

2020

ULTIMATE GUIDE TO GETTING HIRED

A GUIDE BY



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WHO WE ARE

Prepory is a career coaching company based in South Florida. Over the years, we have seen many clients continuously make similar mistakes. This guide will support you through the job search process. Each of the most stressful parts of the job search process that typically hinder your ability to land a job are discussed here, including resume writing, cover letter writing, interviewing, following up, and social media/LinkedIn.

While each of these topics can be expanded on much further, the purpose of this guide is to be brief and to the point. If you are tired of the job search process and googling questions, schedule a free consultation with one of our career coaches to get some tips and learn more about our career coaching and how we can help you land your next dream job.

LASTLY, BEST OF LUCK!

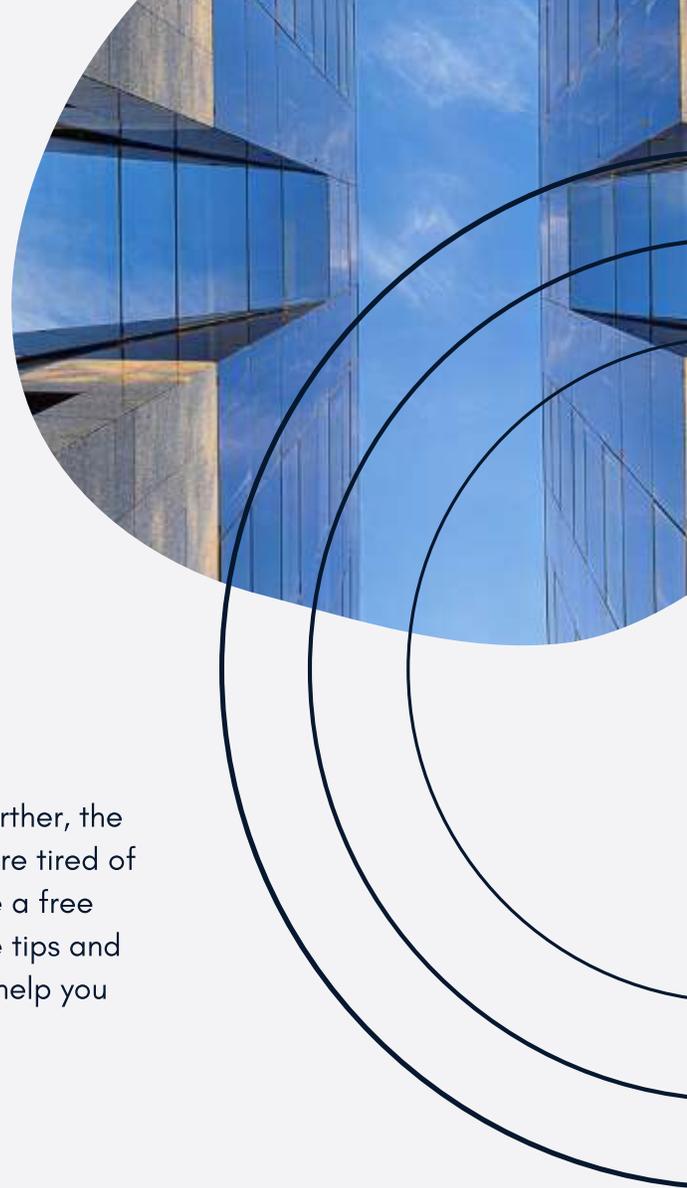
[Learn more about Prepory](#)

I. RESUME

Your resume is the single important part of your application. It acts as your first impression, vouches for your eligibility, and provides employers with something tangible to refer back to in the deliberation room. For this reason, your resume must be impeccable. It must reflect both the professional you are and the one you can become.

What Every Resume Needs

- Contact Information
 - Name, phone number, email
- Education
 - List your bachelor's, master's and/or doctoral degrees
- Work Experience
- Skills, Accomplishments, and Awards



Targeting

Before you write or edit your resume, identify a target career path. Narrow down a desired career, company, location, and salary you would accept. Be specific. If there is a specific job title you would like to have, that helps!

After you determine a target path, pinpoint 4-5 jobs that match the role you want. Look for overlapping keywords, certifications, or programs. For example, let's say you're interested in a position in Human Resources; you may notice that many human resources positions have the words "recruit", "interview", and "lead" in the job description. These job functions are obviously integral to the job itself. Therefore, is it vital that you have these job functions on your resume as well to communicate that you have experience in these areas.

Or, perhaps you are interested in a particular company. You may want to familiarize yourself with the type of language and programs they work with. For example, the company you are looking at may use Python instead of Java. If you have experience in Python, it is in your best interest to list that on your resume. Having experience with programs, people, or companies your desired company works with gives you a competitive advantage. You are more likely to be selected if you have experience with something the company already utilizes.

Whatever you choose to focus on, try to maintain a clear goal, and tailor your resume to that goal. There are many ways to use your resume to your advantage that can help you achieve your professional goals.

Grammar & Formatting

While they may not seem important, formatting and grammar speak to your ability to pay attention to details and write effectively. After you've drafted a resume, ensure all stylings and headings are consistent, and use a professional font in size 10.5 - 12 point. Avoid curly, script, or bubbly fonts. You can also use color on your resume to stand out. Choose colors that are easy to read and limit them to headings or subheadings. All important information such as job functions in the bulleted information should be written in black font.

It is the small details that make a difference on your resume. All of your dates, headings, bullets, etc. should align with one another. Misaligned resumes tend to look sloppy and disorganized. Templates on Microsoft Word are not always the most user-friendly and can easily disrupt the flow of your resume. Consider using a graphic design platform that helps users easily align information and create an attractive, clean resume.

[Discover different types of resumes](#)

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While you won't be writing paragraphs on your resume, you should still consider grammar and mechanics. According to CareerBeacon, 61% - 76% of hiring managers will completely disregard your resume if there are any grammatical or spelling errors. Read through your resume closely and often. Ensure that you've used the right form of a word (i.e. their, they're, and there), the correct word (manager vs. manger), and apostrophes are placed in the right place (its and it's). Writing applications with advanced features such as Google Docs can often catch small grammatical mistakes or misplaced apostrophes. Use these functions to your advantage, but also be sure to ask colleagues and peers to read over your resume as well. You can also seek professional assistance from a career coach or resume writer.

Last, ensure that the action verbs describing your responsibilities at a former position are written in the past tense and that action verbs describing responsibilities at your current job are written in the present tense.

Quantify Your Experience

Use numbers whenever possible in your resume. Numbers help contextualize the work you've done and provide reliable data about the impact your work has within the positions you've held.

Consider the following example:

Collaborated with the creative team to produce print advertisements

Collaborated with the creative team to produce over 15 advertisements across five different print media publications that drove a 37% increase in sales

While both of these examples essentially communicate the same information, the second example is far more effective. The first example does not prove the scope or effect of the work done. The second example helps an employer know that you can work on long-term projects and produce results. While you may not be able to provide productivity percentages for every single thing you did, you can discuss the number of clients you worked with, the number of hours you spent on a project, or the size of the team you led.



II. COVER LETTER

Most people dread writing a cover letter for a position, especially when they are applying to many positions at a time. However, cover letters are another opportunity to showcase your interest in the role.

There are many ways to do this effectively:

- **Tailor to cover letters to the position:** Cover letters are used to express interest in a particular position. Therefore, you should not send a generic letter to every job you're applying for. Each letter should contain specific information that pertains to the company and job description. Hiring managers know the difference between a generic and a specific letter. The more specific your letter, the better. Include all of the reasons why you are particularly interested in that position. There are many reasons you can choose from: you like the roles and responsibilities, you like the clients/businesses you would serve, you admire the people on the team, etc. You will also want to note the most relevant experience you have for the role.
- **Include relevant work experience:** It is important that you include reasons why you are well qualified for the position. You don't need to detail every position you've ever held, however. Instead, pinpoint an experience or job function you have held that is similar to the position you are applying for. Hiring managers are more likely to advance your application if you have an experience that closely matches the job description.
- **Be specific about the company:** Companies won't tell you this, but we will: companies like to be flattered. In addition to discussing why you are interested in the position you're applying for, you should also discuss why you are interested in the company. After all, you will be working for the company. This will require some research on your part. Search the company's website, social media, and any other sources that may provide information about the company. Find a few things you like about the company and detail them in your cover letter. What you like about the company does not have to pertain to the work itself either; you may choose to mention their corporate responsibility, work culture, or even the CEO's value set. What is important is that you mention a particular reason the company, as a whole, interests you.

How to write the cover letter:

- Clearly introduce yourself.
- Address why you are interested in this company specifically, discuss their mission and values.
- Address your relevant experience that is not redundant to your resume. One option is to flesh out a bullet point from your resume that is directly related to how you can excel in the role and company you are applying to.
- Discuss the best relevant qualities and skills you possess that make the ideal candidate for this role.
- End with a note that opens the floor for a meeting, interview, phone call, etc.

We understand that you may be thinking about a career change due to COVID-19. Here's how you can write a cover letter when shifting careers.

[Visit the blog.](#)

III. THE INTERVIEW

The interview is an opportunity for you to assess whether you are a good fit within an organization. Interviews can make or break your application. Be sure you walk into every interview prepared and positive. Applicants who take the time to research and prepare always outperform those who do not.

Do research:

Companies want to know that you know who they are and what they stand for. Before the interview, visit the company's website, read the company's goals and mission statement, and look over the company's social media pages. The information the company shares will provide important context regarding the company's culture and values. Make mental notes about the company, such as the awards they've won, the research they've published, or projects they've completed. You should use this information to inform your answers in the interview.

If the company asks you what kind of work environment you thrive in, you can use your research to describe the parts of the company's work culture you like. For example, if the website mentions a collaborative environment and its values page discusses corporate volunteering. You could say, "I like working in an environment where I can work in a team. I also enjoy working for companies that care about giving back to the community they are part of."

Practice your "tell me about yourself" pitch:

Most interviewers will begin an interview asking applicants to talk about themselves. You should use this time to speak about your professional life and accomplishments. Discuss the jobs you've worked, your educational background, and any applicable experiences. Think of it as a walkthrough of your resume. At the end of your professional experience, you should add a few details about what you do outside of your job. This may include hobbies, personal goals, etc. Providing personal information humanizes you and makes the interview more memorable.

My name is Kacey Lee and I am currently the Entertainment Editor at Miami Sun Magazine. I currently oversee 14 staff writers and 6 photographers and provide creative direction for our digital team. I approve, assign, and edit over 30 stories a month for our print magazine. Before working here, I worked as a staff editor for the Manhattan Moment Magazine as a staff writer for 5 years. My online stories reached 30,000 readers a month at a minimum. Before that, I attended Northwestern University with a double major in Sociology and Journalism. Outside of my professional life, I enjoy playing paintball with my friends and running on the beach with my dog.

Keep your pitch within 2-3 minutes.

Use the STAR method for situational questions:

Employers will likely ask you to provide an example of a professional challenge you faced and how you solved it. Interviewees often spend too much time explaining the problem and rush through the solution. Before the interview, think of a time you had a problem at work and practice using the STAR method to explain the issue. Be sure that the example you share ends in a positive manner and paints you in a good light.

1. Start by identifying the **Situation**, or the problem. Give a few details to explain the severity of the issue at hand and how it would affect the company.
2. Then, explain the **Task** or the objective to fix the situation. In other words, what needed to be done to fix the problem?
3. Next, explain the **Action** taken to alleviate the situation. When explaining the action, use action verbs. Take more time to explain this section than the first two. Use a great deal of detail here as it showcases your initiative and ability.
4. Finally, share the **Results**. If the results were quantified, include those numbers. For example, saying "I created a computer software that increased productivity by 45%." Numbers show rather than tell how effective the applicant's input was.

"I was the Operations Manager of a large distribution company. One year, one of our manufacturing factories closed down unexpectedly and stalled over 1,000 shipments from our warehouse. I knew this problem would cause a large issue so I called my director to ask if I could approve a discount for our clients' next purchase and she approved it. I personally called each client to apologize and offered a discount for the inconvenience. The next month, our clients ordered 30% more than the previous month. Clients expressed gratitude for our proactive customer service."

STAR responses help you organize your answer, provide necessary details, and fully answer the question. Answers based on examples are far more effective than vague, general responses that do not highlight your skills.

Ask questions:

When preparing for a job interview it is important to develop a list of questions to ask the interviewer. Asking the right questions helps demonstrate an interest in the position and the work done by the company. Asking questions during an interview is also a great way to show you've done your research on the company or the person that is interviewing you.

Ask for next steps:

Be sure to reaffirm your interest in the position by asking for the next steps at the end of the interview. You can ask questions like: When can I expect to hear from you? Are there any steps I can take to help the hiring process? How will you reach out to me if I have been selected for the next round of interviews?

Say Thank You:

Be sure to send thank you emails to each person you interviewed with. This is a small gesture that helps you remain in the interviewer's mind.

Hello Mr. Thompson,

Thank you so much for taking the time to meet with me today. I enjoyed the opportunity to learn more about the position and the company. After interviewing with you, I am positive I am well-qualified for the position. My experience as a Customer Service Manager at Silver Financial Solutions closely align with the functions of the Client Success Manager position at Cloud Nine Technologies. As discussed, I would be excited to implement more training materials and team-building exercises with fellow employees.

I also very much enjoyed learning about the company. I was especially intrigued by Cloud Nine Technology's commitment to giving back. As a volunteer at my local Boys and Girls Club, I know how influential mentoring can be for at-risk children.

Again, thank you for your time. I look forward to hearing from you. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Best,
Emily Stoke

IV. FOLLOW UP

Following up is an important way to distinguish yourself from the pool of other applicants. Make sure to check the job posting, however, to ensure that employers don't mind a phone call or email. Some companies request that you do not follow up with your application. In this case, following up could negatively impact your opportunity to receive a job.

- You should follow up on an application **7 to 10 days after** applying **if you really want the job.**
- You should follow up on an Interview **7 to 10 days after** interviewing **if you haven't heard from the company** (and they didn't specifically tell you they would reach out in 2+ weeks). Simply reply to your thank you email and ask where they are in the hiring process.



V. NETWORKING

Networking is a powerful tool to use when trying to land a job. The wider you cast your net to find a job, the more opportunities you will come across. Take advantage of social media sites, especially LinkedIn, to network. Actively put yourself on the market, make connections, and nurture them. This is another reason why being clear on your target is important. You cannot post or talk about what you want if you are not clear about what you want.

You may be surprised by how willing people are to connect you to a job posting or someone they know, which they can only do if they know you are looking for it!

Attend networking events. These are common in major cities, colleges and universities sometimes host them, and you can check on Eventbrite and Meetup.

- **Leverage LinkedIn:** You should be adding connections to your network every single day. Don't be afraid to add people you don't know, especially if they are in the industry you're interested in. Add the professional as a connection and send them a message like the one below to help them understand why you want them as a connection.

Hello X,

My name is Nora Jones, and I am interested in switching career paths. I have extensive experience in the Hospitality industry, which could be beneficial in the Healthcare industry. Your LinkedIn profile certainly proves you are a successful Healthcare Administrator for Silver Palms Medical Group. I would love to learn more about you and your career path.

Thank you so much for your time. I look forward to connecting with you.

Best,
Nora

- **Polish Your LinkedIn Page:** Before reaching out to new connections, assure your profile picture is a clear one of your face, preferably looking at the camera and smiling. Have a headline that includes keywords of job titles you are looking for. Ensure your work experience is up-to-date and accurate. Also, have brief descriptions under each job title that highlight your major accomplishments. [Here are some LinkedIn profile tips.](#)



VI. SOCIAL MEDIA

Employers don't just refer to your LinkedIn, they may check all of your social media networks. Therefore, it is imperative that all of your social media profiles display you in the best light possible. Even if your social media pages are private, some will still reveal private information or posts. For example, Instagram reveals your bio to anyone, Facebook shows some of your posts, and tweets can easily be found on Google. As such, be sure to make sure your profiles are clean and polished, even if your profiles are private.

When to make social media public:

Consider using your social media to your advantage if you are in a creative industry such as advertising, social media marketing, photography, etc. In this case, you may want to keep social media accounts public so potential employers may see your work. Platforms like these can advertise your skills and drive potential employers to your page.

There you go. If you have been struggling to get interviews or job offers, consider our comprehensive career coaching program, Sprout, where we guide you from beginning to end of your career search process. From overhauling your resumes and cover letters to negotiating and accepting your job offer, our expert coaches prepare you to catalyze your career. We guide you every step of the way.

[Schedule a free consultation](#) with one of the career coaches to get some tips, learn more about the program, and how we can help you.

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