



YOU'RE HIRED

Be prepared for the job interview

By Sandy Heath

The chances of success in a job search directly correlate to the level of preparedness of the applicant. Seems obvious, yet key aspects are often overlooked. The basic components of the job search are: the cover letter and resume, the phone/e-mail communication, the interview, and the thank you note.

Does your cover letter refer to the position you are applying for and where you heard of it? Whether you are contacting an employment agency or replying to a company's advertised position, a generic cover letter is taboo. It's interpreted as a lack of direction and a lack of effort.

A cover letter is also the best place to give details on how and when to reach you. An often overlooked aspect is the message on your phone answering device. The big taboos: "cute" message recorded by children and musical or pet background sounds.

The use of email also presents a potential pitfall. E-mail addresses such as bigjoe@gmail.com or supermom3@aol.com may be amusing to you, but hiring professionals will not be amused. Set up a separate account for job search purposes and use either your first or last name or a combination of name and initial ... keep it simple, keep it professional.

Is your resume in chronological order? That's what most hiring professionals prefer. Functional resumes rarely get a second glance. And avoid font styles with flourishes and swoops. Have you used spell-check and also proofread it? Don't rely on spell-check alone.

If you're currently employed, is that section written in the present tense while previous work experience is described utilizing the past tense? Is it two pages or less?

Congratulations! The interview is scheduled, you have two copies of your resume ready, your clothes are pressed, shoes are polished, but do you know anything about the company you are interviewing with? Do they manufacture widgets, design circuit boards, sell services? Use an internet search engine or the nearest library to find out as much as you can about the company and the industry. Not only will you be able to ask intelligent questions, you've just demonstrated initiative, attention to detail, and a sincere interest.

Finally, write that all-important "thank you" note as soon as you get home. A handwritten note trumps an email thank you every time!

Sandy Heath, is a Certified Temporary Staffing Specialist, with over 20 years in the employment industry. Her firm, Sandra Heath & Associates (SHA), specializes in the placement of office support personnel both on a permanent and a temporary basis. Sandy has earned numerous awards and accolades including Top 10 Women Business Owners in Northeast Ohio, The Weatherhead 100 Award and NEO Success Award (Inside Business Magazine). In addition Sandy has been invited to participate in various forums dealing with employment, diversity and certification issues. SHA is located at 16500 W. Sprague Road, Middleburg Heights, Ohio. Phone 440-243-3700 or visit our website at www.sandraheath.com.