



JOB SEEKERS' FORUM

FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) compiled by Liz Summers

Topic: Career Objectives

The purpose of a career objective is to tell the employer what it is that you want to do. The rest of the resume focuses on supporting this objective and convincing the employer of your ability to do it.

Q: *Should I include an object statement on my resume?*

A: Yes. An objective statement should be included on your resume.

Q: *Why is it important to have the objective statement as a separate line, apart from the summary?*

A: Having the objective as a separate line apart from the summary is important because it quickly identifies and clarifies what you're looking for. When networking, it allows anyone who may be assisting you in your search to easily convey to others what you're looking for as well. It makes it easy for them to talk about you and pass your information along.

Q: *Can I list more than one target job or role in my objective statement?*

A: Yes, it is ok to state more than one target role in your objective. However, the roles should be closely related. The content of your resume should speak to the objective, expanding on your skills and experiences.

Q: *Should the objective be general or specific?*

A: It depends. If your goal is to land a very specific role to the exclusion of other, related roles (ie, *Mainframe Application Development Manager* or *Oracle DBA*), then it is ok to be specific. However, it is important to not limit yourself too much. In the above example, saying "IT Leadership Position in Application Development," would open up more options for perhaps the role of Supervisor, Manager, Team Leader, Customer/IT Liaison, working with either mainframe and/or web technologies. Likewise, saying "seeking a role in Database Administration," would open you up for greater consideration as well.

Q: *What is an example of a well-written, focused career objective?*

A: Examples:

"To manage people, interface with customers, and work with highly technical software or hardware applications."

"Accomplished IT professional seeking a leadership position that would maximize my strong skills in the areas of staff and project management; full systems development life cycle; client interface and training. Capable and willing to manage both new and old technology solutions to advance your organization."

“Recent university graduate seeking an internship with an online media company who can utilize my developed skills in information technology, communications, and web design.”

“Obtain a position at XYZ Company where I can maximize my management skills, quality assurance, program development, and training experience.”

“Desire a position utilizing organizational, interpersonal and communication skills. Particularly interested in business analysis, project management and infrastructure management.”

“Dynamic senior project manager with over fifteen years experience. Experience in ecommerce in multiple industries such as Health Care and Financial Services. Creative, persuasive, and multi-disciplinary problem solver with a high degree of emotional intelligence.”

Q: *Where can I go to read more about this topic?*

A: [How to Write a Career Objective | eHow.com](#)

[Should You Use a Career Objective on Your Resume?](#)

<http://www.find-your-dream-career.com/sample-career-objective.html>

Topic: Be Positive!

It is very important to remain positive when in transition and conducting a job search. But just how do you do that when the search becomes challenging and lengthy? The tendency is to get burned out and discouraged.

Q: *How to answer questions from friends/family about the job search process.*

A: When answering questions or giving updates to family and friends about your search, it is important to be positive. Of course you will have down days, and may need to vent some, but be careful with the negative talk because you do not want to burn them out, nor yourself. Also, when talking to them, make sure that you talk about things other than your search sometimes. You want them to know that you value them as family/friends, and that although you're in transition, you still enjoy their company or talking with them about current events, their lives, etc. Finally, resist the urge to stop talking to anyone at all. There will be periods when you just want to keep moving forward with your search and you just won't feel like giving everyone the play-by-play of how things are going. But still talk to someone to keep from shutting yourself out. Try talking to a stranger on the train, or in the grocery store. You never know who you might meet!

Q *How to answer questions from employers about what you're doing now, and why you haven't landed.*

A: Don't get tripped up by this question! Interviewers ask this question in order to determine what's wrong with you that you don't have a job yet. Don't fall for it. Simply address the question honestly and state the facts. Speak with confidence, and keep it brief. If appropriate, use the following techniques: **“no..., but...”** or **“yes..., and....”** **“No**, I do not have my PMP certification, **but** I am working towards it and plan to take the exam by the end of the year.” **“Yes**, I am a Six Sigma Black Belt, **and** I am seeking volunteer opportunities that will allow me to utilize this newly acquired certification, while I continue my search.”

Q: *How do I remain motivated during my search?*

A: There are many ways to remain motivated while searching for your next opportunity. It gets tough, but it's important to keep thinking positive thoughts. The mind is a powerful tool. If you think that you can do it, or that things will work out in your favor, then they will. Other ways include listening to motivational tapes, reading inspirational books, articles or testimonials, exercising, talking to people who are in your situation for encouragement and support. (While it is important to be able to commiserate and share stories, be careful that this does not turn into a pity party. That can be counter-productive.) Also, pray (if you're into

it). Prayer works wonders, and it changes things!

Q: *What are some tips for conveying a positive attitude when on a phone interview?*

A: To convey a positive attitude while on a phone interview, try conducting the interview while standing up, and looking in the mirror. Smile, and be mindful to change your intonation. Other tips concerning phone interviews: if at all possible, use your land line, not a cell phone; eliminate all distractions on your end – turn off the radio and T.V., isolate yourself from any young children in the house; do not use a speaker phone.

Q: *I have been looking for a job for a year. What am I doing wrong? Is it my attitude?*

A: Is it your attitude? Could be. As we mentioned before, attitude has a lot to do with conducting a successful search. That being said, you could be doing everything right, and still be in the middle of what seems like a never-ending job search. There are so many factors that come into play. Some you can control -- are you willing to relocate, take a temporary assignment, or a cut in pay? and some you can't – after three callbacks and five interviews, the position went to an internal candidate, or the position was pulled for budget reasons. The length of time that you've been searching doesn't really matter. The key here is to do your best and address any obstacles within your control, and try not to worry or stress over the things that you cannot control.

Q: *Does diet and exercise play a role in my job search?*

A: Absolutely yes! Diet, exercise and getting enough sleep are all important factors in staying energized and motivated during your search.

Q: *Where can I go to read more about this topic?*

A: [Stay Optimistic and Motivated](http://blacksgonegeek.org/ToolBox.aspx)
<http://blacksgonegeek.org/ToolBox.aspx>

Topic: Tricky Interview Questions

We've all encountered them. Some make sense, and some leave us wondering "what did that have to do with anything?" Rest assured though – every interview question is important to the interviewer. Your response could be the difference between landing the job and waiting indefinitely for the phone to ring.

Q: *How do you best answer "Why do you think you are suitable for this job" in a job interview? This is a very tricky question that we need to get right.*

A: This is a very good question. Before you say a word, think! Take a few seconds to think about your response. If necessary, repeat the question to buy yourself a little time. Then answer the question working backwards. In other words, start with what you think the employer is looking for and then step into those shoes, if you can. Tell the employer what you can do for them and how you will accomplish what, with specific types of results. Talk about your past experiences and how you helped contribute to the bottom line. Past experience is viewed as future success. Tell work stories where appropriate.

Also, realize that the interviewer is not just looking for your answer, but *how* you express yourself and your attitude towards work. Do you come across as confident and enthusiastic? Do you give good eye contact without staring? Do you ramble on and on? Finally, it's ok to brag (a little), but remember to do it with

humility. Practice confidently stating your abilities and accomplishments without sounding boastful or obnoxious.

Q: *Where can I go to read more about this topic?*

A: [How do you best answer 'Why do you think you are suitable for this job' in a Job interview? I believe this is a very tricky question that we need to get right.](#)

Topic: Career Fairs

Career/job fairs are great places to network, get noticed, and find out about the latest opportunities at companies – or are they?

Q: *Are career fairs really worth the time?*

A: Yes! Admittedly, it can be frustrating at times, and a few bad experiences can make you want to eliminate this activity from your job search strategy, but don't do it. Career fairs **are** worth the time. You never know who you may meet or get to interview with on the spot.

Q: *What should our expectations be going into a job fair?*

A: When planning to attend a job fair, you should first of all expect crowds (these days anyway). Some fairs require you to pre-register, so do that. You should expect to see company representatives at booths, who will talk with you briefly. You can expect to stand in line to talk to the representatives, the length of the line/wait can depend on the popularity of the company, the number of posted openings, the time of day, or anything really. So come prepared to be patient.

Note that companies may or may not be accepting resumes on the spot. Either way, you can expect them to ask you to apply online. Know too that companies have different reasons for attending fairs. Some may have specific hiring goals for specific positions, and others may be there just for the sake of marketing and PR – “we attended **x** number of Diversity job fairs last year.”

Q: *What are the best techniques to utilize when attending a job fair?*

A: The best technique to use when attending a career fair is to be prepared. Do your research. Know which companies will be there and determine if you're interested in talking with them. Check out their career sites and posted jobs. Having this research in hand when approaching a recruiter will go a long way. Prioritize the companies in the order of preference. Talk to your first choices first, and then go down your list. Also, try to relax some and have casual conversations with people, including fellow job seekers. You don't necessarily have to treat every conversation as if it's a job interview. Dress for success and bring plenty of resumes.

Topic: Job Follow-up

So, you've applied to a job, you've had a phone screen, and maybe even an in-person interview? Now what? How long should you wait to hear back? Should you call them, or wait in agony for them to get back to you?

Q: *How do you follow-up about a job without being a pest?*

A: We could write volumes on this topic alone. While it is very important to follow-up to express continued

interest in the position, you want to do it the right way and not become a pest.

Q: *After an in-person interview, should I follow-up via email, phone call or snail mail?*

A: While it used to be very appropriate to follow-up after an interview with a hand-written note in the mail, these days, that method is no longer viewed as the best way because it's simply too slow. Decisions are made quickly – usually sooner than an “old fashioned” letter would reach the interviewer's desk. Email is fine.

Q: *How long should I wait before following-up to ask about the status of my candidacy?*

A: Typically, one week is an acceptable amount of time to wait before following-up. If no response, wait a few more days and follow-up again.

Q: *When do you stop the follow-up and assume that you are no longer in the running?*

A: This is a tricky one. There really is no set answer. Are two follow-up attempts too many? Maybe, maybe not. Could be that the company is swamped and you're still in the running. Could be that the decision has been made and they've moved on. Could be they've tried to reach you for a callback without success. Bottom line, you have to use your best judgment here -- you'll know when enough is enough.

Q: *Where can I go to read more about this topic?*

A: <https://technology.theladders.com/career-advice/follow-up-without-being-pest>

Topic: Career Change

Thinking about making a career change? Ready to try something completely different, read on for tips on how to go about it.

Q: *How do I go about making a career change?*

A: When considering a career change, it is important to first do your research on your intended next career. Find out if the duties of the job are what you expect/want/like; find out what training is required; talk to people (in person or online) who are in the field and would be willing to help you. It will also be important to research the salary. Will you be able to live on the salary provided by a new career? Consider the fact that you may have to start at the bottom and work your way up the ranks to the higher salary.

Q: *How do I establish goals in a new career?*

A: Before making the change, you should know in your head what you think your goals should be. Think about how you see yourself, and how others see you. Are you projecting what you want to convey to others who may be giving you an opportunity in a new career? Be as clear as possible when talking to people, especially prospective employers about why you are seeking a career change. You will most likely have to answer this question a lot. Be confident and stay focused.

Q: *Can I use my old skills in a new career?*

A: Hopefully, yes! You should be able to identify some skills that will be transferable from career A to career B. You have to train yourself to see these parallels before you can make others see them. For example, if you are good with fixing things – say trains, cars or whatever, and you're looking to become a computer technician, you can draw the parallel that paying attention to detail and working with your hands, while fixing trains or cars will serve you well in the role of computer tech where you will be troubleshooting computer hardware components. Or learning the sales cycle as an insurance agent will help you do the job of computer sales representative for IBM. The parallels will more than likely be there. It will be up to you to

draw them out and expound on them in order to land a job in your new career. Good luck!

Topic: Networking For The Holidays

The holiday season is upon us. There will be lunches and parties, informal and formal get-togethers. Here are some tips on how to continue your search during the season.

Q: *How do I network at holiday parties without being a pest or killing the mood?*

A: Very carefully! Let's face it – looking for a job is not going to be the main thing on your mind when enjoying the festivities of the holidays. But, it *is* important to always be prepared and ready to talk about your situation and what you're looking for if the opportunity presents itself. And, if the opportunity does not present itself, you should make one! When mingling, be at the ready with your "elevator speech" and/or have a Handbill prepared to hand out to anyone who is interested in helping you. Don't forget to relax and enjoy yourself.

Q: *I do not drink. How do I handle drinking situations at holiday lunches or parties without leaving a bad impression on someone who may be able to assist me in my search?*

A: If you're not a drinker, then don't drink. There are a number of ways to respond when offered a drink. You can simply say "no thank you;" ask for sparkling water or club soda; drink apple or cranberry juice, etc., etc. Whatever you do, don't make a big fuss about it. Once you've stated your position (or ordered an alternative refreshment) people will move on if you do. You don't have to give a sermon about why you don't drink or judge others who are drinking.

Also, if you don't normally drink, but decide to have something just this once, be very careful if you don't know how your body will respond to alcohol. This is not the time to be experimenting – in the company of potential employers or sponsors! If you *do* drink, also be careful to not over do it. You want to stay alert for a host of reasons, including to make a good impression on someone who may be able to help you in your search.

Happy Holidays!!

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