

# LOCAL EMPLOYERS NOW HIRING



JANUARY 2025



A special supplement of *The Farmville Herald*, *The Kenbridge-Victoria Dispatch* and *The Charlotte Gazette*



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# Things not to say during a job interview

A survey of more than 1,000 hiring managers and human resources professionals revealed some surprising things about modern hiring practices. The survey, conducted by The Harris Poll on behalf of CareerBuilder, provided a wealth of insight about the hiring process, including some of the unusual things people have done in interviews. Asked to share the most unusual things candidates have done during interviews, employers and hiring managers indicated job seekers had asked for a cocktail, broke out in song in the middle of an interview, asked to taste an interviewer's coffee, and even wore a costume of Darth Vader to an interview.

Though many of those replies undoubtedly elicited a laugh (and likely some shock), they indicate that many people aren't entirely sure about how to act during a job interview. Most professionals probably don't need to be told to avoid asking for a cocktail or to leave

their costumes at home when leaving for an interview, but some might not know to avoid certain topics. Others may simply venture into uncomfortable conversational territory due to nerves. Though there might not be a formula for a successful interview, if there were it might include avoiding these four topics.

## NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES ABOUT CURRENT OR PAST EMPLOYERS

Positivity should reign supreme during a job interview, so candidates should avoid any negative comments about a current or past employer. Such comments give interviewers the impression that a candidate could be difficult to work with. Negative comments about an employer also suggest a candidate is unprofessional.

## POLITICS

Whether it's office politics or the goings-on in the political arena, this topic

should not make it into a job interview. Politics understandably brings out a passion in many people, but candidates should emphasize their passion for the opportunity at hand and not their enthusiasm for a particular politician or political party during a job interview.

## PERSONAL LIFE

Hiring managers and in fact anyone conducting a job interview is legally obligated to avoid topics that could be interpreted as discriminatory. Candidates who bring up their personal life in an interview could be putting interviewers in an awkward position, which may ultimately affect their impressions of the person being interviewed. Candidates can do their candidacy and

their interviewers a favor by avoiding discussions of their personal life during an interview.

## SALARY

Bringing up salary might not be as big a red flag as political opinions or negative comments about past employers, but it's best to wait until the interviewer broaches the topic. Asking about salary before the interviewer brings it up could give the impression that a candidate is only interested in the money and not the opportunity.

Successful interviewing is a skill that candidates can cultivate. Knowing which topics to avoid during an interview is an important part of that cultivation process.



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# How do I apply for jobs?

**A** job application presents a great opportunity to make a strong first impression with a prospective employer.

Job applications have changed as the utilization of technology has increased. Today the majority of employers advertise jobs online and conduct much of the initial search process through digital channels. According to Indeed, companies typically direct applicants to fill out a digital application through a specific website. Unlike a resume, the job application is a legally defensible document. The information contained on it should be as thorough and accurate as possible. Some additional strategies can help applicants successfully apply for jobs.

- Read over the application carefully. Understand what is expected of you as an applicant. Carefully read the instructions on the application and any other supporting documents or information the employer may be requesting. Applicants should not miss out on a job opportunity due to a failure to follow directions.

- Recognize the use of ATS. Many employers utilize an applicant tracking system (ATS) to help whittle down the applicant pool to the best qualified. ATS may use keywords that coordinate with skills desired in applicants. Be sure to mirror keywords used in the job listing on your application to further your chances of the application being flagged for consideration.

- Have your resume at the ready. An application likely will ask you to fill out fields regarding your work history. Refer to your resume to fill out this portion. Some applications also have an optional tool that will auto-fill job information from an uploaded resume. Therefore, it is handy to have an updated and proofread file available.

- Use a professional email address. Employers are judging everything

about you. Present a professional front by using an email address that is clear and to the point, rather than something clever or controversial. Avoid email addresses like KissyFace123@email.com or ManCave456@email.com, opting instead for FirstName.LastName@email.com. Do not give employers any reason to reject you based on perceptions from something as silly as a lighthearted email address.

- Proofread everything. Be sure to look over your application and make sure that everything is spelled correctly and that your grammar is perfect.

If the application makes it through, the employer may ask you to participate in either an in-person interview or an online interview. Some companies rely on a third-party application for you to upload a statement or answer pre-determined questions. Make sure all technology is working for these next steps, and consult the hiring manager with any issues. Always dress and speak professionally when doing interviews of any type.

If you are offered the job, the hiring manager may send further digital correspondence that will link to their onboarding system. This system will collect more information, possibly conducting a criminal background check and ask that you fill out tax and payroll forms.

The job application process has changed in recent years due to an increased reliance on technology. Applicants should know what to expect to land their dream jobs.



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# Schools are hiring. How do I get the job?

**P**rince Edward County Public Schools has a list of positions that need to be filled. From coaches to English teachers, nurses to bus drivers, there's a number of openings. The same can be said in Cumberland and Buckingham counties as well, with slightly fewer positions to fill. Further down the road, you can find openings in Lunenburg County. But to get the job, there are a few things you need to work on. We've covered the need for a good resume in other part of this publication. Beyond that, you have to work on acing the interviews involved.

Interviews are an integral component of the hiring process. According to Zippia, the average corporate job opening garners 250 resumes. Among those, only four to six people are likely to be interviewed.

With such competition for jobs, landing an interview is an opportu-

nity to be cherished. Furthermore, candidates should do their best to ensure interviews go as smoothly and effectively as possible. Nerves can derail an interview. Nervous energy is a byproduct of humans' 'flight or fight' response in stressful situations. Adrenaline builds up in the body and that can make for a nervous interview.

## LET'S TALK ABOUT INTERVIEWS

The following anxiety-taming tips can help anyone remain calm, cool and collected during an interview.

**1. Laugh out loud.** Humor can diffuse nervous feelings. Rather than stewing on the upcoming interview, watch a funny movie or listen to some standup comedy to help you laugh and lighten up.

**2. Leave plenty of time for travel.** Anxiety can creep in if you're running late for an interview. Leave plenty of time to get there when interviewing

in person. You don't want to stroll in sweaty and out of breath because you just ran from the parking lot. For remote interviews, ensure that meeting links are working properly and that you understand how to use the conferencing application in advance of the interview.

**3. Be prepared.** Prepare for the interview and conduct a trial run with a friend or family member. Research commonly asked interview questions but be prepared to answer more job-specific queries as well. Preparation can help you feel less nervous and more in control.

**4. Clear your mind.** Figure out which relaxation method works for you and employ it. Some find taking a short stroll outside enjoying nature clears their mind, while others prefer deep breathing and meditation. Some people may feel more relaxed after an exercise session. Build these coping mechanisms into your schedule on the day of an interview.

**5. Change your perception.** An interview is a conversation and not an interrogation. Certainly you are selling yourself to the recruiter, but the company also has to sell itself to you. Interviews are two-way streets to determine if the employer-employee dynamic is the right fit. Remembering that you are on somewhat equal footing can make the interview less

nerve-wracking.

**6. Make small talk.** While waiting to be called into the interview, speak with others, such as the receptionist, other employees walking by or even people in the lobby. Small conversations can shift your focus from internal thoughts to external stimuli.

Job interviews can drum up nerves, but there are strategies to help candidates overcome their nerves.

## CLOTHES MAKE THE MEETING

Also, let's talk about how you approach that interview. We've talked to multiple people, both here locally and at VESC, about the way some folks come in for an interview. Instead of dressing to impress, they walk in with a torn shirt, sometimes a sleeveless shirt and blue jeans. Instead, state officials suggest another tactic.

In his masterpiece 'Crime and Punishment', author Fyodor Dostoevsky wrote, "We sometimes encounter people, even perfect strangers, who begin to interest us at first sight, somehow suddenly, all at once, before a word has been spoken." The great Russian novelist is referring to the fact that impressions can be made even before conversations begin. This is an important notion to grasp and can do a job seeker a world of good in every interaction during the hiring process, including the interview.



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Recruiters may have an understanding of you as an applicant from your resume and other correspondences, but it is during the interview whether it's in person or remote that a hiring manager can really get a sense of your energy and professionalism. While no one wants to be judged on appearance alone, what you look like and how you dress affect others' first impression of you. Doing all you can to tip the scales in your favor may lead to favorable job outcomes. The best outfit to wear on an interview varies depending on the company and the job. But there are some guidelines for dressing to make the best impression.

#### **SOME GUIDELINES TO FOLLOW**

Follow the employer's dress code. If you can gauge the dress code in advance, dress to mirror what others are wearing and then take it up a slight notch. For example, while you

wouldn't wear a suit if you're interviewing as a park ranger, you may eschew work boots and faded jeans for a collared polo shirt and khaki pants. For a tech start-up or creative company that favors casual wear, something that is more business casual may be appropriate for the interview.

Err on the side of caution. If you do not know the company dress code, it is always better to be overdressed than underdressed. A sports jacket and a button-down shirt for gentlemen and tailored pants and blouse for women may fit the bill.

Less is more. Distractions can derail an interview, and wearing too many accessories can be distracting to the interviewer and even candidates during the interview. Keep jewelry to a minimum and mute all alerts on a smartwatch and smartphone. If you have piercings, you may want to remove them until you learn more about

which types of body art are acceptable at the company, which you should be able to discern when visiting the office. Distractions also can include heavy or drastic makeup and hair styles. Tone things down until you have a firm understanding of dress policies.

Choose neutral colors. Wear neutral or classic colors over more flashy options. You want to be judged on your qualifications, and neon shirts or a busy print dress could cause an interviewer to lose focus. During a remote interview, choose a high-contrast interview outfit so that you don't blend in with your background.

Wear clean, tidy clothes. No matter how formal or informal the attire, it should be freshly laundered, free from wrinkles or damage, and fit properly.

Interview attire can make or break first impressions, so attention should be placed on what to wear.



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# Update your resume for modern job market

**T**he job market can be unpredictable. Though reports on jobs suggest the market is now flooded with openings, working professionals looking to change careers or switch firms know the reality of modern job hunting is no walk in the park.

Reports indicate that there was an average of one opening for every two applicants on the professional social networking site LinkedIn at the onset of summer 2023. Professionals also are contending with a job market in which firms that hurried to hire applicants during the pandemic are now being more deliberate with their hiring process, sometimes interviewing candidates as many as six times before concluding the process. In addition, a 2023 survey from TIME/Harris Poll found that 52% of applicants with a bachelor's degree or higher completed an interview process without receiving

a job offer.

There's no denying the difficulty professionals seeking new jobs face when they begin their search. Though there's no guarantee the right opportunity will come along quickly, professionals can update their resumes in three notable ways to increase the chances their applications are seen.

## WRITE A NEW SUMMARY

The professional resources experts at Indeed recommend individuals write a new summary of their work history that reflects their qualifications for any job they intend to apply for. Consider past accomplishments, tasks and responsibilities that are applicable to each opening and emphasize those in the summary. For example, individuals aspiring to move up to management level can emphasize past experiences in which they took on a supervisory role to complete a project.

## INCLUDE IMPORTANT KEYWORDS

The frustration many modern professionals feel when looking for new opportunities may stem from how easy it can be to apply for a job but never hear back. Indeed notes that many hiring managers utilize applicant tracking system (ATS) software when considering applications. Such programs scan resumes for predetermined keywords, discarding applications that do not include them. Reading each listing carefully can shed light on which keywords to include, as the right terms tend to be right there in the job description. Indeed also advises mentioning the company's name and exact position title in the summary statement or career objective section.

## DON'T FORGET THE PERSON WHO WILL READ YOUR RESUME

Though ATS software plays an integral role in modern hiring, eventually a human being will see the resume if it gets past the ATS portion of the vetting process. Before submitting a resume, read it several times to ensure it reflects your accomplishments, talents and aspirations and not just the keywords that will get the document seen by human eyeballs. Numerous resumes will get past the ATS software, so it's imperative that the resume illustrates a candidate's qualifications and talents.

Modern job seeking is time-consuming and often frustrating. Getting past the vetting process involves updating a resume so applicants can use the modern hiring process to their advantage.

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# Tips to manage time more efficiently

**B**usy days tend to be productive days. But when especially busy days are strung together, adults can begin to feel a little overwhelmed and may wonder if there's anything they can do to make hectic schedules more manageable.

Time management strategies can be an effective tool in busy adults' arsenals. Efficient time management can free up more minutes or hours in the day, which can ultimately afford adults more time to exhale and thus make each day seem a little less overwhelming. Time management may require a little trial and error before adults find a formula that works for them, but the following are some tips to improve personal efficiency each day.

## IDENTIFY TASKS THAT CAN BE TACKLED AT NIGHT

A hectic start to a morning can set a bad precedent for the rest of the day. With that in mind, adults can identify tasks they can perform at night to ensure mornings are less hectic. Lay out clothes the night before to save the trouble of finding an outfit in the morning. Prepare the family's lunches and even breakfasts the night before so mornings go more smoothly.

## EXERCISE IN THE MORNING

A recent study from the World Health Organization published in the Lancet Global Health Journal found that 31% of adults don't get enough exercise. Lack of routine physical activity has been linked to a host of negative health outcomes, including an increased risk for conditions like heart disease, diabetes, cancer, and stroke. Adults who exercise at night may find that attempts to squeeze in early evening or nighttime workouts add to feelings of being overwhelmed brought on by busy schedules. Exercising in the morning can free up time for other tasks in the evening, and doing so can even make it easier to manage daily stress, as the



Mayo Clinic reports that exercise in any form releases endorphins and helps to relieve stress.

## MINIMIZE DISTRACTIONS

Distractions are arguably more prevalent than ever, as many adults feel every minute goes by without a smartphone notification and/or message from friends, family and coworkers. Minimizing those distractions and resolving to tackle one task at a time can improve efficiency and reduce stress. Turn off smartphone notifications from apps that are not vital to work and family. During the workday, prioritize tasks each day and block off hours on your schedule so time can be devoted exclusively to the most important jobs. If hours on a schedule are left open, coworkers may schedule meetings that can make it difficult to complete necessary tasks.

## ADJUST AS NECESSARY

Flexibility is a must when making an effort to avoid feeling overwhelmed. Each day presents its own unique and fluid challenges, so remaining flexible can help busy adults overcome unforeseen obstacles. In addition, some time management strategies may not be effective for everyone nor useful every day, so it's best to recognize the need to adjust from time to time.

Time management strategies can help busy adults efficiently manage each day and hopefully reduce instances when individuals feel overwhelmed.



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# Ways to improve your job potential

**T**he recruiting strategist ERE Recruiting Intelligence estimates that 250 resumes are submitted for each corporate job opening, and the first submission occurs within 200 seconds after a position is posted. In such an environment, procrastination can be costly.

There also is stiff competition for those who think they'll simply keep a resume posted online and wait for the jobs to roll in. BeHiring says the popular job-hunting site Monster.com receives 427,000 resumes postings each and every week. Getting a better idea of how the hiring process works today can improve professionals' chances of getting a new job or even switching careers.

## UNDERSTAND THERE IS A HIRING FUNNEL

Recruiters use a specific model for every job posting. Informally dubbed the hiring funnel, this is a reference to the number of total applications they

need to generate in order to get a single hire. On average of the 1,000 who see an online job posting, 200 will begin the application process, 100 will actually follow through and only 25 resumes will be screened out, according to Talent Function Group, LLC. Among that final 25, between four and six will ultimately be invited for an interview.

## BE CREATIVE WITH A RESUME

Hundreds of people are vying for the same job, and human resources personnel who review applicants may spend 10 seconds reading over each resume. As a result, it is essential to make a resume stand out. Areas most perused on a resume include job titles, companies worked for, start/end dates, and education. Make sure these key areas are visible and impressive.

Also, many resumes are scanned electronically, meaning if you do not format a resume the correct way or use the applicable software mentioned (often PDF

formatting is rejected), the resume may never get flagged and seen.

## NETWORK RESPONSIBLY

Always connect with people you think can bring career benefits in some way rather than blindly networking. Keep your social media image professional as well, as you never know where a good lead or networking opportunity may come from.

## DRESS THE PART

If you're one of the lucky ones who earns an interview, keep the good momentum going by dressing in a manner that is appropriate for the role in which you are interviewing. Tidy hair, clean fingernails, minimal jewelry, classic attire, and a pleasant attitude can make a difference.

## DO YOUR RESEARCH

Always conduct background research on the company you're interviewing with and the industry it's a part of. This way you'll be better apt to answer any questions that come your way. Don't be afraid to also prepare questions that you can ask the interviewer to show your interest.

## CONSIDER TEMP JOBS

Rejections will certainly happen as you go along, but do not sit idly licking your wounds. A temporary position is better than being unemployed and can get your foot in the door. Work with a recruiter who may be able to place you in temp jobs, especially positions with an employer you have your eye on.

These tips and more can improve applicants' chances of getting a job.



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# How can mid-career professionals find a new job?

Newly minted college graduates often utilize career placement services at their colleges and universities as they seek to land their first job in their chosen field. Such services typically are not utilized by mid-career professionals, who are generally those individuals with ample experience but who are still many years away from retirement. But it's not necessarily easy for anyone to find a new job in the digital era, so mid-career professionals can utilize some strategies to increase their chances of finding a job that allows them to advance to the next step in their careers.

## IDENTIFY YOUR PRIORITIES

Mid-career professionals who are working but want to move on to a new opportunity have the luxury of looking for a position that aligns with their priorities and should take full advantage of that position. Identify what you like or don't like about your current job. Variables that merit consideration include the job itself, but also company size, workplace culture and benefits and perks. Make a list of these priorities and identify which are most and least important to you, and then allow that list to inform your search for a new job.

## DETERMINE IF YOUR NEXT JOB WILL BE YOUR LAST JOB

Many mid-career professionals looking for a new job may be looking with the intention that their next employer will be the last company they work for. If that's the case, then it's important to keep that in mind as you begin your search. Opportunity for professional growth and advancement should be available within an organization that you envision being the last firm you work for. If you enjoy the challenges and excitement that comes with switching employers, or even careers, then you may not need to prioritize advancement opportunities over chances to beef up your experience.

## PRACTICE INTERVIEWING

Mid-career professionals may not have interviewed for a job in many years, and the process of interviewing has undoubtedly changed since individuals were offered their current jobs. For example, initial interviews are now often conducted over conferencing apps like Zoom, so mid-career professionals may want to study up on how to master such interviews. Everything from lighting to backgrounds to how you sit during the call can affect interviewers'

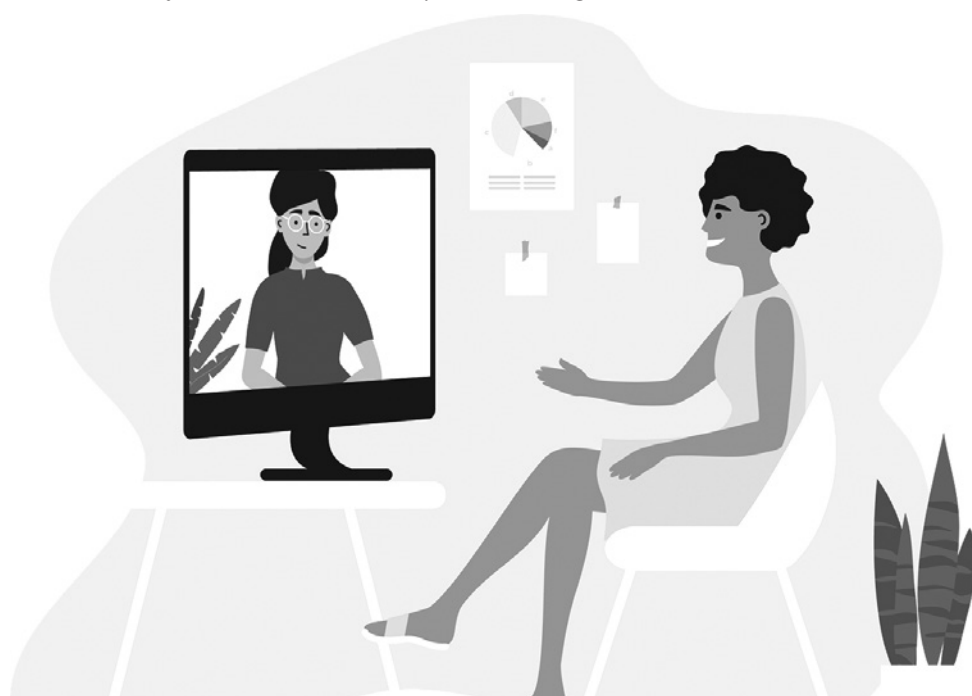
impression of you as a candidate. So preparing for interviews may involve more than traditional steps like studying up on the company and preparing responses to questions interviewers may ask.

## UTILIZE A RECRUITER

Mid-career professionals can benefit from the services of a recruiter. Recruiters can provide pointers on

constructing a resume and how to answer interview questions with the goal of emphasizing your experience and accomplishments. Such insight can be invaluable for established professionals.

Mid-career professionals looking for their next job can utilize various strategies to ensure they ultimately land at a company that values their experience and challenges them in new and exciting ways.



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# Ways to navigate remote interviews

Not so long ago, job interviews were conducted almost exclusively in person. Hiring managers were able to assess candidates during these interviews, getting an idea about everything from the applicant's skill set to how he or she affected the energy in the room to body language and the confidence of a handshake.

But then came the pandemic. While everyone had to work from home, companies still had positions to fill. The best way to do that was through remote interviews. In the years since, the process stuck as a simple way to get interviews done, instead of waiting for days and times that everyone is free to travel and meet in person.

Today a growing number of interviews are virtual. Many are conducted via popular video conferencing apps like Zoom. In a recent survey of talent leaders and recruiters conducted by the tech firm Talview, 80% of respondents said their hiring process is now fully remote. There are many advantages to remote/virtual interviews. They tend to be more convenient for screening applicants for remote positions because the applicant pool may be coming from anywhere around the world. Remote interviews also can be less time-consuming.

As useful as they can be, remote interviews are not foolproof. Technical snarls or uncooperative conditions at home can affect remote interviews. Virtual interviews also may not give candidates an accurate idea of the culture at a given firm. But remote interviews are likely here to stay, so here's how candidates can put their best (virtual) foot forward.



Use your home office environment to make a strong impression. Keep background clutter to a minimum. If necessary, use a virtual office backdrop, which was preferred by 97% of the 513 recruiters that Harvard Business Review observed and interviewed over an eight-month period in 2020.

the interviewer is speaking at length, utilize the mute button on your phone or conferencing app to silence ambient noise.

Remote interviews are a large part of modern working environments. Mastering an ability to interview remotely can help candidates ace their next interview.

## TEST THE TECHNOLOGY

Open the conferencing app and test links to make sure that you can get on the service and understand how it functions. Log in early, even if it means sitting in a virtual waiting room until the meeting organizer arrives. At least you'll be ensured of being on time.

## HAVE A CHEAT SHEET AT THE READY

A remote interview gives candidates a distinct advantage, as they can utilize notes without it being obvious. Place them just above the device camera or off to the side slightly so you can refer to them like one may read a teleprompter or cue cards on television.

## USE YOUR SPACE WISELY

If you'll be on video, set up your space and your appearance so that it is professional but engaging.

## ENGAGE WITH THE INTERVIEWER AND AVOID DISTRACTIONS

Distractions can knock you off of your game and make you come across as less engaging to recruiters. Ask housemates to make themselves scarce during the interview and lock pets out of the room. Silence your phone (if it isn't the device being used for the interview) and look into the camera while speaking. Maintaining eye contact is a sign of respect and confidence. If

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# How can I negotiate a job offer?

**J**ob offers can spark a whirlwind of emotions. After spending weeks or months trudging through job postings, remote interviews, phone calls, and reference requests, individuals may be eager to sign on the dotted line and get to work. Though it's easy to let that excitement take over, professionals must carefully study a job offer to ensure it's in their best interests.

It's not uncommon for professionals to worry that careful consideration of a job offer can make them appear greedy or unappreciative. However, any firm worth working for will allow candidates ample time to consider an offer and even negotiate terms if the need arises. In such instances, professionals can consider these negotiation tips.

## WORK WITH A RECRUITER

A professional recruiter can be your best advocate. Recruiters function as the intermediary between candidates and companies. These individuals can help professionals negotiate a fair offer and benefits in line with market compensation levels and current trends, according to LinkedIn. Employers may

take recruiters seriously, and recruiters will have no qualms about negotiating because they are third parties in these conversations and can serve as the proverbial bad guys if need be.

## THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU WANT MOST

Negotiation terms should reflect what matters most to you, which may differ from person to person. Salary is not the only negotiable. Perhaps a certain amount of vacation time is important because you routinely travel to visit with family? Maybe you need an alternative start time to accommodate child-care needs? Or you may want to solidify retirement savings and can negotiate for a larger match to your 401(k) plan? Focus on one or two negotiation points to get the best employment terms.

## VERBALLY NEGOTIATE WITH THE HIRING REP

It's important to negotiate before a written offer is presented. This is when you have the most leverage. Once an offer is put on paper, managers may be more reluctant to change terms. Take a day to mull over the offer and make a list of wants; then ask for a call with the

recruiter. You never know what you can get if you don't ask.

## EXPECT SOME GIVE AND TAKE

An employer likely will not cave to all of your demands unless they are desperate to fill the role. Negotiations often are marked by trading one thing for another. For example, an uptick in personal time off may come at the compromise of having to work longer hours each day. While you may not be able to

get a big salary increase, the employer may be able to offer you a better title, which can translate into more upward growth in the industry when you move on to another job. Again, if money is an issue, an employer may be willing to make up for a certain salary by offering stock options, expense account allowances or other perks.

Job seekers shouldn't be afraid to negotiate offers with prospective employers.



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Convenience Center Attendant	Part Time	Open Until Filled	\$13.50 per hour
Courtroom Deputy Sheriff Prince Edward County Sheriff's Office	Full Time	Open Until Filled	\$45,000/year DOQ
Deputy Sheriff (Road Deputy) Prince Edward County Sheriff's Office	Full Time	Open Until Filled	\$50,000/year DOQ
Part-Time Deputy Registrar	Part Time	Open Until Filled	\$13.50/hr
Part-Time Visitor Center Travel Counselor	Part Time	Open Until Filled	\$13.50/hr
Pretrial Officer Piedmont Court Services Local Probation	Full Time	Open Until Filled	\$40,562 DOQ
Probation Officer Piedmont Court Services Local Probation	Full Time	Open Until Filled	\$40,562 DOQ
Recovery Court Coordinator	Full Time	Open Until Filled	\$55,000 DOQ
Multi Skilled Tradesworker	Full Time	Open Until Filled	\$42,000 DOQ

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