

# CAREER GUIDE FOR FIRST-TIME JOB SEEKERS

A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR THOSE NEW TO THE  
WORKFORCE AND THOSE RE-ENTERING AFTER  
A LENGTHY ABSENCE

*Monica Burns-Capers*

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## INTRODUCTION

The “**Career Guide For First-Time Job Seekers**” Is A Guide Intended To Assist The First-Time Job Seeker, The College Graduate, The Fresh Out of High-Schooler, The Housewife, and Anyone Else Who Has Never Entered The Workforce - With Job Searching Skills That Can Contribute and Assist With Obtaining & Maintaining Gainful Employment. This Guide Can Also Be Beneficial and Practical For Those Who Are Re-Entering The Workforce After A Lengthy Absence.

In The Pages To Follow, You Will Learn The Following:

- ✓ Creating & Developing Your Resume and Cover Letter
- ✓ Getting Prepared For The Job Search
- ✓ The Job Search
- ✓ The Job Application
- ✓ The Job Interview
- ✓ After The Job Interview
- ✓ Getting & Keeping The Job

Good Luck On Your Job Search!

*Monica Burns-Capers*

# CREATING & DEVELOPING YOUR RESUME AND COVER LETTER

If you are a first-time job seeker with no experience or someone re-entering the workforce after a lengthy absence, you'll use what's called a **"Functional Resume"** to highlight your volunteer work, educational achievements, and work experience (if applicable). This type of Resume can result in a great "first job" if written well and everything is in it's right place and order. The Functional Resume allows the employer to focus on your skills and abilities, as opposed to work experience. It tells the employer what you can do for them, if you have little or no experience in the workforce.

When preparing the Functional Resume, you will place your information in the following order: (1) Skills & Abilities, (2) Educational Achievements/ Accomplishments, (3) Work History (*if any*) and Volunteer Work. The main focus must be on your Skills and Abilities first before the employer reads anything else. On the next page, you will find a **"Functional Resume Sample Template"** from which you can refer to when creating and developing your Resume.

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**SAMPLE FUNCTIONAL RESUME**

Jane Doe  
123 Any Street

123 Anytown, USA  
(000) 000-0000

Email Address:

**QUALIFICATIONS:**

- ☐ List Your Skills & Abilities In This Section.
- ☐ Highlight Your Strengths Such As Volunteer Services, Community Services, and Work Experience (if Applicable).
- ☐ Always Prioritize By Listing Your Strengths First.
- ☐ Each of The Statements In This Section Should Not Exceed Two Lines Each.

**ACHIEVEMENTS OR ACCOMPLISHMENTS** *(whichever's relevant to you)*

- ☐ These Statements Should Be Bulleted Items Explaining Utilization of The Skills In The Above Qualifications Section.
- ☐ You Also Want To Mention Any Rewards You've Received From your Education, Volunteerism, and Community Services.
- ☐ Emphasize Your Problem Solving and People Skills (if applicable), and Other Skills Relevant To The Job For Which You Are Applying.
- ☐ The Statements In This Section Should Not Exceed Two Lines Each.

**WORK HISTORY** *(if applicable)*

- ☐ If You Have No Work History - You'll Omit This Section On Your Resume and Replace It With The Following Section:

**EDUCATION**

- ☐ Include Your School's Name, Degrees Awarded, and Grade Point Average (GPA).
- ☐ Also Include Awards Received, Club Memberships, and Any Other Skills or Achievements Relevant To The Job For Which You Are Applying.

(References Available Upon Request)

Your Cover Letter (CV) is very important, as it is the first thing the employer reads before viewing your Resume. The Cover Letter must stand out from all other applicants, and serve as a “Selling Tool” for you, which will make the employer want to interview you. It should not list everything that’s on your Resume and it should only be limited to one (1) page in length. Your Cover Letter should include: Your Name, Address, Phone Number, Email Address, and the Employer’s Name, Address, and Contact Person or Department Name. You should start the opening paragraph off with introducing yourself, where you found the job listing, and why you are interested in the position. The second paragraph should include how and why you can benefit the company, what skills you have that makes you qualified, and your highest degree obtained (*if applicable*). The third and last paragraph should include your contact information and thanks for consideration closing. Remember to keep your Cover Letter one (1) page in length. **See Sample Cover Letter On Next Page.**

SAMPLE COVER LETTER

January 1, 2010

ABC International CO.  
000 Street  
Any City, USA

Jane Doe  
1234 Your Street  
Your Town, USA

Dear Sir or Madam: *(please use contact's name if applicable)*

My name is Jane Doe and I am writing in reference to the "Blank Position" advertised in the "Blank Issue" of the Sunday's Newspaper. The position will allow me to utilize acquired skills that will be beneficial to your company.

I have the skills necessary to get the job done which include: (1) list your skills, (2) highlight strengths first. My work is detailed, fast and accurate, and I take initiative without having to be immediately supervised.

If my skills and qualifications fit the available position, please feel free to contact me at: (000) 000-0000. I look forward to hearing from you. Thank You for your time and consideration.

Jane Doe  
*(sign your name also)*

See Attached Resume or You May Use

En: Resume *(En Is An Abbreviation For Enclosure)*



# GETTING PREPARED FOR THE JOB SEARCH

Once your Resume and Cover Letter are completed, you should be on your way out the door to your Job Search with Resume and Cover Letter in hand. Your appearance, when applying for a job, should be equal to that if you were going to the Job Interview itself.

### Don'ts

- ✓ Never apply for a job wearing casual party clothes such as: shorts, flip flops, tank tops, mini-skirts, low-cut shirts, jeans, long loud-color nails, colorful hair, and anything that you don't feel comfortable wearing.
- ✓ Never bring family members, friends, or children with you when applying for a job. The employer may decide to Interview you that same day.
- ✓ Never apply for a job chewing gum.
- ✓ Never display negative and inappropriate behavior to staff members of the company in which you are applying for a job.
- ✓ Never talk on your cell phone while applying for a job. It is so not professional.

### Do's

- ✓ Always dress professional in clean, pressed clothing. Make sure your shoes are in good condition. If you can't walk confidently in high-heels, you should not wear them.
- ✓ Nail polish should be in neutral colors and nails should be at an appropriate length.
- ✓ Do bring a Portfolio with extra paper, copies of your Resume, and pens. It shows you are professional, prepared, and organized.
- ✓ Do greet all staff as you walk into the front doors of the company. Always project pleasant behavior and smile (*even if you have to fake it*).
- ✓

The above lists of Do's and Don'ts are not all conclusive, but are intended to give you *some* sort of idea on how to look when applying for the job. You are being observed even when you are *applying* for a job, and if you aren't looking your best, it could ruin your chances of *getting* the job.

## THE JOB SEARCH

Your Job Search should be conducted Monday - Friday 8AM - 6PM, as if you were actually going to a real job. There is no other way if you are serious about wanting to find a job. You can get a heads-up from friends or family members on a position available at the company in which they are employed, but you'll have to *do* the work yourself in getting the job. You should also be mailing out Resumes and Cover Letters to as many companies as you can, even those that aren't hiring. Sometimes these companies don't place advertisements in the local papers, but may have jobs available. And if your Resume is already on file there, you may be the first person they call-in for an Interview. I myself, have gotten several jobs using this method.

The Job Search is really a job within itself, and you can't get something for nothing. So for all the hardwork you put in towards searching for a job, just think of the possibilities once the opportunities and offers start rolling in for you. You'll be fully rewarded for all of your persistence!

## THE JOB APPLICATION

While on your Job Search, you're not only going to submit Resumes and Cover Letters, you are also going to be completing Job Applications. Job Applications are required for record-keeping purposes on each employee and they are kept in an Employee File in the Human Resources Department. A Job Application is required to be completed by each prospective employee. You are going to be completing many Job Applications which will be kept on file at the company for at least 90 days, in the event you didn't get the job when you first applied to the company. When a position becomes available, the employer may pull your application from the files and call you for an Interview. Right now, we are going to focus on completing the Job Application.

When filling out the Job Application, it is important that you try to fill in all the blanks. This displays professionalism and competence on your part. When you come across a question that doesn't apply to you, write "N/A" - (Not Applicable) in the blanks and go on to the next question. You'll want to accurately answer all of the questions honestly and keep your answers short - the spaces are very small. At the end of the application, sign and date it and your're done.

Most Businesses and Organizations utilize different Job Applications designed with their Logo and Company Information placed on them. Once you have completed one or two, they really become second nature; as all Job Applications basically requests the same important information: Name, Address, Phone Number, Social Security Number, Birthdate, Previous Education & Work Experience, and References. As I stated earlier, all Job Applications are not the same and will include information pertaining to the company in which you are applying to. Don't allow the Job Application Process to intimidate you. Just relax and complete it with ease!

# THE JOB INTERVIEW

Now that you have conducted your Job Search and Completed Job Applications, you have received a call-back for a Job Interview. There are a few things you need to do and know, to ensure you ace the Interview and be considered for the position:

### PROFESSIONAL APPEARANCE

- ✓ Wake up early to give yourself enough relaxation time. You're already a little nervous. Look over your **Resume and Cover Letter** to make sure you can explain it in detail to the Prospective Employer.
- ✓ Make sure your **Interview Clothing** are clean, pressed, and professional in appearance.
- ✓ Ladies, your **skirt or pants** (whichever you choose to wear) should not be fitting you too tightly. You want to be comfortable in the Interview. Also, your skirts should not be too short. If you have to question and have doubts about your outfit before you leave your house.....Do Not Wear It!
- ✓ Your **Shoes** need to be in good repair. Ladies, if you can't walk in high-heels do not attempt to wear them to the Interview.
- ✓ Your **Nails** should be clean and shaped - Men and Women. Ladies, do not wear long, designed, neon-colored nails to your Interview. It is not professional at all.
- ✓ Ladies, your **Makeup** should be applied in a professional manner.
- ✓ Your hair should be clean, and styled professionally.
- ✓ Fragrances should be light in scent. If you're in doubt about your Fragrances, Do Not Wear any! You don't want the smell to be too overwhelming as to irritate the Interviewer.
- ✓ Keep all **Accessories** to a minimum. Ladies, no more than two rings per hand. One or two Bracelets and a Watch. Earrings should not be the size of your head, keep it professional. Men, no earrings in either ear. One necklace of normal size, a Bracelet and a Watch is sufficient.
- ✓ No **gun chewing** whatsoever!
- ✓ Always bring at least three (3) **extra copies** of your Resume. Sometimes you will be Interviewed by more than one person, and it makes you look professional and prepared to have extra copies on hand. Your Resumes should be inside of a **Portfolio**.

Once you arrive to your Job Interview, you'll want to look prepared and seem confident, even if you aren't. Here are a few things to help you along the way:

## THE JOB INTERVIEW

- ✓ Once you arrive to your Job Interview, greet the Front Desk Person(s). This is important because they play a part in you getting hired. If they were to inform the hiring manager that you were rude when you walked through the door, you will not be working there.
- ✓ Take a seat and wait patiently for the Interviewer. Use this time to go over your Resume once more and to relax your nerves.
- ✓ Once invited into the Interviewer's office, do not extend your hand for a handshake unless the Interviewer offers their hand to you first.
- ✓ Do not take a seat until you are offered one.
- ✓ Sit confidently upright in your seat. Keep your feet flat on the floor. If you cross your legs, do so subtly.
- ✓ During the Interview, while answering questions, do not fidget. Instead, find something to hold tightly to that will help with controlling your nerves. You aren't the only one nervous, sometimes the Interviewer is nervous also.
- ✓ Keep your responses during the Interview short and brief. Do not ramble on about nothing. Besides you want to get this Interview over with.
- ✓ If at the end of the Interview, the Interviewer asks you if you have any questions, responding with "Yes" displays your interest in the company.
- ✓ Once the Interviewer stands signaling the end of the Interview, you'll also stand. If and when the Interviewer extends their hand for a handshake, only then will you do so.
- ✓ Thank the Interviewer for their time.



Below are some questions that are generally asked during a Job Interview.

You can use the responses to fit to your particular situation.

## GENERAL JOB INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

**Question: So Tell Me A Little About Yourself?**

**Response:** I Have \_\_\_\_\_ experience In this area. I assisted in the improvement of \_\_\_\_\_ at my previous employer (*if applicable*). I volunteered my services at \_\_\_\_\_ and it was a very rewarding experience. (*You can respond how you like, this just gives you a general idea of what type of responses they are looking for*).

**Question: I've Noticed That You Don't Have A Lot of Experience In This Area?**

**Response:** Well Sir or Madam (*try to use their name if you have it*), I volunteered in this area for \_\_\_\_\_ years and I am confident that I can handle the responsibilities of this job, as the hands-on experience will be very beneficial to me ensuring longevity in the company.

**Question: What Are Your Strengths?**

**Response:** I am Reliable, Dependable, and I Take Responsibility. I Take Direction Well and I Am a Fast, but Efficient and Effective Worker. I Take Initiative and Require Very Little Supervision.

**Question: What Are Your Weaknesses?**

**Response:** Well, being a workaholic would be my weakness, as I don't mind working to get my job done; however, I have turned this weakness into a strength by utilizing the time to get twice as much work done. And, because I love what I do, it is now a strength.

**Question: Do You Have Any Questions For Me?**

**Response:** Yes! I Have A Two Part Question. What Are The Advancement Opportunities In This Company? Do You Have An Education Tuition Assistance Program?

Okay.....after the Job Interview, there are a few things that you should do to show your appreciation to the employer for taking the time to Interview you. You should always send the employer a "Thank You Card/Letter" - preferably a handwritten one - it's just more personal. You should mail this card at least a day after or the same day as your Interview. Most employers appreciate this gesture and don't look at it as "kissing-up." It is you showing your appreciation for being considered for the available position within the company.

If after a week you haven't received a call-back, you may call and inquire if the job has been filled. If so, you are allowed to ask, what could you have done differently so that in your next Job Interview you won't make the same mistake. If the job hasn't been filled, ask when are they expecting to fill it and if you are still being considered. There is no harm in asking these questions, they can either say "Yes" or "No." Do Not allow a "No" answer to affect you negatively. It's a reason why you *didn't* get that job, your big opportunity is coming. You should be ready for it.....when it does!

So, say you got the job you worked so hard preparing for. What are you going to do to keep it? The following list below should assist you along the way:

### **TIPS ON KEEPING YOUR JOB**

- ☐ Arrive at least 15 minutes early everyday, unless there is some sort of emergency. If there's an emergency, you must utilize the assigned company numbers and immediate supervisor's name to call-in if you're going to be late, or if you aren't coming to work that day.
- ☐ You should listen carefully to your Supervisor and take direction well. If there is a particular task that you are not understanding, advise your supervisor. This will prevent mistakes from occurring.
- ☐ Don't come to work everyday with your intentions on making friends. If you do make friends, that's great for you; however, you were hired to do a job.
- ☐ Dress professional everyday. If you have "Casual Fridays" make sure you know the "casual dress code" and are in full compliance in your casual attire. "Casual Fridays" does not mean shorts, low-cut shirts, mini-skirts, flip-flops, tight jeans, short dresses, etc. Adhere to your company's casual dress code.
- ☐ Do not make personal phone calls and Do not surf the Internet on company time; unless it is part of your job description.
- ☐ Do not use the company's postage system to mail your personal mail.
- ☐ Do not use the company's fax machine to send Resumes to other companies.
- ☐ Do not engage in office gossip and Do not allow others to make you feel pressured to join office cliques.
- ☐ Do not resort to spying and reporting everything to your "Boss" about your co-workers, not unless it is imperative and damaging to the company. Reporting every petty little thing may backfire on you, and the "Boss" may start to think that you may be a troublemaker; although you were only trying to help.

The previous list to **"Getting & Keeping The Job"** is not all conclusive, but it gives you *some* idea of what you need to do to keep your job. As a responsible adult, the list is Common Sense and should be utilized as such. If you are arriving to work on time, completing your work tasks, staying out of office gossip and away from negativity, you should be working efficiently and effectively. Keep this up and you may be next in line for that big "Promotion." It doesn't take long to advance if you are seen as a valuable asset to the company. It's displayed in your strong work ethics.

*Good Luck and Much Success!*

## CONCLUSION

Thank You for reading “[Career Guide For First-Time Job Seekers.](#)” You should now have *some* ideas on how to:

- ✓ Create & Develop Your Resume & Cover Letter (CV)
- ✓ Get Prepared For Your Job Search
- ✓ What To Do During The Job Search
- ✓ How To Complete The Job Application
- ✓ Preparing For and What To Do During Your Job Interview, and
- ✓ Getting and Keeping Your Job

This guide is intended to be utilized as a reference item to the first-timer and also to those re-entering the working world after a lengthy absence. It can accompany you on your Job Search and even to your Job Interview. It is my hope that I have provided you with information that will assist you in succeeding in this world as a productive and contributory individual.

*Monica Burns-Capers*

## About The Author

Monica Burns-Capers is an Expert Author, Freelance Writer, and Consultant. She is President and Founder of Monica M. Burns Communications - A Self-Development Consulting and Publishing Firm. She is also Founding Editor and Publisher of the Monica M. Burns Communications Online Newsletter. She is an Expert in her field with over fifteen (15) years of experience, and has authored several e-Books, Children e-Books, e-Special Reports, and other Reading Informational Materials. She is a regular Featured Expert Author and Writer on many Websites, Nationally Published Magazines, and Online Magazines. She has also contributed to several poetic anthologies and won awards for her work.

Monica Burns-Capers is a member of the National Association for Female Executives (NAFE), the Manchester Who's Who in Business for Professional Executives Registry, and the Empire Who's Who Professional Business Executives Registry.

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