

# a plan is a GREAT WAY TO START

## BE PREPARED

### Know What to Have to Get What You Need

Most of us don't have the option of being unemployed indefinitely. That's why you must quickly and thoroughly plan and execute your job search. Chief tasks involved include:

- Evaluating your skills
- Determining the job you want
- Determining the labor market where you want to work
- Identifying employers to whom you want to apply
- Developing a back-up plan

### Building a Job Search Plan

Spend quality time in your job search, and you increase your chances of finding a job sooner. Careful planning achieves the most desirable results. A successful job search rarely happens accidentally. Plan on spending 30 hours or more a week on job search activities.

A successful job search plan involves:

- Setting goals
- Managing your time
- Working your plan

### Evaluating Skills

The definition of "skill" is the ability coming from one's knowledge, practice or aptitude, etc., for doing something well.

Identifying your skills will:

- Help you focus your job search
- Help you answer the question: "Why should I hire you?"
- Assist you in clearly communicating your skills and accomplishments to an employer
- Allow you to arrange your skills in priority patterns to apply to specific jobs

- Help you match your skills to your interests and job opportunities
- Provide information for your resume

Practice in front of a mirror. What would you say to an employer if you were asked to describe your skills? Keep in mind that an employer evaluates how you answer the question, not just what you say.

**Note: Employers say that most job applicants cannot effectively describe their skills.**

### Three Employable Skills to Advertise

**Job Specific Skills:** These skills are related to a particular job. They are specialized and job-specific.

**Transferable Skills:** These are general skills that can be used in a variety of jobs.

**Self-Management Skills:** These are your personal characteristics. They make it possible for you to handle yourself and adjust to a variety of situations.

### The Accomplishment Statement: A Glimpse of You Getting Results

Employers are not only interested in the skills you possess. They need to see how these skills can be put to work to benefit them. To impress your next employer, talk about what you have done and the results your work has delivered.

This is where you document how you apply your talents on the job. You will use accomplishment statements throughout your job search: to network, conduct a job search over the telephone, on your resume, and during job interviews. Take time to reflect on the challenges you've faced in previous jobs, volunteer work, leisure activities or education.

Use the **CAR (Challenge, Action, Results)** method to illustrate challenges you have faced at a previous or current job, what action you took to meet the challenges and what you accomplished as a result. You also may include unsuccessful challenges to demonstrate your ability to learn from your mistakes. For each challenge, list the skills you used along with the actions you took and the results of those actions. Be sure to use action words and numbers to show size, money, time, or amount of the results.

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