

2025

Job Search

Planner & Checklist



CONGRATULATIONS ON STARTING YOUR SEARCH FOR YOUR NEXT GREAT JOB OPPORTUNITY!

This Job Search Planner & Checklist is built to serve as a step-by-step guide to take the stress out of your job search and help you land more interviews.

First, you'll learn what to do once you've decided to look for a new job – from setting up your iHire profile to cleaning up your social media accounts. Next, you'll explore career paths, identify your strengths and weaknesses, and analyze your skills. Then, you'll discover best practices for preparing a professional resume and cover letter, building a strong personal branding statement, managing your time, acing your interviews, and more. Along the way, you'll see links to additional resources and templates to keep you organized, plus helpful AI prompts to save you even more time.

By downloading this planner, you're already off to an excellent start – let's get going!

How to Use the Checklist:

To use the DIGITAL checklist, download and save the .pdf file to your computer or phone. After you've made some progress and are ready to complete a step, just select the checkbox. Don't forget to save the document before closing.

If you want a HARD COPY of the checklist, download and print the .pdf. Keep the digital version handy so that you can access the supplemental resources that are provided.

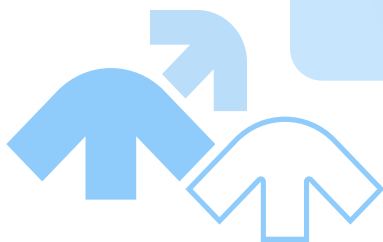


Table of Contents

Preparing for Your Search	4
Clarifying Career Objectives	5
Resumes & Cover Letters	6
Personal Branding & Social Media	7
Job Search Strategies & Networking	8
Interviewing	9
Job Offers & Salary Negotiations	10
Additional Job Search Help	11



Preparing for Your Search



Get Organized

Establish a dedicated **home office workspace**.

Set up a new **professional email address** dedicated to this search and record a professional voicemail message.

Create a **job search schedule** and **goals** (e.g., five applications per day, five follow-up calls or emails per week, three networking events per month, etc.).

Refresh your knowledge of **job search terms**.

Complete Your iHire Profile

Explore iHire's 57 sites.

Complete your iHire Profile, fill in your **iMatch preferences**, and upload your latest resume (no need to update just yet; we'll help with that step later).

Explore the **iHire Resource Center**.

If You Are Unemployed

Research/file for **unemployment benefits**.

Research/apply for health insurance (check out **Healthcare.gov** and/or **COBRA**).

Identify and manage the stages of **job loss grief**.

Make sure to maintain your **emotional and mental well-being** while unemployed.

Follow these **nine tips** to remain productive while unemployed.

Clarifying Career Objectives



Clarify Career Objectives

Use our **Career Clarity Worksheet** to gain a better understanding of your career goals.

Get a new perspective on your skills and potential careers with a few **free online career assessments**.

Complete a **strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis**.

Identify **trending skills** while browsing jobs on iHire.

Explore Careers

Take advantage of iHire's **Career Explorer Tool** to discover other career titles and industries that may be a good match for you.

Manage a career change using **iHire's Career Change Toolkit**.

Sign up for a course or two to improve your skills, enhance your resume, and learn something new.

Research Salaries

Research salaries for your desired job title and location on the **Bureau of Labor Statistics' (BLS) website**.

AI Prompt...



Career Clarity Prompt: Please ask me a series of probing questions about my values, skills, interests, and ideal work environment to help me discover potential career paths that would bring me fulfillment and success.



Resumes & Cover Letters



Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS)

Get a clear understanding of the way an automated **applicant tracking system** works. Use the **right keywords** on your resume to get past the ATS.

Resume Strategy

Determine which resume strategy will work best for you: **chronological**, **functional**, or **hybrid**.

Use **iHire's Resume Portfolio and Builder**, hire a **Resume Writer**, or use our **Resume Writing Toolkit**.

Learn the pros and cons of **using AI to write your resume**.

Upload digital copies to your iHire profile and make sure your resume is set to Searchable (if you want recruiters to find you).

Cover Letter Writing

Make your cover letter brief and to the point with this **template** and **Cover Letter Writing Toolkit**.

Upload a digital copy to your iHire profile.

Alternatively, use **iHire's Cover Letter Generator**.

References

Create a list of **references** and networking contacts.

Create a **reference page**.

70% of resumes that don't meet ATS criteria are instantly removed and never seen by hiring teams.
(source: Select Software Reviews)

Personal Branding & Social Media



Social Media

Find out what's out there by searching your name on Google or any search engine.

Prospective employers will look you up! Get a better understanding of what employers are looking for on **social media**.

Manage your **online reputation** by deleting any embarrassing or potentially compromising photos and posts.

How to Optimize Your Social Media Profiles to Get Hired

LinkedIn

Create or update your LinkedIn account.

Differentiate your **LinkedIn profile from your resume**.

Include a **professional headshot** in your LinkedIn profile.

Join LinkedIn conversations and groups to stand out as a job seeker.

91%

of all recruiters use social media as part of their hiring process.

(source: BloggingX)

Personal Brand

How to Create a Unique Personal Brand as a Job Seeker

Write a **personal branding statement**.

Create an effective **elevator pitch** and practice, practice, practice.

AI Prompt...



Personal Brand Builder Prompt: Create a personal brand statement for a [your job title] in [your industry] with strengths in [list 3 key skills]. Highlight [list 3 top achievements]. Make it brief and memorable.



Job Search Strategies & Networking



Online Job Boards

Find the **iHire community** that's right for you, and join several sites if you have different career goals.

Learn how to answer the **"desired salary" question on applications**.

Customize your resume for each job.

Use **iHire's Job X-ray Tool** before applying to jobs to get instant feedback on which keywords are missing in your resume for a specific job ad.

Track and follow up on all of your applications with **iHire's Job Tracker Tool**.

Temp/Contract Positions & Recruiters

Consider accepting a **temporary or contract position**.

5 Tips for Maximizing Recruiter Relationships

Networking

Research upcoming networking events (in-person or online) and review these **icebreakers**.

Follow up after a networking event using these **email tips and templates**.

Reconnect with previous co-workers, supervisors, or other contacts via email or LinkedIn with **these templates**.

Discover how to **effectively request a job referral**.

Request **informational interviews** with contacts at your target companies or people in your network whose career paths align with your goals.

85%

of jobs are filled via networking.

(source: Zippia)

AI Prompt...



Network Strategy Prompt: Create natural networking scripts for a [your role] connecting with [target contacts] to achieve [specific goal]. Include conversation starters and follow-up tips.



Interviewing



Interview Prep

Prepare for the job interview by researching the company using this [checklist and worksheet](#).

Download iHire's [common interview questions cheat sheet](#) and rehearse your answers.

[How to Answer Job Interview Questions With the STAR Method \[Free Worksheet\]](#)

Maintain professionalism and don't [ghost the employer](#).

Interview Styles & Types

Be prepared for any of these five types of interview styles by downloading [iHire's Official Interview Guide](#).

Virtual/Video Interviews – Practice video interviewing and make sure your technology is working using this [checklist](#) to prepare.

In-Person Interviews – Boost your confidence with [this on-demand webinar](#).

Panel Interviews – Learn how to answer these [panel interview questions](#).

Group Interviews – Be sure you stand out in a [group interview](#).

Acing the Interview

Learn how to talk about your [strengths and weaknesses](#) during an interview.

Ask the hiring manager [smart questions](#) during the interview.

Interview Follow Up

Send [thank you notes](#) and follow up after the interview with these [sample scripts and templates](#).

Continue to stand out as the ideal candidate after the interview by [following these steps](#).

Job Offers & Salary Negotiations



Job Offers

Carefully review every job offer and use our worksheet to **compare multiple job offers**.

Research the employer's company culture before accepting a job.

If needed, professionally decline a job offer using this **email template**.

Salary Negotiation

Complete the salary negotiation prep worksheet and write a **salary negotiation script**.

Follow these **10 steps** to successfully negotiate a job offer. If you find yourself negotiating via email, use these **templates** as guides.

Make sure you understand the differences between **salary and total compensation packages** and how to negotiate **additional benefits**.

Be prepared to effectively respond to **lowball salary offers**.

Job Rejection & Resignation

5 Tips for Responding Graciously to a Job Rejection Email [Sample]

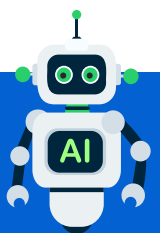
Decide if you will **tell your employer where you're going** when you resign.

Use this template to craft your **resignation letter**.

AI Prompt...



Salary Negotiation Script Generator Prompt: Help me create a brief salary negotiation script. I've been offered [\$X] for a [position] role and would like to counter with [\$X]. My key achievements include [X, Y, Z], and I'm also interested in discussing [benefits]. Please write a short, professional response that's both confident and collaborative.



Additional Job Search Help



For more job search tips, toolkits, and templates, visit iHire's [Job Seeker Resource Center](#).

Are you a Premium member?

Schedule an appointment with a Career Advisor for even more personalized guidance. Find a link to schedule a call with a Career Advisor at the bottom of your iHire dashboard.

Need further assistance with your resume or cover letter?

Get in touch with our [resume writers](#) (Premium members receive 10% OFF these services).

Have more questions or comments?

Reach out to our Customer Success team at CustomerSuccess@iHire.com or (866) 238-0161.

Want the latest job search news? Connect with iHire:



Good luck – we're rooting for you!