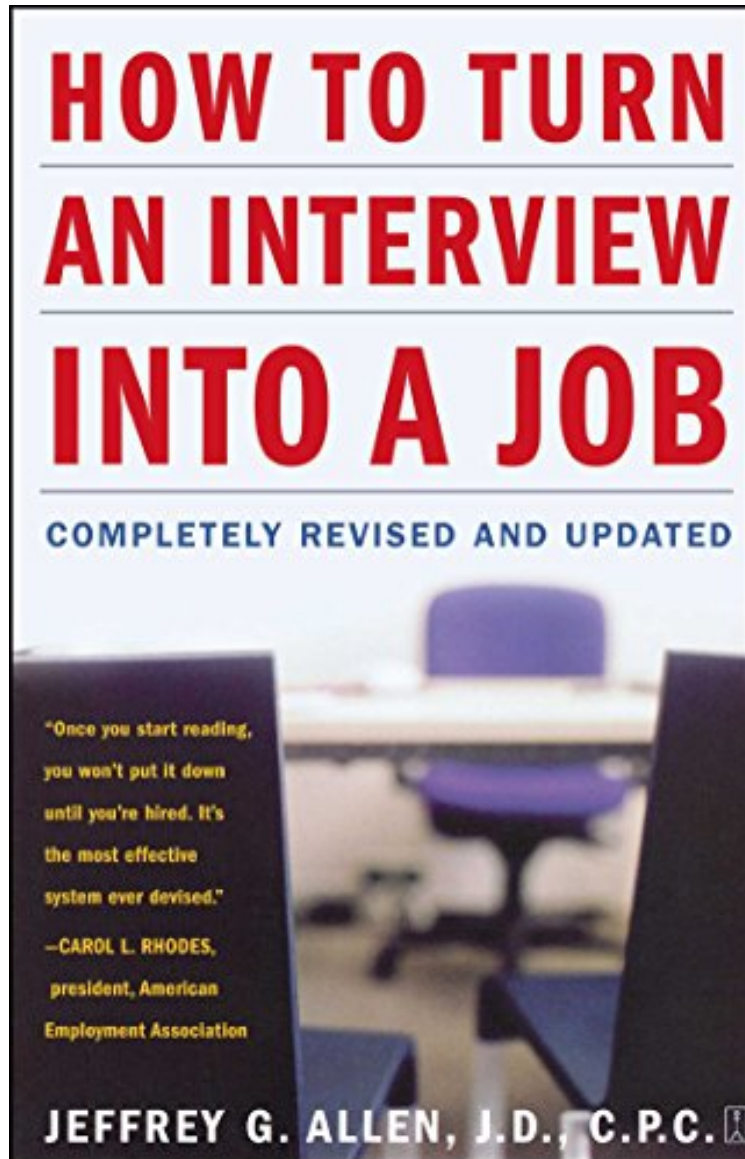


(Ebook pdf) How to Turn an Interview into a Job: Completely Revised and Updated

# How to Turn an Interview into a Job: Completely Revised and Updated

*Jeffrey G. Allen*

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A completely revised and updated edition of the bestselling, classic how-to on mastering the art of the interview. Getting and winning the interview is the key to being hired. Everything else -- research, resumes, e-mails, phone calls -- is all backup for that crucial meeting. In *How to Turn an Interview into a Job*, America's leading interview authority, Jeffrey Allen, presents proven advice on the A to Zs of successful interviewing. Incorporating current etiquette and the new work ethic, Allen covers every step of the process, including: Making the initial phone calls; Scheduling appointments; Selecting an interview wardrobe; How to have the toughest interviewer extend an offer; The follow-up letter; Maximum salary negotiation. This new edition for the twenty-first century is also packed with ways to maximize current technology such as fax machines, voicemail, e-mail, and the Internet. For every kind of job seeker, *How to Turn an Interview into a Job* remains the simplest, most practical, and most streetwise guide to the fastest hire.

Carol L. Rhodes President, American Employment Association Once you start reading, you won't put it down until you're hired. It's the most effective system ever devised. About the Author Jeffrey G. Allen, J.D., C.P.C., is America's leading authority on the interview process. As a recruiter, human resources manager, certified placement counselor, attorney, and author of more than twenty books for jobseekers, he has more than thirty-five years of experience. Excerpt. copy; Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Chapter One Reacute;sumeacute; Roulette: How to Play the Game Literally hundreds of books and articles have been written about reacute;sumeacute; preparation. Thousands of companies offer to prepare a reacute;sumeacute; for you that they guarantee will get your foot in the door. Unfortunately, the only jobs generated by most of these are for the writers. There is no way to ensure that your reacute;sumeacute; will even be read, let alone forwarded! This has led some people to wonder whether your chances of getting hired are actually better without a reacute;sumeacute;. The premise is that "if you never do anything, you'll never make a mistake." If Babe Ruth had thought that way, his 1,330 strikeouts would not have occurred. Of course, he would not have hit 714 home runs either. Which are remembered? To understand why reacute;sumeacute;s are required, consider the plight of the interviewer. Most interviewers are inundated with a flood of reacute;sumeacute;s in a variety of shapes, sizes, and colors. Since reacute;sumeacute; writing is indeed an art, the old saying "I don't know what's good, I only know what I like" fully applies here. Interviewers also know that reacute;sumeacute;s reduce telephone time and awkward explanations to candidates. Accepting reacute;sumeacute;s is nothing more than their way of maintaining their sanity and their job. When blind box advertisements are used, they can even take a lunch break. Since there is no standard form for writing a reacute;sumeacute;, you can understand the fallacy of the words "We have evaluated your background..." in the form rejection letters most reacute;sumeacute;s generate. However, interviewers of this world depend on reacute;sumeacute;s, so you'd better have one. A reacute;sumeacute; is nothing more than a tool to get your foot in the interviewer's door. (It's not really locked; there's only a chair behind it.) A good one results in an appointment for an interview; a bad one does not. If buildings were constructed like most reacute;sumeacute;s, King Kong would have destroyed the world. Interviewers are so subjective and inconsistent in their responses to reacute;sumeacute;s that I have described their use as "reacute;sumeacute; roulette." With that understanding, there are a few general rules that will at least allow you to stay in the game long enough to make the Deep-Breath Phone Call. A reacute;sumeacute; should: 1. BE NO MORE THAN ONE PAGE IN LENGTH This is frustrating, I know, but an ounce of image is worth a pound of performance. You simply must resist the temptation to clutter your reacute;sumeacute; with detailed information. (In Chapter X we'll review e-reacute;sumeacute; techniques.) I remember one candidate I was trying to place who insisted on including on her reacute;sumeacute; everything she had ever done from the time she was a graduate student over twenty-five years ago! No one cared. It was ancient history and only drew attention to the fact that she was a little long in the tooth. She got nowhere until I convinced her to eliminate everything but her most recent experience and reduce her reacute;sumeacute; to a single page. Within a month, she had a job. Use general phrases that will incite the interviewer to positive action: an invitation for an interview. Use phrases like: "Developed a series of..." "Organized several..." "Was responsible for a number of..." "Consistently performed..." "Was promoted to progressively responsible positions in..." Try to emphasize actual accomplishments as well, rather than limiting your narrative to generic job requirements that you might, or might not, have met. 2. BE AT LEAST TEN-POINT SIZE You can vary the typefaces, boldness, and underlining for interest, but conservative styles will increase the readability of the reacute;sumeacute;. My personal preference is Times New Roman. 3. BE PRINTED WITH BLACK INK ON WHITE PAPER Ivory stock can also be used, and the weight should be at least twenty-four pound. Gray would be

acceptable but is often difficult to read and photocopy. Any other ink or paper colors are a mistake. Your relationship with the interviewer is still too fragile, and your resume may receive attention for a negative reason. Save your individualism for your promotion party.

4. HAVE AT LEAST A ONE-INCH BORDER This is primarily for aesthetic reasons, but it is common for interviewers to write comments in the margins. If another sheet is required to do so, many will just move on to the next resume.
5. CONTAIN YOUR NAME, ADDRESS, TELEPHONE NUMBERS, FAX NUMBER, E-MAIL ADDRESS, AND WEBSITE CENTERED AT THE TOP If any of this information changes, prepare another resume.
6. CONTAIN INFORMATION ABOUT CREDENTIALS AND CAREER-RELATED AFFILIATIONS
7. SUMMARIZE YOUR EXPERIENCE, WITH THE MOST RECENT EMPLOYER AND POSITION FIRST Whether you are a generalist or a specialist, this section of your resume can be written in several different ways. You will find that working backward from the kinds of positions you want will help you to focus on the areas of emphasis. Listing or summarizing similar responsibilities is acceptable, but you must be concise. This is known as the "chronological" resume. Some authorities advise a "functional" resume, generalizing your duties, when you have changed jobs more frequently than every two years. Interviewers are accustomed to application forms with chronological sequence. The narrative that a functional resume recites turns them off. Furthermore, it is almost impossible to draft a generalized resume without looking as if you're hiding the truth. Use a chronological approach, but combine and omit short-term employment. There is no reason for you to include everything at this stage of the game.

A resume should not:

1. UPDATE OR EMPHASIZE EXPERIENCE IN HANDWRITING Updating should be done only through another resume or an attached application neatly typed in advance. Underlining or other emphasizing should either be done at the time the resume is prepared or not at all. Since the resume is you at this point, make sure it has class.
2. CONTAIN INFORMATION ON REFERENCES Instead, you should state the following: "Personal and professional references are available. They will be furnished upon request." References are too precious to annoy, and you want to be able to contact them first. This rule may be broken if you are relying on a highly motivated internal referral.
3. STATE A SALARY This includes the amount you received in former positions and that which is your requirement. At the early stages, it is a no-win gamble: it invariably will be too high or too low. Besides, your value to someone else or even to yourself is irrelevant. This will become more evident when you read Chapter VII, on salary negotiation. Whenever possible, send your resume directly to the hiring authority rather than to the human resources department, where you can get lost in the shuffle. When the human resources department is the only option, your resume should not:

1. STATE YOUR OBJECTIVE That is, unless you know the job being offered and you don't care about being considered for anything else. This is also the problem with introductory letters. You are just foreclosing your options. Your objective is getting an interview!
2. BE ACCOMPANIED BY A COVER LETTER A cover letter to an unidentified target can be counterproductive, pointing you away from the job opening. Unless you really know something about the job, or want to name the source of your referral, resist the temptation. Overworked human resources people will think of it as just one more piece of paper to shuffle. However, if you are aiming at a departmental decision maker, an eye-catching cover letter has exactly the opposite effect! It directs you right where you want to be. A well-written cover letter is crucial in this case: it serves to introduce you and spark a decision maker's interest. If you've done your homework, here's a place to use it. Your letter should meet a prospective employer on his own turf. Start with a comment or two on the company perhaps concerning recent developments you have read or heard about within the field and how your work experience might fit in. Close by suggesting your ultimate goal: an interview. Your homework should include a phone call to the company to find out the correct spelling of the executive's name, his exact title, the full name of the company, and other details. There is no greater turn-off to a prospective employer than having his name or his company's name misspelled. Like a resume, a cover letter should be neatly typed not in italic or other "handwriting" typeface on white paper (preferably your personal business stationery with your name, address, telephone numbers, fax number, e-mail address, and website conservatively imprinted). Your resume will be the goods, but the letter is the package. Therefore, it must reflect quality. We are motivating now, not educating. The following three items are optional but worth considering. A resume may:

1. CONTAIN A PHOTOGRAPH Consideration of your face in the hiring process violates federal, state, and local equal employment opportunity laws, except under very limited circumstances. Inclusion of a photograph is therefore a matter of concern to employers, and only a matter of strategy to you. My personal opinion is that you shouldn't; my personnel opinion is that you shouldn't; but my legal opinion is that you can. Whether you should is best left to your judgment. But keep in mind that professional interviewers in some companies will not forward a resume with a photograph attached. Also bear in mind that your photograph might inadvertently trigger a negative reaction. A colleague of mine once got a resume from a woman who enclosed a photograph. She looked exactly like his ex-wife. He tossed her resume in the wastebasket without even bothering to talk to her. Maybe he did this not because he was in the midst of a vicious divorce but because she wasn't qualified. Who knows? But why take a chance?
2. CONTAIN INFORMATION THAT RELATES TO SEX, HEIGHT, WEIGHT, HEALTH, MARITAL STATUS, AGE, RACE, RELIGION, PLACE OF BIRTH, OR CITIZENSHIP As with a photograph, these allow the interviewer

or supervisor to decide your fate based upon irrelevant and illegal criteria. You run the risk of a recipient automatically discriminating against you on the basis of this information. If you want to know the effect of these factors, you can try calling the employer anonymously. Ask a few general questions about its commitment to affirmative action without arousing suspicion. While the information you receive may not be accurate, you will at least have some indication of what to expect. Affirmative action statements in advertisements are meaningless, since they are designed for public and government consumption.

3. USE AN ATTENTION-GETTING GIMMICK

Why not reduce and insert your resume into a fortune cookie? An applicant sent me a package like that once. It was a real grabber. I always felt that sending him "No Interest Letter No. 2" was not quite enough. If you happen to see a half-eaten pita bread stuffed with printed paper on some interviewer's desk as you search for a job, this applicant's probably still on the loose. Your approach should be just to get your foot in the interviewer's door as inconspicuously as possible. Attention? You'll get attention! The rest of you is about to enter. It's time for the Deep-Breath Phone Call.

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