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Advancement  
Center

"Your Regional Workforce Partner"

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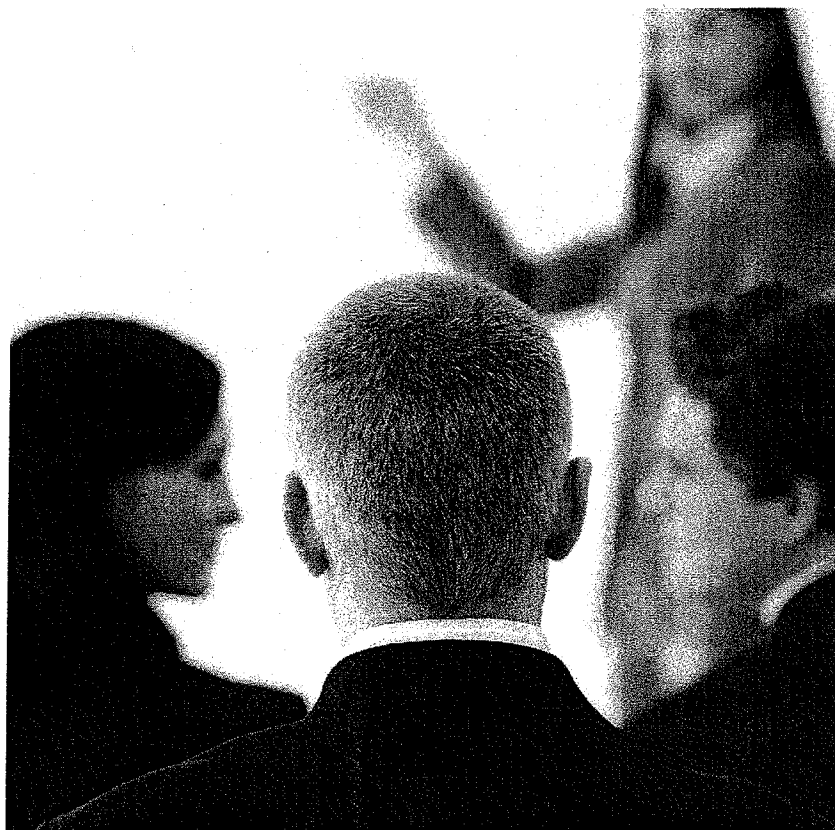
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# Helpful Hints for the Mature Job Seeker



**Presented by Nashville Career Advancement Center**

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## What's Age Got to do With It? Good News/Bad News

- In 2000, 13% of the workforce was 55 or older
- By 2015, 20% workforce predicted to be 55 or older (**Bureau of Labor Statistics**)
- The aging Baby Boomer workforce population is much larger than the following Gen-X workforce population
- Hiring managers are becoming more age-friendly

***BUT...YOU cannot take a growing Boomer job market for granted!!!***

### What Can *You* do to Keep a Competitive Edge?

- **Keep your job skills and computer skills up to date**
- **Stay current with industry trends**
  - *Take seminars, classes, or workshops to maintain or update skills*
  - *Take Microsoft Office classes if you are unskilled – free at public library, and low cost through Metro Schools Continuing Education programs*
  - *Read the Business Journal or Business section of the newspaper (free at your public library)*
  - *Research companies and industries online*
- **Stay current with cultural and news events**
  - *Read, watch, or listen to the news daily*
  - *Take advantage of free cultural events in the community*
  - *Read fashion and pop culture articles online or in magazines (free at the library) –*
- **Keep your mind, body, and spirit in shape**
  - *Read books for enjoyment, do crossword puzzles*
  - *Eat right and develop/maintain a fitness routine*
  - *Spend relaxing, fun times with friends and family; spend time with yourself*
- **Maintain professional and social networks**

### Update and "Age-Proof" your resume

***Is your resume telling your age? It might be, if...***

- You state your date of birth (obviously...but there are still a few of those floating around)
- You use your birth date in your email address
- You give your high school or college graduation date
- You provide dates of military service
- You provide your entire work history dating back 30 years

### ***How can you avoid this?***

- Obviously, leave off your birth date in any form (email or bold statement)
- Leave off dates of graduation unless within past 5 years
- Leave off dates of military service unless within past 5 years
- \*Only go back 10-15 years in your work history

\*Exceptions: unless seeking upper management/executive positions, IT positions, or have been at your former job for 20 years

## **Résumé Formats: Which One Is Best For You?**

### **1. Chronological Résumé**

#### **PROs:**

- Good for people with a strong work history
- Many employers prefer it
- Logical, easy to read

#### **CONs:**

- It displays problems like job-hopping and gaps (such as while taking care of aging parents or taking time off for parenting)
- Not good for career-changers and those with little work experience

### **2. Functional (also called "Skills") Résumé**

#### **PROs:**

- Can present life experiences (not just jobs)
- Good for those with limited paid working experience
- Prevents repeating job duties
- Disguises gaps in work record or series of short-term jobs

#### **CONs:**

- Harder to prepare
- De-emphasizes job tasks and responsibilities

### **3. Combination (or "Hybrid") Résumé**

#### **PROs:**

- Highlights most relevant skills and accomplishments
- Showcases both skills and work history

#### **CONs:**

- De-emphasizes job tasks and responsibilities
- Can sound repetitive

Functional or Combination Resumes are the most age-friendly. Examples are provided in the Appendix.

## **General recommendations:**

- Highlight your current skills, not skills that are obsolete
- Highlight your accomplishments, not just job duties
- Highlight recent job-related training completed, or seminars attended
- Leave off all personal information (marital status, hobbies, etc.)
- Use action verbs to start each bullet describing a work activity



## **Interviewing Tips**

**An interview is a mutual exchange of information between an employer and a candidate for a position.**

### **Before the Interview...**

*Know the Job, Know the Company, Know Yourself*

- Research the job, company, and industry
- Review your qualifications against the requirements listed in the posting
- Prepare and practice your answers to possible interview questions

### **Take to the Interview...**

- Company contact information and directions to the interview site
- Questions to ask the interviewer
- Copies of your references, and your résumé if the job requires it
- Past employment addresses and dates

### **Dress for Success (or "Presentation is Everything")**

- One step above job requirement
- Clean and neat (good hygiene, pressed clothing)
- Conservative, contemporary is usually better (dark or neutral colored clothing – avoid looking too old or too young)
- No Distractions (strong fragrances, too-bright clothing, dangling/flashy jewelry)

## **Appropriate Dress and Grooming Suggestions for Women**

- Limit jewelry to a minimum. Avoid charm bracelets.
- Keep heels low or mid-height and comfortable.
- Generally, stick to conservative hem lengths, depending on current fashion.
- Perfume reminder: Don't wear it. The interviewer might be allergic, or not care for the fragrance's associations.
- Wear clear or light-colored nail polish. Dark colors, and "designer" nails may distract.
- If you're on a limited budget, shop at thrift and consignment shops for bargains, but be sure to get a good fit and good quality.

## **Appropriate Dress and Grooming Advice for Men**

- Buy a white or button-down oxford shirt that can be versatile - suits to jeans.
- Wear a cotton T-shirt or undershirt under your dress shirt.
- Make sure your fingernails are clean and cut to an appropriate length.
- Do not wear cologne or after-shave lotion (the interviewer may be allergic).
- Wear a watch (shows that time is important to you).
- Wear shoes appropriate to your clothing – well polished or cleaned.

## **Arriving at the Interview**

- Alone
- 10 to 15 minutes before the interview
- Respectfully announce yourself to the receptionist
- Relax!

## **During the Interview**

### **Styles of Interviews:**

**Phone** – This type interview is obviously not in person, but it's just as important. Keep your resume by your phone, and reschedule if you can't avoid distracting background noise

**One-on-One** - This is the familiar old standby - one Interviewer and you.

**Informal** - We're all just buddies here—but it's still All Business!

**Group** - You are one of many being interviewed at the same time. Attempt to keep the interviewer "in your zone" – make eye contact with them, and don't defer to other candidates. Pretend it's just you and the interviewer (but don't hog the interview)

**Panel** - You are being interviewed by more than one individual at the same time. When answering questions, make eye contact first with the person asking the question, then make eye contact with the others on the panel as you're answering.



## **Interviewing Etiquette**

- Handshake - be firm but don't break their hand
- Being seated - wait until they tell you to have a seat
- Eye contact - look speaker directly into their eyes, but be aware of other cultures
- Posture - sit up straight and lean towards the interviewer
- Respect the interviewer's personal space
- Don't raise the issue of money-but be prepared to discuss salary if the employer brings it up
- Listen, ask, and learn

## **Interviewing Dos**

- Be natural and friendly, but businesslike; smile
- Present yourself with confidence
- Turn off cell phones and pagers
- Take time to think before you answer the interviewer's questions
- Be prepared to explain what you can do for the company
- Show enthusiasm for the company and/or the position

## **Interviewing Don'ts**

- Give rambling, irrelevant answers to questions, talk too much or too fast
- Arrive late for interview...or not show up at all (call ahead if this is unavoidable!)
- Be overbearing, overaggressive, or conceited
- Appear to have too little confidence
- Condemn past employers, co-workers, or school
- Want a position for only a short time...and not let the interviewer know about it
- Chew gum or smoke (even if the interviewer does or offers)
- Make personal comments or flirt with the interviewer
- Be defensive/too casual, or have a "chip on your shoulder"
- Call the interviewer by his/her first name unless he/she invites you to - even if they're your child's age.
- Do give examples of past successes, but don't dwell on the past – that was then; this is now

## **Interviewer Gathers Information**

