JOB SEARCH WORKBOOK

KANSASWORKS

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INTRODUCTION

Everyone has skills, but not everyone knows how to market those skills to enhance their career. This workbook will help you define and market your skills, as well as provide helpful information to assist you in your job search. The topics covered in this workbook are outlined on page 4.

If you need additional assistance, contact a Kansas Job Center near you, visit KANSASWORKS.com or call (877) 509-6757.

IDENTIFY YOUR SKILLS AND TALENTS

What sets you apart from the competition?

DOCUMENT YOUR WORK AND EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

A good résumé should include dates of employment and demonstrate how you have helped your employers make money, save money or improve their bottom lines. Focus on the company to which you are applying, not your wants, and remember to customize each résumé for each job to which you are applying.

DEFINE YOUR CAREER GOALS AND HOW YOU PLAN TO ACCOMPLISH THEM

Identify a mentor in the field you are interested in. If unsure about an industry, sign up for a temporary job to see what you think. Temporary jobs can lead to full-time employment.

IDENTIFY OCCUPATIONS MATCHING YOUR EXPERIENCE AND TALENTS

PREPARE YOUR MATERIALS (COVER LETTERS, RÉSUMÉS, INFORMATION FOR APPLICATIONS)

Ask someone you trust or a **KANSAS**WORKS representative to review for grammar, layout and other suggestions.

TAKE ASSESSMENTS

Take the **WORK***Ready*!, My Next Move, mySkills myFuture assessments and others recommended in this workbook.

CONTACT EMPLOYERS

Network with everyone you meet! Get involved with activities that align with your interests and the job you want.

PREPARE FOR INTERVIEWS

KANSASWORKS representatives can do mock interviews and coach you to help ease anxiety.

GO TO INTERVIEWS

Be early, be prepared with questions and take extra résumés and anything else that demonstrates you have the skills to do the job. Always prepare questions for the interviewer at the end of the session.

THANK THE INTERVIEWER

Follow up with a thank you note or email.

EVALUATE YOUR INTERVIEW

How could you have improved the interview?

FOLLOW UP ON THE JOB

Negotiate wages after an offer has been received and accept the job.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Kansas Department of Commerce administers the **KANSAS**WORKS workforce system, which links businesses, job seekers and educational institutions to ensure that Kansas employers can find skilled workers. The system includes various job centers, which are located statewide to connect businesses with job seekers in their area.

In addition, the system integrates Kansas universities, community colleges and technical schools so they can tailor their curriculum to the needs of Kansas businesses. The result is a seamless network in which Kansas workers receive job-specific training and Kansas businesses can find well-trained employees.

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INTRODUCTION 1
TABLE OF CONTENTS 4
JOB SEARCH BASICS 6
Managing your job search 6
Using technology to get hired 7
Email etiquette 8
SKILLS, INTERESTS AND VALUES 9
Soft skills 9
Technical skills and talents 10
Determine your skills 10
ACCESS YOUR SKILLS, VALUES AND INTERESTS 12
WORK EXPERIENCE 13
EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE 14
CAREER EXPLORATION 15
Career goals 15
WHERE TO FIND JOB INFORMATION 17
APPLICATIONS 19
Tips for completing an application 19

COVER LETTER **21**
Tips for writing cover letters 21
Cover letter format 22
Cover letter example 23
RÉSUMÉ PREPARATION **26**
What is a résumé? 26
Effective résumés 26
Four types of résumés 27
Action verbs 29
Chronological résumé format 30
Functional résumé format 32
Combination résumé format 33
Targeted résumé format 34
INTERVIEWING **35**
Before the interview 35
How to answer interview questions 35
Traditional vs. behavioral interview questions 36
Preparation for the behavioral interview 38
At the interview 39
Questions to ask the interviewer 39
Closing the interview 40
After the interview 40
THANK YOU LETTERS **41**
Tips on writing thank you letters 41
Thank you letter format 42
Thank you letter example 43
TESTING / ASSESSMENTS **44**
How to prepare for assessments 45
FOR MORE INFORMATION **46**
Employment & training resources 46
More resources 46
Other useful websites 46
TAKE NOTES **47**

Information for this booklet was pulled from various job seeker websites, such as jobsearch.about.com, collegegrad.com, quintcareers.com, forbes.com, mass.gov and best-interviewing-strategies.com.

JOB SEARCH **BASICS**

Managing your job search

To be truly successful, you should consider a job search a full-time job.

- Wake up early to begin searching and search all day (40 hours a week).
- Plan your time and determine what must be accomplished each day.
- Be your own boss or appoint a friend to hold you accountable to carry out your job responsibilities.
- Apply for jobs early in the day. This will make a good impression and give you time to complete applications, interviews or tests. Generally, avoid applying on Mondays and Fridays. You may want to call employers to find out the best times to apply. Some companies take applications only on certain days, or within specific hours, during the week. Cover tattoos and remove piercings when picking up applications and leave your cell phone in the car. Companies have reported they felt the job seeker was texting rather than wanting to work for them. Bring your **KANSAS**WORKS pocket résumé with all your phone numbers on it.
- Fill out applications completely and write N/A where appropriate. Do not write, "see résumé." This is a poor reflection of your work ethic and shows employers you do not follow directions properly.
- Keep a record of employers you contact, the résumé you sent for each opportunity, the date of your contacts, people you talked to and special notes about your contacts.
- Manage your time well by applying with several companies in the same part of town, when possible. Use your network to find out who is hiring in your expertise. The majority of openings are not advertised publicly, but found through networking.
- Be prepared. Develop a master application with dates, addresses, phone numbers, correct name spelling and other information about previous positions. Have résumés, pens (preferably blue), Google maps or similar navigation apps for your cell phone and job information with you at all times. You never know when a lead will come your way.
- Follow up on new leads immediately! If you hear about a job, research how the employer wants you to apply and do so right away. Do not wait until the next day.
- Network by telling everyone you know you are looking for a job. Stay in touch with friends and contacts (e.g., church pastor, former co-workers, neighbors, relatives, etc.). Develop and practice your "elevator pitch" about your skills. Ask our Workforce Specialists if you need assistance.

Using technology to get hired

Employers receive hundreds of résumés and applications for each position. Only the most qualified and proactive job seekers are attracting the attention of hiring managers and get their foot in the door for an interview.

Job search tactics now require embracing technology by creating a strong online presence, networking and using new strategies to market your personal brand.

The following strategies will help you kick start your job search and find that next opportunity.

You must have a basic understanding of the Internet. This will help you search for jobs, research companies and send emails. You must also communicate effectively online.

1. Create an online presence. A common practice for hiring managers is to Google candidates before calling them for interviews. Check into LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook. These are great tools, but be cautious. Do not post anything you would not want a potential employer to see or read.
2. Create your own web page or blog devoted to your job search. They are not expensive to create and can help in your job search. Check out Google.com profiles or other free website solutions.
3. Post your résumé on career sites such as **KANSAS**WORKS.com so you can be found for your skills and talents.
4. Network with professional organizations or alumni associations. Informational interviews are acceptable in today's market. Look for a mentor in the field as well.
5. Develop your own personal brand. Be an expert and write papers related to your field and post them online. Volunteer at industry events to show your passion for what you do.
6. **KANSAS**WORKS Virtual Services provides Skype Video conferencing to job seekers for out-of-area interviews. Workshops are also available in some offices. Speak with staff at a Kansas Job Center near you, visit **KANSAS**WORKS.com or call (877) 509-6757.

Successful job candidates are those with great communication skills and passion who bring value to a company. By practicing these tips, you are on your way to landing the opportunity!

Email etiquette

Communication via electronic means has become commonplace. Here are some tips to assist you when communicating via email:

- **First contact with an employer** - Use email when the employer has invited you to do so through its website, job ad, verbal conversation or other communication. Otherwise, send a résumé and cover letter via hard copy.
- **Responding to employers** - If an employer emails you, it is permissible to respond via email. Be careful to read the email for instructions. For example, you may be asked to do some follow-up online or with another person. Always follow cues from the employer regarding preferred method of contact.
- **Thank you notes after interviews** - An email thank you is acceptable, especially if the hiring decision is happening quickly after the interview. An email will most likely be seen before a hard copy.
- **Keep it professional** - Your email alias, your subject line and your content all need to be clear and appropriate for the recipient. Do not use texting or abbreviations and use spell check.
- **Email alias** - "Hotdogdude@hotmail.com" is not appropriate. Without a professional address, you will not be taken seriously or viewed as professional.
- **Subject line** - Make it clear and meaningful to the recipient, as in "Application for Graphic Designer Listing 84G11." A blank subject line is unacceptable. "Read this" and "Information" are meaningless and may be interpreted as containing a virus.
- **Greeting** - Do not misspell a person's name. If you are writing to John Smith, use "Dear Mr. Smith." Use "Ms." for women, as it is the feminine equivalent to the masculine "Mr." The only exception to this is when a woman uses another salutation such as "Mrs." or "Dr." for herself. If you do not know the name, but you do know the department where you must send your letter, use "Dear Human Resource Department staff," or "Dear Hiring Manager at XYZ, Inc." If at all possible, find the name to which it should be directed. Do not use "To Whom It May Concern." The use of "Dear Sirs" will date your workplace knowledge, so avoiding this is important in your job search.
- **Content** - Use business-like writing style and be clear, concise and to the point. Start by stating why you are writing. "I am applying for the accounting internship position your firm advertised through the XYZ University Accounting Department." Provide brief information about yourself. "This May, I will graduate from XYZ University with a bachelor's degree in human services." My experience includes two internships in community mental health agencies." The same rules of hard copy correspondence apply to business email.

SKILLS, INTERESTS AND VALUES

If you have been a homemaker, student, volunteer or participated in some other seasonal activity, these skills may be applied to jobs. For example, planning and organizing a large family gathering requires communication and organization. Volunteering on a committee can demonstrate your responsibility, attendance and technical skill depending on the role you played on the committee. All these transfer into skills employers seek.

Soft skills

Soft skills are the skills all employees must have in order to succeed in the workplace regardless of the type of job. Employers place great importance on these skills and an employee who has them is considered valuable. These skills are separate from the technical knowledge you may need on the job, such as computer experience.

To employers, soft skills (also known as employability skills) are as important as technical skills. Your personal characteristics and behavior affect your ability to interact successfully with others. Personal characteristics associated with outcomes that are important in the workplace include job performance, organizational abilities, productive work behaviors and teamwork. These skills are needed to keep the job once you get it. Soft skills include:

- Attendance - Coming to work on time, coming every day, giving advance notice for days off, calling in sick only when absolutely necessary and calling your supervisor if you are going to be late.
- Communication/Interpersonal Skills - Communicating with co-workers, managers and customers in a pleasant and professional manner. Seeking advice when needed and practicing listening skills. Expressing yourself clearly so you will be understood. Being polite, not argumentative, in accepting and expressing criticism. Remaining calm in all situations and maintaining good eye contact.
- Teamwork - Working in a cooperative manner with others to achieve team goals and identify needs.
- Initiative/Motivation - Beginning or following through energetically with your job duties or a task without prompting or direction.
- Responsibility - Working hard toward reaching a goal. Completing required and expected duties. Being aware of time schedules. Managing personal responsibilities and working effectively with little or no supervision.
- Appearance/Hygiene - Understanding and adhering to dress code policies. Wearing appropriate work clothing. Displaying good personal hygiene and grooming (e.g., shower, clean clothes, brush teeth and brush/comb hair). Being aware of your personal and professional appearance.
- Flexibility - Willing to cheerfully accept special projects or fill in for absent employees. Embracing ideas from others or changes in the middle of a project.

- Problem Solving/Conflict Resolution - Identifying problems, evaluating all possible solutions, selecting a course of action and evaluating the outcomes. Someone who is willing to negotiate for problem solving while respecting others' opinions and interests in a positive manner.

Technical skills and talents

Technical skills and talents are the skills you possess to accomplish a job (computer skills, operating equipment, understanding procedures, research, etc.). These are hard skills employers review to determine if you are able to perform the work.

To develop your skills further, we have resources free of charge. Please visit with your workforce professional about the right one for you.

Determine your skills

To help determine your skills and talents, list your hobbies, club memberships, sporting activities, church and school involvement and areas of interest. List tasks you perform well or strong skills you possess, even if you have not been paid for these skills.

Your list may look like it has nothing to do with job skills or experience, but that is acceptable. The purpose of this list is to help you determine the skills you already have that can be transferred to a job.

All hobbies, sports and activities involve transferable skills, knowledge and abilities. Look at each item on your list. On the next page think about the skills or talents it takes to perform that activity. List your activities and skills as demonstrated in the example chart on the next page.

Hobbies, sports and activities Things I do well	**Skills, knowledge and talents involved**
Playing basketball	Positive interaction with others (be a team player) Utilize math (keep track of scores) Reach, lift, jump, stoop and run
Homemaking	Manage budgets Ability to handle multiple tasks Knowledge of human development Skills in teaching and training
Fixing Cars	Ability to diagnose mechanical problems Skill in using tools Knowledge of electronics
St. Patrick's Day Parade Coordinator	Capacity to create printed materials Skill in advertising Organizational skills Competence to lead others Knowledge of fundraising Communicate professionally

Complete the table below. Use action verbs to describe your soft and technical skills.
See page 29 for a list of action verbs.

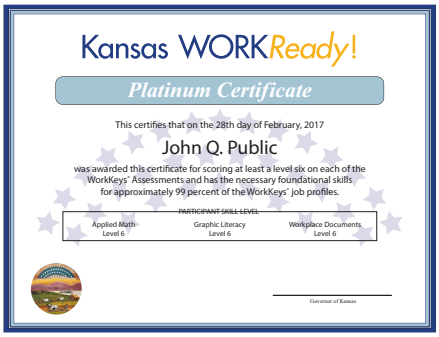
Hobbies, sports and activities Things I do well	**Skills, knowledge and talents involved**

ACCESS YOUR SKILLS, VALUES AND INTERESTS

Another means of determining your talents is to complete a formal assessment of your skills, values and interests. This will help determine which careers are suitable for you and which are not. You may also find that your skills and abilities match an occupation you never considered. There are many career assessment tools to help you gather this information and generate a list of occupations best suited for you. For example:

- O*NET can help you match your skills to desired occupations. This tool includes a *Skills Search* designed to help identify occupations you may want to explore. This is done by selecting a set of skills from six broad groups of skills to create your customized skill list.

- The Kansas **WORK***Ready*! Certificate is a nationally recognized certificate informing employers of your skills before you even walk into the interview room. It measures your skills in three areas - Workplace Documents, Graphic Literacy and Applied Math - and certifies you as a Platinum, Gold, Silver or Bronze candidate. If you are interested in taking this assessment, contact your local Kansas Job Center, visit **KANSAS**WORKS.com or call (877) 509-6757.



- The Kansas WORKTalent! Assessment is utilized to provide insight into your personal characteristics and work-related behaviors. This will help you learn to rely on your personal strengths and adopt some different behaviors. This will help you learn to rely on your personal strengths and adopt some different behaviors to make you even more employable and successful in the workplace. If you are interested in taking this assessment, please contact your local Kansas Job Center, visit **KANSAS**WORKS.com or call (877) 509-6757.

Additional information may be found on page 44, "Testing/Assessments."

WORK EXPERIENCE

Now that you know your skills and interests, it is time to review your work experience. Write down your previous employment history. Concentrate on the details of the positions within the last seven years, including all part-time, military, volunteer, apprenticeship/internship and self-employment work. Make sure all dates, job titles and applicable contact information are accurate. Write down your accomplishments and how they relate to the position for which you are applying. Each résumé should be tailored to each position for maximum credibility. Past experience determines future performance. What did you like the best? These details will usually denote where your strengths are to help market your talents as well. Be prepared to discuss with a potential employer in an interview any times when you were not employed.

Think about the skills, knowledge or abilities it took to perform each work duty and write them down. In addition, list the kind of work characteristics involved with the duties (organization, self-management, etc.). Here are a couple of examples:

Job	Work duties	Skills or talents	Work characteristics
Farm Worker Smith and Sons May 2012 - April 2013	Selected vegetables and fruits Inspected fruit for damage and ripeness Used hoes, shovels and shears to plant, cultivate and prune	Performed quickly, skillfully and safely Labored outside and alone for long periods	Ability to work quickly, skillfully and safely
Customer Service Rep. Jones Financial Group April 2013 - Present	Answer customer phone calls Update customer accounts Answer customer questions or complaints	Display proper phone etiquette Comprehend stock market Locate information quickly Experience with computer skills Serve customers	Polite/accommodating Organization Problem solving Attention to detail Time management

Complete your work experience list below. A list of action verbs is available on page 29.

Job	Work duties	Skills or talents	Work characteristics

EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Now it is time to examine your educational history. List schools you attended with dates and major studies or courses completed. List most recent history first. List honors, accomplishments, skills and expertise (e.g., computer software applications, machinery operation, etc.). Also list activities you have participated in to increase your overall knowledge (e.g., training or certification, military services, relevant community or volunteer work). Then ask yourself what classes or training you like and why you liked them, as shown in the example below.

Degree, certificates, awards and honors	**Classes or training I enjoyed and why**
BA Biology Certificate of Microsoft Office Training Gold Star Sales Award Employee of the Month, Oct. 2012 Outstanding Attendance Award	Web page design - enjoyed creativity and starting something from scratch Scuba diving - enjoyed contact with nature and adventure

Complete your educational history in the following table.

Degree, certificates, awards and honors	**Classes or training I enjoyed and why**

CAREER EXPLORATION

What career would you be happy doing every day if money was not an obstacle? This is usually an indicator of your passion and will help you be successful and attentive. At this point, you have completed your self-assessments and know your values, interests and skills.

You may also have a list of careers that align with assessment results. You now need to narrow your list of careers so you can pursue the one you find most desirable. There are hundreds of career options out there. Think hard about your choice of occupations and you will find a fulfilling and successful career. It could take some time and energy to make a decision.

Gather information in career fields you are thinking about and research labor market information for availability in your area. Gather basic information about each career on your list, such as job descriptions, employment statistics, job outlook, earnings and educational and training requirements.

For basic information about career fields, use Career OneStop. You will find occupational demographic and labor market information at the local, state and national levels. This site is constantly updated. Other helpful sites are **KANSAS**WORKS.com and the Kansas Department of Labor.

Once you have enough information to decide what career(s) you would like to pursue, it is time to dig deeper. You need to learn as much as possible about your narrowed list of occupations. Once this is complete, you should be able to narrow your list to one. You can always continue your research and change your mind. Remember, nothing is set in stone.

Career Goals

With a few career options in mind, it is time to figure out how to reach your goal of actually working in that field. Perhaps you lack a few skills for the career or there are no jobs currently open. Identify what steps will help you gain experience for your career choice. Maybe you need to take some classes, get a degree or find an employer offering on-the-job training. To help determine what to do, list your career choice in one column (the type of work you want to do five or 10 years from now). In the opposite column, list what jobs, education or experience you can get to help you reach your goal as demonstrated on the next page.

Career I would like to have	Jobs/education/experience to help reach goal
Police Officer	Security Guard, Correctional Officer, Administrative Assistant in Police Department, Court Clerk, Police Academy
Writer	Book Store Sales Clerk, Library Assistant, English Course
Welder	General Labor, Position in Manufacturing Environment, Metalworking, Welding and Fabrication Courses

Complete your career goals in the following table.

Career I would like to have	Jobs/education/experience to help reach goal

Today's workplace is very competitive. However, there are also a lot of career opportunities out there and one is for you! You need to have a variety of skills to give you a competitive edge. You may be choosing a career, deciding whether to change careers, re-entering the workforce or recovering from a job loss. Staff at Kansas Job Centers are ready to help at no cost. You may also visit **KANSAS**WORKS.com or call (877) 509-6757. Additionally, career information is available at your local library, community and technical colleges and universities.

WHERE TO FIND JOB INFORMATION

If you know what job skills you have and what you like to do, you are ready to look for a job. You can look for job openings through the following sources:

NETWORKING is the key to a successful job search and the number one way people get jobs. Networking consists of building on personal contacts and making yourself known to potential employers. Talk with anyone who may know of an opportunity that would be right for you, including colleagues, recruiters, other job seekers, career professionals, etc. Do you have a mentor? This is another option, and our workforce professionals are also connected to where the jobs are.

SOCIAL NETWORKING provides a great way to make connections with potential job opportunities and promote yourself across the Internet. This can help you describe yourself, your major strengths and the benefits an employer would receive by hiring you. Check into LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook. These are great tools, but be cautious. Do not post anything you would not want potential employers to see or read. Employers will check these sites. They want employees who can respect their companies and their customers.

KANSAS JOB CENTERS provide assistance in finding jobs and offer an office to work from until you find your next position. We offer a wide variety of other services at no cost. For a list of job centers, visit **KANSAS**WORKS.com or call (877) 509-6757.

COMPANY WEBSITES are used more than ever to direct applicant flow. Many companies accept résumés and/or have résumé builders directly on their sites. Review the employment or career section of the site for job opening information and the applications process. You may also contact employers directly (even if they are not advertising openings) and speak to their personnel offices. When an update posts (e.g., new jobs), some websites automatically alert you. Follow the company on their Facebook page as it will typically post new openings there.

FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT PERSONNEL OFFICES list a wide range of job opportunities. Phone numbers may be found under government listings. The State of Kansas has a Civil Service Job site at www.jobs.ks.gov. To find federal openings, use www.usajobs.gov.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES have books and other materials on occupations and often post local job announcements. Some also have networking events or free computer classes.

NEWSPAPER ADS list jobs, but remember the newspaper contains less than five percent of the vacancies in your area. If you are qualified, send your résumé. These ads are usually time sensitive, so do not delay.

LOCAL RADIO OR TELEVISION STATIONS often announce available jobs.

COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGES offer counseling and job information to students and alumni.

CHURCHES AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS frequently offer employment services or provide job search assistance.

VETERANS' PLACEMENT CENTERS OR ORGANIZATIONS often have job listings for members. Contact the Veterans Employment Representative at a Kansas Job Center near you, visit **KANSAS**WORKS.com or call (877) 509-6757.

UNIONS AND APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS provide job opportunities, information and training. Contact the Kansas Apprenticeship Council at (785) 296-4161, a relevant labor union or a Kansas Job Center for information. You may also visit **KANSAS**WORKS.com or call (877) 509-6757.

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS often have websites and publications that post job opportunities. There are numerous professional organizations for a variety of industries and career specialties. Many national conferences and local chapter meetings are great networking venues.

*Under the Civil Rights Act of 1964, all sources listed above serve persons of any race, color, religion, sex or national origin. The Age Employment Act of 1967 forbids discrimination of older workers. Both laws forbid employers to discriminate in hiring.

APPLICATIONS

A job application is often an employer's first impression of you. Employers often ask job seekers to fill out an application before an interview. The matter in which you complete your application often tells an employer how well you will perform your job. Since the product you are selling is yourself, it is worth the time and effort to complete the application as best you can.

Tips for completing an application

- Read the entire application before answering any questions. If you complete the application by hand, be sure to print legibly and in pen, preferable blue ink, otherwise black ink.
- Fill in all blanks providing complete, detailed information. If a questions does not apply to you, write “N/A” (not applicable) to show you did not miss the question. Do not write “see résumé” on the application.
- If you are filling out an application online, do not use auto-fill. The information loaded into your application when using auto-fill may not align correctly. Your "position" answer might instead say which college you attended or prior employment dates might just show start dates.
- Be sure all names and addresses are spelled correctly and fill out the application carefully. Other items that may be requested include: Military record, social security information and/or license/certification identification. Because of identity theft, instead of entering your Social Security number on the application, you may state, “Will provide at interview or upon hire.” Please use your judgment on these items.
- For an online application, have all your information ready when starting, including a copy of your résumé to upload. Some applications have a time limit, so having this information ready up front is beneficial.
- Have your work experience list with you so you can correctly enter titles, dates, addresses and full names of supervisors if asked. Kansas Career Keepers, also known as “pocket résumés,” are available at Kansas Job Centers to record your employment history.
- Use appropriate job titles for your previous positions and for the positions you are seeking. Have a specific job(s) in mind. Do not ask for “just anything.”
- If you are not sure of the wages or salary of the job for which you are applying, write “negotiable” until you have a chance to discuss the job responsibilities with the employer and research labor market trends for that position in your area.
- Having a telephone is the best way to get calls from employers requesting an interview. If you do not have a telephone, ask a friend or neighbor for permission to use their number. Indicate on the application this is a number where a message may be left. Be sure to check with them often so there is little time delay.
- Professional references: The typical rule of thumb is three people who can account for your work ethic and character. These should not be related to you and should be contacts who will give you a positive

reference. Ask if they would like to be a reference for you and what they will say when someone calls. Ask for their correct name spelling and which number they would like people to call, current address, city and state and occupation. Some employers ask for business references or names of previous supervisors. If you have not held a job before, it is permissible to use teachers or family friends as references.

- If there has been a special situation in your past, such as a criminal conviction, it may be best to write, "May I explain in person" in the appropriate blank. This will give the employer a chance to ask questions and you to disclose information. However, some employers may require this information in advance of an interview. We have trained staff in our centers to help coach this. If you would like additional assistance in preparing answers regarding criminal backgrounds, visit with workforce professionals at a Kansas Job Center near you, visit **KANSAS**WORKS.com or call (877) 509-6757.
- After you complete the application, check it over to make sure the information is thorough and accurate. If you have any questions about the application, ask the person in charge to explain it to you. Usually, you will be asked to sign a statement that the information you provided is true. False statements or intentional omissions are grounds for dismissal after being hired.
- If asked, agree to sign a statement giving the employer permission to contact your past employers and check your school and work records. Not giving permission gives a potential employer the impression you have something to hide.

COVER LETTER

If you are applying for a job that requires a résumé, you should always write a cover letter to accompany it. The purpose of a cover letter is to:

- Introduce yourself by setting a higher bar than others who choose not to send a letter of introduction.
- Explain how you discovered the job.
- How would your skills and talents benefit the company in this role?
- Show the employer why they should read your résumé and invite you to an interview.
- Include past experience not on your résumé or application.
- Ask for an opportunity to meet them and interview for this role.
- Assure the employer you will follow up and do so.

Tips for writing cover letters

- Write a separate cover letter tailored to each job for which you apply.
- Include your address, telephone number, email and social media icons you would like them to see, especially if the role indicates this as a duty to oversee. Quite often, this is set in the 'header' to incorporate a consistent marketing brand on your cover letter and reference page. Ensure all documents have a consistent font and font size.
- Address each letter to a specific person (the person who would actually supervise you or the person with hiring authority). Blind letters are not as effective. You can obtain a contact name by calling the personnel department of the organization. If you cannot get a contact name, address the letter by title (e.g., Dear Customer Service Supervisor).
- Create a strong first paragraph stating why you are interested in the position.
- State the position you are seeking and the source of the job opening (newspaper ad, friend, etc.). If there is an identification number, it is suggested to insert it here. Make it easy for the hiring personnel!
- Highlight your job qualifications and what you can bring to the company. It helps to have a completed résumé before this step.
- Try to identify something about yourself that is unique or of interest to the employer.
- Show you've done some homework on the company (you know what they do, their interests and challenges). Check out the company's website and social media.
- Request an interview. If possible, suggest a specific date and time that is mutually agreeable.
- Convey personal warmth, enthusiasm and passion for working for the company.
- Keep your letter short and to the point and grab the reader's attention quickly.
- Use proper grammar and correct spelling. Proofread your letter and have someone else review it.
- Type/print letters on standard-sized (8-1/2" x 11") white or standard color paper that matches your résumé.

COVER LETTER FORMAT

YOUR NAME

Your Street
Your City, State, Zip

Your Primary Phone
Your Email

Date

Name
Title
Company Name
Company Address
Company City, State, Zip

Dear Name or Title:

INTRODUCTION PARAGRAPH - Specify the position for which you are applying, how you became aware of the opening (e.g., newspaper ad, **KANSAS**WORKS.com, radio, etc.). You want to capture the reader's attention. Show you have done some research on the company by talking about new projects the company has taken on or citing something you read about them. Reference your enclosures.

BODY - In this paragraph, talk about your responsibilities, actions accomplished and results achieved in past jobs. Use descriptive and concise action statements. Indicate how your experience would benefit the company. Do not repeat your entire résumé, but mention those items most appealing to the employer.

CONCLUDING INFORMATION - This is the section where you close your letter. Express your interest in an interview for a position or in learning more about the company's opportunities and hiring plans. Indicate what your follow-up plan will be (e.g., I will contact you next week to schedule a mutually agreeable meeting time, etc.). Be sure to mention how you may be reached. Finally, thank the employer for his/her time and consideration (e.g., Thank you for your time and consideration).

Respectfully,

Leave four spaces for handwritten signature

Your Name (typed)

Enclosure: Résumé

COVER LETTER EXAMPLE

JULIE ALDEN

1275 Apple Lane
Topeka, KS 66612-2345

(123) 456-7890 (C)
jalden@email.com

August 9, 2017

Patty Turner
Human Resources Manager
Patty's Place
1234 Sailor Drive
Topeka, KS 66612-2345

Dear Ms. Turner:

I am writing in response to your ad in the XYZ paper August 6, 2017, regarding the position of Human Resource Manager. I have heard great things about Patty's Place and have enclosed my resume for your consideration of my skills to the role which you are recruiting for.

As my résumé indicates, I have more than eight years of human resources management experience in a manufacturing environment. I have a strong background in creating and implementing training, policies and procedures and reducing turnover. Over the past three years, our company has experienced a 15% increase in retention and a 40% reduction in grievances. Our company has exceeded production goals by 10%. We believe our continued interest in our team is reflected in these numbers.

As an HR manager myself, I know the pressure is on you to recruit the best available talent to help the company grow and thrive. I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and discuss how we could benefit each other. Next week, I will follow up with you to answer any questions or concerns you may have with my application packet. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Julie Alden

Julie Alden

Enclosure: Résumé

COVER LETTER EXAMPLE

JULIE ALDEN

1275 Apple Lane
Topeka, KS 66612-2345

(123) 456-7890 (C)
jalden@email.com

August 9, 2017

John Green
Human Resources Manager
Patty's Place
1234 Sailor Drive
Topeka, KS 66612-2345

Re: Warehouse Manager, Requisition #12345

Dear Mr. Green:

When I read your ad for a Warehouse Manager on the **KANSAS**WORKS.com website, I immediately noticed how well your requirements align with my experience, education, skills and background. While my enclosed résumé provides a good overview of my strengths and achievements, I have also listed some of your specific requirements for the position and my applicable skills:

You require:	I offer:
Ability to coordinate and oversee the work of subordinates.	Currently I oversee the quality of 25 full time and 5 temporary employees at a 24-hour fast-paced facility.
Ability to strategically plan, develop and implement programs and operations toward achievement of team's mission, goals and objectives.	5+ years developing and implementing cross-training programs in accordance with the operations department's vision to exceed the goals of the company by ensuring customer satisfaction is priority.
The analytical skills to perform needs assessments, evaluate current programs, and initiate changes or adjustments to current systems and improve operations.	Success in implementing the Kansas **WORK***Ready*! assessment in turn has reduced turnover and increased employee referrals for employment.
Problem-solving and decision-making abilities.	Success in solving a variety of daily issues such as cross training to avoid delay time when one is absent and employee recognition.

As it appears my experience and expertise fit the job title requirements so closely, I would enjoy an opportunity to visit more in depth to determine how I can help Patty's Place. I will follow up with you next week to answer any questions. In the meantime, please feel free to call my cell phone at (123) 456-7890 at your convenience. I look forward to our meeting. Thank you for your time and consideration of this opportunity.

Respectfully,

Julie Alden

Enclosure: Résumé

COVER LETTER EXAMPLE

JULIE ALDEN

1275 Apple Lane
Topeka, KS 66612-2345

(123) 456-7890 (C)
jalden@email.com

August 9, 2017

John Green
Human Resources Manager
Patty's Place
1234 Sailor Drive
Topeka, KS 66612-2345

Dear Mr. Green:

After a review of the Job Title role, I see similarities in what you are looking for and what I could offer. Although my current role is extremely rewarding, I would like to tackle a new challenge. I see Patty's Place is growing and introducing new products of which I would like to be a part. Therefore, I wish to forward my credentials for consideration of this role.

My experience includes working in and with upper management, staffing companies and entry level workers. Currently I cross train staff on the operations to reduce down time when one is absent. Our retention rate has surpassed the previous year's and this may be a result of implementing the Kansas **WORK***Ready*! assessment to new hires. I lead one of the most successful crews and maintain 90% of the talent we brought aboard.

My job is very rewarding and I have not been looking to change until this position caught my eye. It would be a pleasure to meet and discuss this further. I will follow up with you next Monday to answer any questions you may have of my application material. In the meantime, you may reach me at (123) 456-7890 at your convenience. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Julie Alden

Julie Alden

Enclosure: Résumé

RÉSUMÉ PREPARATION

Today there are very few jobs where a résumé is not required. The average employer spends seven seconds scanning a résumé. To be most effective, you need to grab their attention quickly! If you don't, the next person will!

What is a résumé?

The résumé is your marketing tool and summarizes your background. It provides an employer with an outline of your abilities, education, work experience, special knowledge and training. It is your opportunity to attract an employer's attention and separate yourself from all the other applicants competing for the job.

Effective résumés

When preparing a cover letter or résumé, remember to visit a Kansas Job Center or visit **KANSAS**WORKS.com to utilize resource materials or seek assistance. For a location near you, visit **KANSAS**WORKS.com or call (877) 509-6757.

Résumé tips:

- Type your résumé. Use standard-sized white paper or résumé-specific paper.
- Print on one side only.
- Do not fold, staple or bend the résumé.
- Use fonts like Arial, Times New Roman, Tahoma or Verdana with text at 9-12 points and headings at 10-14 points.
- Keep your résumé simple, bold and professional.
- Do not use shading, graphics or boxes. Limit use of underline, italics and vertical lines.
- Do not use abbreviations.
- Your résumé should be neat, clean and professional looking.
- The layout of your résumé should make reading or scanning easy. Large amounts of white space are effective.
- Be specific. Use clear and concise sentences. One page is standard, but if you have more than 15 years experience, two pages is acceptable.
- Use a header to put your name and contact information on the top of each page.
- Make sure your contact information is correct. Include primary phone number and email address.

- Use bulleted or highlighted statements beginning with action verbs to describe your accomplishments and duties. Try not to repeat the same words. Use the same number of bullets on each work experience.
    - Watch the verb tense. For current employment experience, use present tense. For previous experience, use past tense.
    - Since duties on a functional résumé are arranged by category and not past/present jobs, you may use either present or past tense. Choose one or the other and use that one throughout the résumé.
    - Do not use "ing" verbs (managing, acting, etc.). Use keywords to match your skills and abilities to the requirements of the job.

  A list of action verbs can be found on page 29.
- Make sure there are no spelling, grammar or punctuation errors. Proofread carefully and have someone else review it as well.
- Add numbers or hard data to your résumé. In a document full of letters, numbers really stand out (e.g., reduced costs by 17 percent during the past 10 years). Numbers draw attention and show results achieved. Be positive and focus on benefits and results. The use of "bold" will help these.
- Do not use the words "I," "me" or "my." Your résumé is not a personal correspondence and should not include details about your personal life.
- Never lie or exaggerate.
- If you can direct your résumé to a person in the organization who is responsible for hiring, you will be much more successful at getting your foot in the door for an interview.
- Ensure the language is consistent. Construct each description or summary in a similar manner, including grammar, punctuation and length.
- Do not include salary or wages. Perhaps you will be able to negotiate, so don't sell yourself short.
- Always send a cover letter with your résumé.
- When using a Career Objective, ensure it is easy for the reader to see why you are a good fit for the job and include the specific title of the position (e.g., "Seeking a position as Sales Manager in which 10 years of customer service experience will add value," or "Seeking a position as Manager in which three years of management experience will contribute to success."). Be sure to adjust your Career Objective for the different types of jobs to which you apply.
- In some cases, a Summary of Qualifications should be used in place of the Career Objective. List your best characteristics to align with the details of the job (e.g., "Reputation for writing clear and concise explanations for technical and nontechnical users."). Be sure your list reflects how you want to be summarized as a potential candidate.
- References are no longer necessary on your résumé. You do not even need to state, "References available upon request." Employers will request your references when they are ready.

Four types of résumés

There are numerous ways to format a resume. Four primary types are discussed in this section. Review all of them and find a format that works for your situation and career experience. Then use the information you gathered on pages 11-14 to develop your résumé.

CHRONOLOGICAL RÉSUMÉ FORMAT

ADVANTAGES

Widely used format

Logical flow, easy to read and prepare

Showcases career progression and growth

DISADVANTAGES

Emphasizes gaps in employment

Not suitable if you have no work history

Highlights frequent job changes

Emphasizes employment but not skill development

Emphasizes lack of related experience and career changes

BEST USED BY

Individuals with steady work record

Individuals whose recent employers or job titles are impressive

FUNCTIONAL RÉSUMÉ FORMAT

ADVANTAGES

Emphasizes skills rather than employment

Organizes a variety of experience (paid and unpaid work, other activities)

Disguises gaps in work record or a series of short-term jobs

DISADVANTAGES

Viewed as a suspicion by employers due to lack of information about specific employers and dates

BEST USED BY

Individuals who have developed skills other than documented employment and who may be changing careers

Individuals with no previous employment

Individuals with gaps in employment

Individuals with frequent job changes

COMBINATION RÉSUMÉ FORMAT

ADVANTAGES

Highlights most relevant skills and accomplishments

De-emphasizes employment history in less relevant jobs

Combines skills developed in a variety of jobs or other activities

Minimizes employment gaps and absence of directly related experience

DISADVANTAGES

Can be confusing if not well organized

De-emphasizes job tasks and responsibilities

Requires more effort and creativity to prepare

BEST USED BY

Career changers or those in transition

Individuals re-entering the job market after some absence

Individuals who have grown in skills and responsibility

Individuals pursuing the same or similar work as in the past

TARGETED RÉSUMÉ FORMAT

ADVANTAGES

Personalized to company/position

Shows research

More impressive to employer

Written specifically to employer's needs

DISADVANTAGES

Time-consuming to prepare

Can be confusing if not well organized

Must be revised for each employer

BEST USED BY

Everyone - because any of the other formats can be made into a targeted résumé

Action verbs

Action verbs give your résumé power and direction. Begin all skill statements with an action verb. If you cannot find the word you are looking for, use a thesaurus. For employment history, use the same grammatical structure, punctuation and verb tense (i.e., current history is present tense; previous history in past tense). Do not use "ing" verbs (managing, acting, etc.).

Below is a list of verbs to use on your résumé:

achieve	deliver	inspect	purchase
address	design	instruct	recommend
administer	determine	integrate	reconcile
advise	develop	interpret	record
allocate	diagnose	interview	recruit
analyze	direct	investigate	reduce
approve	dispatch	improve	represent
arbitrate	document	judge	report
arrange	draft	lecture	resolve
assemble	edit	maintain	review
assign	enlist	manage	schedule
attain	establish	mediate	screen
audit	evaluate	moderate	select
catalogue	examine	motivate	solve
chair	execute	negotiate	specify
classify	expedite	observe	spoke
collect	explain	operate	strengthen
communicate	extract	organize	summarize
compile	fabricate	oversee	supervise
compose	facilitate	participate	tabulate
conduct	forecast	persuade	train
consolidate	formulate	plan	translate
contract	generate	prepare	troubleshoot
control	guide	present	utilize
correspond	hire	prioritize	validate
create	implement	process	verify
critique	increase	produce	visualize
delegate	initiate	promote	write

CHRONOLOGICAL RÉSUMÉ FORMAT

SAMPLE I. NAME
(785) 555-5556 (C) • samplename@outlook.com
5555 Sample Road, Great Town, KS 44481

OBJECTIVE (optional or see Summary of Qualifications on next): Mechanical Engineer

WORK HISTORY:

Industrial Engineer **2003-Present**
Tool Incorporated, Great Town, KS

- Researched the current shipping department and worked with a lean team to design a more productive operating process by utilizing the latest techniques. This increased customer's shipments within 24 hours turnaround and overall produce 50+ products out to customers each day.
- Developed a multi-step shipping process improvement plan to cross train all team members on quality control, resulting in increasing production numbers and helping the company grow 20% that quarter alone while exceeding customer satisfaction as reported by the sales team.
- Earned the Employee of the Year award for bringing the team together to accomplish this.

Design Engineer **2000-2003**
Mechanical Systems, Paradise, KS

- Introduced a complete safety package for a robot loader to increase efficiency on the floor.
- Trained and mentored 5 intern engineers on SOLIDWORKS for a semester. Successfully helped our company retain 4 upon graduation.
- Evaluated and recommended machine components to fiscal and involved in saving $5K+ on negotiating.

HVAC Engineer Assistant **1995-2000**
Engineering Consultants, Kansas City, KS

- Prepared building and equipment bid specifications.
- Evaluated HVAC equipment options.
- Incorporated EPA and OSHA regulations into safety procedures.

FORMAL EDUCATION:

Currently studying for the Professional Engineering License Exam

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE DEGREE: MECHANICAL ENGINEERING, 1990
Minor: Engineering Management
Sample University, City, KS

CHRONOLOGICAL RÉSUMÉ FORMAT

SAMPLE I. NAME
(785) 555-5556 (C) • samplename@outlook.com
5555 Sample Road, Great Town, KS 44481

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS:

Review the job description and pick the top characteristics they are looking for and how you meet and/or exceed those. Put them in this section. From research, this is the section to grab the reader's attention and to keep them reading on...

Example: If the job description asks for a minimum of 5 years of SOLIDWORKS experience in a manufacturing environment:

24+ years' experience with SOLIDWORKS programming, AutoCAD and similar programs. The past 19 years have been successfully creating design work in the manufacturing industry.

WORK HISTORY:

Industrial Engineer **2003-Present**
Tool Incorporated, Great Town, KS

- Researched the current shipping department and worked with a lean team to design a more productive operating process by utilizing the latest techniques. This increased customer's shipments within 24 hours turnaround and overall produce 50+ products out to customers each day.
- Developed a multi-step shipping process improvement plan to cross train all team members on quality control, resulting in increasing production numbers and helping the company grow 20% that quarter alone while exceeding customer satisfaction as reported by the sales team.
- Earned the Employee of the Year award for bringing the team together to accomplish this.

Design Engineer **2000-2003**
Mechanical Systems, Paradise, KS

- Introduced a complete safety package for a robot loader to increase efficiency on the floor.
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HVAC Engineer Assistant **1995-2000**
Engineering Consultants, Kansas City, KS

- Prepared building and equipment bid specifications.
- Evaluated HVAC equipment options.
- Incorporated EPA and OSHA regulations into safety procedures.

FORMAL EDUCATION:

Currently studying for the Professional Engineering License Exam

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE DEGREE: MECHANICAL ENGINEERING, 1990
Minor: Engineering Management
Sample University, City, KS

FUNCTIONAL RÉSUMÉ FORMAT

SAMPLE I. NAME
C: (785) 555-5556
samplename@outlook.com
Address, City, KS

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

10+ years as the line supervisor of highly competitive distribution center; leading and developing a team of 25+ members at a given time to ensure product is quality assured prior to leaving the facility with a 10% error rating in past year.

Proven skills include:

— Onboarding — Cross Training — Motivation
— Staffing/Scheduling — Safety Protocols — Retention

- Member of the National Management Association.
- Served as a liaison of upper management and the staffing company.
- Hold the record of highest production with lowest overhead cost of departments.
- Have trained 100+ employees and a track record of 90% retention of talent.
- Department has increased safety training and ensured cross training resulting in 60 less accident reports in the past year.
- Hands-on leadership, forklift operation and in-house certification.
- Certified with OSHA 10.
- CPR Certified and EMT coursework (no certification).
- Kansas **WORK***Ready*! Certificate: Silver level credential, 2003.
- Introduced company to the Kansas **WORK***Ready*! Resulting in numerous accolades for the proven ability of the assessment in the workplace.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Line Supervisor **2000-Present**
Assistant Line Supervisor (1.5 yrs)
Team Member (1.5 yrs)
Company Name, Topeka, KS

EDUCATION

HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA, 2000
SCHOOL NAME, CITY, KS

COMBINATION RÉSUMÉ FORMAT

SAMPLE I. NAME

Customer Service Professional
C: (785) 123-4567 • name@email.com • Address, City, State, Zip

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS:

*Proactive self-starter of taking initiative, personal responsibility, ownership of work and reputation for removing obstacles and making things happen. Passionately involved in coaching new hires and mentoring the interns. One who is committed to researching trends and suggesting innovations to stay ahead of competitors. Works closely with all levels of management, **KANSAS**WORKS and staffing companies for recruitment needs. One whom is passionate of providing high quality customer care.*

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

General Office

- Organized and implemented weekly group activities for collaboration and innovation
- Scheduled appointments for General Manager
- Maintained accurate financial records and timely invoice payments
- Prepared reports and created documents using Microsoft Office products

Customer Service

- Welcomed customers and visitors in a professional and courteous manner
- Provided customers with desired information in a timely manner
- Assisted customers with concerns
- Received exceptional rating from company's secret shopper

Communication

- Introduced Instant Messaging as a solution of responding to needs quickly
- Developed social media platform for company to have an online presence
- Established rapport with diverse individuals and groups in the community
- Suggested ideas to the management team and influenced action for employee morale

WORK HISTORY

OFFICE ASSISTANT / CUSTOMER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE

Company ABC, Paradise, KS • June 2013 - Present

- Maintain social media sites for company
- Communicate with customers, employees and other individuals to answer questions, trouble shoot problems and provide a clear picture to the owner
- Responsible for annual Employee Recognition Awards Luncheon, negotiate catering costs and ensuring the event was successful
- To pass public relation scripts to owner for addressing in a timely manner

EDUCATION

ASSOCIATE OF ARTS: BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, 2012

COLLEGE NAME, CITY, STATE, ZIP

TARGETED RÉSUMÉ FORMAT

ANN KINNEY
506 10th Avenue
Kansas City, MO 66118

(913) 123-4567 (C)
akinney@email.com

SUMMARY OF PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS:

- Experienced manager with expertise in human relations and project management
- Extensive background in staff recruitment and retention
- Staff training and development
- Superb written and oral communication skills
- Organizational and strategic planning
- Program marketing
- Contract negotiation and compliance
- Knowledge of federal and state employment law

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- Society of Human Resources Management
- Portland Human Resources Management Association

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Clinical Director
Riverbend Inc., Chicago, IL • 2010-2015

- Senior management of a Joint Commission of Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) accredited treatment facility. Responsible for all aspects of program management including clinical, administrative and fiscal.
- Responsible for recruiting, orienting, training and supervising 50 staff. Reduced staff turnover from 38 percent to 14 percent by improving staff orientation and training, professional development and mid-level management coaching.
- Provided oversight of all aspects of staff performance - performance evaluation, progressive discipline, mediation of staff disputes and grievance procedures in accordance with state and federal laws.
- Increased annual revenue by 38 percent through program marketing.

Program Director
R. Dykeman Center, Chicago, IL • 2003-2010

- Administrative, clinical and human resources management of an outpatient mental health center - 60 full-time employees and 45 contract employees housed in various locations.
- Responsible for the recruitment, supervision and performance evaluation of medical and administrative staff.
- Provided training to enhance workplace performance at all levels of staffing.
- Independent consultant to several small businesses, law firms, non-profit agencies and school districts on staff grievance procedures, team building, and the setting and achieving of organizational goals.

EDUCATION

University of Heidelberg, Heidelberg, Germany • May 2002
Doctor of Psychology in Clinical Psychology • 3.8 GPA

INTERVIEWING

Interviews can be a little overwhelming, but with the proper preparation, you'll be ready. Below are some general tips to get you focused. After a few interviews, you'll feel more confident.

Before the interview

- Plan ahead - Research the company, the position and if possible, the people you will meet in the interview. Review your work experience. Be ready to support past career accomplishments with specific information targeted toward the company's needs. Have your facts ready. There are lots of sample interview questions out there. If you journal out the questions and answer, you will be able to review for the next interview if this one does not work out.
- Be prepared - Take the following items with you to the interview: copies of your resume, driver's license, union card, military records and a list of references, both work and personal. You will need some of these items once you are hired as you will be asked to complete an I-9 form. Also bring any supporting documents to help you close the deal and be hired (e.g., an architect should bring his portfolio).
- Role Play - Once you have finished studying, begin role-playing (rehearsing). Use the general questions provided below. Write down answers if it helps make your presentation more concise. Try to keep your answers to the information your new employer will want to know. Staff at your local Kansas Job Center may also be available to provide mock interviews.
- Create and Rehearse - You have a limited amount of time to make an impression on someone. Create and rehearse a 30-second statement, also called an "elevator speech" or "30-second commercial." By writing this out and rehearsing it everywhere, it will flow more easily. Be prepared with the following information:
    - Who you are
    - What business or field you are in
    - What is your unique selling proposition and what makes you different from the competition
    - What benefits will employers derive from your services?

  Here is an example: "Hi, my name is Abby Smith, and I have five years experience as a Marketing Manager in a fast-paced advertising company. I love to build relationships with people, and I work a lot in the community building alliances and partnerships. My passion is working on projects with people.

How to answer interview questions

Interviewers often begin an interview by asking you to tell them about yourself. It is helpful to think about your response before going to the interview so you do not stumble with a response. Be sure and keep your answer tailored around the position and company you meet with.

Questions asking "what if" are difficult to answer. For example, what would you do if your supervisor told you something illegal? These questions should be answered based on your knowledge, experience and personal

values. Remember your solution is not as important as your attitude. A calm approach is best - do not rush into an answer. It is best to cushion your answer by saying something like, "One thing I might consider would be..." Then, if the interviewer does not like your solution, you can consider a different approach.

Interviewers are not allowed to ask questions concerning marital status, religion, ethnicity or national origin, age (other than if you are between the minimum and maximum age required for the job), children, childcare arrangements, pregnancy or disability. Most employers who ask for this information do so in casual conversation or out of ignorance. Think about how you will answer or avoid answering such questions.

Traditional vs. behavioral interview questions

In a traditional interview, you will be asked a series of questions that typically have straightforward answers like "What are your strengths and weaknesses?" or "What major challenges and problems did you face? How did you handle them?" or "Do you desire a typical work week?"

In a behavioral interview, an employer has decided what skills are needed in the person they hire and will ask questions to find out if the candidate has those skills. Instead of asking how you would behave, they will ask how you behaved in the past (what you did, what you said, how you reacted or how you felt). The interviewer will want to know how you handled a situation, instead of what you might do in the future. Behavioral interview questions will be more pointed, more probing and more specific than traditional interview questions. Follow-up questions will also be detailed.

Examples of Traditional Interview Q&As

1. **Can you tell me a little about yourself?** Prepare ahead of time by developing your own 30-second personal branding statement to tell clearly who you are, your major strengths and the clear benefit your employer received. The advantages of this approach are quickly getting their attention and interest in knowing more.

Sample answer: "I'm a seasoned retail manager who developed training programs and loss prevention techniques resulting in revenue savings of over $2.3 million for Acme Corp. during the past 11 years."

2. **What is your greatest weakness?** Be careful with this one. When you are asked what your greatest weakness is, try to turn a negative into a positive.

Sample answer: "Being organized hasn't always been my strongest point, but I implemented a time management system that really improved my organizational skills" or "I like to make sure my work is perfect, so I tend to spend a little too much time checking it. However, I've created a good balance by setting up a system to ensure everything is done correctly the first time."

3. **Do you prefer to work independently or on a team?** When the interviewer asks this question, they want to know if you're a team player or would rather work on your own.

Sample answer: "I am equally comfortable working as a member of a team or independently. In researching the LMN Company, your mission statement and the job description, I could see similarities to my previous position where there were some assignments requiring a great deal of independent work and others where the team effort was most effective. As I said, I'm comfortable with both."

4. **Why are you the best person for this job?** The best way to respond is to give concrete examples of why your skills and accomplishments make you the best candidate for the job. Take a few moments to

compare the job description with your abilities, as well as mentioning what you have accomplished in other positions. Be positive and reiterate your interest in the company and the position.

Sample answer: "I've got extensive experience in [name the appropriate field] and have the specific skills you are looking for," or "I'm a fast learner. I adapt quickly to change and will hit the ground running" or "I'm dedicated and enthusiastic about helping this company meet its goals and will provide top-quality results with minimal oversight. I'm an outstanding performer who takes pride in my work. You won't have any regrets when you hire me."

5. **What is your greatest strength?** This is one of the easier interview questions you'll be asked. When you are asked questions about your strengths, it's important to discuss attributes that qualify you for the job. The best way to respond is to describe the skills and experience directly correlated with the job for which you are applying.

Sample answer: "When I'm working on a project, I don't want to just meet deadlines. Rather, I prefer to complete the project well ahead of schedule" or "I pride myself on my customer service skills and my ability to resolve what could be difficult situations."

6. **How do you handle stressful situations?** Give some examples of stressful situations you've dealt with in the past. Tell how you use time management, problem-solving or decision-making skills to reduce stress.

Sample answer: "I react to situations, rather than to stress. That way, the situation is handled and doesn't become stressful" or "I actually work better under pressure and I've found I enjoy working in a challenging environment."

7. **What major challenges and problems did you face?** How did you handle them? Be sure to include specific examples of how you handled a particular difficult situation. Discuss how you researched the issue and contributed to finding a solution.

Sample answer: "During a difficult financial period, I was able to satisfactorily negotiate repayment schedules with multiple vendors" or "When the software development of our new product stalled, I coordinated the team that managed to get the schedule back on track. We were able to successfully troubleshoot the issues and solve the problems within a very short period of time."

8. **I see from your application you have been convicted of a crime. Will you explain this to me?** Be prepared to answer questions about your criminal record. Do not be lengthy in answering the question. Be truthful and accountable. Talk about regret, responsibility and redemption in your answer. It is best to write this out and practice prior to the interview.

Sample answer: "I'm glad you asked because I want you to feel comfortable hiring me. I want to assure you it had nothing to do with my previous employers. I made some poor choices I wish I hadn't made, but I have matured and will never make those same choices. Since then, I've taken the time to decide what field I would like to get into, have enrolled in several clerical courses and can type 50 wpm. I am familiar with several software programs for word processing and have excellent phone skills. I am very interested in learning all I can about this industry and I know I would be an asset to your organization," or "When I was younger I got mixed up with the wrong crowds and got in trouble for breaking into cars. We all do things when we are young we regret. I used the time to my advantage by completing an air conditioning and heating training program and received my certificate. I've researched several air conditioning companies in the area and yours is well respected. I would really like to be a part of your team" or "In my past, I was involved with drugs, but that is all behind me and I've taken control of my life. I have two years experience in food service and want to stay in this industry and learn as much as possible. Because of my past, when you hire me, your company is eligible for the Work Opportunity Tax Credit, which can save you up to $2,400. Are you familiar with this program?"

Preparation for the behavioral interview

The best way to prepare for a behavioral interview is to refresh your memory and consider some special situations you have dealt with or projects on which you have worked. Prepare stories to illustrate times when you have successfully solved problems or performed memorably. The stories will be useful to help you respond meaningfully in a behavioral interview. Remember, your answer is not as important as your attitude. A calm approach is best - do not rush into an answer.

Examples of Behavioral Interview Q&As

1. **Give me an example of a problem you faced on the job and tell me how you solved it.** This is a great question to show your ability to be creative and problem solve. Choose a problem you might face in the job you are interviewing for.

Sample answer: "I think it is important to get information and clarify the problem first before coming up with possible solutions. If you skip this step, other people's time can be wasted. For example, at my last job we had a problem where the situation was "X," the action I took was "Y" and the positive outcome was "Z." I was commended by Keith in Accounting for solving the problem and getting the project back on track."

2. **What did you like best and least about your previous job?** This question reveals a lot about you. You want to be sure to include the things you liked especially those that will appeal to the hiring manager. Give specific examples of how your last job allowed you to show your skills. Never make statements such as "I liked my last company because they gave me a lot of vacation days," or something similar. When answering what you liked least, keep it short and do not be negative.

Sample answer: "What I liked best about my previous job was getting to work with a wide variety of people. This really allowed me to learn how to be patient, handle different situations and provide excellent customer service. What I liked least was there didn't ever seem to be enough time to complete all the paperwork required. I know the paperwork is necessary, but I really prefer to utilize my time and talents to provide service to customers."

3. **Describe a situation when working with a team produced more successful results than if you had completed the project on your own.** The hiring manager wants to learn more about your thought process. You will want to show your ability to solicit ideas from others, listen carefully and persuade people to your point-of-view.

Sample answer: "I have worked both as a member of a team and independently in my career. I enjoy both and can do both equally well; however, I do think working with others has brought better results to projects. For example, at XYZ, I was asked to chair our committee on implementing a new process for taking customer orders. I was able to bring the team together for several meetings, stay in contact via emails and together we developed a new process that received great reviews from our boss. It also really improved the time it took to input information and in turn really made the customers a lot more satisfied as well."

At the interview

- Dress appropriately for the interview and the job. Dress at a level above the position you are interested in obtaining. For men and women, a nice conservative suit is appropriate. If you have tattoos, cover them as their dress code may not allow it. Remove piercings or put in clear studs. Try not to smoke immediately prior to the interview.
- Always go to the interview alone. Arrange for a babysitter and transportation. Plan to arrive 10 to 15 minutes early and be relaxed before the interview.
- Remember that your first impression is made when you walk through the door. Introduce yourself and shake hands firmly. Be friendly to everyone you meet. You never know who will be involved in the final hiring decision.
- Maintain eye contact with your interviewer. If there is more than one interviewer, include all interviewers when you answer the question. Show you want the job with your interest.
- Take notes. Show the interviewer you are serious about their time, what he or she says and demonstrate your organizational skills.
- Listen and adapt. Be sensitive to the style of the interviewer. Pay attention to those details of dress, office furniture and general decor, which will afford helpful clues to assist you in tailoring your presentation.
- Try to relate your answers to the interviewer and his or her company. Focus on achievements relevant to the position.
- Encourage the interviewer to share information about his or her company. Demonstrate your interest. Some suggested questions to ask the interviewer are provided in the next section.
- Be positive. Avoid negative comments about past employers. Answer questions in a clear and concise manner. Show how your experience and training will make you productive in the shortest time with minimal supervision.
- Thank the interviewer and ask for his or her business card. This will help when sending the follow-up note.

Questions to ask the interviewer

At the end of the interview, the interviewer will probably ask if you have any questions. Asking questions shows your interest in the company or the position. It is also your chance to clarify any item not thoroughly explained during the interview. Here are a few sample questions you might ask at the end of the interview:

- How would I be trained or introduced to the job?
- Will you please describe the department's goals for the year?
- What are the opportunities for growth and advancement in this company?
- Will you list the major job duties I would be performing in a typical day? Be sure you have a good understanding of the job (duties, work hours, etc.).
- When do you plan to make a hiring decision?
- What can one do to exceed your expectations in this role?
    - What does your top performer's day look like?
    - What attracted you to this company or what do you like best about working here?

- Do not ask about benefits or salary in the interview. Save this for the offer stage. Most likely, the employer will tell you.

If you do not have any questions, say something like, "Thank you, but I think you have given a good description of what the job involves and have answered all my questions. I am very interested in the job and am sure I would be an asset to the company."

Closing the interview

- If the employer does not offer you a job or say when you will hear about it, ask when you may call to find out about the decision.
- If the employer asks you to call or return for another interview, make a written note of the time, date and place.
- Thank the employer for the interview and reaffirm your interest and qualifications for the job.
- Ask for the interviewer's business card. If more than one person did the interview, ask for a business card from each.
- Send a thank you note immediately. If necessary, clarify any points you did not make well or overcome any employer hesitation. Reinforce your interest and qualifications.

See "Thank You Letters" on page 41 for more information.

After the interview

Make each interview a learning experience. After it is over, ask yourself these questions:

- What points did I make that seemed to interest the employer?
- What questions did I have the most difficulty answering?
- Did I present my qualifications well?
- Did I overlook important qualifications for the job?
- Did I learn all that I needed to know about the job?
- Did I ask all the questions I had about the job?
- Did I talk too much? Too little?
- Was I too tense? Too relaxed?
- Was I too aggressive? Not aggressive enough?
- Was I dressed appropriately?
- Did I effectively close the interview?
- What did my non-verbal communication "say?"

Make a list of specific ways you can improve your next interview. Remember, practice makes perfect. The more you interview the better you will get. If you plan carefully and stay motivated, you can market your job talents.

THANK YOU LETTERS

You should plan to send a thank you letter within 24 hours of your interview. Some professions expect a mailed hard copy while others find an emailed thank you appropriate. Follow the cues from the employer regarding the preferred method of contact

Tips on writing thank you letters

When you write your letters, use these guidelines:

- Use the same paper stock you used for your resume and cover letter.
- Write clearly and concisely.
- Be sincere - most people can tell when you are not being honest.
- Proofread your letter and make corrections. Check for spelling, grammar, typos, etc.
- Keep a copy of thank you notes and replies for your records, especially if you have attempted to restate or clarify topics discussed.
- Mention the day of the interview and job title.
- Talk about your interest in the company and the position for which you interviewed. Be specific about why you are interested and how you are a good fit for the team.
- Say you want the job.
- Address any questions you feel you did not fully answer during the interview. This letter is your last chance to make a positive impression on the interviewer.
- There will probably be several people interviewing, so set yourself apart from other candidates so the interviewer will remember you. Highlight a key point the interviewer will recall and therefore remember you.
- If you meet with more than one person, send them all thank you letters, each one a bit different because you don't know who is making the decisions.
- If the company communicated its specific needs, issues or challenges, use your thank you letter to show how you can meet their needs.
- If the company communicated its ideal qualifications for a candidate, use your thank you letter to outline how you meet or exceed those qualifications.

Thank you letter samples are on the following pages.

THANK YOU LETTER FORMAT

YOUR NAME
Your Street
Your City, State, Zip

Your Primary Phone
Your E-mail

Date

Name
Title
Company Name
Company Address
Company City, State, Zip

Dear Name or Title:

FIRST PARAGRAPH - Thank the person with whom you interviewed being sure to remind them of the position for which you interviewed. Refer to how impressed you were with the company or how enthusiastic you are about the possibility of learning more about the company. Highlight a key point from the interview that will make you stand out.

SECOND PARAGRAPH - In this paragraph you could offer information you may have forgotten to mention in the interview or refer to how your experience relates to the position. Include a brief statement explaining how these relate mentioning your qualifications, skills and education, if applicable to the position.

THIRD PARAGRAPH - Thank the interviewer once again for taking the time to meet with you. Make sure the employer knows you are still interested in the position. Tell the employer you look forward to hearing from them and can provide additional information, if necessary.

Respectfully,

Leave four spaces for handwritten signature

Your Name (typed)

THANK YOU LETTER EXAMPLE

JULIE ALDEN
1275 Apple Lane
Topeka, KS 66612-2345

(123) 456-7890 (C)
jalden@email.com

August 9, 2017

Patty Turner
Human Resources Manager
Patty's Place
1234 Sailor Dr.
Topeka, KS 66612-2345

Dear Ms.Turner:

Thank you for meeting with me last Friday about the Administrative Assistant position. I was very impressed with your facility and believe my qualifications would be a good match for Patty's Place.

As discussed in my interview, I have more than 10 years of experience in an office setting and feel my skills match your needs. My affiliation with the Society of Human Resources Management will also be of value to your company. I welcome the opportunity to learn new responsibilities working for your company and am very interested in the position.

Again, thank you for taking the time to meet with me. I would be pleased to provide any further information and look forward to hearing from you. You may reach me at either my cell phone number or email address as listed above.

Respectfully,

Julie Alden

Julie Alden

TESTING / ASSESSMENTS

Some jobs may require testing or assessment. Usually, the job announcement or ad will mention required tests. Tests that may be given include:

- Assessment tests - Predict your ability to learn and perform job tasks.
- Practical tests - Measure what you know and what you can do in a job (e.g., word processing speed for a secretarial job or knowledge of street names and routes for a firefighter job).

Below are some online resources available to improve your basic computer skills:

- ACT WorkKeys Curriculum - Please enroll with your workforce professional.
- Microsoft Word Tutorial - This site will take you through a tutorial on the functions and tools available in Microsoft Word.
- Learn Free - This site offers courses about everyday life, math and money, computers, Microsoft Office, email, Internet and online classes.
- Kansas **WORK***Ready*! Certificate - This is a nationally recognized certificate informing employers of your skills before you ever walk into the interview room. It measures your skills in three areas - Workplace Documents, Graphic Literacy and Applied Math - and certifies you as a Platinum, Gold, Silver or Bronze candidate. Benefits to you are:
    - Leads to higher starting salaries
    - Improves your chances for career advancement and promotions
    - Makes interviews less stressful because your skills are already documented
    - Provides you the confidence of knowing your specific strengths
    - Allows you to assess your skills and choose the best career for you

  If you are interested in taking this assessment, please contact your local Kansas Job Center, visit **KANSAS**WORKS.com or call (877) 509-6757.

How to prepare for assessments

Brush up on job skills related to your job field. For example, if you are taking a typing test, practice typing. If you are taking a construction test, review books and blueprints. If you are taking WorkKeys, ask a workforce professional to enroll you in the refresher course - ACT WorkKeys Curriculum (previously known as Career Ready 101).

Here are some tips to help you with most tests:

- It is natural to be nervous about tests.
- Make a list of what you need for the test (pencil, eyeglasses, ID, etc.). Check it before leaving.
- Get a full night's sleep.
- If you are sick, call to reschedule the test.
- Arrive early at the test site.
- If you need any special accommodations, tell the test administrator in advance.
- If you do not understand the test instructions, ask for help before the test begins.
- Work as fast as you can. Do not linger over difficult questions.
- Find out if guessing is penalized. If it is not, guess on questions of which you are unsure.
- After the test, find out what your scores actually mean.

For many jobs, your work talents and other capabilities will count more than your test scores.

FOR MORE **INFORMATION**

NETWORKING - KANSASWORKS.COM

EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING RESOURCES:

Kansas Department of Commerce: KansasCommerce.gov
State of Kansas Employment: jobs.ks.gov
Career One Stop: CareerOneStop.org
O*Net Online: ONetOnline.org
Federal Bureau of Labor Statistics: bls.gov
Federal Employment: UsaJobs.gov
Job Corps: JobCorps.gov
ACT WorkKeys: act.org/workkeys
ACT KeyTrain Curriculum: KeyTrain.com

MORE RESOURCES:

Kansas Commission on Veteran Affairs: kcva.ks.gov/kanvet
Kansas Department of Labor: klic.dol.ks.gov
Kansas Department for Children and Families: dcf.ks.gov
Kansas Department of Corrections: doc.ks.gov
Kansas Board of Regents (College & Universities): KansasRegents.gov
Kansas Commission on Disability Concerns: KcdcInfo.ks.gov
Kansas Registered Apprenticeship Program: KansasApprenticeship.org

OTHER USEFUL WEBSITES:

Kansas Realtor Association: KansasRealtor.com
Kansas Chamber of Commerce: KansasChamber.org
Kansas Department of Motor Vehicles Relocation Guide: dmv.org
Relocation Calculator: HomeFair.com

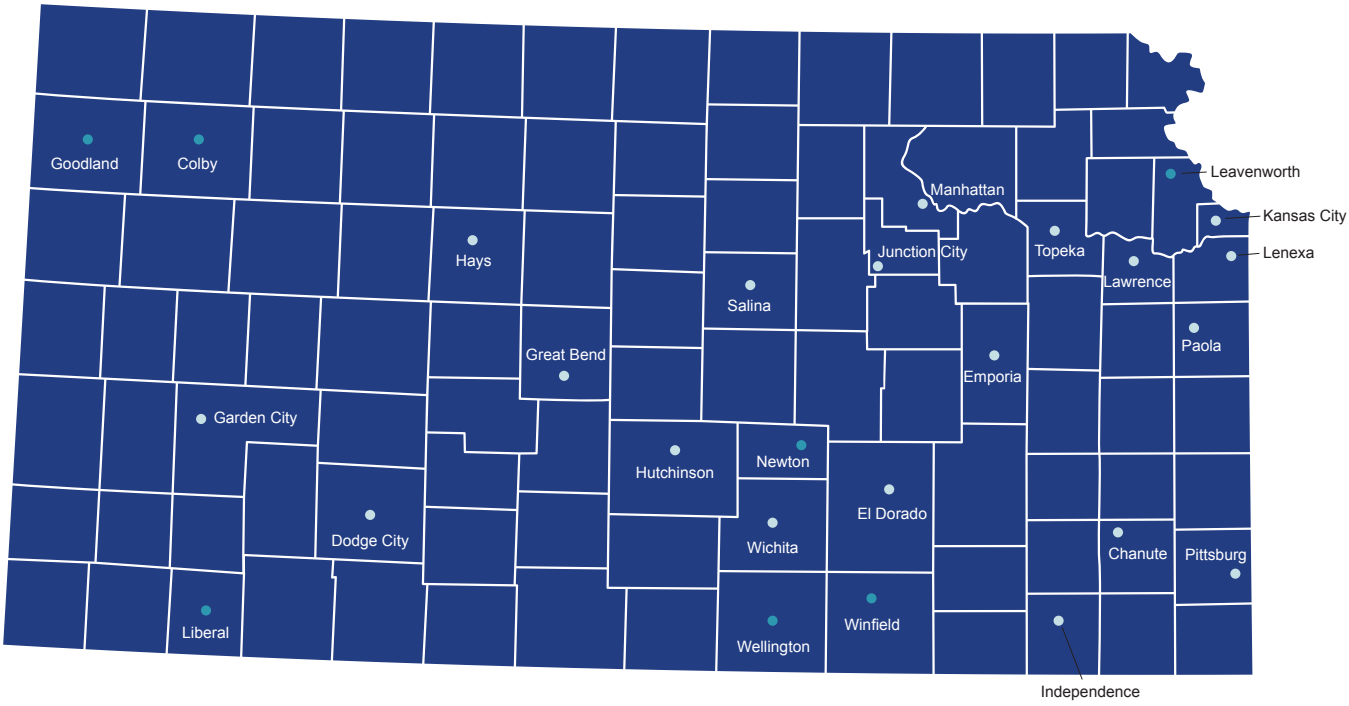
The Kansas Department of Commerce is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities and other barriers to employment.

TAKE NOTES

LINKING QUALIFIED JOB CANDIDATES TO BUSINESSES!

KANSASWORKS

"Your Workforce Network"



KANSAS JOB CENTERS

● Full-Time Service ● Part-Time Service

FOR MORE INFORMATION

(877) 509-6757

Email: workforcesvcs@kansasworks.com

KANSASWORKS.com

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