



THE  
**Job Search**  
ACADEMY

COURSE WORKBOOK

career contessa

# Are You Ready to Begin?

Before you really dive into The Job Search Academy, make sure...

- You're in a comfortable location with high-quality Internet access
- You downloaded the course files
- You downloaded Adobe Reader (below)

## DOWNLOADING ADOBE READER

This document is interactive! That means whenever you see a fill-in-the-blank, you should be able to fill it in, and when you see a check box, you should be able to check it off.

The best way to view these interactive PDFs is with **Adobe Reader**. To ensure the best possible experience, please visit [get.adobe.com/reader](https://get.adobe.com/reader) and **install this software** to use the Course Workbook.

You are also welcome to print this book out and use it old-school-style, of course—but in case you don't have printer access, we wanted to make sure you could fill these out on-screen.

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# Your Productivity Roadmap

## LESSON 1 FIGURING OUT WHAT YOU WANT

- Career Ideals Worksheet
- Job Search Persona Quiz
- Creating Your Job Search Support Group Worksheet



## LESSON 2 FINDING YOUR TARGET COMPANIES

- Target Companies List Worksheet
- Company Research List



## LESSON 3 NARROWING YOUR SEARCH— TARGET ROLES

- Return to Target Companies List

## LESSON 4 POLISHING YOUR MATERIALS

- Personal Pitch Worksheet
- Resume Quiz
- Polishing Your Materials Checklist



## LESSON 5 FILLING THE GAPS

- Skills Resource
- Skills Gaps Worksheet



## LESSON 6 NETWORKING AND INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

- Email Templates
- Informational Interview Questions

**STUDY BREAK**

Job Search Pep Talk



**LESSON 7  
REFINING YOUR  
ONLINE  
APPLICATION  
STRATEGY**

How to Read a  
Job Description  
Worksheet



**LESSON 8  
AFTER THE  
APPLICATION**

Thank You Note  
Templates



# Lesson

# 1

# FIGURING OUT WHAT YOU WANT

# Career Ideals

Start by defining what you want. Look at the last 3 roles and/or large-scale projects you've worked on, and capture everything you did and owned in those roles and projects.

## ROLE OR PROJECT #1

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## ROLE OR PROJECT #2

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## ROLE OR PROJECT #3

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Go back through each role or project and highlight what you **enjoyed most** about that work. Highlight only the things that truly **motivated** you. What aspects did you enjoy? What lit you up?

What skills or experience do you want to gain in the next 12-18 months?

**Take a few minutes to dream about your future**—If you could wave a magic wand, what would your life look like in 5 years? What kind of work would you be doing? Where would you be in your career? Who would you be working with? What would you be doing?

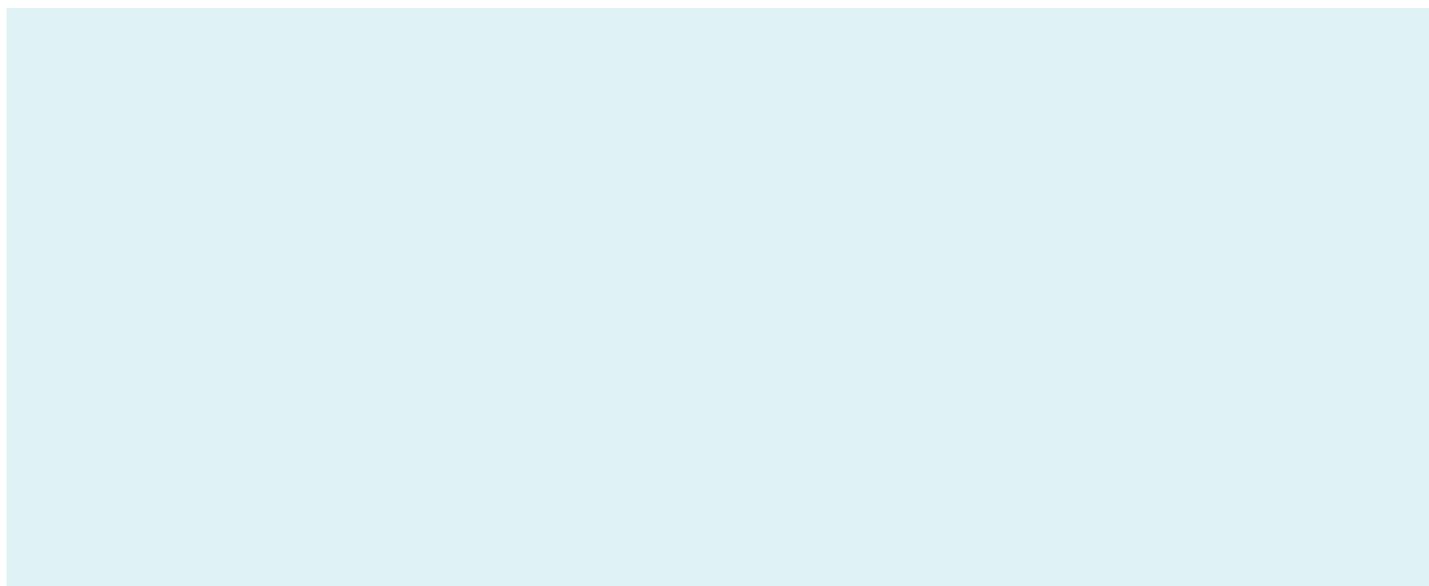
If money were no object, what would you want to do for work?

# Discovering What Matters to You

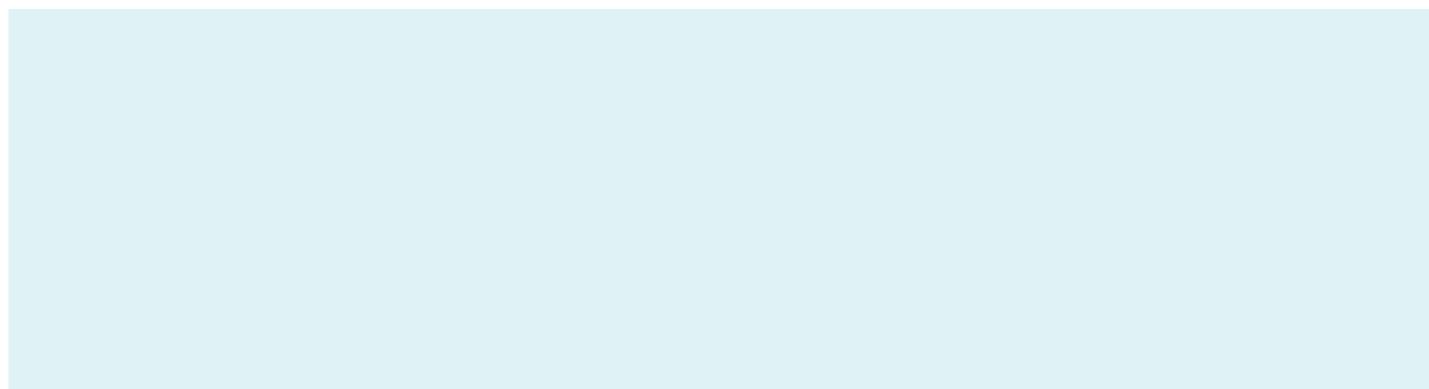
Alignment in your career is an agreement between your personal values and the type of work you do. Discovering what matters to you is a key part of career success and satisfaction.

Write down your top **personal** and **professional** values.

*Think in words such as: family, financial success, innovation, creativity, community, teaching, growth, peace, art, etc.*



Are there areas in your current career where you see strong alignment to your values? If so, where and how?



Figuring out what career to pursue can be a challenging activity, especially if you know you're looking for something different than what you have now. To help, fill out the following table. List anything and everything you could possibly want, and don't be afraid to dream big!

AREA	DEAL-BREAKERS	NICE-TO-HAVES	MUST-HAVES
Industry			
Department			
Company Type + Size			
Salary Range			

AREA	DEAL-BREAKERS	NICE-TO-HAVES	MUST-HAVES
<p>Types of People/Team Members (i.e. small team with people my age)</p>			
<p>Job Responsibilities</p>			
<p>Skills I'd Want to Leverage (i.e. writing, analytical thinking, event planning)</p>			
<p>Location</p>			
<p>Commute (i.e. time, method)</p>			

AREA	DEAL-BREAKERS	NICE-TO-HAVES	MUST-HAVES
<p><b>Corporate Perks</b> (i.e. health insurance, 401K)</p>			
<p><b>Lifestyle Perks</b> (i.e. gym, food, pets at work)</p>			
<p><b>Hours</b> (i.e. flexible, remote)</p>			
<p><b>Professional Development</b> (i.e. formal mentoring program, networking groups)</p>			
<p><b>Work Style</b> (i.e. work in groups, work independently project-based)</p>			

# What Type of Jobseeker Are You?

Take our quiz, then tally up how many As, Bs, and Cs you circle.

## Have you job searched before?

- (a) Nope, not really. This is my first or second job search.
- (b) Yep, I'm familiar with job searching.
- (c) I have, but it was a long time ago.

## What kind of role are you looking for?

- (a) I want a role just like the one I have now, just somewhere else.
- (b) I'm trying to find a new role in a different industry or company than I'm in now.
- (c) I'm looking for a role that fits my skill set, but open to what that role looks like.

## How many years of experience do you have in your current role?

- (a) 0-3 years
- (b) 3+ years
- (c) I don't have a current role.

## Do you like your current role?

- (a) I like what I do, I just want to do it at a different company.
- (b) I don't love what I do now, I'm looking to move into a completely new role.
- (c) I'm ready to explore new roles, similar to my past roles but not exactly the same.

## Do you like your current industry?

- (a) Yes, I think it's interesting and I like learning more about it.
- (b) No, I'm trying to move into a different industry.
- (c) I don't have a current industry.

## For your next job, are you going to have to learn new skills?

- (a) Not a lot, my current job gives me ample experience for roles I'm looking for.

- (b) Yes, I'm going to learn A LOT to succeed in my next job—I'm ready to build my skills.
- (c) I'm going to learn new skills, but hope to apply the skills I have, too.

## Have you ever had a side-hustle or freelance career?

- (a) No—or, yes, but it's not relevant to the role I want.
- (b) Yes—and I'm trying to transition into an industry or role similar to that.
- (c) I've worked done freelance and worked odd jobs but I'm not focusing on that as my experience for my next role.

## When we introduced you to each of the personas before, who did you relate to the most?

- (a) Ciera, the classic searcher.
- (b) Teresa, the transitioner.
- (c) Ruth, the returner.

## Results

**MOSTLY A'S You're a Classic Job Searcher, like Ciera.** You're looking for a role that's similar to your current job. You're looking for a new company. Follow along with our examples for Ciera for the rest of this course!

**MOSTLY B'S You're a Transitioner, like Teresa.** You're looking for a role that's different from your current job—trying to transition into a new role, industry, or company. You'll follow along with our examples for Teresa for the rest of this course!

**MOSTLY C'S You're a Returner, like Ruth.** You've worked before, but are coming off a work gap, and you're ready to use your experience to succeed in your new role. Follow along with our examples for Ruth for the rest of this course!

# Creating Your Job Search Support Group Worksheet

## Building Your Job Search Support Group

If you're job searching and you don't tell anyone, are you really job searching? (The answer is yes, but it's much better if you do.) You're going to create a job search support group—people that will be there for you to lean on during your search, and that can help hold you accountable, too.

Answer the prompts below with whoever comes to mind. Don't feel pressured to write a lot or a little, just write what comes to mind. It's ok to reuse names, but try your best to think of new people in each question.

Who do you call when you're having a bad day? Who do you call with good news?

Who calls you when *they're* having a bad day? Who calls you with their good news?

Do you have any career or life mentors that you can count on? Who are they?

Who can you rely on? Who would you call at 2 am for help?

Who would you give as a reference, if you were asked to do so?

When we mentioned an accountability group, was there anyone you thought of right away?

### Reaching Out to Your Group

Alright, you've brainstormed a list of people who care for you, and who you can count on. The next step is to reach out to your potential group members and see if they're willing to help keep you accountable and give you support during your job search.

Reach out to your group in whatever way feels most natural to you—text, phone call, DM (we don't judge) or email. If you're wondering how to make the ask, try using our reach-out template for reference or as a starting point.

Dear [NAME],

I hope this email finds you well!

As you might know, I recently decided to launch a job search. I'm [NEW DIRECTION: a few words about switching jobs/fields/industries] to work with [DESCRIPTION: type of companies and/or people you're hoping to work with].

I'm reaching out to ask if you'd like to help keep me accountable in my job search, by joining my Job Search Support Group. I value your opinion, and I know that you've been there for me [PERSONALLY, PROFESSIONALLY, BOTH] in the past [X] years.

So what does the Job Search Support Group entail? Not a lot—I'm asking you to check in with me to make sure I'm making progress. That means researching and applying to jobs, and working along in the Job Search Academy course I'm taking.

Ultimately, I'm asking for your support—for your advice and your help as I search for a new role. Your insight is invaluable to me.

Thank you for considering it!  
[NAME]

Again, this is just a point of reference for your reach-out. Depending on how well you know your support group members, you can alter your ask to be more or less formal.



# Lesson 2

## FINDING YOUR TARGET COMPANIES

# Target Companies Worksheet

First, write down any (and every) company that interests you, and why it made the list. Don't censor yourself. It's important to understand *why* you're interested in the company because you'll need to answer that in your resume, interview, etc.

Come back to this worksheet in lesson 3 and fill out the last column—the role or department you want to target.

TARGET COMPANY	WHY IT MADE THE LIST	THE ROLE OR DEPARTMENT YOU WANT TO PURSUE AT THE COMPANY





# Lesson

# 3

## NARROWING YOUR SEARCH— TARGET ROLES

# Company Research

Here's where you will capture all of the information you've collected about what makes a company unique, and a great fit for you.

## COMPANY

WHAT TO KNOW	WHERE TO FIND IT	NOTES
What the company does. Who are their clients/what's their product/service?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Company website</li> <li>+ Company social media</li> <li>+ Company press</li> </ul>	
What makes them different/unique from their competition?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Company website</li> <li>+ Company social media</li> <li>+ Customer reviews</li> <li>+ Company videos/interviews</li> <li>+ News/press about the company</li> </ul>	
What is the company's revenue or business model? How do they make money?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Company website</li> <li>+ Company product/service</li> <li>+ News/press about the company</li> </ul>	
Who is the company leader, his/her background, and the company's history?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Google (search for the leader's name)</li> <li>+ Company website</li> <li>+ LinkedIn (search for the leader's name)</li> <li>+ News/press about the company</li> </ul>	
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Has the company had any recent press?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Google news search</li> <li>+ Industry-specific news/publications</li> <li>+ Company social media</li> </ul>	
How does the company fit into its overall industry?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Google news search</li> <li>+ Industry-specific news/publications</li> </ul>	

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**Lesson**

**4**

**POLISHING  
YOUR  
MATERIALS**

# Prepping Your Pitch

## A GOOD PITCH ANSWERS 5 THINGS

- + Who you are
- + What you've done and why you're passionate about it
- + Your unique strengths
- + Where you'd like to go next and why
- + Your "ask" or conclusion

## TAILOR YOUR PITCH

- + Make your pitch relevant to your audience
- + Keep your pitch interesting by including what you've done and why you've done it

## KEEP IT SIMPLE

- + Keep it brief, it's called an elevator pitch because you should get your message across in the time it'd take for an elevator ride
- + But also have a slightly longer version for an interview, when you'll want about 2 minutes
- + Articulate your pitch clearly (show off your communication skills)
- + Have a thoughtful conclusion (meaning "aaaand that's pretty much it" is out)

## PRACTICE SAYING IT OUT LOUD

- + Have a friend listen to you run through
- + Ask them to give you feedback on any areas they found confusing, then tweak your pitch accordingly

# Creating Your Pitch

## ELEMENT 1 / WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU DO

Name

What you do

## ELEMENT 2 / WHAT UNIQUE (AND RELEVANT) STRENGTHS YOU HAVE

**What you specialize in**

*(5-6 words to describe your unique expertise and skills)*

**What you've accomplished**

*(explain 1 past work experience and how it's relevant to your career goals or adds to your skill set)*

### **ELEMENT 3 / YOUR INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC QUALIFICATIONS**

Identify an industry or company problem

Explain how you're qualified to fix it

### **ELEMENT 4 / YOUR CAREER OBJECTIVES**

Explain the next phase of your career

How does this fit in with your overall career goals

### **ELEMENT 5 / THE ASK OR CONCLUSION**

Why you're the perfect fit for the job

Why you're the best at what you do

# Now Let's Put It All Together

My name is [NAME], and I'm a [WHAT YOU DO] who specializes in [WHAT YOU SPECIALIZE IN]. In the past year, I have done [WHAT YOU'VE ACCOMPLISHED] and have a strong track record in [COMPANY PROBLEM + YOUR SOLUTION]. I'm looking to [NEXT PHASE OF YOUR CAREER] where I can [ACCOMPLISH X, Y, Z CAREER GOALS]. I am an excellent fit for a position at [COMPANY] because [YOUR UNIQUE SELLING POINT].

## EXAMPLE

My name is Lauren Smith [WHAT YOU DO], and I'm a digital marketing professional [WHAT YOU DO] who specializes in social media and influencer campaigns [SPECIALTIES]. I've worked with big name brands like Clorox and Pepsi to help refine and grow their digital presence through highly targeted campaigns. [ACCOMPLISHMENTS]. Since the web's constantly evolving, staying on top of marketing trends can prove challenging [COMPANY PROBLEM]. I have a strong track record in implementing new and innovative methods to tap into new opportunities [SOLUTION]. After working at a large marketing firm, I'm looking to expand my expertise by joining a growing brand [NEXT PHASE OF CAREER] where I can help reach new audiences and be involved in the day-to-day growth marketing strategies and milestones [CAREER GOALS]. I am an excellent fit for an in-house marketing position at a startup company because I have big brand marketing knowledge, as well as experience applying those tactics to smaller target audiences. Most importantly, I am excited by the prospect of growing a brand from the ground up, and am confident I have the scrappiness required to get the job done well [UNIQUE SELLING POINT].

# Which Resume Format Will Land You The Job?

**Formatting a resume involves a lot more than just deciding if you should add columns or what type of font to use. An easy way to keep a clean layout and ensure you relay your story to a recruiter properly is by choosing the right format. Want to find out which format is right for you? Take this super fast and easy quiz to find out!**

**You're ready to make a move, but which direction are you heading?**

- Ⓐ I'm looking to stay in the same industry or take on a similar role.
- Ⓑ I really want to make a big career change.
- Ⓒ I'm flexible so I'm keeping my options open.

**Can you tell us a little bit more about your work history?**

- Ⓐ I've worked three (or fewer) jobs at different companies.
- Ⓑ I can list multiple job titles on my resume, but they're all at the same company.
- Ⓒ My first job was many years ago, and I've come a long way in my career with multiple companies and job titles.

**How do you feel about your current or most recent job? Be honest!**

- Ⓐ I really love what I do. Other factors are fueling my job search.
- Ⓑ I've given it the old college try, but I don't like my work, my company, and maybe not even my industry.
- Ⓒ There are aspects of my job that I really enjoy, but some not so much.

**Does your current job title suit you?**

- Ⓐ The title I have is the one I want—or at least it puts me on the path to the title I'm after.
- Ⓑ It's a little off track from where I want to be, and it doesn't represent my biggest/most impressive skills.
- Ⓒ I feel like my title illustrates some of my experience and my role, but it's not the perfect fit.

**What area of your career are you most proud of? Show it off!**

- Ⓐ I hustled through school/a career change/returning to work, and I'm proud of where I've landed.
- Ⓑ I've acquired some really valuable skills, and I'm an incredibly versatile candidate/worker.
- Ⓒ I've got many years of work experience, specific industry expertise, and even some career-centric extracurriculars in the form of volunteer work, serving on boards or professional organization, or other accolades.

# If you answered mostly...

## A Chronological Resume

This format keeps the focus on your most recent work experiences. Your jobs are listed in reverse chronological order with your current, or most recent, job first. Your education and related skills are also included in this resume, but where you place them on the page is flexible—you can choose what you want to highlight and what you think would be most enticing to a recruiter. So if you want the recruiter to notice your technical skills first then list them at the top.

### You Should Use This If...

This format works particularly well for people who are looking for a job in a similar industry or for a job that's similar to their current (or a past) position. This format also works well for students and recent grads who might not have as many work experiences to choose from.

## B Functional Resume

A functional resume focuses on your skills and experience rather than your chronological work history. In this format, you emphasize specific skills and capabilities to highlight your competency and keep the focus less on job titles and more on transferrable expertise.

### You Should Use This If...

You're a job seeker who is changing careers or has gaps in your employment history. Another example includes professionals who have held multiple positions at the same company or are currently serving as a consultant or a freelancer. This resume design allows you to highlight the functional skills you learned through multiple roles that didn't always follow a linear path.

## C Combination Resume

This is just like it sounds—a combination of a chronological and a functional resume. At a certain point in your career, you'll have numerous core competencies and accomplishments. A combination resume lets you show off multiple years of experience through a chronological list but also quickly point out your accomplishments.

### You Should Use This If...

This is a popular format for mid-level to experienced professionals because they have multiple years of work experience. You've put in years of hard work, so why not show off a little?

# Polishing Your Materials Checklist

## LINKEDIN

- Update your personal summary with keywords related to the work/company you're pursuing
- Add a keyword-rich title to your headline (hint: you're not just an "editor," you're an "editor | content creator | digital strategist")
- Update your work history, including your most recent job description, with bullet points of your accomplishments and responsibilities
- Request LinkedIn recommendations from past coworkers and employers—and offer to write them one as well
- Check your recommended connections and make any relevant requests
- Add any additional sections that are relevant like volunteer work, publications, courses, etc
- Upload any work examples to your summary of the specific job
- Update your profile picture with something professional and chic
- Start following companies you're interested in working for (and even try connecting with employees at those companies)

## INSTAGRAM

- Make it private if you're a private person
- If you're OK with a public profile, do an image purge—no inappropriate party shots, but also clean up some of those blurry photos, too
- Start following companies you admire so you don't miss any "we're hiring" announcements

## FACEBOOK

- Check and update your current privacy settings
- Update your profile picture and cover photo—potential employers may not be able to see your details because of your settings, but they will see your photo
- Join relevant Facebook groups for some networking opportunities
- Update your work history if necessary

## TWITTER

- Clean up past tweets—delete anything that a boss might frown upon
- If you haven't updated in, like, years consider deleting your account (or at least making it private)
- Start following people in your field and companies that you admire



# Lesson

# 5

# FILLING THE GAPS

# Skills Resource

Coming up with your list of relevant skills can seem like a daunting task. To make it easier, we compiled a list of over 150 skills for you to add to your LinkedIn and application materials. Remember, you'll want to add a healthy mix of hard—or technical—skills, with soft—or general—skills. Check, highlight, or circle the skills that you have here—you're going to be referencing these again to identify your skills gaps.

## SOFT SKILLS

- Ability to Take Criticism
- Active Listener
- Ad Sales
- Adaptability
- Advertising
- Approachability
- AP Style Writing
- Artistic/Design Sense
- Blogging
- Business Ethics
- Business Etiquette
- Change Management
- Client Relations
- Collaboration
- Communication
- Community Building
- Complex Problem Solving
- Conflict Management
- Conflict Resolution
- Consistent
- Consumer Experience
- Content Creation + Strategy
- Creative Thinking
- Creativity
- Crisis Management
- Critical Thinking
- Customer Service
- Decision Making
- Dedicated
- Delegation
- Detail Oriented
- Diversity of Thought
- Efficient
- Emotional Intelligence
- Empathy
- Enthusiastic
- Event Production
- Flexible
- Giving + Receiving
- Feedback
- Industry Research
- Industry Trend Awareness
- Interpersonal Skills
- Managing
- Natural Leader
- Negotiation
- Networking
- Open Minded
- Organized
- Patient
- Perseverance
- Persuasion
- Persuasive Writing
- Planning
- Presentation Skills
- Problem Solving
- Product Development
- Productive (Highly)
- Project Management
- Public Relations
- Public Speaking
- Reliable
- Research
- Resourceful
- Responsible
- Results-Oriented
- Self-Assessment
- Self-Confidence
- Storyteller
- Strategic Planning
- Stress Management
- Team Building
- Teamwork
- Time Management
- Trustworthy
- Work Ethic (Strong)
- Writing + Editing
- Works Well Under Pressure
- Writing Reports + Proposals
- Willingness to Learn

**HARD SKILLS**

- A3-D Modeling + Printing
- A/B Testing
- Adobe Software Suite
- Accounting
- Analytical Reasoning
- Animation
- Artificial Intelligence
- Audio Production
- Automotive Repair
- Big Data
- Blogging Platforms
- Bookkeeping
- Business Analysis
- Carpentry
- Cashflow Management
- Certifications
- Client Relationship Management Software
- Cloud Computing
- Competitive Strategies
- Computer Coding Languages
- Computer Graphics
- Content Management Systems
- Copywriting
- Corporate Communications
- Customer Service Systems
- Data Analytics
- Data Mining
- Data Science
- Database Management
- Digital Photography
- Digital Marketing
- Engineering (All kinds)
- Foreign Languages
- Game Development
- Graphic Design
- Heavy Machinery
- Operation
- Industry-Specific Applications/Programs
- Industrial Design
- Interviewing + Reporting
- HTML
- Journalism
- Landscaping
- Machine Learning
- Machine Operation
- Medical Coding
- Microsoft Office Suite + G Suite
- Mobile App Development
- Natural Language Processing
- Network + Information Systems
- Network Security
- Operating Systems
- People Management
- Presentation Creation
- Programming Languages
- Quality Assurance
- Quickbooks
- Risk Analysis
- Risk Assurance
- Sales Leadership
- Schedule Management
- Scientific Computing
- Security
- SEO/SEM Marketing
- Social Media Marketing
- Social Media Platforms
- Storage Systems and Management
- Statistical Analysis
- Systems Analysis
- Task Management Applications
- Technical Documentation
- Technical Support
- Translation
- Usability Testing
- UX + UI Design
- Video Creation + Editing
- Video Production
- Web Analytics
- Web Design

# Identifying Your Skills Gaps

No matter what your work experience is or what job you're applying to, there's probably one area (or more) that you need to work on. We call those areas skills gaps. And identifying, then filling, those skills gaps will help you stand out as a candidate, and ensure you'll be successful in your next role.

You're off to a great start—you've already identified your skills using the Skills Resource. Transfer all of those skills into the first section, "My Skills." Then, you'll do research on your target roles—what skills do they require? Copy those skills into the "Position Skills" section.

The last step? Comparing your skills to the position skills—and putting anything you don't have, that the position requires, in the last section. Those are your skills gaps. That's what you want to focus on.

## MY SKILLS

## POSITION SKILLS

## SKILLS GAPS

Now that you know what your skills gaps are, the next step is to fill them. You can probably learn your new skill online—but you can also consider volunteer experience, seminars, conferences, or in-person learning. If you don't know where to start, read our article—[The Ultimate Guide to Continuing Your Education + Online Learning](#). We cover it all.



# Lesson

# 6

## NETWORKING + INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

# Job Search Network Update Templates

You need to let your network know you're job searching—your connections will likely know of jobs, or be able to make introductions to people in roles or at companies that you're interested in learning more about.

## Tell Friends That You're Looking for a New Job Template

I hope this email finds you well!

As some of you may know, I recently decided to **[NEW DIRECTION: a few words about switching jobs/fields/industries]** to work with **[DESCRIPTION: type of companies and/or people you're hoping to work with]**.

As I dive into my job search across the country **[or SPECIFIC LOCATION]**, I'd love it if you could keep your eyes open for people I should connect with and/or positions that might be a fit for me. Below is a bit about my background and what I'm looking for, and you can view my full resume on LinkedIn **[INSERT LINK]**. These are just a few of my ideal scenarios, but if you come across anything related, please keep me in mind!

### MY BACKGROUND

[Note: Include 2-3 bullets, being as specific as possible about the number of years you've worked, your impact, high-profile accomplishments or companies, etc.]

- + As a **[PERSONAL CAREER/JOB DESCRIPTION]**, my experience spans **[JOBS/INDUSTRIES]**.
- + With over **[NUMBER]** years of experience in **[CAREER/JOB SKILLS]**, I'm looking to translate those skills into **[NEW DIRECTION]**.
- + My biggest strengths are **[LIST STRENGTHS]**.
- + I would love to help an organization **[CAREER GOALS/ASPIRATIONS]**.

### WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR

- + A full, part-time, or consulting position for **[TYPE OF INDUSTRY, COMPANY, TEAM, AND/OR ENVIRONMENT]**.
- + I work best in an environment where I can utilize **[TYPES OF TASKS THAT FIT YOUR STRENGTHS]**.
- + I definitely want to find a position that **[LOCATION AND/OR ANY OTHER IMPORTANT FACTORS]**.

Please feel free to forward this email to any contacts or companies that are hiring and would benefit from **[FILL IN SOMETHING UNIQUE YOU BRING TO THE TABLE]**. Thank you so much for taking the time to read this email and for keeping me on your radar!

All the best,  
**[YOUR NAME]**  
**[EMAIL] | [PHONE] | [LINKEDIN] | [WEBSITE]**

## Tell Relevant Contacts Individually That You're Looking for a New Job Template

Hi [NAME],

I hope all is well! [INCLUDE PERSONAL COMMENT: e.g., "I saw photos of the conference you held last month on Facebook—it looked like a fantastic event."]

I'm reaching out because I'm currently seeking a new position. As you know, I have been at [CURRENT/MOST RECENT EMPLOYER] for almost [NUMBER OF YEARS], but I'm ready for a new challenge in the [YOUR INDUSTRY] world.

I know that you used to do work for [COMPANY], which is on my short list of dream companies. Do you still have any contacts there and, if so, is there someone that might be willing to do an informational interview with me? Any introductions you can make would be greatly appreciated.

In addition, if you hear of any job opportunities that might be a good fit, please send them my way. I've attached my resume for your reference; feel free to pass it along.

Thanks in advance for your help! Please keep me posted on how things are going and if there's anything I can do to return the favor.

All the best,  
[YOUR NAME]  
[EMAIL] | [PHONE] | [LINKEDIN] | [WEBSITE]

# Reaching Out on LinkedIn + Adding Cold Connections

## The Classic Approach

Hi Jane,

Came across your profile and work at XYZ Company. I'm a fellow aspiring marketing professional and would love to connect.

Regards,

[YOUR NAME]

## The Admirer Approach

Hi Jane,

Saw your recent presentation at XYZ conference. I got a lot out of it and would love to chat with you to discuss some questions I had about your work.

Regards,

[YOUR NAME]

# Following Up + Asking for the Informational Interview

## The Classic Reach-Out

Hi Jane,

Thank you for connecting with me on LinkedIn. I see that you've had a lot of work experience in corporate marketing, a field that I'm hoping to break into. I've done a couple of internships in the field and would love your advice on this topic. Would you be willing to speak with me over the phone for 20-30 minutes in the next few weeks? Thanks for your consideration.

Regards,

[YOUR NAME]

## The Hybrid Reach-Out

Hi Jane,

I'm a fellow Rice University alumnus who recently graduated with a degree in Marketing. I came across your LinkedIn profile through our alumni group and was intrigued by your work experience in marketing. I'd love to learn more about your career path and get your perspective on how to best break into the field as a new grad. Would you be willing to speak with me over the phone for 20-30 minutes in the next few weeks? Thanks for your consideration.

Regards,

[YOUR NAME]

## Traditional Ask Approach

Hi [NAME],

I hope this message finds you well. My name is [NAME], and I'm reaching out today because I've read up on your career and the work you've done with [A SPECIALTY OR PROJECT YOU LEARNED ABOUT IN YOUR RESEARCH], and I was hoping to learn more. Would you be willing to hop on the phone for 20 minutes to discuss your career so far and some insight into your industry?

If you're open to this idea, I am available to speak by phone at the following times in the next two weeks:

[INSERT A BULLETED LIST OF DATES AND TIMES]

Please let me know if one of those dates and times works for you and a good number to reach you, and I'll send over a calendar invite!

Thank you for taking the time, and I hope to speak to you soon!

All the best,

[YOUR NAME]

[EMAIL] | [PHONE] | [LINKEDIN] | [WEBSITE]

# 15 Questions to Ask in Every Informational Interview

Here are some general questions that should work well regardless of industry or the person's professional background. When you ask your questions, make sure that they're relevant to the person by doing thorough research on their career before the interview.

**1. Can you tell me a bit about your career path and what led you to the role you're in today?**

**2. What were some of your early roles in the field?**

**3. What does a work day look like for you?**

**4. What are some big projects you're working on now or that you've finished up in the last few months?**

**5. What do you enjoy most about the work you do? / What are you most excited about right now?**

**6. What do you enjoy the least? Or, is there something that surprised you about the role when you first started?**

**7. What skills do you think are most important for someone interested in a job like yours?**

**8. Do you think there's a personality type that's not well-suited for this kind of career?**

**9. What are some of the biggest challenges you face day-to-day?**

**10. What about the biggest rewards?**

**11. What do you wish you'd known when you were starting out in this career/role?**

**12. Where do you see yourself in 5 or 10 years?**

**13. Do you have any recommendations for other people I should talk to or other resources I should explore?**

**14. Are there any questions I'm not asking that I should be?**

**15. Would it be alright for us to stay in touch?**

**ALSO, INCLUDE 3-5 QUESTIONS SPECIFIC TO THE PERSON AND COMPANY**

We can't stress this enough: beyond the standard informational interview questions, you're going to want to thoroughly research the person you're meeting as well as his or her company.

Head to the company website but also LinkedIn, so you can plan specific questions on current projects or on the person's professional background.

Researching is also a great way to find overlaps in interests—maybe you're both Michigan State alums or you have a former colleague in common.

## HOW TO PERSONALIZE YOUR INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Some topics and ideas to consider, although obviously, you should think of the questions that are the most useful to you:

- + Ask them about their earliest internships or roles ("I saw on LinkedIn that you interned at Google before graduating—did you find that internship helpful for finding jobs later?")
- + Ask about volunteer work or professional organizations ("I noticed you are a member of AIGA—have you found that helpful?")
- + Somewhat personal questions are OK as long as you tread lightly ("I hope you don't mind me asking, but I know you're a working mom. I'd like to have children as well someday. How have you found that navigating a career in this field as a mom?")

# STUDY BREAK

THE PEP TALK

# Pep Talk Resource



## ANN SHOKET'S TWO TIPS ON BUILDING THE BIG LIFE (AS HEARD ON [THE FEMAILS PODCAST](#))

Listen to the itch, and build your squad.

"Number one, pay attention to the itch. That feeling, that there's something else bigger out there for you, that you should be doing something else better for you—that is a feeling that you have to pay attention to you can't ignore it. You can't brush it off. It is a signal that you should go. And that you should start thinking about where you're going to how you're going to scratch that itch, to be honest."

"And two, you should build your squad. Surround yourself with people who get it. Who see the world the way you do, and who are devoted to helping you achieve and succeed. And it's not that old idea of transactional networking—this is a sisterhood. It's a relationship that you're building not just exchanging business cards over a warm glass of chardonnay."



## JENNIFER ROMOLINI ON WHY "FAILURE" SHOULD BE A MOTIVATOR (AS HEARD ON [THE FEMAILS PODCAST](#))

After 23 job rejections, Romolini (understandably) felt a little lost. But she learned something in each and every one of those job interviews—and that motivated her. Each rejection was a push to keep going.

"I was too pissed off. I was pissed off, and I was humiliated, and I think sometimes you know...bad emotions can be really good motivators. I was just angry and I was like, 'Why won't they let me in?'...I was embarrassed [and that] really drove me...I was fiery. I was fired up because then I started to feel like well, 'They can't keep me out. I'm not going to let them.' You know, I wanted revenge almost...I'm going to stick with it just to show you."



### CHRISTINA MEITUS ON MAKING MISTAKES + FINDING A COMPANY FIT

“We are human and there is only so much that is in our control. The best advice I would give to women is, DO NOT be afraid to fail—just bring your best self to the table. Find an organization that judges you on your ability to “bounce back” or recover from a loss. We will all have misses. It’s what you learn from it that matters. I have some leaders on my team that use the lotto slogan a lot, “Can’t win if you don’t play.” I truly believe it is how I have handled the setbacks—more so than the wins—that have built my brand and [explained] why people have trusted me to lead.”



### OMOJU MILLER’S ADVICE TO WOMEN OF COLOR + FINDING A COMPANY THAT SUPPORTS YOU

“My advice is if you are in an environment where you feel marginalized, leave. Don’t try to change it. Go and look for a place that sees you and lets you be you. Life is too short. Further, don’t assume every workplace where you are a minority will be hostile. Seek people of good will and build a broad coalition along mutual goals. If you are able to do that, you will be fine.”



**RACHANA PRADHAN + GOING WITH YOUR GUT**

“I really haven’t come to regret much in my still relatively-short career. I think part of that is because I’m not really risk-averse but I also haven’t tried to plan everything out; most of my career progression has come from gut instincts and, luckily, so far they haven’t failed. In the coming years, I think it will be important to remember that it’s important to keep taking risks. It can be easier to stick with what you know but I think it’s crucial for a reporter’s development to tackle new challenges.”

**Other Good Reads**

- + [How to Not Lose Your Mind While You Search for Your Dream Job](#)
- + [How to Survive a Long Job Search \(Without Losing Confidence\)](#)
- + [Fried? 9 Hyper-Motivating TED Talks from Women on the Top](#)
  - + [Why You Should Write an Intimidation List](#)
  - + [5 Books to Boost Your Career Confidence](#)
  - + [12 Inspirational Career Quotes for 2019](#)

Click to download these desktop and mobile backgrounds to stay motivated.





# Lesson

# 7

## REFINING YOUR ONLINE APPLICATION STRATEGY

# Let's Read Between the Lines



If you're looking for a new job—even casually—you're probably spending quite a bit of time reading job postings. You know, those all-important-but-somehow-totally-confusing descriptions of the company and role, responsibilities, and qualifications.

Especially if you're looking for a new role while still in a full-time position, the process can feel overwhelming, tedious, and draining. So it's not surprising that after a few weeks of grinding through it, you start to rush, scanning the descriptions for buzzy words that seem appealing but not actually processing what the company is looking for or what you'd be getting yourself into.

Those speed reads can land you in over your head in a new position or—maybe worse—just in one that makes you actively miserable.

Fortunately, each section of a job posting reveals something different about a role, a company, a team, and more. The trick is to know what to be on the lookout for and how to leverage those clues.

# The Company Description\*

OK, let's start with the big one: the company itself. Actually, you don't need to get too hung up here. The main thing you need to pay attention to is what the company describes as its values. Those values—particularly what they lead with—can be very telling.

## ABOUT US

You can find Bumble in the Android or Apple store, but we're so much more than an app. Bumble believes relationships make us human. **Our core values are kindness, integrity, positivity, equality, confidence, and authenticity.**

Bumble is the destination where you meet your next significant other, best friend, and most valuable business connection. We've created an empowering, safe place for members of modern society to meet the important people in their lives. We're making digital relationships personal again.

## IT STARTED WITH AN IDEA

Bumble, born and raised in Austin, Texas, is the brain-child of **Whitney Wolfe.** Whitney's business concept: "Look at what's broken in society, figure out how to make it better, and build a business around that."

Whitney noticed people were treating each other with a lack of respect. In heteronormative relationships, women are told to sit on their hands and wait for men to make the first move, which encourages submissive behavior. Bullying is rampant in social networking. Whitney wanted to change the way people communicate and do it using kindness as the guiding principle. By allowing women to make the first move, and giving men permission to be less aggressive, first connections are beginning with mutual respect.

## BUMBLE'S VISION

We started as an app to connect people with future significant others, but Bumble is no longer only a dating app. We firmly believe life is about relationships. Our mission is to provide people with a better way to meet.

**In March 2016, we launched Bumble BFF to connect people with friends. Next we're launching Bumble Bizz, where we'll be facilitating connections for business networking.**

Facebook is where you connect with the people you know; Bumble will be the place where you're no longer afraid to connect with people you don't know.



Sometimes you'll notice different job postings from departments include different company descriptions. Weird, right? Well, actually not really. The variation shows what's most valued from one job function to another.

Company descriptions don't always explicitly reference "Our core values..." but when they spell them out (like this example) take extra notice.

If the CEO, founder, or any other name is mentioned you *better* be knowledgeable about her background and any personal visions shared on social media. Likewise if the history of a company is included.

When a company spells out its evolution and changes these are key for you to know and understand. But what they share in the job posting is not enough. Do your research. You don't need to know every detail (many may not be public knowledge yet!), but you need to be conversationally versed.



Be sure to reference the job posting before every conversation in the interview process. Since a company description spoon-feeds you what a company's values are, what they stand for, and what they prioritize, you'll want to touch on these during your interview(s).

# Now It's Your Turn

As you read this part of a posting it can be tempting to toggle to the company's website—don't do that (yet)! Instead read the whole section, then ask yourself if these values are in line with yours. Does the way the company describes itself sit well with you? If you're not aligned, it might not be the right fit (which, incidentally, is totally OK—you've just saved yourself from wasting time applying for a job that's not right).

If this all feels too squishy to you, consider coming at the values piece from a different angle:

- + Is the description long or short? (Ask yourself if this mirrors your own communication style).
- + Does it focus on the company or the customer? (Do you, as an employee, want to be prioritized above a customer or do you believe the customer always comes first?)
- + Are there any metrics or accolades in the description and if there are, which ones? (If the descriptions references winning "Top Place to Work" awards, for whom is it a top workplace—working mothers, recent grads, military families? Are you one of these people?)

## NOTABLE QUOTES FROM THE COMPANY DESCRIPTION

## YOUR THOUGHTS ABOUT THEM

# The Role Description

The role description tells you exactly what the hiring manager currently expects out of the open position. Be on the lookout for keywords that need to be included in your resume. Particularly if you're applying for a role at a large company, you want to be sure your resume will pass any keyword search.

## ABOUT THE JOB

Do you like working with big data and using it to drive decisions and the direction of products that impact the lives of people every day? As a Data Scientist dedicated to decision support and strategy at Pluralsight, you will have the opportunity to see a direct link between your work and business critical questions, insights, and outcomes. You will be part of an established team of top-notch, collaborative data scientists working on a breadth of challenges across the company and you will be working with a cutting-edge data platform. For senior members of the team, your responsibilities will also include providing leadership and mentoring to teammates and championing data-driven decision making throughout the organization.



You can think of this like the elevator pitch the hiring manager gives when explaining to her family, friends, and colleagues who she's trying to hire. So make this work for you—when asked what you're looking for in your next role during your interview, your response should sound at least a little similar!

When a job description has a question in it, use that! Turn it around and make it a statement somewhere in your application materials—in your cover letter, in an objective statement if you have one, or simply in the way you position yourself in conversation.



Even if you don't end up landing the job (or you decide you don't want to apply) job descriptions are a great place to get inspiration for how you talk about your work. Especially if you're transitioning industries, often you can start to learn the terminology your desired industry uses from various job descriptions and start implementing that in your own resume and cover letters.

# Now It's Your Turn

Your application materials should **parallel the language** used in the **role description**. When it makes sense, **use the same words and phrases**—but don't overdo it! The hiring manager shouldn't think to herself, "Hmm, where have I heard that before?" Instead, your objective is to **frame your work** so that she thinks, "Wow, it's a little uncanny just how perfect of a fit this woman is!"

**KEYWORDS, PHRASES, AND  
LANGUAGE FROM THE JOB  
POSTING**

**YOUR TAKE ON IT (THINK: RESUME  
BULLET POINTS, COVER LETTER,  
INTERVIEW ANSWERS)**

# The Responsibilities

This is the meat of a posting and what you should focus on as you tailor your cover letter and resume for the role. It's everything the role will be responsible for—from budget to people management, to administrative duties to communication style.

This is the part of a posting that is easy to rush through. Maybe you've experienced this: you get through the company and job description, and you're already excited—this is a company you've admired for years or one that sounds absolutely ideal. You read the first two bullet points of the job posting and think, "Sure, that's easy," or "That's something I've technically been doing for years," then end up convincing yourself before finishing reading that this job is perfect for you.

Don't do that. That's what leads someone to start a job only to find out that it's 80% administrative work when they thought it was going to be 100% creative. Read the whole posting slowly and critically. It may feel painfully slow, but maybe it should be. Pretend it's a set of instructions for an Ikea shelf or a complex recipe you want to nail for a dinner party. Whatever it takes, make yourself read it.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

- + Implement merchandising plans to achieve performance goals for a specific merchandise category
- + Support merchandising strategy for the division, including alignment of brand portfolio and product line
- + Participate in developing private label strategy (initiate, grow and retire) for multiple categories and/or brands
- + **Ensure successful product line presentations**
- + Oversee day-to-day activities for product delivery
- + Prepare accurate forecast of merchandise plan
- + Deliver product performance results based on strategic goals and budget expectations
- + Hire and supervise an efficient and effective team that meets the needs of each functional area
- + **Collaborate with Brand Manager, Designers and other groups and leaders to achieve brand expectations**



Check in with yourself after each bullet and ask yourself, "Have I done this?" but also the all-important, "Do I want to do this?"

As you read, take notes on what questions you can ask in an interview. For instance, what is the company's definition of success?

If the job posting notes other team members you'll work closely with, ask questions about them. Note if you have worked with these roles in the past.



Sometimes roles and responsibilities change but largely the bulk of a job is included in a job posting. The best way to avoid the challenging thought of, "This job is not at all what I thought it would be," is to critically read the posting and consider whether that's the job you really want.

# Now It's Your Turn

**RESPONSIBILITIES LISTED**

**YOUR EXPERIENCE**

**DO YOU WANT TO BE DOING THIS  
WORK?**

**IF YES, HOW CAN YOU TAILOR  
YOUR APPLICATION MATERIALS TO  
THE JOB?**

# The Minimum + Preferred Qualifications

You should possess about 80% of these skills and experiences to be a competitive candidate. That's a good rule of thumb, but don't let it stress you out too much. If you have a high majority, go ahead and apply (particularly if you're applying through a connection or referral).

Sometimes it can be confusing to delineate between the job responsibilities and job requirements, especially if you're reading a posting after a long workday—or if it's simply full of bullets that seemingly bleed into each other. But these are two distinct sections with very different information.

## QUALIFICATIONS

- + Proven excellence in outbound sales
- + 2+ years experience B to B selling, preferably in business services, or market research sectors
- + Strong experience building a pipeline, qualifying leads, and identifying closeable deals
- + Proven track record of achieving and exceeding sales and revenue goals
- + Demonstrated strength in building and managing relationships along with presenting to a diverse audience from business champion to C-level executives
- + Successful experience selling into diverse companies including web services, enterprise or mid-market accounts
- + Strong and demonstrated written and verbal communications skills. Must be able to communicate effectively both internally and externally and adjust to a diverse audience, including C-level executives, Developers, Account Executives, Product Managers, etc.



The job responsibilities are what the employee will be doing, and the qualifications are the skills the employee will use to get the work done.



It can become overwhelming to think that you have to reference each and every one of these on your resume. You don't per se. When it comes to your resume, make your focus weaving in the job description and company values. With skills and requirements, just add the essentials to the Expertise section of your resume and weave them in wherever they fit organically.

# Now It's Your Turn

QUALIFICATIONS THE JOB LISTS

QUALIFICATIONS YOU HAVE

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QUALIFICATIONS YOU DON'T HAVE—AND HOW YOU'LL DEAL



# Lesson

# 8

## AFTER THE APPLICATION— INTERVIEWING + FOLLOWING UP

# Thank You Note Templates

## A SAMPLE POST-INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW THANK YOU NOTE

Dear [INTERVIEWEE NAME],

Thank you again for taking time to chat with me about you and your career.

I was so surprised to learn [XYZ/tidbit/fact/thing in common.] I really value your insight, and am excited to stay connected.

Thank you!

Warmly,

[NAME]  
[EMAIL ADDRESS]  
[PHONE NUMBER]  
[WEBSITE]

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## A SAMPLE POST-INTERVIEW THANK YOU EMAIL

Dear [INTERVIEWER NAME],

Thank you again for taking time to speak with me about the [JOB TITLE] position and for giving me additional insight into the responsibilities and day-to-day duties involved. Our conversation today only increased my interest in the role. I would be thrilled to use my [insert a skill or two that you discussed in your interview, such as "editorial skills and background research and interviewing"] to benefit [COMPANY NAME] and your goals, including the work you're doing on [insert a specific example of a project or work your interviewer mentioned, such as "expanding into video and other multimedia content"].

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have additional questions for me! I look forward to having another conversation with you soon.

Best regards,

[NAME]  
[EMAIL ADDRESS]  
[PHONE NUMBER]

## A THANK YOU NOTE TEMPLATE FOR AFTER A SECOND INTERVIEW

Hi [INTERVIEWER NAME],

It was a pleasure speaking with you again today about the [POSITION]. I loved hearing more about [a project or goal that came up in your latest interview]—and can't wait to potentially help your team on it! As always, please let me know if you have any questions or if I can send any additional information your way. I'm looking forward to moving forward in this process!

Regards,

[NAME]