prepared, and educated****.***

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| ***Professional Communication Basics*** |
| **EMAIL:** Emails should be brief, concise, and with a clear goal in mind.  **PHONE:** When you have professional conversations over the phone, keep calls focused, brief, and to-the-point. It is helpful to have a written list of your goals in the conversation, so that you are prepared and confident during the call.    **VERBAL:** Make sure you are actively contributing to a conversation, both through meaningful comments and active listening. Active listening requires you to listen to the other speakers’ comments, repeat and respond to them appropriately, and contribute positively to the overall discussion. |

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| ***Writing Professional Emails*** |
| ***When you are writing a professional email, make sure that you keep it concise and efficient.***  **STEP ONE**: Before you start writing an email, identify your goal. Who is this email going to, why are you sending it, and what is the purpose of the email?  **STEP TWO**: Identify your audience. Are you emailing your boss, a potential recruiter, or a coworker? Is this email to communicate your qualifications for a role, contribute knowledge to a project, or to request support from your superior? Knowing your audience will help you more efficiently format your email.  **STEP THREE**: Keep your language concise. Cut out any filler words (I believe, I think, Maybe, Anyway, etc) that do not have a clear impact on the content of the email. Do not include any unnecessary information or repeated details. You can always clarify with further details if requested.  **STEP FOUR**: Ensure your email is proofread, properly addressed with a greeting and salutation, and has any attachments requested. Make sure your subject line is clear without too much detail, and clearly illustrates your target for the email.  **STEP FIVE**: Follow the below format to write professional emails, and adjust the template to fit your audience.  ***PROFESSIONAL EMAIL FORMAT***   1. Salutation (Hello, Ms. Smith, Dear Human Resources Team, etc) 2. Body (your full email, edited with the guidelines listed above) 3. Closing (summarize your message, request a follow-up, or end with a greeting) 4. Signature (your name, followed by additional information; title, email address, or phone number)   ***PROFESSIONAL EMAIL EXAMPLE***  **STEP ONE**: My goal is to reach out to Elyse Villanueva to request more information about the resume writing workshop she hosted last week. I want to get clarification on how I should write a resume for a trade role, specifically to be a contractor with an HVAC company.  **STEP TWO**: My audience is the team that hosted the workshop, Elyse specifically. I want to get more support from them to help me on searching for a job with an HVAC company, so that my resume can fit that field.   1. Hello, Mrs. Villanueva and Ms. Carnes, 2. I am reaching out to request more information regarding your resume workshop last week. I am seeking a job as a contractor with an HVAC company, and want to ensure I write my resume to fit that industry. Do you have any resources for trade industry resumes, or could you further assist me in writing this document? 3. I would appreciate any information you can provide. If possible, could we have a quick Zoom meeting? 4. With gratitude,  Cat Carnes Professional Writer (if needed) [ccarnes@letseatgrandma.com](mailto:ccarnes@letseatgrandma.com) |

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| ***Professional Verbal Communication (Face-To-Face & Over The Phone)*** |
| ***The key to professionalism in conversations is to listen more than you speak. Listen to the other participants, know your goal and the expectations for the conversation, and be confident.***  **STEP ONE**: Before your conversation, identify your goals and expectations for the discussion. A job interview, salary negotiation, or client consultation will require different information. Write down notes for the call, including any points to share or questions to ask. If you are preparing for a job interview, *see the additional resources for interviewing tips*.  **STEP TWO**: Actively listen to other participants, and ensure you actively contribute to the conversation. Active listening will help build rapport and communicate your thoughts more clearly. Active listening includes the following skills:   1. **Non-Verbal Cues**: make direct eye contact, nod along, sit upright with good posture, and minimize any physical distractions like fidgeting, looking around the room, or making noise. *These cues can be difficult and painful for neurodivergent employees, and may make them uncomfortable. See below for more details.* 2. **Minimizing Distractions:** Minimize any visual distractions so that other participants can communicate effectively. If you are a fidgeter, minimize any visible fidgeting, foot tapping, pen clicking, etc. 3. **Be Attentive:** Show you are listening by responding (when appropriate) with your own questions, feedback, or perspectives. Rephrase another participant’s ideas and add to them with thoughtful responses. For example, if you are in a job interview and the recruiter mentions a skill you have from previous experience, you can bring it up in response to the recruiter’s thoughts. *“I like that you brought up that time management is important to your team. In my previous job as a cashier, I had to complete a 10-point checklist every hour to make sure I met sales goals and took care of customers.”* 4. **Ask Questions:** Ask other participants meaningful questions to learn more about their idea or make them feel valued in the conversation. Make sure your questions are relevant and open-ended, meaning that they prompt the answerer to give more details. These questions can also bring attention to a participant’s contributions. *Example: “Elyse, what strategies did you use to create this presentation? It looks great!* |

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| ***A Note About Non-Verbal Communication & Social Cues*** |
| For some neurodivergent people, non-verbal cues can be difficult or painful, and do not come naturally. Ableism in the workplace is a major concern for many people. [Neurodiversity in the workplace requires the leadership team to be educated about supporting their neurodivergent staff.](https://medium.com/neurodiversity-at-work/helping-workers-manage-their-own-cognitive-differences-in-the-workplace-456c92d2199e) Non-verbal cues, while helpful, are not the only way to actively listen. [Asking clarifying questions](http://autisticnyc.org/vision/soc-skills/active-listen.html) to better understand another participant’s idea, paraphrasing their idea to show you listened to them, and following up a conversation with written communication are all helpful tools.  *If you are neurodivergent and receive feedback that you do not appear to be listening, this could be why.* If possible, you should ask for accommodations in the workplace to fit your needs. [Some common accommodations are:](https://www.hireautism.org/resource-center/the-autism-friendly-workplace/)   1. More one-on-one meetings, rather than conversations with multiple participants 2. Consistent feedback, written or verbal, with superiors to ensure you are meeting goals 3. Written instructions or meeting notes, when possible 4. More flexible workplace features (example: noise-canceling headphones, work area away from foot traffic, ability to work at home or in different office areas, modified schedules)   Depending on your work environment, it may not be possible to disclose disabilities or request accommodations. In these situations, work with a trusted person (family, friends, previous employers or coworkers, job coaches, etc) and determine your unique challenges and brainstorm ways you be more comfortable and successful at work. |

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| ***Interviewing Tips*** |
| Arrive to meetings prepared, dress professionally, and ensure that you actively listen to the other participants.  Take some time to research the company, making sure to note particularly appealing details about the company’s mission statement, workplace culture, or position responsibilities. Interviewers like when their candidates ask meaningful questions or point out details about the company that appeal to them.  There is no one way to answer the common interview questions, as your professional experience will impact your answers. A good rule of thumb is to practice beforehand by jotting down notes of your own experience, and researching the most common answers to ensure you don’t sound repetitive or disinterested.  Another resource to consider is researching the recruiter’s expectations for an interview. In addition to reading about how to interview successfully, read some recruiter’s perspectives on how they determine the success of the interview.  **COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:**   * What is your greatest strength? * What is your greatest weakness? * Where do you see yourself in 5 years? * Tell us about a time you failed, and how you overcame it. * This position requires strong [social, organizational, communication, etc] skills, how confident are you in your ability to perform that skill in the workplace? * What motivated you to apply for this job? Do you see this as a long-term career?   You’ll often get asked something along the lines of: *Why are you a good fit for this job?* | *Why should we hire you?* | *What will you bring to this company?* | *Why do you want to work here?*   * These questions can be tricky to answer. Read the job description and think about your background, then boil it down to the 5-10 reasons why you’ll get the job and how you fit the culture. Think of concrete examples of how you have already succeeded and how you will continue to succeed.   ***The most important question to consider and prepare for is “Do you have any questions for us?”***. It may seem like a strange question, but this is a crucial opportunity to show the interviewing team why you will fit into the existing team, how you will positively influence the company, and what will motivate you. You can ask questions about a wide range of topics, here are some examples:   * **Questions about the company:** What’s your favorite part of working for this company? | What qualities and attributes make for a successful employee in the company? | What makes people stay at this company? * **Questions about the position:** Can you elaborate on the day-to-day responsibilities of this job? | What is the most challenging part of this job? | What qualifications are most important for this role to be successful? * **Questions about the interview:** Are there other important aspects of the job we haven’t discussed yet? | Do you need me to further clarify or expand on anything? | Do you have any more questions for me? |

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| ***General Workplace Etiquette: Professional Dress*** |
| Confidence is key! Many studies indicate that people are more successful in interviews if they are wearing clothing that makes them feel confident and prepared.  Typically, your employer will outline the expectations for workplace dress code in the Employee Handbook. However, these codes can be vague. If you are in a specialized field requiring uniforms, formal dress, or other specific dress, it would be best to reach out to your employer directly to confirm you’re on the right track.  Some employers will only include that their dress code is “Business Professional” or “Business Casual”, and it can be difficult to choose the appropriate clothing if you’re unsure of the difference.  **BUSINESS PROFESSIONAL/FORMAL** is just as it sounds, more formal than Business Casual. If attire is business formal,  this is usually indicated beforehand. ***You should ALWAYS dress Business Professional for any interview!***   * **Pants:** Fitted pants should be black, navy, or other dark neutral colors. Avoid denim, linen, or khaki pants, as they can be too casual for this environment. * **Dresses & Skirts:** If you wear a dress, make sure it is a formal, conservative dress. Typically, appropriate dresses are fitted, simply styled, and in neutral colors. The length should be at or below the knee, and often call for hosiery underneath. Avoid any bold patterns or colors. * **Shirts:** All shirts should be professional, conservatively styled, and not too fitted or baggy. Long-sleeve button ups should be paired with a tie. Short sleeve blouses should be paired with a simple sweater or blazer. * **Shoes:** Close-toed, conservative shoes are required. Loafers, professional flats, or short heels are best.   **BUSINESS CASUAL** blends professional office wear with comfortability. Definitions may vary by  company, meaning the creative flair you can use can vary. In general, these are the expectations of business casual:   * **Pants**: appropriate styles include slacks, chinos, corduroy, khakis, twill, or a professional suit. * **Tops**: appropriate styles include polos, sweaters, knit shirts, button-ups, and layered tops (a tank or t-shirt can be okay if layered with the right overshirt or cardigan). * **Dresses & Skirts**: both dresses and skirts are permitted if they comply with expectations of length, style, and professionalism (make sure, if sleeveless, you prepare to have a sweater or cardigan to layer) * **Shoes**: appropriate styles are ideally close-toed loafers, flats, or small heels. Some workplaces allow for sneakers or sandals, but confirm the workplace expectations before wearing them.   Generally, you should dress clean and professionally. Here are some general tips:   * **Clothing Patterns & Colors**: Stick with simple patterns and dark, neutral colors. Bold colors and patterns may stand out in a negative way, especially in a more conservative office space * **Simple Jewelry**: Earrings, bracelets, or other jewelry can be noisy when you are moving around. This can be irritating for coworkers in-office and even listeners in remote environments * **Clothing Quality**: Make sure you take care to ensure your work clothing is clean, wrinkle-free, and not stained or ripped. (If you have pets, be liberal with a lint roller so you don’t have pet hair on your clothes!) * **Personal Grooming**: Paying attention to the small details in your personal appearance can be important for interviewing and working. Trim your nails (and stick with simple nail polish colors if you paint them), make sure the polish isn’t chipped or damaged. Don’t use any strong perfumes, but ensure you smell nice and clean. * **Hair**: Make sure your hair is clean, dry, and styled appropriately. If you have facial hair, make sure it is trimmed and neat. If you have bangs or layers, make sure your hair is styled in a way that stays out of your face.   *A few notes about professional dress and appearance:*   * Many people of color experience discrimination because their hair is considered unprofessional or unkempt. This is especially true for black employees with protective styles like braids or twists, natural hair, or locs. If you are a person of color and are hesitant about how to style your hair, talk to your manager if it is safe to do so. Here are some tips about [how to talk to handle hair discrimination](https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/how-handle-hair-discrimination-workplace-during-/) from Brandi Fowler on LinkedIn. * Some dress codes outline different dress code expectations according to gender (like requiring makeup, dresses, or skirts for women, or not allowing men to have long hair). Gender-specific dress codes can be uncomfortable for some employees. [Here are some gender-neutral dress codes](file:///Users/catgcarnes/Library/Mobile%20Documents/com~apple~CloudDocs/LEG%20Workspace/PHILANTHROPY/Print%20Resource%20Drafts/Here%20are%20some%20gender-neutral%20dress%20codes) that you can use as guidance if you are concerned about gender-based dress code rules, You can also speak to your Human Resources manager about your gender presentation and ensure there are no concerns. |

***Professional Documents***

*In this section, you’ll learn the basics for a resume, cover letter, and LinkedIn Profile. You’ll also learn why each document is important, and how to make them competitive, unique tools for your job search.*

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| ***Your Resume*** |
| This section will outline each section of a resume, why it's important, and how to make sure your resume sets you aside as an ideal candidate for any position. We'll briefly explore the ATS, and how to optimize your resume and make sure it does not get rejected by pre-determined filters chosen by the hiring team.  A RESUME is designed to communicate to recruiters and hiring managers that you are the best fit for the position. There are two key factors that determine if your resume is competitive and successful. The first is your efficiency, clarity, and relevance. The second is your format, especially as it relates to the Applicant Tracking System (ATS) that filters resumes automatically, before a human being ever sees it.  This is a formal, technical document with strategic formatting, and is not meant to be an exhaustive list of your entire work history. Rather, it is meant to illustrate your qualifications by aligning your skills, work history, education, and motivation into one cohesive professional document. Each section of a resume is important for different reasons.  **HEADER**: your name and contact information, the job you’re applying for, and your professional experience summary (top skills, contributions, etc)  **AREAS OF EXPERTISE**: this is the most important section to show recruiters what skills you already have that are relevant to the new role  **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**: a breakdown of your work history that covers what you did, how you did it, and why your contribution was important to the workplace  **SUPPLEMENTAL SECTIONS**: your education, certifications, volunteer work, awards, and any other “bonus” sections that give recruiters more information about your qualifications |

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| ***Header & Summary*** |
| This section is the key information a recruiter sees to get an idea of your skillset and work history. What information do they need to know about you? The header is your way of introducing yourself to hiring teams. You need to make sure it includes all the information about your location, contact methods, and core skills.  **HEADER**  Text  Description automatically generated  **CONTACT INFO**: Make sure you add your contact information, including the phone number and email address you use on your professional documents. Your city and state are also important, even if you’re looking for remote or hybrid work. Your residential area helps employers get an idea of state regulations, taxes, and other regional information. If you ­are applying for remote work, format it this way: [City, ST] (Seeking Remote/Hybrid Positions).  **DESIRED TITLE**: Directly after your contact info, you can list the specific role you’re applying for – this is a really easy way to stand out, because it grabs the hiring team’s attention. Your resume looks like it’s customized to their specific job listing, even if you’re only editing the title of the role. If you’re applying for several jobs, or using this for multiple positions, delete this section. It’s better to leave this section off altogether if you’re not sure of its accuracy.  **CORE EXPERTISE**: The Core Expertise are the 2-3 major skill categories for a job role. These should be the most in-demand, relevant, or distinct skills that relate to your desired role. A good rule of thumb is to cover three unique categories that show a combination of technical, social, and leadership skills.  **SUMMARY**  Text  Description automatically generated with medium confidence  The Summary is where you’ll get a chance to highlight your top achievements in your work history. These typically include metrics, specific accomplishments, or most impactful contribution.  These bullet points are meant to summarize why you’re the ideal candidate for the position. Choose three separate aspects of your professional experience that you’ll use in the new role, and describe them while highlighting your specific achievements.  For example, if you worked in retail and got recognized for customer service, or organized inventory that sped up the restocking process, this is a great place to highlight those more unique accomplishments. |

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| ***Areas of Expertise*** |
| This is, arguably, the most important section of your entire resume. This section will get you past any automated Applicant Tracking Systems, inform your skill category in your LinkedIn profile, and give the hiring manager an idea of what you already know how to do without needing to be trained.  Text  Description automatically generated  This section is meant to be unique to your skillset and experience. You should keep these skills specific, concise, and relevant to the industry, field, position role, or specialization. Make sure you only list skills you can use on Day 1. It’s okay if you’re new at them or have little experience for an entry-level position, but make sure you can back up your skills in an interview or training period.  You should list your skills to match the job description. One easy way to do that is to study the job description and pick out “keywords” of skills needed for the position. Hiring managers write these descriptions, so they’ll be looking for similar language.   If you aren’t sure how to phrase skills, or what to call a skill you have, an easy way to get more information is to search “key skills for [job title]” and find out the common language used for similar job postings. You should also check sites like LinkedIn, Glassdoor, and other professional websites if you want to learn more about the position.  When you are building up this section, think about what you need to know to succeed in the role, and two distinct categories of skills that apply to the position. Most roles will require a combination of hard and soft skills, so this is a good place to start if you’re not sure what categories to choose. Hard skills are skills you learn via training, education, or experience. Soft skills are those that come naturally, such as leadership, communication, motivation, etc. |

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| ***Professional Experience*** |
| Graphical user interface, text, email  Description automatically generated  Your professional experience is your chance to outline your job history and include details that highlight how your past experience makes you the ideal candidate for this new role. Include specific achievements where you can, and make sure you are descriptive and thorough in your details.  For example, if you were previously a cashier or salesperson, you can use those skills for an administrative assistant position. Your job overview can highlight your ability to multitask and communicate, and your specific bullet points could outline your unique experience with customer complaints, cash handling, and scheduling. |

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| ***Supplemental Sections*** |
| Graphical user interface, application  Description automatically generated with medium confidence  In these additional sections, you’ll add specialized information that further set you apart from other candidates.  **Awards:** Here is where you’ll list awards or special accomplishments, “employee of the month” recognitions, or other acknowledgements from your professional work.  **Certifications**: These certifications count any training courses, boot camps, or licensing exams, or other formal certificates you’ve already completed. If you are currently pursuing a certification, you can add that and include “Expected YYYY” for the date. There are a lot of free online courses offering certifications you can use to expand your skillset or increase your pay for a new role. See the “Additional Resources” section for details.  **Education**: If you are a recent high school graduate, you can include your high school information. Otherwise, only add education if you’re in college, have graduated with a degree, or went to a speclalized program. |

***The Cover Letter***

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| ***What Is A Cover Letter?*** |
| A cover letter is an accompanying professional document to your resume, with a more personalized and informal format. This is meant to directly address the hiring manager, and explains why you’re the best fit for the role based on your goals, personality, and motivations for applying. These are not always expected in a job submission, but will set you apart competitively if done right.  In a cover letter, you can lay out your accomplishments more specifically, demonstrate your thought process to achieve your goals, and show the hiring manager how you’d personally fit into the existing team culture.  When you are writing a cover letter, there are formatting and content standards to follow. These are general expectations, and your unique situation will determine which of these should be followed or ignored.  **CONTENT STANDARDS:**   * Who are you? What’s your professional story? * Why do you want this job? (We all want higher pay, better benefits, or a positive workplace. This is your chance to explain why you want this role at this company in this field. Get specific!) * What are you most proud of in your previous experience or existing knowledge? Be specific about your process here, explain how you used the skills in your resume to accomplish those goals. * What do you know about the company and industry? Why does this industry appeal to you? What do you hope to gain from this position?   If you have any “red flags” on your resume, like a long career gap or demotion or short-term employment, you can address those here as well.  **FORMATTING STANDARDS:**  **HEADING**: When you are drafting your cover letter, keep to the standard format and include the date, company name, job title, and a greeting. Do not guess a hiring manager or recruiter’s name if you are not sending this to a direct contact. Instead, choose the appropriate team for your submission.  *Some examples: Dear Hiring Team, Dear Director of Human Resources, Dear Recruiting Team, Dear Talent Management Team, etc.*  **CALL TO ACTION**: You should *always* end your letter with a call to action. Invite the hiring manager to contact you to schedule an interview or discuss your application in more detail, and include the best ways to contact you.  *Conclude by thanking the hiring manager for their consideration.*  **LAYOUT**: The layout should be easy to read and organized into sections. No one wants to read a wall of text. Break the letter itself out into paragraphs or bulleted lists, depending on your letter contents.  *If you are featuring two key positions of your experience, a bulleted list may be helpful. If you are featuring your three biggest accomplishments at the same company, a paragraph may be appropriate.* |

***Your LinkedIn Profile***

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| ***Creating A Strong Profile*** |
| LinkedIn is an important feature to have in today’s job market. Your LinkedIn profile is dedicated to networking, building up a network of other professionals, and engaging with potential employers and recruiters.  About 93% of recruiters use LinkedIn to find candidates for open positions, and you’ll be highly competitive for positions if you are invited to apply by an internal hiring manager.  Your LinkedIn profile should tell a story, be conversational, and connect with other professionals in your industry. This should blend your personality and your experience into a dynamic summary of your capacities as a potential job candidate.  Much like your resume and cover letter, your LinkedIn profile is a valuable tool for your job search. Not only will your profile help you stand out to recruiters, but creating your profile will also help you figure out your goals and speak more confidently about yourself in interviews.  There are several customizable sections of a profile that should be addressed:  **PROFILE PHOTO**: Your profile photo should be a well-lit, centered headshot with a simple background and professional appearance. You do not have to pay for professional headshots to do this, you can take a photo of yourself at home! Set up your camera in a well-lit room, make sure your background is plain and has no clutter, and put on a professional, comfortable outfit. If you have facial hair, wear makeup, or style your hair, stick with simple styling.  You only need a photo of yourself from the shoulders up, so you can keep those pajama pants on, if you want.  **COVER IMAGE**: This should be a photo related your personal brand, professional experience, career goals, or interests. You can review the Let’s Eat, Grandma [LinkedIn Cover Image Gallery](https://www.letseatgrandma.com/21311-2/) to see our recommendations and get some ideas.  **HEADER**: This is your description attached to your name, and should give a quick glimpse about your professional life. You can use the Core Expertise in your resume, key skills you’ve learned, or previous roles. Unless you are seeking to stay at your current position, avoid putting your current role in your header.  **ABOUT SECTION**: The about section is all about you, and should tell a story about your interests, accomplishments, and goals. This is a great opportunity to discuss your volunteer work, recreational hobbies, or other personal background information. It is crucial to make sure your opener is engaging, as that’s what a visitor can see without having to click “Read More”, so make sure they want to read more! Check out this Let’s Eat, Grandma blog post, [How To Write A Great LinkedIn About Section](https://www.letseatgrandma.com/blog/how-to-write-a-great-linkedin-about-section-summary-section-with-examples/) for tips!  When you’re working on this section, keep those keywords in mind and work them into your profile. Avoid buzzwords or unnecessary jargon, and only use keywords when they’re relevant. The more keywords you use, the more likely you are to show up first in a recruiter’s search for candidates.  Always end with a direct call to action:  Key Strengths: LIST Key Strengths from the resume  Let’s connect! Or email me at [EMAIL CONTACT].  **SKILLS & PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**: These sections are self-explanatory, and can be pulled directly from your resume. Some key ideas to keep in mind, though, is that you should keep the format consistent, and highlight the most important information about your previous experience. Choose a few of your most specific or unique job responsibilities, and make sure you don't get repetitive. It’s always good to feature any metrics, awards, or specific accomplishments to these sections.  For your skills section, LinkedIn allows for up to 50 skills. Get as close to 50 skills as possible without being repetitive or too vague. Pay close attention to those same keywords, job descriptions, and specialized industry skills. The more skills you have, the more likely you are to be at the top of the algorithm. |

***ADDITIONAL RESOURCES***

*The resources below outline budget friendly ways to build your knowledge, skillset, and*

*potentially increase your pay through courses and certifications. Oftentimes, certifications or licenses are required to work certain positions. Even if it’s not required, these are surefire ways to make you stand out as a candidate.*

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| ***Certifications, Licenses, and Specialized Training*** |
| Depending on the career path, positions will require a combination of workplace experience and education. Many times, you can take online courses to learn the skills needed, supplement your education, or demonstrate your competency in a skill that isn’t reflected in your work history. ***Certificates do not always satisfy the same requirements as a license or a degree in some fields.*** Research your desired career path, look at other professionals in the industry, and see what key skills are required.  **CERTIFICATION TYPES:**   * **DEGREE**: If you are looking for a degree (which typically require fees and exams), check out this search tool: [Local Training Finder | Credentials Center | CareerOneStop](https://www.careeronestop.org/Credentials/Toolkit/find-local-training.aspx) * **TRADE SCHOOL PROGRAM**: If you are interested in a trade, many trade schools will require a combination of study and apprenticeships. Check this guide to learn more about [Trade School Programs](https://toptrade.school/programs/). * **SPECIALIZED LICENSES**: If you are looking for a state-sponsored or other accreditation-based license, here is a search tool to find the right professional development path for you: [License Finder | CareerOneStop](https://www.careeronestop.org/Credentials/Toolkit/find-licenses.aspx)   ***Be wary of training scams!*** Learn how to look for legitimate education opportunities: [What are Diploma Mills?](https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/online-education/what-are-diploma-mills/1/)  **FREE COURSES & TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES:**   * [Free Online Courses & Certifications [2022] | Coursera](https://www.coursera.org/courses?query=free) * [Free Harvard Courses](https://www.edx.org/school/harvardx?hs-referral=course-listing) Note: You will need to pay a small fee for a verified certificate for these courses * [Free Online Courses from Udemy](https://www.udemy.com/courses/free/) * [Free Online Courses from Saylor Academy](https://learn.saylor.org/?utm_source=nb&utm_medium=p&utm_campaign=Courses&redirect=0) |

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| ***Industry-Specific Certifications*** |
| **BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT & MARKETING:**   * + [Certification in Digital Marketing from Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/business/learn/certification)   + [Facebook Blueprint Courses in Business & Marketing | Meta for Business](https://www.facebook.com/business/learn/courses)   + [Google Digital Marketing and Ecommerce](https://www.coursera.org/professional-certificates/google-digital-marketing-ecommerce/?utm_source=google&utm_medium=institutions&utm_campaign=gwgsite-gDigital-paidha-sem-bk-gen-exa-glp-br-null&_ga=2.84260761.1654973257.1663358728-1223827485.1663358728&_gac=1.223730025.1663358742.Cj0KCQjwvZCZBhCiARIsAPXbajuCQOMsN646lVtf5dDrqxZBG7huHvICtVr7zVdLX8LOcxcCsXiVYe8aAq-zEALw_wcB)   + [Customer Service Training | Goodwill](https://goodwillsp.org/services/goodwill-university/customer-service-courses/)   + [Google Business & Marketing Classes](https://skillshop.exceedlms.com/student/catalog/browse)   **OFFICE ADMINISTRATION:**   * + [Google Digital Literacy Skills for Adults - Applied Digital Skills](https://applieddigitalskills.withgoogle.com/en/learn)   + [Technology Training (Microsoft Office, email, internet, etc.)](https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/subjects/tech/)   + [Microsoft Office Training | Goodwill](https://goodwillsp.org/services/goodwill-university/microsoft-office-training/)   **TECHNOLOGY & DATA SCIENCE:**   * + [Build your Data career with a Certificate in Data Science | Coursera](https://www.coursera.org/certificates/data-science)   + [Professional Certificates in IT Support, Data Analytics, UX Design, or Project Management](https://www.coursera.org/google-career-certificates)   + [Information Technology Training | Goodwill](https://goodwillsp.org/services/goodwill-university/it-training/)   **CONSTRUCTION, TRADE, & WAREHOUSING:**   * + [Construction & Trade Skills Training | Goodwill](https://goodwillsp.org/services/goodwill-university/construction-trade-training/)   + [Warehouse, Inventory & Logistics Certification Course (goodwillsp.org)](https://goodwillsp.org/services/goodwill-university/logistics-training/)   **SELF-EMPLOYMENT & FREELANCING:**   * + [Entrepreneurship Training | Goodwill](https://goodwillsp.org/services/goodwill-university/entrepreneurship-training/)   + [Blogging Courses from Skillshare](https://www.skillshare.com/browse/blogging)   + [Freelance & Entrepreneurship Courses from Skillshare](https://www.skillshare.com/en/browse/freelance-and-entrepreneurship)   + [Graphic Design Courses from Skillshare](https://www.skillshare.com/en/browse/graphic-design) |

*Should you need any direct support, or if there are questions you have that go beyond this guide, feel free to email our Philanthropy team for more information. If we cannot help you, we can point you in the right direction.*

Best,

*The Let’s Eat, Grandma Philanthropy Team*

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*Better Resume. Satisfying Career. Happier You.  
Customer Service Inquiry? Reach out to*[*help*](http://goog_231454851/)[*@letseatgrandma.com*](http://letseatgrandma.com/)