

# **EMPLOYMENT THE PROFESSIONAL WAY**

**A GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING  
THE AUSTRALIAN JOB SEARCH  
PROCESS  
FOR PROFESSIONALLY  
QUALIFIED IMMIGRANTS**



Australian Multicultural Foundation



Department of  
Immigration and  
Multicultural  
Affairs

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## Australian Multicultural Foundation

This interactive manual aims to assist people who are unfamiliar with Australian recruitment practices and provides practical advice, examples and activities which can increase understanding of how to compete on the open job market. The Australian Multicultural Foundation is proud to be associated with this initiative and acknowledges the value of our culturally diverse society and the positive impact it makes on industry in Australia.

Rita Faelli and Richard Jackman, the authors of the manual, have been involved in assisting professionally qualified immigrants into the Australian workforce with the Australian Multicultural Foundation's programs for several years. Their dedication and commitment have culminated in this publication which, I am sure, will be of benefit to many people.

I also wish to thank the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs for their sponsorship of the manual.

I commend this initiative and wish everyone who reads it success in their search for employment in Australia.

Mr B. (Hass) Dellar OAM  
Executive Director

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*A legacy of Australia's Bicentenary - Established to promote a strong commitment to Australia as one people drawn from many cultures.*



# PREFACE

## JOB SEARCH SKILLS FOR OVERSEAS PROFESSIONALS

The recruitment of professionally qualified staff is quite different in Australia to many other countries. Among the reasons for this is the nature of Australian business.

Australia has historically been a supplier of natural resources and primary industries to the world. Most people are familiar with Australia exporting wool, wheat, iron ore, alumina and other natural resources. Of recent times Australia has set out to increase its manufacturing capacity as we move towards a global economy.

The Manufacturing industry in Australia traditionally is made up of many small businesses rather than the enormous organisations found overseas. Some 70% of our industry is with companies of less than 200 employees. This is significant in terms of employment.

As a general statement professionals are expected to go beyond the strict limits of their disciplines and use their education, training and experience to contribute in a broader sense to a company's goals. It also means a much closer association with all levels of workers in the organisation which might not be the case elsewhere.

Australian employees at all levels are expected to offer their ideas and views on the tasks at hand, under current circumstances this trend is growing rapidly with the introduction of self managed teams and Total Quality Management concepts.

As you progress through the Manual we will be emphasising the need to "fit in" to an organisation. What this means is how will you, the prospective employee, contribute to the goals and future growth of the firm. It is the skilled demonstration of this capability on your part which will secure the job.

Successful job seeking for professionals very much depends on how well you can demonstrate your worth to an organisation. You must be prepared to discuss with a recruiter how you see your skills and experience making a valuable contribution to the company. You must be prepared to enter into a professional discussion at the interview about aspects of your professional life which have relevance to the position on offer.

Communication is a major skill required by professionals in any country. Good communication does **NOT** mean just English Language skills, it means the ability to convey your message understandably to your listener.

Unlike many countries where **QUALIFICATIONS** are the major reason for successful professional employment, this is not the case in Australia. Whilst it is true that Australian employers expect their professional staff to hold recognised degrees there are many other factors which influence their decisions.

Australian businesses are generally fairly small in size, therefore, staff tend to work closely together, an ability to be part of a team has value. Social skills are also valued as so much time is spent together at work, often outside working hours. Coffee and lunch breaks are important times for staff to discuss matters of work and social importance and it is essential that newcomers be prepared to participate to get to know their new colleagues.

There is a wise saying "*people generally employ people they like*" which simply means that the first impression you make with a potential employer is so important. When you first make contact by phone, letter or face to face you must give the impression that you are someone they could work with. This does not mean pretending to be someone you are not but it does mean being your natural self, not someone so distressed by nerves that your ability to do a job under pressure is doubted.

When you are applying for jobs try to remember the two big **E'S** -

**ENTHUSIASM**

**ENERGY**

Enthusiasm shows that you really want this job, you can bring benefits to your new employer and that this is the job you have been waiting for (even though this may be your fiftieth application).

Energy shows that you can give full effort to the job. Employers will know that if you are on the staff they are getting someone who is going to give the job everything they've got!

So many resumes say "I'm energetic, hard working, flexible, a quick learner" wonderful attributes, but unless you look and sound like it nobody will be convinced.

Job searching is a job in its own right, a full time job with plenty of overtime. The best jobs **don't** go to the luckiest they go to the best prepared. You need to provide the will, drive, enthusiasm and energy to succeed. We are confident that you will!

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# INTRODUCTION

## PURPOSE OF THE MANUAL

The purpose of this manual is to guide people who are unfamiliar with Australian recruitment practices for professional and skilled occupations. Australia has its own method of recruiting which is suitable to its industrial and economic environment.

The manual is intended to take the reader step-by-step through each phase of the recruitment process from initial identification of an opportunity to succeeding in the interview. Each chapter is part of a continuous process. The interview is the culmination of all the newly acquired skills demonstrating the candidate's potential value to the employer.

The value of the manual lies in provision of information which, to be effective, must not only be read but must also be practised. It follows a logical sequence covering each phase of the recruitment process and it is explained in a clear and practical manner.

The manual includes practical exercises and it is strongly recommended that these exercises be used to familiarise the job seeker with the nature of job search for professional and skilled people in Australia.

**Remember the more you practice the luckier you get!**

## HOW TO USE

Maximum benefit will be gained by reading the manual from cover to cover **very carefully!** After familiarising yourself with the contents and practising the suggested exercises, it may be used as a reference to reinforce particular aspects of the job search process.

### Steps:

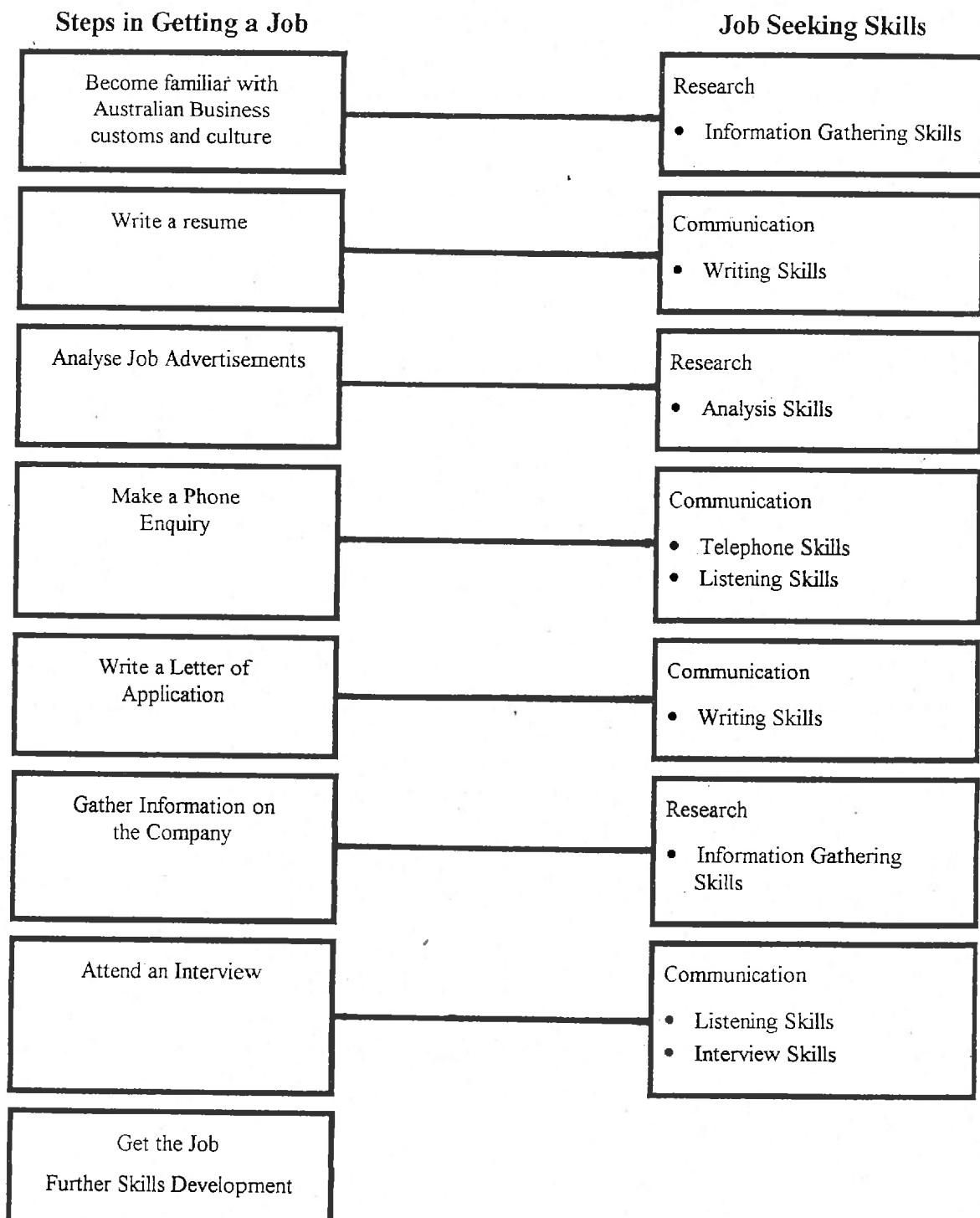
1. Read the manual carefully.
2. Each chapter covers a particular stage in the job search process. Ensure that you fully understand each stage before proceeding to the next including completing the exercises.
3. Be prepared to undertake the exercises, for example, in some sections you will be asked to practice suggested routines as if you were actually going for a job. Use this non-threatening situation to practise your communication skills.

4. The interview section requires a considerable amount of thought and practise, similar to an actor rehearsing a role and requires all the preparation and rehearsal involved in a public presentation. Make sure you feel comfortable and confident in this role.
5. Research and revision is a critical factor of success in all aspects of professional life and employment is no exception. It has been shown that successful employment outcomes are directly related to the amount of research undertaken by the candidate. You are a professional put your skills to work.
6. The manual will help you develop confidence in expressing your skills and professional competence demonstrated by your achievements. It is important for you to discuss how you have performed as a professional in your previous employment in a confident and positive manner. This will encourage Australian employers to recognise your professional value in a competitive job market.
7. The manual encourages you to think deeply and seriously about your past experience, both professional and personal, and to provide credible evidence to an Australian employer who is unfamiliar with your background and experience. Do consider self-research as a critical step in successful employment.

# CHAPTER ONE

## 1.1 THE JOB SEARCH PROCESS AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

The job search process involves numerous steps and stages. Of course, not all successful employment follows a strict pathway, however, all job applicants must demonstrate good communication and research skills. The following chart provides an overview of the process and skills required.



## 1.2 COST OF EMPLOYMENT

The costs of employing a skilled or professional person in Australia are high. Many job seekers are unaware that when employers make a decision to hire they give **very careful consideration** to the cost/benefit analysis.

### Salary and On Costs

The following figures demonstrate the average outlay an employer in Australia makes in employing a professional on a \$40,000 salary.

SALARY:		\$40,000
ON COSTS:		
4 weeks annual leave	3,000	
11 public holidays	1,700	
8 sick days	1,200	
Payroll tax 7%	2,800	
WorkCare levy average 4%	1,600	
Superannuation @ 4%	1,600	
Training	1,000	
Accounting	500	
Miscellaneous (light, power, phone etc)	<u>1,000</u>	
		15,000 (33%)
TOTAL		\$55,000

These figures are by no means absolute, there can be many further costs, for example a motor vehicle, costly equipment, uniform, safety apparel and equipment etc.

These costs are generated by gross profit. Whilst this may vary from industry to industry, a rough guide would show that a company requires a gross income of \$200,000 as the minimum amount to justify and provide a salary of \$40,000. We use this to demonstrate the reasons why employers are very careful in their selection of professional staff as a wrong selection will be a very expensive exercise.

**A bad employment decision is costly in lost production, time and money.**

## **1.3 WHY PEOPLE EMPLOY?**

It is important to remember that the employment process is by no means an exact science and, as such, is subject to perceptions and attitudes. In some cultures the selection process is based entirely on assessment of academic qualifications and certificates of service, in others, there is a directive to employ by a central authority. In Western cultures generally, it is a competitive interview based system.

## **1.4 THE MARKETING EMPHASIS**

### **Marketing Definition**

Marketing can be defined as a series of steps leading to a successful outcome:

1. identifying an opportunity (a problem to be resolved)
2. developing a solution
3. selling the solution
4. delivering the results

Why are professionals employed? Take a few minutes to think about this question, it may seem obvious but the answer is often overlooked. The answer is to **solve problems!** Therefore, an employer will be looking for a professional who can demonstrate her/his ability to solve problems. The job seeker will need to undertake a process of **identifying the problem, developing a solution, selling the solution and delivering the results.** This is marketing.

The marketing process is the means by which you will be able to compete successfully. Preparation to undertake this process is essential and the first step is to understand yourself. This requires self analysis; your career objectives, your strengths, any training and development needs and your achievements.

### **1.4.1 Setting Career Objectives**

1. You need to have goals.
2. Selecting your goals and objectives is a matter of choosing which **direction you want to go.**
3. The possible directions that you can take will depend almost entirely on the assets (strengths) that you have. Consequently, to expand your choices you should be continually developing your assets. **You will have to take the initiative in identifying your training and development needs and doing something about addressing them.**
4. More than any other factor, your job - or more generally your career - is going to determine how you live. Therefore, give it a great deal of attention and thought.
5. Basic to everything is physical and mental well-being. Take care of your body by exercising and keeping fit. Also take time out to relax and unwind - this refreshes the spirit and keeps you motivated. Enjoy yourself.

Here are some exercises which may help you get to know yourself better. Make sure you complete these as they will provide a framework for your Resume and your interview performance.

#### 1.4.2 Exercise 1 - My specific strengths and how I utilise them in my work

MY SPECIFIC STRENGTHS	HOW I UTILISE THOSE STRENGTHS IN MY WORK
Example 1. ANALYTICAL SKILLS	1. I can successfully recognise and test solutions
2. Communication Skills	2. I can effectively liaise with all level of staffs, & contractors & other outside organizations
3. Computer Skills	3. Effective & confident use of all common & some special software and ability to learn new software quickly.
4. Extensive Engineering experience.	4. I can find practical & realistic solutions to engg problems on site
5. Knowledge of Mgt	5. I can lead teams to achieve organizational goals & targets

### 1.4.3 Exercise 2 - Skills Audit

Setting Career Objectives and Identifying Training and Development Needs

CAREER OBJECTIVE (Which direction do you wish to go?)	KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS REQUIRED	TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT NEEDS
1. Become a Project Manager in a major Project in Aus.	1. Local regulations, Local practices & understanding of local work culture	1. Find a mentor - Talk to someone at IEDA -
2. Establishing a well spread local network in Aus.	2. Meeting Professionals in diverse backgrounds.	2. -
3. Achieve knowledge of local construction practices.	3. Site Supervision,	3. Reading articles - Enquire from IEDA
4.	4.	4.

#### 1.4.4 Exercise 3 - Personal and Professional Achievement Checklist

My Major Career Achievements So Far	The Specific Strengths Which Enabled Me To Achieve These Things
Example	<p>1. Introduced computers to replace a manual system of accounting.</p> <p>1. Sound computer knowledge, good training and communication skills, good interpersonal skills, understanding financial reporting requirements.</p>
<p>2. Successfully negotiated with Ministry of Defence regarding the working rules &amp; regulations in &amp; around the project site in Singapore</p>	<p>2. Well developed communication skills, good interpersonal skills</p>
<p>3. Successfully managed two <del>the</del> work departments in a major project in Singapore, &amp; received commendation from the client</p>	<p>3. Communication skills, interpersonal skills &amp; leadership qualities.</p>
<p>4. Successfully negotiated the final A/C &amp; submission of final document of a Aus \$300 million project in Singapore.</p>	<p>4. Communication skills, interpersonal skills, understanding of A/C matter &amp; Specification, Computer skills</p>

# CHAPTER TWO

## 2.1 ADVERTISEMENT

When employers identify a “problem” (ie they need a new employee to achieve perceived tasks) an ideal solution is developed in consultation with other members of the company. The “problem” is then expressed by means of an advertisement which identifies the characteristics, education, experience, and skills of the person they are looking for to solve their difficulty. For example, this “problem” may be that the company is expanding its business, entering overseas markets, replacing an experienced employee or introducing new systems. Your job is to carefully read the advertisement to identify precisely what the employer is seeking.

## 2.2 NETWORKING

Many employers prefer not to advertise due to the costs in time and money involved. Often they will canvass their friends, associates at clubs and other social venues to find a suitable candidate. This type of networking accounts for a very large proportion of the jobs available and should not be discounted as a source of employment. Networking requires association through the wider Australian community and involves participation in clubs, special interest groups, schools, local community, sporting and cultural organisations.

**Remember to advise your new friends that you are seeking employment in your profession!**

## 2.3 SEARCHING THE PAPERS

The main sources of professional and skilled employment advertisements can be found in every major city newspaper. Other sources include, the Financial Review and industry magazines/journals, and government gazettes.

The Internet is now a particularly valuable source of employment information and computers can be accessed at your local and State libraries. Websites for most newspapers and journals are available for both local and international positions.

### 2.3.1 Analysing the Advertisement

Most people when applying to advertisements don’t read the advertisement carefully. They stop after they see the position title or maybe scan the ad without paying attention to the all important small print. The small print holds the key to what the employer is looking for.

If you don’t carefully examine and “pull apart” the ad you will more than likely miss out on the very points that can be used in your favour when developing the covering letter. Therefore, it is essential that the ad be “dissected”, listing all the requirements of the position.

Some advertisements don't give a great deal of information regarding the position or the company, therefore, there are questions you need to ask. If the ad has a contact number, prepare a list of questions and ring the appropriate person (see ch. 3)

You **must** also ask for the selection criteria when applying for Public Service positions.

Always attempt to find out as much as possible about the position because the more relevant and specific you make your covering letter the greater your chances are of getting an interview.

The following advertisements demonstrate how to carefully 'dissect' an advertisement to obtain all the information necessary to begin your job application. Notice how much information can be revealed in most cases.

## Advertisement 1 - Private Enterprise

### Applications Engineer

(1)

#### Refrigeration

(2)

#### Senior Engineering Opportunity

The Iceberg Appliance Group is one of Australia's leading manufacturers of specialist refrigeration equipment. From commercial refrigerated milk vats and refrigerated supermarket cases to metal shelving and retail racking systems, our products have revolutionised cold storage and display throughout the country.

(3)

As we enter a new period of growth, we are seeking to recruit a highly experienced professional to complement the team at our Head Office and manufacturing facility at Carlton.

(4)

Reporting to the Iceberg Refrigerations Engineering Manager, the candidate will work closely with our Sales Engineers to ensure commercial refrigeration products and systems satisfy customer requirements.

(5)

You will not only prepare refrigeration performance requirements and specifications, but be part of the Product Development team for Icecold refrigerated supermarket cases, and Iceberg milk vats and related refrigerated systems.

(6)

The successful candidate, ideally tertiary qualified, will have had industrial experience with refrigeration and/or other thermodynamic applications, be computer literate and a good communicator of engineering issues. It is unlikely that applicants with less than 5 years experience will meet the challenge. As the position is re-advertised previous applicants need not apply.

(7)

The company offers sound employment prospects, a smoke free environment, attractive salary package commensurate with experience and equal employment opportunities. Applicants for the above position should be marked 'CONFIDENTIAL' and addressed to: Mr Smith, Manager Human Resources, Iceberg Appliance Group, PO Box 1X, Melbourne, Vic. 3000, Tel: 9777 6666, Fax: 9555 4444.

(8)

(9)

(10)

## Advertisement 1 - Key

- (1) Job title (professional position).
- (2) Industry and level of position and experience required.
- (3) Information about the company, its products, status in the industry, etc.
- (4) Reason for the advertisement  
Level of experience  
Location.
- (5) Indication of skills required eg communication skills, service skills.  
Refrigeration Engineering Manager - possible contact for further information.
- (6) Duty Statement - what the job involves.
- (7) Selection criteria - qualifications, experience, personal attributes on which selection will be based. This is the essential part of the advertisement which you **must** address in your letter and more fully at the interview.
- (8) Additional information:
  - Note 'Smoke free environment'
  - Salary (make sure you have an idea of the salary levels for a position of this kind. Refer to your Professional Association)
  - Equal Employment Opportunity - find out about this, if its published they're serious about it
  - 'CONFIDENTIAL' - make sure your envelope is marked **CONFIDENTIAL** **not** your letter.
- (9) Contact person and addressee (possible contact for further information).
- (10) Basis for further research.

## Advertisement 2 - Public Service

### AUSTRALIAN CONSTRUCTION SERVICES

Service is our Business

(1)

SENIOR OFFICER GRADE B -  
ASSET SERVICES  
\$46,537 - 53,403

(2)

Asset Services offers its clients a comprehensive building asset management service. We operate through 11 business centres in metropolitan and country Victoria and Tasmania and offer the services of skilled tradespeople and maintenance management. Our portfolio of skills range from fire and security systems to plumbing through to high level electronic controls and heritage work.

(3)

(4)

The selected applicant will manage the State office resources, will provide high level advice and assistance to the State Manager on a broad range of business and strategic issues and, in conjunction with the Business Centre Managers will ensure the effective provision of administrative services supporting district operations.

(5)

Qualifications: Tertiary qualifications in accounting, commerce, business management or other relevant disciplines desirable.

(6)

Enquiries: Mary Brown (03) 9605 3896

(7)

Selection Documentation: Brian Jones (03) 9605 3712

(8)

Quote Position No: 173

(9)

Applications close with:

Manager (Personnel & Recruitment), Australian Construction Services, 239-241 Bourke Street, MELBOURNE VIC 3000

(10)

By: 17<sup>th</sup> October 1998

(11)

Australian Construction Services is a Division of the Department of Administrative Services and is an equal opportunity employer.

(12)

## Advertisement 2 - Key

- (1) Mission Statement -describes aim of the organisation/department.
- (2) Classification and salary level.
- (3) What they do and where they operate (travelling could be involved).
- (4) Range of skills to be managed.
- (5) Brief Duty Statement - will be expanded in Selection documents.
- (6) Qualifications.
- (7) Officer for enquiries.
- (8) Contact for Selection documentation. **Do not attempt to respond before receiving the complete Selection documentation.** Ring the given number and request documentation.
- (9) Quote this position number to identify the position you are applying for.
- (10) Addressee.
- (11) Closing date - applications **must** arrive prior to 5pm on the closing date.
- (12) Source for further research.

### 2.3.2 Exercise 4 - Analysis of my Advertisement

Now try the following exercise on your choice of advertisement. Analyse the job advertisement you have selected using "Analysing the Advertisement 1 or 2" as a guide:

<b>Company Name and Description (Public Service/Private Enterprise)</b> Connell Wagner - CW is one of <del>the</del> Aus' most experienced privately owned multidisciplinary consulting firm
<b>Contact Name for enquiries:</b> Esther Walker
<b>Job Description (Name of job &amp; duties):</b> Senior Civil Engineer (Urban development) Working as a part of a team you will <del>be</del> undertake a project leader role in the hands-on design of civil eng work
<b>Qualifications Required:</b> (not very clear)
<b>Experience Required:</b> - Design knowledge of roads, kerbworks & drainage work. - Financial myt - Business development - Team leadership
<b>Desirable personal characteristics:</b> - Leadership qualities - communication skills - <del>etc</del>
<b>Salary and Conditions:</b> (not stated)

Due date for applications: (not stated)

Other relevant information:

Applications to be sent to:

Esther Walker  
Recruitment Co-ordinator-Vic.  
Connell Wagner Pty Ltd  
P.O Box 321, S. Mel, Vic. 3205

What are the impressions you get about this job from the words used in the advertisement?

- This position requires knowledge of design with regard to roads & other municipal structures. It needs strong leadership skills with communication skills.

How do you interpret this in terms of employer expectations?

- Experienced engineer who has performed well in managing roles & who has sound eng knowledge

List other things you would want to find out about this company that are not included in the advertisement.

- Closing date for applications
- 

In your opinion, which aspects of this job are likely to be the most important in determining the selection of applicants?

- Knowledge of Eng & communication skills

Which parts of your experience match this job advertisement?

- Strong leadership skills & communication skills

# CHAPTER THREE

## 3.1 TELEPHONE SKILLS

Communication skills form an integral part of the job search process and business. Without good communication skills people will not take your application seriously and telephone skills are the most difficult for many people because your voice is your only means of projecting yourself.

## 3.2 USING THE TELEPHONE

It is important to practise consistently the following:

- Keep your voice rate at an even pace, slower speech is far more intelligible than rapid, excited speech.
- Do not rush as this tends to distort pronunciation.
- Pitch your voice a little lower and enunciate clearly.
- Pause frequently so that the other person has the opportunity to comment.
- Speak directly into the mouthpiece.
- Make sure you use appropriate expressions:
  - *I'd like to speak to Mr...., please.*
  - *May I speak to Ms...., please.*
  - *Good morning / good afternoon Mr...., Paul Collins speaking.*
  - *Mr Smith, my name is Paul Collins, I'm ringing regarding the ad in Saturday's Age for....*
  - *I'm ringing about the position advertised in The Age for....*
  - *I'm sorry, I didn't quite catch that....*
  - *Could you repeat that please....*
  - *Good morning / good afternoon not Hello Good morning or afternoon.*
  - *May I leave a message for Mrs Jones, please.*
  - *May I ask who's speaking?*
  - *Could you spell that please?*

- Certain sounds are easily mistaken over the phone - 'M' and 'N', 'P' and 'B', 'T' and 'D', 'R' and 'S'. Take particular care to spell out any words that need to be exact such as names, addresses, etc.

*My surname is Pappas -  
P for Peter  
S for Sam*

- Listening is a very important skill that you must be aware of when using the telephone. Pay careful attention to the other person's tone and do not interrupt while the other person is speaking.
- Acknowledge that you understand and are listening attentively by commenting and regular intervals - for example "Right", "Yes", "I see", etc., interjected at appropriate moments.
- One of the best ways of overcoming nerves over the phone is to prepare a script before hand detailing the main points and questions you want to ask.
- Always be courteous to the receptionist.
- Always ask if it is a convenient time for discussion.
- Put a SMILE in your voice.

As an aid to developing clear speech at the appropriate speed, try this amusing story by **reading out loud and recording yourself on tape**. Critically review, or better still, get a native English speaking friend to listen to the result. Remember practise makes perfect!

### Theophilus Thistle

"Once upon a time there lived in the lush Numinbah Valley, a boy by the name of Theophilus Thistle who was a successful thistle sifter. Next door to the thistle sifter, Theophilus, lived another boy, Peter Piper, the pickled pepper picker. Unfortunately, Theophilus Thistle often thrust three thousand thistles through the thick of his thumb and Peter, while picking peppers, often got pickled himself.

One afternoon, after picking a peck of pickled peppers and becoming quite pickled, Peter wandered down the beach at Surfers Paradise, to do a little surfing, and there he met the girl of this story.

Now for the sake of simplicity, we shall call the girl "She". She sold sea shells by the sea shore and Peter the pickled pepper picker, often purchased the sea shells and they became quite good friends.

As time passed, their friendship grew and they were finally married. Peter Piper picked Theophilus Thistle to be his best man. Theophilus Thistle said that he gladly would. The day of the wedding - woe! Theophilus Thistle, who was really a very successful thistle sifter, thrust another three thousand thistles through the thick of his thumb. But Peter who wasn't pickled, and She, who wasn't selling sea shells, got married anyway and they lived happily ever after.

A further way to improve your voice projection is to listen to professional broadcasters, for example, Radio National, the Australian Broadcasting Commission in your locality or read aloud ten pages of good English literature every day.

The following article by Carolyn Rance of The Age newspaper clearly demonstrates the importance of effective telephone skills during the job search.

Article from The Age, Employment Section, by Carolyn Rance

## Telephone skills vital for job seekers

Telephone Skills are an increasingly vital part of job seeking. Many employers use the phone to conduct initial screening of candidates and some have now introduced automated interview systems requiring callers to answer a series of pre-recorded questions.

Establishing good contact at the start of the call, structuring the information you wish to provide and listening carefully to what is being said to you are the keys to making a good impression, says Agnes Banyasz, educational counsellor at La Trobe University language centre.

As the author of the Do Call training package launched at the university last week, she believes that successfully sourcing and applying for jobs can often depend on how effectively you use the phone.

She says who you want to speak to, what you want to say and the best time to call all need to be thought out before you dial the number. Job seekers should do some research beforehand about the organisation being called and the name and title of the person being approached.

Rehearsing aloud what you plan to say, making sure your answers to questions are relevant and concise and keeping notes on what is discussed and possible follow-up action increase your chances of making a good impression.

Ms Banyasz says although she designed Do Call primarily for job seekers from non English-speaking backgrounds, many people born and raised in English-speaking countries are hesitant or disorganised when using the phone to contact potential employers. Making calls, she suggests, should be from a child-free, television-free environment.

Job seekers should be aware that it is not only when making calls that you should be well prepared and courteous. Employers may call you at home in response to letters of application and resumes that you have sent to them. If a call is answered as if it is an unwelcome interruption, a negative tone is set for the whole conversations.

"With no support from body language, people form an image of you based on your voice, the expressions you use, and the way you generally handle the conversation.

"Articulate your words clearly...and listen very attentively. When you finish your sentence don't just think about what you are going to say next and wait impatiently for your turn but listen to the response so that you can make your next statement relevant. What you say and how you say it are equally important because when you are on the telephone your voice is the only channel of

communication, says Ms Banyasz.

She suggests that job seekers from non English-speaking backgrounds form the habit of answering even their home telephone calls in English. People encountering pre-recorded interview hotlines can improve their chance by being confident and effective communicators, she says vital in today's increasingly competitive society, job seekers and people already in the business world need the presentation skills to ensure they make a good impression. People gain confidence when they overcome their nervousness. You gain a voice and people listen to you, it can open whole new worlds, she says.

### 3.3 TELEPHONE SKILLS PERSONAL ACTION PLAN

When telephoning a prospective employer for more information about a position use the following table as a guide to a personal action plan to improve your telephone skills. Tick the features of effective telephone manner which you need to improve.

Preparing questions in advance	
Asking first if it is an appropriate time for a discussion	
Speaking evenly and slowly	
Using clear pronunciation	
Pausing frequently to allow the other person to comment	
Speaking directly into the mouthpiece	
Using appropriate expressions	
Spelling out words that need exact spelling	
Not interrupting	
Listening carefully	
Sounding pleasant and courteous	
Sounding enthusiastic	

The record sheet for outgoing and incoming calls can be used as a practical aid and record for your professional contacts.

Record Sheet (Outgoing)	
Date: _____	Telephone number: _____
Purpose of call: _____ _____	
Name of Contact: _____	
Position of Contact: _____	
Company Name: _____	
Name/positions of people I talked to before getting to Contact: _____ _____	
Subject: _____ _____	
Follow-up: _____ _____	
What next? _____ _____	
Further contact details: _____ _____	
Phone: _____	Fax: _____
Email: _____	
Address: _____ _____	

### Record Sheet (Incoming)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Caller's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Caller's position: \_\_\_\_\_

Company Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject: \_\_\_\_\_

Follow-up: \_\_\_\_\_

Further contact details: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

### 3.4 QUESTIONS TO IDENTIFY THE JOB

It is always a good idea to practise your telephone conversation before actually making the call. The following are *suggested* conversation scripts for your guidance.

#### 3.4.1 Requesting Selection Criteria

- Good Morning / Good Afternoon.
- Could you please send me the selection documents for position TG/152, Accounts Assistant.
- My name is Pat McGregor, I'll spell my surname for you - M for Mary, C, G for George, R for rabbit, E for egg, G, O, R.
- My address is 3 slash 45 McPherson Road, Oakleigh, 3182.
- Thanks for your help.
- Goodbye.

#### 3.4.2 Requesting further information regarding an Advertised Position

- Good Morning / Good Afternoon.
- I'm enquiring about the position of Applications Engineer advertised in Saturday's Age.
- I'm very interested in the position and I believe I have most of the skills and experience you require, however, I was wondering if you could give me further details on the development and restructuring of the division. What actually does this involve and what role would the successful applicant be performing?
- Also, you mention you require a person who is computer literate, could you tell me what software you are using?
- Thank you very much, you've been most helpful. One final question, who should I send my application to?
- I'm sorry, I didn't catch the name.
- Thanks again.
- Goodbye.

### 3.4.3 Asking for a Plant Visit prior to Interview

- Good Morning / Good Afternoon.
- May I speak with Ms Jones please. My name is Pat McGregor.
- It's regarding my interview next Thursday.
- Thank you.
- Good Morning Ms Jones. I was wondering whether it may be possible to come and have a look at the office before my interview. I'd like to prepare myself thoroughly and it would be great if I could familiarise myself with your working environment.
- That's great, thank you very much. So, I'll see you on Tuesday at 10:30. Thanks again for your help.

#### OR

- No, I understand. That's OK. I look forward to seeing you at the interview.
- Goodbye.

### 3.4.4 Asking for feedback Post Interview

- Good Morning, may I speak with Ms Bonnici?
- Good Morning, Ms Bonnici.
- My name is Jasmin Fitzgerald. I had an interview with you last week for the position of Systems Analyst.
- Yes I was disappointed that I wasn't successful but I was wondering if you could give me some feedback regarding my performance at the interview as I would like to build upon this experience for future interviews.
- Great. Thank you very much for your time and assistance.
- Goodbye.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## 4.1 RESEARCH

When replying to advertisements, it is essential to find out in depth details of the company's activities, products, services, staff, size, location, overseas branches etc. before writing your letter of application. Research is the basis of your job search and should not be overlooked. Without researching your job market you will be a disadvantaged candidate, therefore, it is critical that you familiarise yourself, as much as possible, with industry in Australia and the prospective companies to whom you wish to apply.

As a qualified professional you will be familiar with and experienced in research. It is now time to put those skills to good use. The following are suggestions, by no means exhaustive, of sources of information. You will need to find these locations in your State/Territory.

### Examples of organisations for research purposes

- **Careers Reference Centre**
- **State Government Information Centres**
- **Australian Government Bookshop (Commonwealth)**
- **Stock Exchange**
- **State Libraries**
- **Australian Securities Commission**
- **Australian Bureau of Statistics**
- **Government Offices**  
See telephone directory for State and Commonwealth Government Departments.

The **Careers Reference Centre**: has information on industries and includes visual and written material. Broad based industrial information.

The **State Government Information Centre**: has all the information on State Legislation, Awards, Government reports, Annual reports of State Government Departments, Industrial Relations and small business information.

The **Australian Government Bookshop**: has all Commonwealth Government publications including Industrial Relations, Awards, environmental policy, etc. In addition, books, videos and cassettes from SBS may be purchased here.

**The State Library:** has a very extensive listing of companies in Australia and Government Departments. In addition, magazines, directories and reports, such as:

JOBSON'S  
KOMPASS  
DUN & BRADSTREET  
(Proprietary Limited Companies)

## Public Companies

- **The Australian Public Company Guide**
  - Major Shareholders
  - Issued Capital
  - Balance Sheet
  - Activities/Historical Information

All companies listed on the Australian Stock Exchange have readily available Annual Reports.

## Government

- **The Australian Local Government Guide**

Comprehensive contacts directory to every local council and municipal authority in every state and territory of Australia. It includes names and contact information for councillors and senior officer, plus financial and legal information, development and other business opportunities.
- **The National Guide to Government**

The comprehensive contacts directory to Federal and State Governments. The National Guide contains up to the minute contacts to every section of every state and territory Government in Australia as well as a comprehensive listing of all Federal Parliamentarians, all ambassadors and foreign representatives.

## Other

- **The Directory of Australia Associations**

Lists more than 7000 associations and specific interest groups, ranging from conservation and environment to Arts and entertainment organisations to Professional and industrial associations.
- **The Industrial Relations Index**

is the one reference to Unions, employer groups, industrial tribunals and all Industrial Relations organisations.
- **Who's Who in Australia**

Contains 8219 biographical references to notable people in Australia in every field of activity (updated annually).

**Semi-Government companies**, e.g. CSIRO, SEC, QANTAS, Ansett Airlines, Gas & Fuel, produce booklets which can be collected from the companies themselves.

**Australian Securities Commission:**  
information on Proprietary Limited Companies.

**The Australian Bureau of Statistics:**  
has a huge range of statistics including demographic movements throughout Australia as well as business, economic data, etc. You may be able to get an idea on industry trends and where employment activity is taking place.

**Government Offices:**  
you can go directly to the offices and ask for their annual report. In addition, many Government Departments put out a range of information on what they do.

Don't forget the **Yellow Pages** are also a helpful resource.

#### **4.1.1 Exercise 5 - Researching organisations**

The following questionnaire provides you with your research framework. As an exercise, research three organisations/companies in which you are interested and complete the questionnaire in as much detail as possible.

Name of Company or Government Department

---

Is the company publicly listed on the Stock Exchange (LTD) or privately owned (Pty. Ltd.)?

---

Is the Department Federal, State, Local?

---

If the Company is listed on the Stock Exchange, have you obtained the latest Annual Report?

---

Where is the product or service sold to and to whom?

---

How many years has the company been in business?

---

What is the product or service offered by the company?

---

Who would you write to if you were canvassing? (Name and position)

---

Is the company the holding company or subsidiary?

---

Has the company realised a profit from the product or service in the last year? In the last five years?

---

Is the company known for its innovative treatment toward employees?

---

What new ventures are the company planning to undertake?

---

Does the company have offices interstate?

---

What is the annual turnover?

---

Is the company part of a growing industry?

---

What is the organisation's mission statement?

---

What programmes do they administer?

---

Are they centralised or regionalised - where?

---

Are they growing or reducing in size?

---

**Prepare two questions that you would ask at an interview based on your research.**

Name of company: \_\_\_\_\_

First question: \_\_\_\_\_

Second question: \_\_\_\_\_

## 4.2 NETWORKING

Another source of information on employment/companies/services etc. is through networking. For people unfamiliar with the Australian job market networking requires some effort. However, do not be discouraged as most people are prepared to give information and assist you with your queries.

Up until now we have concentrated on developing skills for seeking an advertised position. However, not all jobs are advertised. In fact, advertised positions make up only 30% of the total vacancies on the job market.

### So where are the remaining 70% of the jobs?

The Public Service is required by law to advertise and large companies such as Esso, BHP, BP, etc. often advertise via professional recruiting agencies.

That leaves small to medium sized companies which tend not to advertise as frequently because of economic restraints. Advertising costs time and money and many companies do not have the facilities to cope with the amount of applications nor are they prepared to employ the services of professional recruiting agencies which charge anywhere between 12-15% of the first year's salary. Consequently, a very effective means of finding the right person for the position is through **networking**.

A network is a group of people sharing common experiences and/or interests and needs.

A network may be of a **formal** nature, that is, it has a name, constitution or structure, meets regularly, etc. such as alumni groups, service clubs, church groups, political groups, associations, etc.

An **informal** network is quite simply one that is made through everyday contacts such as:

Educational Bodies:      \* Peers at secondary school, university, alumni  
                                    \* Former teachers, lecturers, etc.

Family:                      \* Parents, brothers, sisters-in-law  
                                    \* Uncles, aunts, cousins, etc.

Community:                \* Neighbours  
                                    \* Local council  
                                    \* Community library, recreational facilities, etc.

Employment:               \* Colleagues, clients, employers, partners, etc.

Friends: \* "What are friends for?"

Mentors: \* eg. Institution of Australian Engineers.

**Networking is an all important component of the job search.**

**4.2.1 Exercise 6 - List names of people you know in the following categories:**

**Educational Bodies**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Clubs**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Associations**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Friends**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Community**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Courses**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

# CHAPTER FIVE

## 5.1 WHAT IS A RESUME?

A resume is a logical summary of your education and career development including personal information, special interests and specific information and job experience highlighting **skills and achievements**.

## 5.2 WHAT ARE THE FUNCTIONS OF A RESUME?

- To obtain an interview for the job you want.
- To impress a prospective employer with your past performances which are indicative of your future potential as an employee.
- To sell your **skills and achievements**.

### 5.2.1 A Resume is not a job description

- A Resume should show your best side and make a prospective employer want to see you in person.
- It should contain information **relevant** to the job you are seeking.
- The information must be **honest**.
- Resumes must be letter perfect when it comes to **spelling and grammar**.
- It should highlight **skills and achievements**.
- It should contain “action” words that show **achievement, creativity, problem solving abilities initiative**.
- A Resume should effectively sell your skills and achievements to a prospective employer.

Writing a Resume should help you organise your thoughts prior to an interview.

### 5.3 SKILLS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

A skill is something you have **learned** eg. word processing.

A skill is something you have been required to develop as a result of previous employment eg. negotiating with unions.

- Skills are always verbs - a skill is an ability to do something.
- An achievement is the successful application of a particular skill or skills in a given context.

#### Examples

1. Negotiated with unions and reached an **amicable** agreement on a dispute.
2. **Improved** productivity by **reducing operational time**. To achieve this, I undertook a process of:
  - \* task breakdown
  - \* task definition
  - \* retraining
  - \* introduction of new equipment
3. **Introduced** an economic order quantity model to **minimise** stock level in a fertiliser mixing industry, reducing its existing **storage cost** by 50%.
4. **Implemented** an analysis system for stock control of Volkswagen spare parts and home appliances. The system **substantially improved** inventory control with considerable financial benefit.
5. **Reduced** operating costs significantly by **maximising** the use of human resources.
6. **In spite of declining market** and gap in the equipment range, **maintained** turnover at over AU\$12 million.

Skills and personal attributes overlap. A skill is a developed capacity, flair or aptitude which is usually expressed as a combination of knowhow and knowledge.

For convenience, skills are often grouped under broad headings, eg. organising skills, communication skills. You may find the following table a useful way of identifying, classifying and naming many of your transferable skills.

The following is a list of skills which may help you with your own skills identification. Remember, employers will want you to demonstrate these skills through examples of achievements and outcomes.

SKILLS	IDENTIFICATION
Initiative	<p>Do you take decisions easily and then follow through with them? Do you get things done without waiting to be asked or directed or given permission?</p> <p>Employers sometimes use the word “self-starter” or “self-motivated” to describe these qualities. Another word is “enterprising”. It means they expect you to be resourceful and use your own energy and discipline to achieve things or take the lead in a situation.</p>
Self Confidence	<p>Self Confidence is a changeable quality. You can have it, lose it, get it back, have it in some circumstances and not others. Some people seem full of self confidence whenever you see them, but you can be sure there are times when they’re not. Even the appearance of self confidence can be just that - an illusion that hides fear or uncertainty. Ironically, appearing self confident can actually help you feel that way.</p> <p>You are right to be confident about things you do well and hesitant or unsure about lack of experience or skill. Confidence grows with both of these.</p> <p>It’s important to be positive and confident with prospective employers about your skills and abilities as well as show a belief in your potential to succeed in untested situations.</p> <p>Try to put your good points into words using these kinds of expressions which show confidence without conceit or arrogance.</p> <p><i>I can ...</i>  <i>I find it easy to ...</i>  <i>I have a flair for ...</i>  <i>One of my aptitudes is ...</i>  <i>I've got good skills now in ...</i>  <i>People have told me I'm ...</i>  <i>I've done well in ...</i>  <i>I found (x) hard at first but now ...</i>  <i>I need more experience in (y) but I do know about ...</i>  <i>My experience in (z) has taught me to ...</i></p>

<b>Persistence</b>	<p>Can you hang in there when the going gets tough? If you're an ideas person, can you follow through and put them into practice or do you leave the hard work to others?</p> <p>Persistence requires self discipline and a strong desire to reach a goal. Its what is behind the hard work part of any task or goal, the long haul between the inspiration and the champagne bottle that launches the ship.</p> <p>Clearly, you'll have shown persistence by completing your tertiary studies successfully. But there will be other examples from your life as well. If you have given up at times, have you found an alternative that suited you better, or have you returned eventually to your earliest path? You don't have to be so blindly persistent that you're inflexible (a negative quality) but you should be able to show the capacity to reach a difficult goal, large or small.</p> <p>Examples might be learning a musical instrument or foreign language, maintaining a fitness program, overcoming a disability or weakness. We all know what's difficult for each of us - its how we tackle something hard that shows our persistence and determination.</p>
<b>Special Talents and Skills</b>	<p>Do you have a special talent or aptitude you might use in some way in your work?</p> <p>By special talent we mean a strong natural ability which you have developed or could develop into a strong skill or skills through training or experience. Examples include musical skills, a flair for selling or persuading, superior skill in a particular sport or broader physical skills, an outstanding gift for logical deductive thinking, a well developed intuitive judgement, skill in capturing and presenting ideas in visual form, capacity to concentrate simultaneously on both the details and the wider context of a situation (sometimes called the "helicopter" view).</p> <p>Many more illustrations can be drawn. The point is that if you believe you have a special talent that has been or should be developed, you should include it in your thinking about your career and life choices. You may decide to try and use it in your first job or set time aside for further training. Its important not to ignore your potential in any direction, however trivial or "irrelevant" it may seem at present. It could well be central to your long-term satisfaction and sense of identity in life.</p>

<b>Interpersonal Skills</b>	<p>How do you manage your contacts with other people?</p> <p>Interpersonal skills are the ones you use most in dealing with others and they can take many forms in the work environment. They may involve making contact with new people, motivating others, negotiating, reasoning, supervising, teaching, explaining, listening, directing, accepting direction, advising, counselling, sharing and being open, competing, anticipating, operating under stress, handling and resolving conflict, making unpopular decisions, and just getting on with all sorts of people.</p> <p>Communication skills are closely allied to interpersonal skills.</p>
<b>Communication Skills</b>	<p>Good communication is the key to being successful and satisfied in many situations - work, personal, social. At work, communication skills are most commonly shown in your ability to use and understand language, whether spoken or on paper. Other elements are equally important though, drawing on your personal attributes and experience with people. These include tact, sense of humour, sensitivity to others, thoughtfulness and enthusiasm. Interpersonal and communication skills are often closely connected.</p> <p>You need a good command of language, of how to get your ideas, opinions and feelings across clearly, combined with these other qualities. Listening carefully is a fundamental communication skill, as is the ability and confidence to ask questions when you need to understand something or get information from someone. Competence in a language other than English counts as a communication skill.</p>
<b>Leadership</b>	<p>This is another tough quality to define. Leading people is not about telling them what to do. It means making people want to or be willing to do something. Any job which involves directing a team, managing a project, supervising people or teaching a skill is essentially about leadership.</p> <p>Your first job may not involve these roles but employers will be looking for evidence of potential. Respect for others, sensitivity with honest reactions, sharing information and ideas, showing genuine concern, being willing to take risks and initiative, having a sense of vision as well as proportion, communicating clearly about objectives - these are all components of good leadership. Sometimes it involves making personal sacrifices or showing you're willing to make them if necessary.</p>

<b>Organising and Planning Skills</b>	<p>The ability to organise your work and your life, to work out your priorities sensibly and plan realistically, to manage your time and resources, are very important in a career. The ability to assign priorities and attend to the most important ones first, spend less time and energy on non-essentials and delegate to others are highly regarded in almost any job.</p> <p>We all know when we've done well in this area, and equally when we've let too many deadlines accumulate with no time to meet them all.</p> <p>Do you organise things well most of the time so that your life proceeds smoothly or do you get by on luck and sympathy? Can you plan and set priorities so that the most important things do get done? Which parts of your life do you find easiest to manage and which are much harder? Can you think of ways to improve the situation?</p>
<b>Flexibility</b>	<p>This is a partner to imagination and creativity and the other side of persistence. It concerns openness to new ideas and changing circumstances, a willingness to adapt and make the best of opportunities presented by change rather than automatically resisting it. It can also mean being prepared to consider carefully different ways of achieving the same goal before choosing one.</p> <p>Your personal circumstances and commitments can mean more or less flexibility is possible regarding your career at different times in your life.</p>

### Examples of Action Verbs that describe your Functional Skills

Analysed	Implemented	Created
Coordinated	Improved	Expanded
Examined	Increased	Maintained
Expanded	Led	Planned
Generated	Managed	Problem Solved
Identified	Administered	Upgraded

## 5.4 THE RESUME

The following example is a **SUGGESTED** format for a Resume:

<b>NAME:</b>	<i>Your full name, include Mr/Mrs/Ms if desired</i>
<b>ADDRESS:</b>	<i>Your postal address</i>
<b>TELEPHONE NUMBER:</b>	<i>Both home and business</i>
<b>MARITAL STATUS:</b>	<i>Optional</i>
<b>DATE OF BIRTH:</b>	<i>Optional</i>
<b>RESIDENCY STATUS:</b>	<i>Important to show your permanent residency or Australian Citizenship</i>
<b>LANGUAGES:</b>	<i>English, other, other</i>
<b>DRIVERS LICENCE:</b>	<i>Hold a current (nominate State/Territory) Drivers Licence</i>

*In the same category you can also include comments on:*

- your physical fitness and health
- interests and/or leisure activities

*These are optional but useful if you feel they may assist your cause*

**PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS:** *eg. Member of the Institute of Engineers Australia or eligible for Membership*

### **EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND:**

*Begin with the most recent course undertaken. Include:*

- Date
- Name of the institution
- Degree or Diploma Title (*include majors and minors of the degrees only if relevant to the position being applied for*)

**COMPUTER SKILLS:** *Nominate those skills in which you are proficient. Note: for computer professionals a technical summary describing your knowledge of software, hardware, special packages, etc. is essential.*

**OTHER COURSES:** *ie. those additional to formal education and relevant to your profession, eg sales training, presentations*

**ADDITIONAL SKILLS:** *eg. First Aid, Occupational Health & Safety, etc.*

**EMPLOYMENT HISTORY:**

*Your employment history should list the companies where you have worked and the career achievements you made while you were working there.*

*This section of your resume can be organised as follows:*

*Begin with the most recent employment, include temporary work whilst seeking employment even if unrelated to your profession.*

**DATE:** *eg. January 1998 to December 1999*

**NAME OF COMPANY:** *Brief description of the company*

**POSITION:**

**RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- *List in point form your responsibilities and the skills used (4-5 key points relevant to the job to which you are applying).*
- *Indicate what technology you have used or examined.*
- *Mention your relationship with staff or peers.*

**ACHIEVEMENTS:** *How your skills were used to reach a professional result*

**REFEREES:** *The best Referee is your previous Supervisor*

Name

Position Title

Company

Address

Telephone Number

Fax Number

*make sure that international and interstate telephone numbers have all prefixes included - (0011) (7) (852) 632 9154 Phone between AEST 1100 - 1900 hrs*

## Helpful Hints

- Prepare a front cover if desired - do not shade it as this inhibits facsimile transmission.
- There is no absolute rule on the number of pages of your Resume. However, employers prefer Resumes of 3-4 pages - **its the quality of information not quantity which is important.**
- Note: You can either list the names and telephone numbers of referees, or simply say "available on request". However, make sure that you notify your referees. A well informed referee can make all the difference by answering general questions in a specific manner. Only choose referees who are able to speak about your professional expertise.
- You may choose to enclose references with your application or wait to present them at interview. Any you enclose must be pertinent and relevant. Usually employers don't study references in great detail until after the interview.
- Australian employers may contact overseas Referees so ensure that your Referees are notified and that translators are available if required.

## 5.5 RESUME REVISION

Swap your Resume with a friend or relative and rate it according to the following list.

	Indicate Yes or No
Is the spelling correct?	
Is the grammar correct?	
Is the punctuation correct?	
Is the language clear and concise?	
Are skills and achievements clearly outlined?	
Does it give a clear picture of what he/she did?	
Will an Australian employer understand it?	
Have all the sections in the "suggested format" been included?	
Is it chronological?	
Is the layout attractive?	

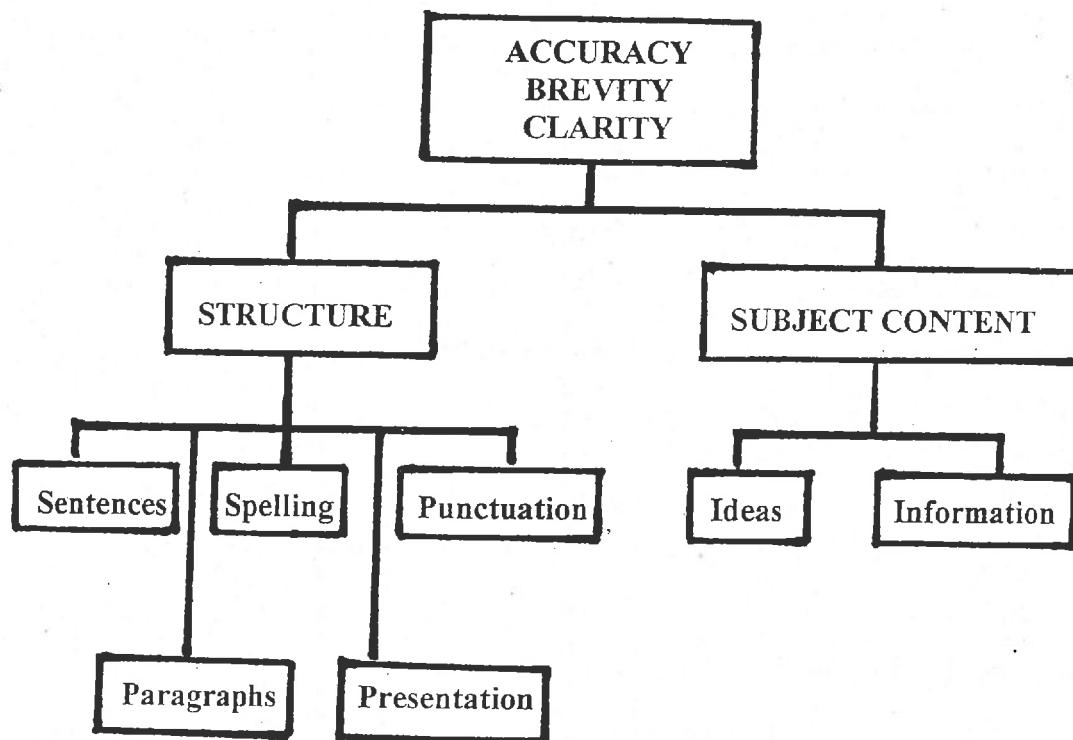
# CHAPTER SIX

## 6.1 LETTERS OF APPLICATION

For the professional, the letter of application is a demonstration of the calibre of the candidate, therefore, it must be a carefully crafted document. The salient feature of a cover letter is that it matches the needs stated in the advertisement (see 2.1) and demonstrates the professionalism of the candidate who addresses those needs.

The letter should not exceed one A4 page and should be kept short, simple and to the point. Remember the mnemonic **KISS** (*Keep It Short and Simple*). Look at the chart below which illustrates the structure of a good business letter.

### STRUCTURE OF GOOD BUSINESS LETTER



### 6.1.1 Exercise 7 - Letter Writing Skills Checklist

Write an application letter for an advertisement you have selected. When you have completed the letter apply a rating of **clarity** and **brevity** and **analyse** it according to the Letter Writing Skills Checklist.

Letter Writing Skill	My letter
Avoids unnecessary repetition	
Includes only relevant information	
Comes to the point immediately	
No unnecessary background information	
Is specific and definite	
Includes exact facts and figures (avoids imprecise terms such as "some", "perhaps", "maybe")	
Is one page in length	
Mentions that the Resume is attached	

### 6.1.2 The First Step: Knowing Your Market (Research)

- An advertisement is designed to attract the ideal candidate.
- While the ideal may be the objective, the reality is that the candidate closest to the ideal will be successful.
- The most effective way of demonstrating your closeness to the ideal is through research.
- Standard letters miss the target.
- Value your worth as a professional. Respect yourself and your future employer by demonstrating your understanding of their needs.
- Research the company.
- Obtain an annual report if its available.
- Speak to the appropriate person in the company.
- Gather as much information as possible on all aspects of the position.
- Arrange a plant visit.
- Put yourself in the position of the employer (who would you choose and why)

### 6.1.3 The Second Step: Matching Skills with the Position Requirements

- Make your letter reflect your knowledge of the position requirements within the company context.
- Past performance indicates future behaviour.
- Achievements reflect problem-solving skills.
- Achievements reflect a results-oriented professional.
- Your letter should briefly contain relevant examples of problem solving.

The following two letters are examples of responses to an advertisement for Current Electronics. The letters are quite different, yet both address the **key criteria** stated in the advertisement. Take a careful look at both letters and reflect which one might best suit your style.

## CUSTOMER SERVICE MANAGER

### *Current Electronics Pty. Ltd.*

The Company has become a leader in marketing industrial electronics and computer products by providing excellent customer service and top quality products.

Exciting opportunity exists for experienced Service Manager to head National Customer Service Division.

This key position reports to the Managing Director and involves administration of the team of engineers; restructuring, modernising and training to improve customer service and develop new markets.

The successful applicant will have:

- *Degree in Electronic Engineering*
- *Five years plus experience in Electronics*
- *Excellent communication and presentation skills*
- *Experience in introducing new systems to improve productivity*
- *Understanding of customer needs*
- *Staff training experience*
- *Energy, drive and initiative.*

Human Resources Manager  
G.P.O. Box 147  
MELBOURNE VIC 3001

## Example - Application Letter One

Ms Galina Kochnocova  
Unit 2, 35 Eagleton Road  
CAULFIELD VIC 3162  
Telephone: (03) 9362 1849 (home)

15 October 1998

Ms Frances McNamara  
Human Resources Manager  
124 Smith Street  
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Dear Ms McNamara

Following our telephone conversation, 13 October 1998, I am applying for the position of Service Manager, advertised in "The Age", 10 October 1998.

I have 8 years experience as an Electronics and Communication Engineer in the Customer Service Industry.

As Senior Engineer, Service Division, I was instrumental in the changeover of a manual to a computerised system of the Service Division.

I selected the software and ensured that staff were formally trained in the use of the programs and in customer related courses.

Following a faults analysis survey I implemented changes in the work environment which resulted in an increase in sales turnover of 40% over a 2 year period.

As a result, staff absenteeism declined and morale generally improved.

My excellent communication and organisation skills are demonstrated in my successful training programs, modernisation of division, increased customer satisfaction and product turnover.

I am confident that my experience suits the position and that I can make a strong contribution to the company.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Galina Kochnocova

## Example - Application Letter Two

Ashok Gupta (Mr)  
35 Highett Grove  
ARMADALE VIC  
Telephone: (03) 9813 1267 (After Hours)

15 October 1998

Ms Frances McNamara  
Human Resources Manager  
124 Smith Street  
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Dear Ms McNamara

RE: SERVICE MANAGER, ELECTRONICS INDUSTRY  
"The Age" 10 October 1998

Thank you for the time you spent on Wednesday to discuss the position. It certainly sounds a very exciting opportunity. Please accept my application for which I have enclosed my resume.

Following our conversation concerning your company's aims and the specification in the advertisement I would like to highlight the following points:

- I hold a Bachelor of Science Degree, recognised in Australia and I am a Corporate Member of the Australian Institute of Engineers.
- 10 years experience in electronics. The last 4 years in satellite communication.
- Demonstrated communication skills by examples shown on page 2 of my resume.
- Successfully led a service team resulting in major sales increases.
- Experienced innovator and trainer, demonstrated by successful project achievement.

Further to these qualifications I can demonstrate my enthusiasm, energy and commitment as I have successfully undertaken a similar role in my previous position.

I look forward to hearing from you and discussing my background further.

Yours sincerely

Ashok Gupta

## 6.2 CANVASSING LETTERS AND OTHER BUSINESS LETTERS

The canvassing letter is designed to introduce yourself to a prospective employer who has not formally advertised. While you do not have an advertisement with which to develop your letter, you must **research** the company and find out as much as possible so that you can include this in your letter and make yourself relevant to the organisation.

The canvassing letter has several functions. It will:

- **Introduce you**
- **Describe the type of position you want and have been trained for**
- **Say why you have chosen that particular firm as a source of assistance**
- **Tell what you have to offer**

Keep these points in mind when writing a canvassing letter:

- Research the company thoroughly before writing the letter. Seek the company's assistance, do not ask for a job at this point.
- Write to the person directly responsible for the area you are interesting in eg. Manager (Maintenance Department, Finance Department, etc.)
- Do not address it to the Personnel or Human Resources Manager - they are usually only concerned with vacancies that have become vacant through resignation or termination, and may not take much notice of a canvassing letter.
- Include your Resume with your letter and mark the envelope PRIVATE or CONFIDENTIAL.
- Address your letter with the person's name and title - if you don't know ring the receptionist and ask).
- Follow-up your letter with a phone call to make sure that they received it. Explain that you are seeking assistance from a fellow professional and you would like the chance to meet to discuss your situation further.

## Example - Canvassing Letter One

Ron Parkes  
51 Fern Road  
BURWOOD VIC 3125  
Tel (03) 9631 9215

5 October 1998

Mr D H Jones  
Managing Director  
J & J Printing Machines Pty Ltd  
123 Smith Street  
ARDMORE PARK VIC 3168

Dear Mr Jones

As a recent arrival to Melbourne, I am writing to you to seek your assistance. My research into industry in Victoria indicates that your company is prominent in the production and marketing of printing machinery and allied services.

My own experience is precisely in this industry where for the last 10 years I have been closely involved in the development of electronic colour control systems from the first fairly crude system to the third generation currently being introduced. I understand from my research that you are agents in Australia for this system and it is for this reason that I would like to meet you to discuss the local industry with you.

I would appreciate the opportunity to undertake work experience with your company as my professional skills would allow me to make a contribution in return for the local experience.

I would like to contact you by phone within the next few days to establish your interest in the proposal.

Yours sincerely

Ron Parkes

## Example - Canvassing Letter Two

Fred Smith  
794 Middleborough Road  
BOX HILL VIC 3128  
(03) 9890 7594 (Private)  
(03) 9666 6276 (Business)

5 October 1998

Mr Jack Brown  
Pighe Bank Ltd  
650 Collins Street  
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Dear Mr Brown

I believe that my extensive experience in the banking industry would successfully make a sound contribution to your bank. I have 17 years managerial experience, 11 of which have been at the Heep Bank, both in Australia and overseas.

Specifically, my achievements include:

- In-depth knowledge and experience in international trade.
- Successfully managing the trade finance operation for the past 13 years to the satisfaction of the bank and its customers.
- Receiving many awards from the Heep Bank in recognition of my contribution and accomplishments.
- Independently negotiating with overseas correspondent banks and attracting more income for the branch.
- Meeting all job objectives in a timely and professional manner.
- Providing outstanding retail customer service amongst many foreign banks.
- The ability to reduce operating costs significantly by maximising the use of human resources.

I would like to meet with you to discuss how my knowledge and experience can benefit the Pighe Bank. I will telephone you in the next few days to arrange a suitable time.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to meeting you soon.

Yours sincerely

Fred Smith

## 6.3 FOLLOW-UP LETTERS

Very few people make the effort to write a thank you letter after an interview. It is so unusual, that is usually makes a strong impact. It could make the difference between getting the job or not. A follow-up letter should be short, sincere and friendly. It should be posted as soon as possible after the interview.

### 6.3.1 Follow-up Letters: Examples

(correct address, date, etc.)

Dear Ms Morrow

I would like to thank you and your colleagues for interviewing me for the position of Chemical Engineer.

The discussion was most interesting and has clarified details of what the position entails.

I am certain that my skills and experience could be of value to your company.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

(correct address, date, etc.)

Dear Mrs Sarchet

Thank you for taking the time to explain the laboratory technician position. I found the discussion very worthwhile. The working conditions are impressive. It would be a pleasure to work with such a dedicated and friendly team.

Now that I have learned at first hand exactly what the job entails, I am certain that with my qualifications and experience, I could be of value to your company.

I am looking forward to hearing from you and hope that you will consider my application favourably.

Yours sincerely

## 6.4 PUBLIC SERVICE LETTERS

All public service applications require responses to specific criteria. Before applying you **must** obtain the selection documentation which contains the selection criteria which have both **essential** and **desirable** criteria. Your application **will not be considered** unless all the essential criteria are addressed and as much of the desirable as possible. **All applications must reach the department before close of business 5pm on the closing date.** The following is a good example of a cover letter and statements of claims relating to the selection criteria.

### 6.4.1 Public Service Application Example

Pat McRitchie (Mr)  
55 Goulbourn Street  
MIDDLE PARK VIC 3168  
Tel: (03) 9658 9401

27 January 1998

Ms Betty Nicolaou  
Staff Selection Officer  
Department of Employment, Education & Training  
24<sup>th</sup> Floor  
222 Exhibition Street  
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Dear Ms Nicolaou

#### **RE: ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES OFFICER AG5690**

I wish to be considered for the above position advertised in The Age, Saturday 23 January 1998.

In support of my application I submit the following information to demonstrate my suitability to the position advertised and my ability to perform the duties required of this position: -

1. Statement of Claims Addressing the Selection Criteria.
2. Resume.
3. Reference Letters.

I look forward to providing additional information and elaborating on this application in an interview.

Yours sincerely

Pat McRitchie

Response to the Selection Criteria - note each criterion is clearly stated before the response.

### STATEMENT OF CLAIMS ADDRESSING THE SELECTION CRITERIA

*1. Understanding of the barriers facing disabled people seeking employment in Australian Public Service.*

In the roles of Disabled Persons Officer and Employment Counsellor with DEETYA, the Disabilities Contact Officer and Executive Secretary to the Committee on Facilities for Persons with Disabilities with La Trobe University, I have four years experience with, and involvement in the complex issues which people with disabilities face in their pursuit of employment and education. Some of these issues include the physical, social, psychological and institutional barriers which can impede the ability of people with disabilities to attain short term goals, such as sitting academic examinations or sitting for a public service entrance exam, as well as prevent the attainment of longer term goals such as obtaining educational qualifications or employment with career opportunities.

The duties of the Disability Contact Officer role involved liaison with Faculties and Examinations Departments of the University and the Campus Medical Officer to arrange alternative academic participation and assessment methods, including modified testing arrangements, for students with disabilities. Some of these alternative assessment methods included: arranging for lectures to be audio taped for hearing impaired students; arranging for submission of audio taped assignments for students with fine motor impairments; arranging enclosed study booths in the University Library to allow students with visual impairments and fine motor impairments to type assignments; and arranging for students with disabilities to sit academic examinations where extra time is allowed.

*2. Knowledge of Australian Public Service recruitment practices and procedures.*

My knowledge of APS recruitment practices and procedures stems from personal experiences when undertaking APS selection tests, as well as the referral of CES jobseekers to both permanent and temporary APS advertised vacancies and selection tests. I have also familiarised myself with the general information contained in the Job Description relating to publications concerning procedures pertinent to recruitment of people with disabilities. The procedures for modified testing for people with disabilities are not dissimilar to those practiced at La Trobe University.

3. Ability to liaise and communicate effectively with applicants, community organisations and staff of other departments and agencies, and awareness of Industrial Democracy (ID) principles and practice and the ability to apply and promote these in the workplace.

As a Disabled Persons Officer and Employment Counsellor with DEETYA, I liaised with clients, employers, community organisations and service providers in order to achieve effective and appropriate outcomes for a wide variety of client groups including jobseekers with disabilities. As the Disability Contact Officer for La Trobe University, I liaised with students, University departments, community organisations and service providers in order to negotiate both short term and long term solutions to the physical, social and institutional barriers which impeded or prevented students with disabilities gaining full access to educational opportunities. In my role as Executive Secretary to the Committee on Facilities for Persons with Disabilities, and in consultation with the University's EEO Unit, I developed University policy and practice papers on just such issues.

My awareness of ID principles and practices stems from the promotion and application of ID currently in the DEETYA workplace. I believe I have the commitment to ID principles and the ability to promote and apply these principles in the workplace.

4. Ability to set priorities and to manage a range of tasks which must be undertaken concurrently.

As an Employment Counsellor my duties included providing a specialist CES service to a wide variety of client groups in three quite difference CES offices. My duties also included one-to-one and group training to CES staff, as well as negotiating client based programmes with CED and Area Management, which were then formalised as quarterly timetables, plans, programmes and reports. These duties were undertaken concurrently and it was necessary to establish priorities which enabled these tasks to be fulfilled, and yet enabled flexibility in the event of revised plans and programmes.

The position I held at La Trobe University contained three quite separate roles: Student Welfare Officer, Disabilities Contact Officer and Executive Secretary to the Committee on Facilities for Persons With Disabilities. These roles were not only held concurrently, but also in three Campus locations. As such it was essential to have the ability to establish plans of action and set priorities in performing all three roles successfully.

*5. Sound oral and written communication skills.*

My educational qualifications and experience in the workforce have required sound communication skills both orally and in written form. More specifically, my experience as an EC and the position I held at La Trobe University required the ability to adapt appropriately to a wide variety of situations where negotiation, conciliation, and liaison were required, and where the ability to present information in a succinct and clear manner was essential.

*6. Demonstrated knowledge and practice of EEO principles.*

In my role as Executive Secretary to the Committee on Facilities for Persons With Disabilities at La Trobe University, I worked in close consultation with the University's EEO Unit, producing University policy and practice papers on issues concerning students with disabilities. This experience has provided me with a sound knowledge of both EEO legislation and its practical applications.

# CHAPTER SEVEN

## 7.1 WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF AN INTERVIEW?

An interview enables an employer to gain knowledge of a candidate's suitability including appropriate professional skills, personal attributes, image, communication and social skills by a **process of conversation**.

The interview is a two-way process. Employers like you to show a keen interest in the job. They like you to ask intelligent questions. They like to see you perform confidently. Fear, nerves and anxiety are likely to transfer to the interviewing panel who will probably want to conclude the interview as quickly as possible. However, the reverse is also true. If you project confidently in a natural and relaxed manner, the interviewers will also feel confident and relaxed.

**Remember many interviewers are just as nervous as you are!**

The question in the interviewer's mind is not "Are you able to do the job?" but "**How well can you do the job?**". It is your responsibility to sell your achievements to willing and attentive buyers.

## 7.2 COMPETITION

You are competing against other people. Your aim is to leave the interviewer with the best impression. If you are competing with someone who has more experience than you in the direct industry you may have stiff competition. You cannot alter facts about your past, the positions you have occupied and the qualifications you hold. What you can affect however, is the impression you leave with regard to your **potential - what you can offer the company in the short and long term**. In some cases, **willingness to learn, attitude, enthusiasm and ideas** are received more favourably than experience.

Always reassure yourself that you are the best person for the job.

## 7.3 RESEARCH AND PREPARATION

The best way to prepare for an interview is to **research**. Some companies will send you information about themselves and/or a job description when you enquire about the job. A little time taken reading and thinking about the material prepares you to respond at the interview in relevant ways that will show you to be the best candidate.

Some jobs will be advertised by Personnel Agencies and Management Consultants. The reasons companies commission consultants are varied. Often they wish to employ the expertise of professional recruiters. Sometimes they need to keep the job vacancy confidential. If this is the case, it may be difficult to get information about the company, and you may need to wait for the interview, or even a second interview, before you get the full picture. This will not put you at any disadvantage, as all the other applicants will be in the same position.

Many interview questions are predictable and should be researched prior to the interview.

### Examples

#### • The Company

- \* How old is it?
- \* Who owns it?
- \* How successful is it?
- \* What does it produce?
- \* Who are its main clients?
- \* What industry does it operate in?
- \* Who are its competitors?

If you are applying for a position within the public sector, you can frame other appropriate questions. You will also have specific questions about the company in relation to the job you are applying for. For example, a salesperson is going to need more specific information about the products and potential customers than an accountant.

#### • The Position

- \* Is there a position description?
- \* What are the actual duties performed on a day to day basis?
- \* What are the qualities they seek in the incumbent?
- \* Where does the position fit in the organisation chart?
- \* Is it a newly created position?

- **Youself**

Research yourself as if you were the interviewer.

- \* Do you have the skills they require?
- \* Have you the qualities/personality they seek?
- \* What areas of your skills and experience need to be elaborated?

Read your Resume as if you know nothing about yourself.

- \* What questions does it leave unanswered?
- \* What does it leave out?
- \* What questions would you ask yourself?

Prepare replies to predictable questions such as:

- \* Tell me about yourself.
- \* What have you done that shows initiative?
- \* What is your major weakness?
- \* What does teamwork mean to you?
- \* Can you tell me why I should employ you rather than any of the other applicants?
- \* What are the expectations regarding this position?
- \* What are your ambitions for the future?
- \* What are your strengths?
- \* Where do you see yourself in 5 years time?

Prepare questions that you can ask during the interview. These should demonstrate your professionalism and show that you are enthusiastic and have obviously done your homework.

Preparing and researching before an interview makes your performance stronger and more confident. You are in control during the interview and in some cases can direct the interview to your advantage.

A browse through your notes before your interview will reduce the risk of forgetting something due to nerves.

- **Presentation**

Spend some thought on deciding what you will wear. The important thing about your physical appearance is the first impression. First impression can make or break an interview and are therefore extremely important.

Remember, your purpose is to make a lasting impression and to stand out above the other candidates. You cannot take too much care with presentation.

Men should wear a suit and tie, women should wear a skirt, dress, jacket. Do not wear too much jewellery. Hair must be clean and tidy. Make sure that appropriate deodorants are used to combat body odours in particular, bad breath, underarm odour.

Wear clothes that you feel comfortable in. If you feel uncomfortable, you will look uncomfortable.

Never wear sports shoes or casual footwear.

- **Impressions**

Making a good impression is very important.

***REMEMBER - YOU NEVER  
HAVE A SECOND CHANCE  
TO MAKE A FIRST  
IMPRESSION***

**Your interview commences as soon as you walk through the door.**

- Greet the receptionist pleasantly and courteously.
- Make a good first impression by greeting the interviewer confidently and extending a firm handshake.
- Wait to be asked to be seated and sit in the middle of the chair with a straight and relaxed posture. This shows that you are attentive and alert.
- Maintain a relaxed body posture. Avoid leaning back in the chair or crossing your arms as this creates an impression of sloppiness and defensiveness.
- Maintain eye contact and don't lower your head while you are talking. This may make the difference between appearing confident or insecure.
- Be confident - keep reminding yourself that you are the best person for the job.
- Do not be overbearing, aggressive or conceited.
- Be a good listener as well as a good speaker.
- Don't smoke even if the interviewer offers you a cigarette.
- Non-verbal performance is just as, if not more, important than verbal communication.

**Show enthusiasm, determination and smile!**

- Performance

Performance means - how well you perform at the interview.

- \* Do you communicate effectively?
- \* Do you ask intelligent questions?
- \* Do you project confidently?
- \* Do you show empathy and a liking for the interviewers?
- \* Have you tuned-in to the interviewer's wavelength?
- \* Do you listen effectively?

## The Interview Format

Most interviews have a standard pattern:

### Stage One: Introduction - "Ice-breaker" - small talk

This initial stage of the interview is meant to make you feel a little more relaxed and settled. Typical questions are:

- \* "How do you find Australia?" → a positive & short answer.
- \* "Is your family settling in well?" → give reason
- \* "Did you find the office easily?" → visit prior to interview

Respond comfortable, confidently and sociably.

### Stage Two: This may be followed by a series of questions designed to elicit your interest in the position, for example:

- \* "What attracted you to this position?"
- \* "What do you know about this company?"
- \* "Why did you apply for this position?"
- \* "What are your expectations regarding this position?"

The following questions are designed to demonstrate the relevance of your qualifications and experience to the position:

- \* "Why should we choose you for this position over the other candidates?"
- \* "Tell me about your background." → relevant to the position advertised
- \* "What skills do you bring to the position?"
- \* "Have you had any local experience?"
- \* "What progress have you made in your career to date?"
- \* "What type of person would you choose for this position?"

**Stage Three:** This is usually followed by the “what if....” or hypothetical questions. These questions gauge how you would apply your skills, knowledge and experience in a given situation. For example:

- \* “If a situation occurred such as .... How would you handle it?”
- \* “What would you do if .... ?”

Short and long term goals:

- \* “what are your career aspirations?”
- \* “Where do you see yourself in three years time?”
- \* “What are your ambitions for the future?”

Your strengths and weaknesses:

- \* “What do you consider to be your best points/strengths?”
- \* “What are your weaknesses?”
- \* “How do you deal with stress/conflict?”

NB: ‘Weaknesses’ do **not** refer to any personal problem, the interviewer is trying to find out what you would like to do better as a professional.

**Stage Four:** The last stage is usually open for your questions:

- \* “Do you have any questions you would like to ask?”

The closing lines usually end with:

- \* “Well, thank you very much, that’s about all.”
- \* “We’ll be in contact with you early next week.”

## 7.4 WINNING TIPS

1. The ‘icebreaker’ is critically important. The more at ease you and the interviewers are, the better the interview will be for you. Use your social skills to put the interviewer(s) at ease and help yourself relax.
2. Remember every question you are asked is your opportunity to **discuss** the position and demonstrate your understanding of their needs and how you can use your skills to meet them. Do not give minimal answers which do not show the full extent of your skills.

3. Ask questions about topics which allow you to demonstrate your expertise, experience and skills and how these can make a significant contribution to the company. Ask open-ended questions, e.g. "can you give me information about...."
4. Your personal presentation reflects your personality and professionalism ensure that you are dressed and groomed appropriately.
5. Make your body language reflect what you are saying. Remember 80% of communication is visual.
6. Listening is just as important as talking.
  - Use body posture and eye contact to show interest.
  - Use encouraging words and head nods.
  - Don't interrupt.
  - Restate what is said to show real listening and understanding.
  - Check to clarify what was said.
  - Sum up at appropriate points what is said.

## 7.5 SAMPLE QUESTIONS

The following are questions which are frequently asked at interviews. Prepare yourself by using these questions as a guide. Remember that employers want to find out as much as possible about you in a limited period of time. Not only will they want to know your strengths and skills but they will inevitably want to know what you think your weaknesses/limitations are. Be prepared and do not be afraid to answer these confidently. But remember, this is not the time to discuss weaknesses which would jeopardise your chances of winning the job. Be honest but also be practical.

### 7.5.1 Sample Questions for an Interview and some possible responses

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

Keep it brief about two to three minutes. Begin with your academic studies, then outline your employment history focusing on **relevant** experience. Something about what you are doing currently.

#### 2. *Why do you want to work for us?*

Indicate that from your study of the company, many of the activities and problems are similar to the ones you have dealt with in the past and therefore you can contribute. Explain what genuinely interests you about the company and what it is that appeals to you.

*To make up our own answers  
in dot form.*

*3. What do you know about our company?*

State what you have found out through your research, not in a show-off manner but merely letting your knowledge show gracefully through the informed way in which you handle the interview.

*4. What can you offer us?*

Be sure you know something about the job situation they have in mind before you try to answer this. Then you can relate some of your past experiences where you have succeeded in solving problems that appear similar to those of your prospective employer.

*5. What are your strengths?*

Mention three or four strengths relevant to the position. Give a relevant example from your past experience to prove these strengths.

*6. What are your weaknesses?*

Interviewers are NOT asking you if you are weak. They want to know if you understand yourself and what you would like to improve as a professional and what you are doing about it.

*7. What have you accomplished?*

Think about your achievements. Choose the ones that are relevant to the position you are applying for. The more relevant the better.

*8. Where do you see yourself in three/five years time?*

Everyone should have goals in their lives especially career wise. You should know where you are going realistically. Say that you would like to do your best in this position first of all then you will show progress. Talk about your ideal position. Avoid statements that are unrealistic or that might threaten some of the present incumbents.

*9. Don't you feel you might be over-qualified or too experienced for this position?*

If you are over qualified don't deny it, accept it. Say that you are well qualified but because you are a new arrival to the profession in Australia, you believe that you need to start at the beginning. However, in due course, you believe that they can use your extensive skills and experience to benefit the company.

#### **10. You lack local experience.**

Answer in a positive way, state that you understand their concern but ask them to clarify which area of local experience they are concerned with. They will have to nominate these areas which will make it easier for you to answer.

#### **11. What salary did you have in mind?**

State that you have done your research and that taking into consideration the position and your skills and experience you would be asking for a salary between \$x - \$y (give a range), then throw the question back at them asking if that was what they had in mind which will open up the negotiation.

#### **12. How would you describe yourself?**

Don't use single word adjectives, like hardworking, flexible, honest, they mean absolutely nothing unless substantiated by evidence through examples of achievements. For example: I believe I work well under pressure. In my previous position I was asked to takeover a project which was very difficult. I prioritised using time management and communication skills to build an effective team. This reduced pressure and necessary delay and the project was completed successfully on time and within budget.

#### **13. Did you encounter any problems in your previous positions?**

They ask this question to find out if you can solve problems so don't say "No, I didn't have any problems." Mention a problem that you came across that was similar to the problems they are dealing with and say what the problem was. How you coped with the problem. How did you solve it and what was the outcome. You can bring in any skills and experience you think would be relevant and useful to the company.

#### **14. Do you have any objections to undertaking psychological tests?**

No, none at all. This would mean that you are a serious candidate. Psychological tests are designed to find out your major personal strengths and if they match the position. They are used in conjunction with other tests and the interviews. It helps the employer to decide on the best candidate based on all the relevant information.

NB: If you are asked to undertake such tests make sure that you inform the test Supervisor that English is not your first language if this is the case.

### **7.6 SUMMARY**

Anticipating the questions you will be asked is a relatively simple matter. Examine the advertisement very carefully, note the selection criteria which will indicate to you the general thrust of the questions you will be asked. As a professional put yourself in the position of the interviewer and ask yourself "What would I want to know if I were employing this person and what would convince me they are the best candidate?"

## 7.7 QUICK REMINDERS FOR AN INTERVIEW

- Prepare for the interview and research the position and company.
- Give yourself ample time for the interview.
- Confirm your appointment ahead of time.
- Dress appropriately - good grooming and appearance is vital.
- Treat the receptionist or secretary courteously.
- Shake hands firmly.
- Remember interviewer/s name/s.
- Make eye contact.
- Wait until you are offered a chair before sitting down.
- Look interested and enthusiastic.
- Smile.
- Ask questions.
- Listen attentively.
- Give answers that are concise and relevant.
- Tell the truth.
- Be diplomatic with questions regarding politics, economics, religion.
- Be positive - complaining about former employers or situations shows lack of discretion and character.
- Prepare your referees for receiving a call.
- Complete forms neatly and completely.
- Do not push details about salary, holidays, retirement, superannuation, etc. at the first interview. However, be aware of your market value and let the employer lead discussions concerning salary.
- Prepare answers to typical questions.
- Prepare questions for the interview.
- Follow-up interview with a thank you letter.

# CHAPTER EIGHT

## 8.1 Summary

The information supplied in this manual has been successfully used by many professionally qualified immigrants from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, many of whom now occupy senior positions in Australia.

The key to success in gaining employment in Australia is to understand and accept the way selection for employment is conducted here. Australian recruitment processes may be very different to what you have previously experienced. Be prepared to accept these changes and work with them to ensure you have the advantage.

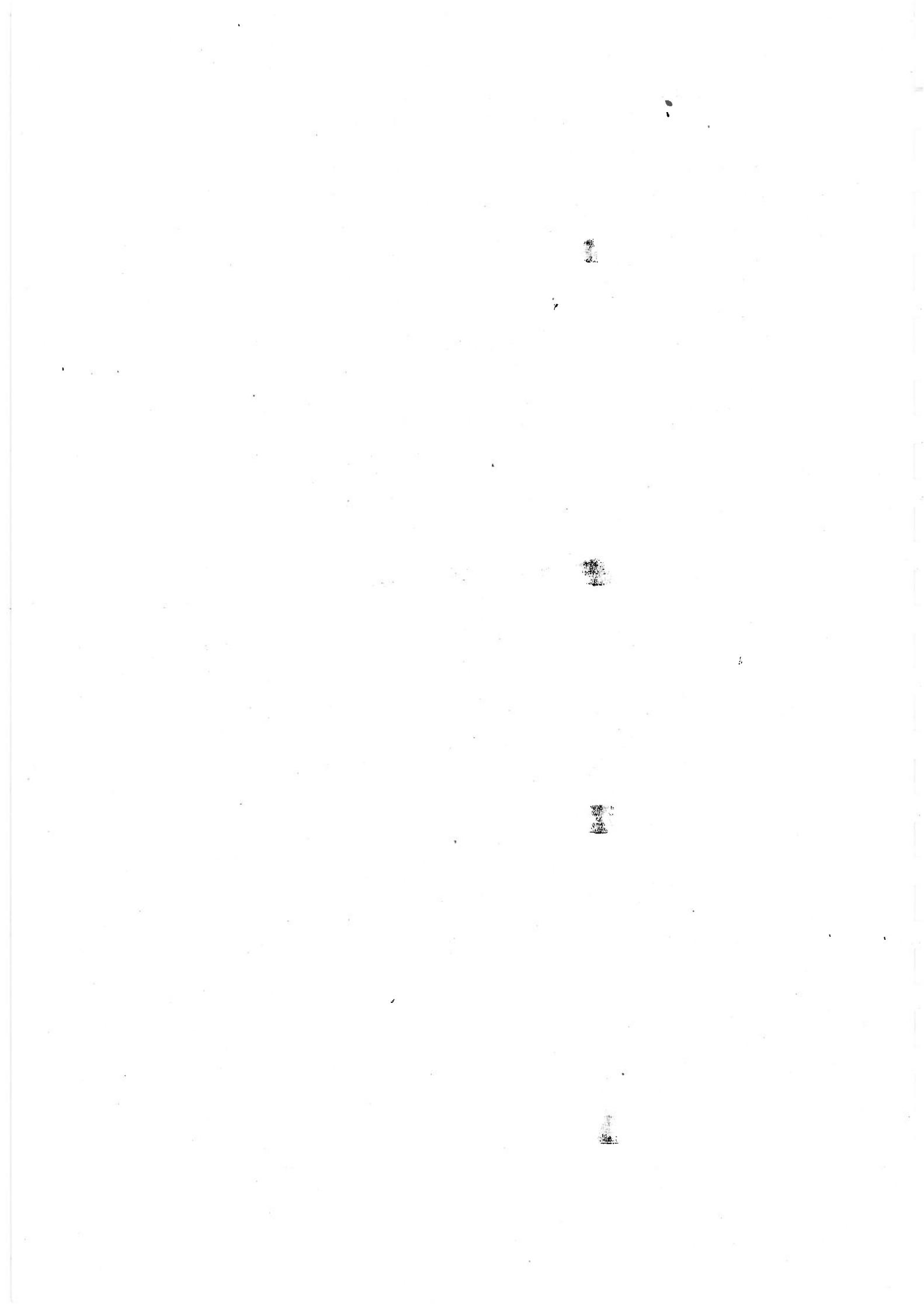
The recruitment process, like any other structured activity, requires understanding the rules of the “game”. It also requires motivation, tenacity and hard work. Remember, you are learning new skills in a new environment and the transition may sometimes be confusing. Do not give up! Continue applying your newly acquired knowledge.

The advice and information supplied in the manual is a guide to success in job search but naturally you will find instances where the process differs. We are suggesting that if you *absorb* and *practise* the information provided you will be able to use your intelligence, experience and education to adapt to the unexpected and still perform to the maximum.

Read the manual very thoroughly, think carefully about how you can put your skills to use in the new environment and prepare yourself to undertake the task. Adapt your resume to sell your skills in a competitive market, remember your achievements, don’t be falsely modest or arrogantly immodest. Remember that employers are *buying your professional skills* so you will have to be prepared to tell them what those skills are and how these have solved similar problems.

Establishing good rapport with your potential employer is important. Demonstrate your human side as well as the professional side. The all important “*small talk*” shows how well you can adapt to new situations. The way in which you answer the interview questions will demonstrate your ability to communicate, your maturity, your confidence in yourself, your standing as an experienced professional. All of which will demonstrate your ability to “fit in” to your new environment.

We wish you every success in your job search.



The following is a reminder of some of the characteristics of a professional:

- P** PROPER PLANNING PREVENTS POOR PERFORMANCE
- R** RESEARCH, RESEARCH, RESEARCH
- O** ORGANISE YOUR DATA
- F** FORESIGHT
- E** ENERGY, ENTHUSIASM, EXAMPLES, EXCITEMENT
- S** SIMPLICITY
- S** SINCERITY
- I** INTEREST, IMAGINE
- O** OPTIMISM
- N** NATURAL
- A** ACHIEVEMENTS
- L** LISTEN

