

NOTE: Since the majority of our summer seasonal employees have historically been high school and college students, this presentation has been designed for newer entrants into the workforce.

Congratulations! You're in the job market now and looking for a summer job. What many job candidates don't realize is that there are tips which can help them vastly improve their chances of success in obtaining the position they'd like to have. On the other hand, there are also many pitfalls to avoid – and these pitfalls can tend to land job candidates solidly into the "NO" category faster than they realize is possible – and most of the time these individuals don't even know why (I could have easily done a presentation on the "Don'ts" alone and called it "How Not to Get a Job.") So stay tuned for some hints, some "Do's" and a few "Don'ts" to help improve your odds of obtaining the job you want. You'll also notice that many of these sound like good common sense, but take it from a Human Resources Manager when I tell you that common sense isn't always common practice!

- **Determine what you'd like to do for a summer job.**
- **Understand what an employer will be looking for: qualified employees who are responsible, reliable, trustworthy, and who have a great attitude.** Ask yourself frequently if you are reflecting these characteristics to a prospective employer? If not, spiff up your image and approach as an applicant.
- **Completing an Application**
 - First of all, read any available position description and qualifications for the job(s) for which you are applying. Do not apply for a position if you do not meet the basic qualifications.
 - Read the instructions on the application carefully and then complete the application according to those directions. Consider for a moment that if you don't follow basic instructions on an application, an employer may wonder if you would follow basic instructions as an employee!
 - Remember that you are applying for a position, not "signing up for one."
 - By the way, spelling counts!! You don't want to be an applicant whose spelling is noticeably horrendous. Ditto on your grammar on your application, in e-mail communications to the employer, or in person with the employer – I assure you that the employer will then be wondering about how well you would communicate with their patrons.
- References. You want to provide the names and contact info of responsible (and non-relative) adults who know you well and who can speak to your character and/or experience when an employer calls them to conduct a reference check. Do not waste a hiring manager's valuable time by listing your sixteen-year-old girlfriend or your aunt (or so on) as references.
- Final word on applications: Take the time to complete the application correctly and review it before submitting the application to the organization for which you'd like to work.
- **The interview.** Get called for an interview? Awesome! Here's your chance to make a great impression with the hiring manager.
 - First of all, if you are scheduled for an interview, remember your interview time and location. (You're probably thinking "Duh!" right now, but you'd be surprised!).
 - Prepare for your interview. Go to their website and be familiar with their organization. Be familiar with the position – and the qualifications – for which you are interviewing. Be able to tell the interviewer why you are interested in working for their organization and, specifically, why you find that position appealing. Be able to tell the interviewer about yourself – emphasizing any qualifications, previous experience, leadership abilities, etc. you think would serve to strengthen your standing as a candidate (remember that other people want this job, too!). Have a couple of questions prepared in advance to ask the interviewer.
 - Appropriate dress and neat grooming. Dress appropriately for the job for which you are interviewing. No one expects a lifeguard applicant to come to an interview in a business suit or their Sunday finest, but we also don't expect them to come to the interview in casual shorts & t-shirt or as though they are heading to a nightclub once they've completed the interview. Employers simply expect their applicant who are interviewing to be neat and well-groomed and to wear clean, pressed, appropriate clothing. Just so you know, parents can be very helpful in providing guidance here!!
 - Arrive 15 minutes prior to the start time of your interview.
 - In the interview, convey a cheerful, confident, and "grounded" attitude. Maintain good eye contact with the interviewer. Take the initiative to reach out to shake the interviewer's hand – both when

you are initially greeting the interviewer and at the conclusion of the interview (nice firm handshake; not too limp and not a vice-grip, either). No gum, food, drinks, profanity or cell phones!

- Try to relax in the interview. It's normal to be a bit nervous, but remember that the interviewer has been on your side off the table as well! If you've prepared well for your interview, that should give you additional confidence as well. If you should be asked a question for which you don't have an immediate response, take a moment (and a breath) to gather your thoughts before answering. By the way, if you do happen to blow an interview – and most of us have – remember that it is just one interview out of many you'll have in your lifetime. Try to have a sense of humor about it, treat it as a learning experience, and move on!
- Here's a GREAT tip if you've just had an interview: send a thank you note to your interviewer the same day or the following day. You can even e-mail it. It doesn't have to be long, just create a well-crafted note to thank the interviewer for his or her time and consideration, reiterate your interest in and enthusiasm for the position (and tell them why again), and let him/her know you're looking forward to hearing back about the final position decision. So few applicants send thank you notes and it's absolutely a no-brainer because this simple note conveys that you are a responsible, considerate individual.
- One last word here: should you not be able to make your scheduled interview time, always have the courtesy to contact the hiring manager ahead of time to reschedule (or to cancel in the event you have accepted another position elsewhere). If you don't, keep in mind that employers have long memories – and should you apply the next summer season, you've already given the impression that you're irresponsible and inconsiderate.

▪ **What is a parents role in this process?**

Understandably, parents may be a bit anxious about their child's first (or one of the first) forays into the working world. There are plenty of concerns and worries: ensuring that the work itself is appropriate, that work requirements and schedules are clearly understood, that the environment is safe and appropriate, and that the organization and its staff are reputable. Still, and while it may be difficult, resist (!) the urge to try to manage your child as he or she works to obtain a job. You, as a parent, can be most valuable in providing guidance and direction to your child to

ensure that he or she is as well-prepared for each stage of the pre-employment (and then employment) process as possible; that they are prepared to present themselves to potential employers as independent and responsible young adults any organization would love to have on board. Parents who over-manage their child through this process can actually have a detrimental effect: casting doubt on whether or not their child is independent and responsible enough at this stage to be successfully employed.

▪ **A few additional helpful hints:**

- E-mail addresses. These can tell you a lot about an individual – sometimes more than you really want to convey to a hiring manager. You do not want them to be overly "cute," reflect immaturity, and certainly not something which would make a hiring manager blush. Keep your e-mail address tactful, professional, and clean.
- Ring back tones. If you think e-mail addresses can convey a lot about you, ring tones can actually convey more. Check those ring back tones and consider what a hiring manager would think if they called you to schedule an interview and heard yours. I've heard some that are so filthy, I've literally hung up and never tried to reach the candidate again.
- Careful what you put on your Instagram, Facebook, etc. pages. We live in the age where PLENTY of employers Google potential employees prior to hiring them. Depending on what is on your page (strong profanity, racy pictures, and so on), the hiring process may come to a screeching halt. A friendly reminder, too, that what goes up on the web, isn't necessarily easy to remove from the web...
- Following up on your application status. It is generally okay to follow up on the status of your application once or twice if necessary. That said, you don't want to hound the hiring manager. If the individual is high maintenance as a candidate, it's probably safe to say that the individual will also be high maintenance as an employee and no employer needs a staff of prima donnas.

Final words: I've said it before – but it's worth repeating – ultimately what a potential employer is looking for is qualified employees who are responsible, reliable, trustworthy, and who have a great attitude. Be as prepared as possible for the pre-employment process and be sure you reflect these characteristics and you'll substantially increase your odds at landing that job you want. Good luck!