Skills to Pay the Bills

They say everyone is good at something. But nowadays certain skills will put you on the fast track to a great job. Here's a quick rundown of the Top 10.

Active Listening
Giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.

Speaking
Talking to others to convey information effectively.

Reading Comprehension
Understanding written sentences and paragraphs in work related documents.

Social Perceptiveness
Being aware of others' reactions and understanding why they react as they do.

Service Orientation
Actively looking for ways to help people.

Writing
Communicating effectively in writing as appropriate for the needs of the audience.

Critical Thinking
Using logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions or approaches to problems.

Monitoring
Monitoring/Assessing performance of yourself, other individuals, or organizations to make improvements or take corrective action.

Instructing
Teaching others how to do something.

Coordination
Adjusting actions in relation to others' actions.

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Applications

Some employers do not require a resume or cover letter. Ask the potential employer what they require to apply for the position. Many times this just includes a job application.

Tips for completing an application

- Never use abbreviations or slang.
- Avoid stating "see resume."
- Keep your Personal Data Record available to avoid making errors.
- For paper applications, print clearly in black ink.
- Complete the entire document, using "N/A" (not applicable) only when necessary.
- Avoid negative information, if possible. Be truthful and positive when sensitive information is unavoidable. Never give false information.
- Due to limited space, showcase the skills and experience best suited to the job.
- Be sure to include the correct job title on the application.
- If you have gaps in your employment history, list positive ways you spent the time while unemployed.
- When asked about the salary requirements, respond, "negotiable."

— Information courtesy of the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services Job Seeker's Guide

A Resume Guide

There's no telling just how many resumes an employer might get in a day for a job. It's the first impression you make to a prospective employer, and it only takes 10 to 15 seconds to determine if you will be called in for an interview.

Top Resume Strategies

Go beyond the standard resume.
Here are four strategies to make your resume unique:
Sell yourself - Identify what makes you different from other applicants.
Identify your transferable skills - These skills are major selling points that set you apart.
Highlight your accomplishments - Listing accomplishments gives you credibility.
Use keywords effectively - Specific words used in your resume are critical to communicate your value to an organization.

Why have a GREAT resume?

- Grab the attention of employers and recruiters.
- Sell your strongest skills and accomplishments.
- Show why you are a potential match for a position or project.
- Communicate your current capabilities and future potential.
- It helps you take the next step in your career.
- It gets you the interview.

The Interview

Your resume has caught the attention of a perspective employer, and you have an interview.

What's the next step?

Here are a few tips to help you ace the interview.

Wear the Right Outfit.

Check with the HR department for the company's dress code. Wear clean, pressed, conservative clothes in neutral colors. Avoid excessive make-up and jewelry. Have nails and hair neat, clean, and trimmed. Don't overdo you favorite perfume or cologne.

Be professional.

Know the name, title and the pronunciation of the interviewer's name. Give a firm handshake and maintain good eye contact. Don't talk too much about your personal life and don't badmouth former employers.

Be On Time.

Know where you are going, allowing time for traffic and parking. Show up 10 to 15 minutes early; arriving late to the interview says a great deal about you. Keep your cell phone charged and have the interviewer's number handy in case circumstances are beyond your control, but turn it off before the interview.

Send a Thank You Note.

Here's a chance to make a final impression on the interviewer. You may find it is much appreciated and remembered.

Questions?

Don't let the interviewer ask all the questions. In fact, they expect you to ask some! Have questions prepared to learn more about the position and the company, such as:

- How soon are you looking to fill this position?
- What is the typical career path for this job?
- What are some of the biggest challenges facing this position, this department, or this organization?
- What is an average day on this job like?
- How would you describe the ideal candidate?
- What kind of training and/or professional development programs do you have?