

SkillBott

JOB FINDING SKILLS MODULE

The old saying goes, “If you fail to prepare, you’re preparing to fail.” It’s true for anything in life—especially career development. In fact, researchers have documented that career preparation is critical not only for high school students (The Kansas City Star, 2006), but also for successful and seasoned employees who must stay on top of career preparation practices so they’re prepared if/when they need to find a new job (Demars, 2002). More importantly, successful career development has been found critical in the overall success of students in college (Quimby & O’Brien, 2004) so in reality, career prep is critical for school success.

The Job Finding Skills Module in the SkillBott Program was designed to meet the expectations of employers from ANY industry—as well as arm our learners with the tools they need to get employed, stay employed and enjoy a prosperous career.

Our lessons and activities were developed to ensure our learners would experience true-to-life situations that elicit the career preparation skills and behaviors that employers expect and demand. In addition, we formulated a sequence of high-powered topics that begin with the fundamentals for success and culminate with the acquisition of skills that exceed expectations.

Informational Interviews

We begin the Job Finding Skills Module with a lesson about gathering specific information that is used to confirm the needs of targeted industries, companies and even individual hiring managers.

In our lesson entitled Can We Talk? How to Use Informational Interviews to Your Advantage, students learn the rationale behind informational interviews, “how to’s” in conducting them, and advice on collecting valuable data that will help strengthen any career prep process.

Writing a Cover Letter

In order to apply for a job, you will very often need a form of technical writing known as the Cover Letter. A cover letter is an employer’s FIRST glimpse at your writing skills, and your cover letter has to officially introduce you, flow from one idea to the next and entice the reader to want to learn more about you. If it sounds like a tall order to fill for just one typed page, you’re right! That’s why learning how to make your cover letter compelling, informative and a reflection of your strong communication skills is critical. But don’t worry, our exercises will show you how to do all of that and much more!

Preparing Your Resume

If an employer does not require an application, the employer will certainly ask you for your resume. Effective resume writing is critical; therefore, we made it a two-part series. In our resume lessons we cover everything from choosing a format, organizing your skills sections, and thinking about how employers view resumes, to the most effective ways of presenting it to an employer. Upon the completion of this two-part series, you may not have another question about resume preparation ever again!

Applying for a Job

Let's say a person conducts an informational interview at a local company and learns that he/she likes it and wants to work there. Well, the next step is usually either filling out an application or submitting a resume or both. Which leads us to the lesson entitled Apply Yourself and Get the Job!

In this lesson our learners are given explicit details about job application do's and don'ts. They also have an opportunity to complete a self-guided template that teaches them the importance of compiling thorough information. Finally, the lesson includes activities involving the presentation of the application. Did you know that you should wear professional attire even when you are just dropping off an application?

Acing the Interview

After the resume and cover letter have been sent, received and read by the employer, the desired outcome is for you to receive an invitation for an interview. In our next lesson called The 3 P's of Acing an Interview: Prepare, Practice, Perform, students learn how to do just that! In fact, in our follow-up lesson called Interviewing for Success, our learners will find a long list of sample interview questions and answers!

Dress for Success

Students will learn how to improve one of the basic elements of finding a job: professional dress and hygiene. In our Dressing for Success lesson, our students learn that dressing for success means coordinating colors, accessorizing tastefully and making sure their shoes are highly polished. As Shakespeare has written, "The clothes oft make the man (or woman)". He understood the importance of a professional look. And he was right; dressing for success can mean the difference between a great first impression or a forgettable first meeting.

Dining Etiquette

Looking good is not enough. There is much more to looking and acting professional. In our lesson called Get Your Feet off the Table and Stop Slurping Your Soup, our learners are guided through lessons that cover critical dining etiquette skills. After all, in business and in one's personal life, many important discussions, decisions and deals are conducted over a meal. Whether it is breakfast, lunch or a gala dinner, our self-improvement skill building lessons will apply.

First Impressions

Employers meet prospective employees every day. It is the little things that make you stand out from the crowd and catch the attention of the employer. They notice how you dress. They observe how you order a meal and if you have table manners. No details are left to chance as students learn that delivering a firm, hearty handshake and creating appropriate "small talk" helps a new acquaintance feel comfortable and open with them. First impressions can either open or close the door on a job.

Work Ethic

In our lesson Working Hard or Hardly Working, students experience the importance of work ethic development. Showing up on time and having perfect attendance is the foundation of a strong work ethic, but we don't stop there! Developing a strong work ethic also involves

“working smart” by being efficient and solving problems, and producing outstanding results that exceed expectations.

Finding a job is a process. Every step is important.

References:

1. Title: Preparation Pays

Citation: The Kansas City Star

Publication Year: January, 2006

2. Title: Keys to a Successful Career Transition

Author: Demars, Julie

Journal Citation: CMA Management Magazine

Publication Year: June, 2002

3. Title: Predictors of Student and Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Among Nontraditional College Women

Author: Quimby, Julie L. & O'Brien, Karen M.

Journal Citation: Career Development Quarterly

Publication Year: June, 2004