W 936-B

FINDING WORK

Career Change: Building on Your Past

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If you have been out of the labor market for some time or are looking to make a career change, the thought of re-entering the job market can seem daunting. It is important to realize, however, that you can still engage in a productive, rewarding job search even if your work history is dated or you don't have a formal work history at all.

Success in re-entering the job market or changing jobs comes down to two things:

1. developing the right attitudes about your abilities, and
2. organizing an effective job search.

The key to success is preparation. Preparation means learning to recognize past experiences, talents, skills, abilities and volunteer work that can help "sell" you in today's labor market. Life experiences will be your most valuable resource to turn into tangible assets. It means translating "life skills," then becoming a confident, potential employee. Maturity and life experiences are pluses many employers seek.

THINK ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCES

As you begin to prepare for your job search, take a few minutes to think about your past experiences. Specifically, take some time to:

- List all the places you have been and things you have done.
- Recall how you have used your spare time. Note which activities, as well as past jobs, you enjoyed and which ones you disliked.
- Record important experiences in school, at home, in prior jobs and as a volunteer within the community.

This information will be useful as you determine the type of work you would enjoy most.

MATCH EXPERIENCES TO YOUR JOB

Think back over the past few weeks. Whether you realize it or not, you have performed a number of jobs that are typically related to specific careers. This activity will help you record these activities and match your experiences with those skills needed in various careers.

1. Divide a sheet of paper in half. On the left side, list some major tasks you did during the past few weeks. Include all tasks, responsibilities, hobbies or volunteer community work. Be sure to include every activity you can think of that you do. Label this list "Experiences."
2. Then on the right half of the paper, list what these activities would be called if you had to hire someone to do the task. Label this list "Paid Work." See Figure 1 for an example.
3. Once your list is complete, review it carefully and determine which jobs you do the best and like the most. These are the jobs to highlight when you begin your job search.

Maturity and life experiences are pluses for which many employers are looking.

Figure 1

EXPERIENCES	PAID WORK
Paying bills	Bookkeeper or accounting clerk
Fixing broken equipment	Mechanic, small engine repair
Posting on social media	Blogger
Park beautification chairperson	Public relations, landscaper, or greenhouse worker
Assisting children with homework	Tutor, professional note taker

MARKET YOUR EXPERIENCES

Through the years, you have developed a variety of skills which could pay great dividends in today's job market. Your challenge is to identify these skills and relate them to job skills for which employers are looking. To identify your skills and to place them in marketable employment terminology, follow these three basic steps:

1. Develop a list of your skills. Begin by dividing a sheet of paper into thirds. Label the left third of the paper "Skills." List some activities you have done or are currently doing. Work completed as a farmer, stay at home parent, in self-employment or as a volunteer in the community should be listed. See Figure 2 for examples.
2. Label the middle third of the paper "Work-Related Ability." List all the skills needed to accomplish each activity that you listed on the left.
3. Label the right third of the paper "Marketable Terminology." Use words from Figure 3 that imply the development of useful skills that describe activities performed in particular jobs.

By recording your "jobs" in this manner, you can get a fairly good picture of the types of jobs you might find as potential paid employment.

Figure 2: *Marketing Your Experiences*

SKILLS	WORK-RELATED ABILITY	MARKETABLE TERMINOLOGY
Plan, prepare, and serve meals for large groups	Adapting recipes; food preparation skills	Supervised staff, coordinated activities of 20 volunteers in preparation of and serving banquet meals for large groups.
Record farm income and expenses	Knowledge of accounting basics; math knowledge	Maintained financial records for farm business. Budgeted farm business funds.

Figure 3: *Skill Words*

COMMUNICATION SKILLS	FINANCIAL SKILLS	DETAIL SKILLS	CREATIVE SKILLS
Create	Account	Arrange	Create
Develop	Administer	Classify	Design
Direct	Allocate	Collect	Develop
Edit	Analyze	Compare	Direct
Enlist	Audit	Compile	Discriminate
Influence	Budget	Compute	Generate
Interpret	Calculate	Dispatch	Innovate
Lead	Compile	Execute	Integrate
Manipulate	Develop	File	Paint
Merge	Keep Books Manage	Inspect	Perceive
Motivate	Plan	Memorize	Perform
Negotiate	Prepare	Organize	Plan
Obtain	Record	Process	Shape
Read	Research	Reconcile	Synthesize Visualize
Reason	Solve	Respond	Write
Recruit		Retrieve	
Sell		Schedule Systemize	
Speak		Tabulate	
Write			
MANAGEMENT SKILLS	**RESEARCH SKILLS**	**TEACHING SKILLS**	**MANUAL SKILLS**
Administer	Analyze	Adapt	Assemble
Analyze	Clarify	Advise	Bind
Assign	Collect	Clarify	Control
Coordinate	Critique	Coach	Cut
Delegate	Define	Communicate	Drill
Determine	Diagnose	Coordinate	Drive
Develop	Evaluate	Develop	Feed
Evaluate	Examine Extrapolate	Encourage	Grind
Execute	Inspect	Explain	Handle
Facilitate	Integrate	Facilitate	Lift
Integrate	Interpret	Guide	Manipulate
Maintain	Interview	Influence	Move
Organize	Investigate	Inform	Operate
Plan	Organize	Instruct	Set-up
Prioritize	Recognize	Organize	Tend
Recommend	Review	Persuade	
Review	Survey	Plan	
Schedule	Synthesize	Stimulate	
Supervise			
HELPING SKILLS			
Adjust	Empathize	Refer	
Advise	Guide	Relate	
Attend	Lead	Render	
Care	Listen	Supervise Understand	
Cooperate	Perceive		

As you identify your skills, you will see how you can use your past experiences when you write your resume and respond to questions during an interview. Your summary of relevant self-employment experiences, marketable skills, education and volunteer service should be written in terms of the prospective employer's needs. The resume should relate your skills and accomplishments to the requirements of the job offered by the employer.

PLAN YOUR FUTURE

You may be able to increase job possibilities if you receive training in a specific field. It may be that you can update or acquire new skills by taking some short courses at an area community college, technical college or community-based organization.

As you move ahead in your search for a job, it is important to put your best foot forward when you begin the interview process. To ensure success in your job search, follow the steps listed below:

- Complete a personal inventory of your experiences, abilities, skills, strengths, education and previous jobs held.
- Explore types of jobs available in your area and match your skills to those of greatest interest to you.
- Develop a resume. Refer to UT Extension Publication W 936-C for resume writing guidelines. Be explicit, accurate and complete. Have all necessary information readily available to tell your story.
- Gain skills in completing an application form and preparing letters of application.
- Develop skills in how to interview for a job. See UT Extension Publication W 936-F for job interviewing techniques.
- Learn how to follow up a job interview.
- Gain skills in how to be a successful employee. Be alert to ways you can cultivate your abilities and skills to blend in with employee/employer relationships.

Be creative as you initially enter the job market, re-enter the job market or change careers. Plan your strategy using all the skills and abilities you have developed through the years as an employee, self-employed individual, and/or community volunteer.

Are you a SNAP recipient interested in finding a job that can help you be self-sufficient? If so, contact us.

UT Extension offers Skill Up Tennessee, a program designed to help eligible SNAP participants gain the skills, training, work or experience that will increase their ability to obtain regular employment.

To find out more about this program check out ***skillup.tennessee.edu***

Skill Up Tennessee is UT Extension's SNAP Employment and Training program. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment & Training (SNAP E&T) is a partnership between the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and states to provide training and employment services to eligible SNAP participants. Skill Up Tennessee is offered through a partnership with the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

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