

The Job Search

Now you are ready and prepared to go job hunting. Organize your schedule and set aside some time everyday to pursue opportunities. Do not be disappointed if you do not bag the first job for which you apply. The more your resume circulates in the market, the greater your chances of finding the right job.

- **Answer advertisements:** Job search engines, newspapers and magazines all have prospective employers advertising open positions and seeking applications.
- **Read the job profile** and responsibilities carefully to determine if it is correct for you.
 - Make changes in your resume to **draw attention to the match** between your skills and the employer's requirements.
 - Make the effort to **find out the name and position** of the person who will read your application.
 - If the classified ad asks for **specific information**, be sure to provide it.
 - **Follow the employer's directions** about the preferred application method.
 - Send a brief, personalized **cover letter** with each application.
 - **Network:** Every year, a number of job openings are filled even before they can be advertised. Your friends, relatives, ex-coworkers, and neighbors may have inside information about a vacancy for the right job.
 - **Make a list** of the people in your circle who could be of help in finding the right job.
 - **Get acquainted** with people who work in your target career field.
 - **Make it known** that you are job hunting and discuss your needs and skills with the people on your list.
 - **Hand out your resume** to anyone who seems interested in helping.
 - **The Upfront Approach:** Contact prospective employers directly to achieve success in your job search.
 - Find out the name and position of the Human Resources person at your target company. Then **send your resume and cover letter** to them.
 - If you get inside information about the possibility of a vacancy, approach the hiring manager by **phone or ask for an appointment**.
 - **Play up your abilities** and skills. Make it clear to the employer why you think they should hire you.
 - **Send a personal thank-you note** to anyone who agrees to meet you or call to thank them.
 - **Follow-up** on the position by calling every few weeks. The next time a vacancy comes up, the manager will think of
 - you. **Persevere.** Don't give up too easily. If you cannot get one job, maybe you will bag the next

Job Offer Proposal

You've finally got that long awaited job offer. Time to sit back and relax? No! On the contrary, it's time to be as alert and sharp as ever. Your acceptance could make a world of difference to your future. Don't be overjoyed into accepting when you should actually be thinking of what negotiations you should be making. The company will be expecting this anyway.

Acknowledge receipt of the offer letter immediately but at ask for some time to think it over. Especially if it's a job you are sure you want but the salary package and other benefits are not up to your expectations. Some of the things other than the salary which may be worth

negotiating for are relocation expenses, medical benefits for you and your family, paid vacations, phone allowance, memberships to professional and non-professional societies, etc.

Here are some points you should keep in mind while writing your counter proposal letter.

- The first paragraph of your letter must thank the employer for his offer and at the same time highlight the fact that they have made a prize catch. Make sure they know how profitable you will be for the company.
- Next, allot one paragraph for each part of the offer that does not agree with you. Make sure you give good reasons why this is so. If necessary, remind them of how valuable you can be as an employee.
- To conclude, insist that your demands are not extravagant considering your potential. Politely say that you hope they will consider your counter proposal favorably and make you an offer that you can willingly accept at the earliest.
- Giving the counter proposal a balanced feel by including some parts of their offer which you unconditionally accept is also a good idea.
- Your counter proposal can also include points on which you need clarifications.

Job Negotiation

Searching for a job may seem complicated and tedious. But if you are prepared and follow a few simple steps, you could make it seem like a cakewalk and get the best deal for yourself.

- Be aware of the market rate or salary that's being offered to people with your educational qualifications and skills in the job market
- Do find out the salary range that's being offered to different positions across the company by talking to a secretary or an employee in the company
- It's not advisable to accept a job immediately after it is offered. Do evince interest in the job and give them a timeframe in which you will get back to them
- It's important that you analyze the job offer in terms of your requirement, long-term career prospects.

List out all the advantages and disadvantages

- Be firm and sure. If this is the right job for you, go ahead and make it clear. If you have your own doubts, don't hesitate to meet again and discuss issues that are ambiguous.
- Remember you are free to request and renegotiate issues relating to salary, work hours, stock options, day care facility and anything that's bothering you.
- Negotiate professionally.
- If the offer does not match what you had in mind, tell them so, but let them know you are still keen on the job if there's a better deal.
- Always keep your answer open ended so that you stand a chance in the future.

In case you are turned down, don't fret. Remember, failure is the stepping-stone to success. Treat this as a learning experience. Let them know that in case there are openings in the future, you'd still be interested to work for the company. Remain positive, stay cool and keep trying. For if you don't try at all, you have already lost the battle. If you do try, there is always a chance that you will win!

Job Offer Salary Negotiation

Well done! You have the offer letter for your dream job in your hands. But you see a small glitch—the salary doesn't meet your expectations entirely. This is when you have to be real smart. If you really want this job but at a different salary, here are some negotiation tactics which you would do well to know.

- Wait till the list of candidates has been narrowed down to the narrowest when the employer is convinced he has to hire you.
- Make full use of the time between receiving the offer and accepting it. Negotiations made after indicating acceptance will most likely be in the 'recycle bin'.
- Leave a decent amount of time before starting your negotiations.
- Be well informed of your true value (what you think you are worth is NOT information).
- Don't shy away from bargaining because you think it will be unpleasant. Most companies expect it.
- Use a mode of communication that you are most comfortable with.
 - - Ask for a little higher than what you will be happy with—you won't get what you ask for anyway.
 - If the basic salary is 'strictly not negotiable', then try to get an increased amount of other bonuses in the non-salary category.
 - Add a few extras in your wish list. You can ceremoniously drop these off during your discussion so as to seem flexible.
 - Remember that salary is not the only thing. You can negotiate on the perquisites as well.
 - Don't let them ever forget how good you will be for their company.
 - If you've made up your mind about rejecting their offer, don't waste everyone's time negotiating unnecessarily.
 - Don't bother telling one company about another offer that you have that's higher paying. They may just tell you to go there!
 - The trick is to get as much of your wish list accepted and at the same time making them feel they got the best part of the deal.
 - All employers don't negotiate. The sooner you recognize your kind the better.
 - Don't try to bully them. It won't work. Ever!
 - Expect the worst. If it happens, you'll be prepared. If anything else happens you'll be pleasantly surprised.
 - Be realistic. If this is a job you badly need, your position is definitely weaker.
 - Human nature being what it is, more demands may crop up in your mind after you've made the deal. Squelch them immediately or risk losing the job.
 - Accept nothing less than a written agreement of the terms and conditions, clearly stating your pay package.

Employment Contract

Many software designers agree to unfavourable terms in the employment contracts because they're afraid of losing the job if they question clauses in the contract. By accepting the terms, they lose control over their developments. Apart from this, some of the clauses also bind the worker to long hours that cut into private time or projects. If you fall in the category of design or intellectual property development, then use these guidelines when you sign the work agreement.

Clauses in the contract

Most people are so excited when they hear that they've [been hired](#) and since they don't want to create a [bad impression](#), sign the employment contract without attesting unfavorable clauses. Many persons realize that those clauses will have a negative impact on their time or work, but sign nevertheless. Others are unsure of the legal terms and don't want to look uninformed so

they don't ask for explanations. The above reactions can cost the employee a lot. It is for this reason that the employee should read, understand, and contest any discrepancies in the contract before signing.

If a clause looks unreasonable or incompatible to you, approach the human resources officer for clarification. Motivate the reason for wanting to alter the clause. If the contract doesn't provide you with any protection, you should request a more acceptable contract.

The danger of innovation clauses

The innovation clause is the most risky clause in the employment contract for designers. The clause protects the company by stipulating that the employee assigns all rights of his innovations to the [employer](#). It is not an unfair clause since the company pays for the time and facilities to develop the idea or software program, but it becomes unfair if the employment contract stipulates that any software or developments by the employee becomes company property. If it includes projects outside working hours, it means that the company has ownership even over projects that are not related to their activities. Don't sign the contract if the innovation clause is too broad.

Contracts with innovation clauses should have space for exclusion of completed projects or projects already in the development process. List all the work that you want excluded from the contract.

Additional work clauses

Most employers are against additional work taken by the employee outside company hours because the employee can only handle a limited amount of working hours, before getting burned out. It means that the employee will be less [effective](#) during normal work hours. The only way to get past these type of clauses, is to stipulate that you are entitled to taking on projects after hours with permission of your manager. Unless you already have an [extra job](#), you should consider leaving the clause as is.

Defining the employment contract

The employment contract regulates the work relationship between the employer and employee. It stipulates the [remuneration](#) for work done by the employee. An agreement is signed after the work offer is accepted. The employer and employee both have rights and expectations that are stipulated in the contract. It is enforceable by law.

A contract is legally binding even if it is a verbal agreement. It is however safer to get a written employment contract. The minimum information that must be included in the statement or contract is:

- Name of company
- Full names of the employee
- A proper work description
- The commencement of employment date
- Work address
- Remuneration
- Minimum and maximum working hours
- Leave arrangements and stipulations regarding work on public holidays
- Sick leave stipulations
- Pension regulations
- Minimum notice time

- Procedures for complaints
- Disciplinary procedures
- Collective bargaining procedures

Indirect terms of the employment contract

The above terms and regulations are direct terms. Indirect terms refer to terms not stipulated, but are indirectly referred to by signing the agreement. All contracts contain the following terms regardless of stipulation in the contract:

- Preserving trust and confidence through collaboration
- Trust in terms of work and payment to be done
- Ensuring a safe employment place

When no direct regulations are stipulated, indirect conditions can form part of the agreement:

- Through the behaviour of the employer and employee
- Through routines and actions
- Through the corporate rules if the worker is informed of their existence

Rights of the employee

Employees have certain rights even. These rights are enforceable by law:

- The right of fair treatment regardless of [age](#), race, religion, gender, disabilities, or [sexual preferences](#)
- The right to equal treatment, also with regard to wages
- The right not to be dismissed without proper cause and the correct procedures
- The right not to get [fired](#) for giving birth to a child
- Employees also have the right to a proper written notice time for termination of their work agreement in relation to the period employed
- Employees have the right for compensation when they are retrenched
- [Safe workplace](#)

The above information is only a guideline to what you as an employee is entitled to, even if it is not stipulated in the employment contract. Labor laws and basic conditions of employment differ from country to country. In general though, you can use the above terms and regulations as guidelines to what a good employment contract should include.

Responding to job ads

Thousands of employers use classified ads as a means to advertise vacancies and even more people respond to these ads, but only a few applicants ever get a positive response. You may think, so why bother with these ads? If you consider the competition for one job, it may seem a futile operation, but there are a few secrets for responding to job ads and if you make use of these tips, your chances of landing the job increases tremendously.

Benefits responding to job ads

The job ads are the ideal place to find a comprehensive directory of businesses that are looking for employees. There are normally a bit of [information](#) about the company and the best of all - you get an idea of what the [companies look for](#), what they expect, and in some cases, are willing to [pay](#).

How to use the classified ads

Don't look for [entry level jobs](#) since these types of ads will be in the minority, rather scan the ads to find [who is hiring](#) and where possible, to find the names of the recruitment officers. Only then, should you try to get an entry level job at the company.

Step 1: Select the advertising vehicle

Subscribe or purchase newspapers that run job ads for the area where you would like to locate a job as well as any national papers or magazines that focus on your job industry. Make a list of Internet sites that run classified job ads and browse them regularly as well.

Step 2 The scanning process

Mark the entry level jobs and respond to them first. You should be prepared to be at the company first thing in the morning. You then also mark entry level openings in other job fields, since they may not directly apply to you, but still indicate that the enterprise is willing to employ at entry level.

Thirdly, scan the ads that indicate that [experience](#) and [higher qualifications](#) are needed. Even though you won't get the advertised job, you get valuable information such as who your manager will be; the name of the recruitment officer, and the types of job responsibilities that you can expect.

Step 3 Make the list

Before you start responding to job ads, you need to make a list of all the relevant hiring companies and the positions advertised.

Best time for responding to job ads

If you saw a job ad in a weekend paper, you should respond on Monday. Don't mail your CV since it will only arrive later in the week. Emails only get read around Tuesday or Wednesday, so you need to be at their offices on Monday before the rest of the applicants respond. If the ad doesn't say "No calls" then you can make a phone call to enquire, but if it states that calls are not welcome, you should pay them a personal visit. Most employers urgently look for replacements and will be too happy not to deal with thousands of applicants and that is why you should help them out by responding on Monday. Don't call to get an interview or meeting, just arrive at their offices with your CV and well [prepared for an interview](#).

When you get to the secretary, ask to speak to Mr. X or the recruitment officer since you have a package that needs to be delivered in person. If the relevant person is in a meeting, you wait. If he is out, ask when he will be back and return at that time. When you meet the person, state that you were in close vicinity and thought you could deliver your CV in person. Thank the person for his time and request five minutes as an introduction. If he agrees, you have your first short interview; if not then ask for a meeting later. If he doesn't agree, you should leave it at that.

The benefit of this method is that you get personal contact with the [recruiter](#); your [CV](#) arrives first, and is not just one of many. If you make a good impression during the first minute, you are half way through to the short list.

Responding to job vacancy

What if the ad is old?

Don't dismiss old job ads because you think three to five month old ads may not be relevant anymore. They are excellent opportunities for getting attention. Most ads are placed to replace a person who has been working at the company for a while. The company is probably looking for a person with the same level of expertise. If the company fails to locate a person with the same experience and qualifications, they may be willing to look at an [inexperienced](#) or [less qualified person](#). Most people will not glance at the old classified advertisements, which means that you won't have any competition on that level.

You should not respond to the ad, but rather send your CV, a [targeted cover letter](#), and a clear indication that you are suitable for the specific position. Indicate that you heard from a trusted source that the specific job may be available and that you are interested.

Another method for responding to job ads

You may not exactly fit the job profile, but your qualifications, [skills](#), and experience are related. When this is the case, you should send or deliver your CV and cover letter. One way to ensure that the [recruiter](#) sees the relevance of your experience, skills and qualifications, is to list the [job requirements](#) in one column and your work history, skills and experience in a second column. Try to match them as far as possible. This makes the recruiter's task a bit easier and makes you stand out.

The contact person

You by now realize that you have to address a specific person. Some [job advertisements](#) have more than one contact name. The secret is to make use of the last listed contact since everyone else will go for the first person. This means that you will have to compete with fewer applications addressed to that person; providing you with an edge.

What if the ad only states a postal address?

Some ads only state the postal address, with no contact or company name. Since post office boxes must be registered, you can find out who to contact and what the company's name is, by calling the post office. If they don't want to give the details, you can simply state that they placed an ad in the newspaper and you just want to know who the advertiser is. If they don't give you the information you can also tell them the Information Law states that they must provide the owner of the post box's name if the owner uses that box to implore something from the public.

Once you have the information, contact the company's recruitment officer and mention that you heard they are looking for a person to fill the specified position and indicate that you are the right candidate. The person will be caught off guard and you can use the opportunity to indicate that a contact told you about the position. Provide a list of your [qualifications](#) and [experience](#) that are relevant to the position.

These methods for responding to job ads are unconventional and will thus increase your chances of getting the [interview](#) and the job.

Learning about employers for job search purposes

Where is a better starting place for learning about employers for [job search](#) purposes than directories such as the Yellow Pages? You can find the contact details, locations, their products and services, by browsing through the relevant categories. Several companies also list at online directories and provide summaries of their main business activities and some also list their websites. Use the contact details and website addresses for learning about employers for job search purposes.

Step 2: Use marketing related information for learning about employers for job search purposes

Don't overlook the usefulness of product and services knowledge. Very few applicants bother with marketing material of the [potential employers](#), which means you will have a definite advantage when you study their catalogues.

Where to get the information

Contact the company's marketing division or visit their website's products and services section to get a list of their main business activities, pricing structure, products and services. This type of information is readily available and the sales people at the company would gladly forward the information. Create the impression that you are not only a possible future employee, but also a customer interested in their main product line. Use brochure and marketing material from the company to learn more about their marketing strategies and client relationship policies.

Step 3: Study annual reports for learning about employers for job search purposes

The company annual report normally provides:

- The names of the CEO, directors, and department heads
- History of the company
- Vision and mission
- Economical outlook
- Short and long term plans
- Clues about the business strategy and focus points
- List of their main shareholders
- Indication of growth
- Employment policy
- Marketing goals
- Current important issues for the company
- Annual financial records
- Major clients
- Main business activities
- Main suppliers
- The company's perspective on their achievements and possible competition

The above information is extremely valuable when you [apply for a job](#) or go for an [interview](#). You know something about the company, which they don't expect. Having this knowledge will provide you with an advantage over your competitors since they won't read the annual report.

Where to find the annual report

You will be able to download a copy of the annual report from the company's web address or find the relevant information on the about us or company background page. If the company doesn't provide the information at their website, you can contact the marketing or shareholder division to request an annual report. Most marketing personnel will be to glad to provide more

information. You don't have to tell them the purpose other than stating that you are interested in the company.

How to understand the financial statements

Not everyone understands financial statements. The bottom line is to focus on the final figures for every quarter and year. Note the upward or downward trends and any changes in partners, business purchases and income. Use the CEO or MD's letter to the company's major shareholders for interpretation of the financial data.

Step 4: Study the [career opportunity](#) documents for learning about employers for job search purposes

Once you have located the basic information about the company through a directory, read their annual report and browsed their website, you should locate their employment policy and possible entry level opportunities list. This type of information is not so readily available.

Some of the employers have a section at their website called: 'careers, employment, jobs, or opportunities'. Browse the specific section to learn about possible positions at the company, job requirements and their expectations from employees, as well as career potential information. Many of the companies also list the relevant department heads. If you are [still at college or university](#), you can find this type of information at the college [career division](#).

If you cannot locate the information on the Internet, you can contact the personnel department of the company and request information about the company for interview purposes. In most cases the person will be glad to assist when you tell her that you want to be prepared for an interview at the company.

If you use these sources for learning about employers for job search purposes, you will be well [prepared for interviews](#) with the tremendous advantage of knowledge about the companies.