

Looking for work: it's ups and downs

A positive attitude is extremely important for your mental health and for the success of your job search. Rejection letters and other disappointments happen in any job search. These suggestions can help you handle them successfully.

- ▼ Be realistic about how long the search will take.
- ▼ Be willing to learn from your experiences, and
- ▼ Maintain a healthy, balanced lifestyle.

When you get a rejection letter, read it carefully for any clues about why you didn't get the job.

HANDLING REJECTION

▼ *You hoped you would get a job a lot sooner.*

If you found jobs relatively easily in the past, your expectations this time may be unrealistic for today's tough job market. Fortunately, it's never too late to use the most effective methods to find suitable job opportunities.

▼ *Your application did not make it past the "paper screening" stage - you were not invited for an interview.*

There are two possible reasons you weren't invited for an interview.

- a) You don't have the qualifications the employer was looking for.
- b) Your application did not communicate you have the desired qualifications.

To find out which reason applies to you, ask the employer. Put your disappointment behind you, pick up the phone and explain to the employer you are trying to improve your job search skills and feedback on your application. You have nothing to lose and you could get some valuable advice.

If the employer explains you don't have the desired qualifications, you may need to research the qualifications required for job openings more carefully before applying. To find jobs you are qualified for, use networking and contact employers directly.

If the employer thinks you don't have the desired qualifications (but you do), don't argue. Ask for suggestions about how you can communicate your qualifications more effectively.

▼ *You have not found many suitable job openings so you were really counting on this one.*

- a) There are very few jobs that satisfy your job objective.

b) You need to put more effort into finding suitable job opportunities.

Before you assume that (a) is the case, be honest about how much real time and effort you put into networking, contacting employers and other methods of finding job opportunities. If you can honestly say you have researched the possibilities well, you may have to broaden your job objective.

Talk to a career or employment counsellor or someone whose judgment you respect.

▼ *Your job interview did not go as well as you had hoped.*

Unfortunately, all the preparation in the world won't get you the job if the chemistry between you and the interviewer isn't right. When this happens, talk to an understanding friend. Expressing your frustration can help put the experience behind you.

▼ *You really thought you had this one in the bag, so you stopped looking for others jobs.*

No matter how promising a job prospect looks, don't stop looking for other possibilities until you have a job offer on paper. There are too many things that can go wrong between a tentative verbal offer and an official written offer.

If you learned this the hard way, pick up the threads of your job search as quickly as you can.

▼ *You got an interview, it seemed to go well and you have no idea why someone else got the job.*

When a number of well-qualified applicants apply for the same job, employers have to make difficult decisions. The difference between successful applicants and unsuccessful may be small and hard to define.

Find out what could make you the successful applicant next time. Telephone the interviewer. Ask him or her to help you improve your job search skills by giving you feedback on your interview. Make sure the interviewer understands you are not considering legal action to appeal the competition, you're just trying to be better prepared for your next interview.

▼ *You are fed up and ready to quit.*

Frustration and discouragement can sink any job search.

If you are feeling really discouraged and can't seem to shake the feeling, it's time to talk to a professional counsellor.

What work do you like?

An interest inventory will give you an idea of how your likes and dislikes relate to the work world. It allows you to look at your interests and match them with occupational possibilities.

There are no right or wrong answers. However, it is extremely important to answer questions honestly. During our lifetimes, our interests will change. Many people tire or grow out of the work they are doing and explore new possibilities based on new interests.

The following questions are a sample from The Canadian Work Preference Inventory, developed by the Occupational and Career Information Branch, Employment and Immigration Canada. Simply answer Yes or No.

- 1 Do you like to work at the same thing for a long time?
- 2 Do you like to build things and/or repair them?
- 3 Do you like to dig deeply into topics to solve problems?
- 4 Do you enjoy directing people in their activities?
- 5 Do you like to help your friends solve problems?
- 6 Do you like to finish one job before starting the next?
- 7 Do you enjoy working with tools and machinery?
- 8 Do you enjoy activities which allow you to test and measure in some way?
- 9 Would you like to be responsible for organizing an activity and planning something for everyone to do?
- 10 Would you like a job where you had to deal with people all day?
- 11 Would you like to have a job where you always know what was expected of you?
- 12 Would you like to have a job operating machinery all day?
- 13 Would you like to have a job where you do mathematical calculations as part of some technical work?
- 14 Would you like to have a job where you could direct, control and plan the activities of other workers?
- 15 Are you able to help people worried or upset?
- 16 Are you able to take and follow strict orders?
- 17 Do you enjoy finding out from books or TV programs how things are made or how they work?
- 18 Would you like to work on projects that allow you to discover new facts or ideas?
- 19 Are you usually successful in getting people to do what you want?
- 20 Would you like a job interviewing people to get their opinions?

These questions are based on interests needed to be happy in different kinds of work. Remember, they are just examples. Interest inventories are based on the idea that people and jobs can be described in similar ways. There are usually many facets to our interests and abilities. Based on the questions you answered, you can get an idea of your strongest interests.

The following sections identify different interest types. The questions also match with different interest types. Circle the numbers of those questions to which you answered "yes". Then find the two sections with the most "yes" answers. This will be your interest profile.

The categories where you've answered yes the most suggest your interest type. None of us can be categorized into one type, so it's natural to have more than one interest type. As you can see some occupations appear in more than one category. This also suggests that occupations usually require a combination of interests for success.

Remember, understanding your "interests" is only one means of selecting a suitable occupation.

Questions 1 6 11 16 Practical/methodical

You are organized, practical. You like to do things in an orderly step-by-step way and do not like surprises.

Shipping and receiving clerk, teller, meatcutter, statistician, receptionist, mathematician, switchboard operator, tile setter, secretary.

Questions 2 7 12 17 Objective/technical

You think logically and find it easy to understand complicated instructions and diagrams. You may enjoy tinkering to try to fix things and you're curious about how things work. Others in this group are good with their hands and enjoy working with tools and machines.

Questions 3 8 13 18 Innovative/explorative

You like experimenting. You enjoy figuring out new ways to solve problems. You may be creative and like to express yourself in different ways. You are not intimidated by unexpected things which may occur from time to time.

Chemist, dietician, architect, musician, warden, lawyer, vet, surveyor, pharmacist, compu-

ter systems analyst, computer programmer, biomedical engineer, photographer.

Questions 4 9 14 19 Directive/managerial

You are independent, enjoy being a leader, and may feel stifled by having to follow someone else's strict instructions and procedures. You are a "take charge" person.

Air traffic controller, architect, pilot, teacher, engineer, firefighter, lawyer, advertising manager, police officer, curator, chef.

Questions 5 10 15 20 Social/helpful

You enjoy working with and for people. This may mean that you will like helping people who are sick or in trouble, teaching, or even dealing with people in the sale of a product or the delivery of a service.

Social worker, psychologist, dental assistant, parole officer, librarian, nurse, nursing assistant, speech therapist, bartender, doctor, hairstylist, sales representative, police officer, daycare assistant.