



## Table of Contents

- Getting Started. . . . . 2
- Self-Talk and Personal Empowerment . . . . . 3
- Your Resume, Cover Letter and Application. . . . . 3
- Putting Together a Master Application . . . . . 4
- Potential Employers and Managing Your Time . . . . . 5
- Best Ways to Hunt for Your Job. . . . . 6
- Finding the Person with the Authority to Hire You . . . . . 7
- Interview Tips . . . . . 9
- Turnaround Talk Formula . . . . . 9
- Self-Employment. . . . . 12

# New Entry Job Hunting Plan

# My New Entry Job Hunting Plan

Please note that this job hunting plan is effective regardless of your geographic location. If the resources listed are not near you, simply substitute like resources in your area. Your local American Job Center (<http://www.servicelocator.org>) and public librarian ([www.lib-web.org/unitedstates/public-libraries](http://www.lib-web.org/unitedstates/public-libraries)) can both help with identifying your local resources and offer free computer use should you need it. Also, your local public community college career center (<http://www.utexas.edu/world/comcol/state/>) can be helpful and should be open to the public, whether you are enrolled or not.

A typical job hunt for most people is to go to web sites that everyone knows about and e-mail off lots of resumes and wait for the phone to ring. This is known as a passive job hunt. The New Entry Job Hunting Plan is one of action and relentless focus! You are actually building momentum by working your plan and uncovering job possibilities that are not typically advertised or posted. Remember, you don't need to have talent to hustle! Your attitude and hustle in your job hunt is key and ultimately what is going to build the momentum that will land you a job!

## Getting Started

Congratulate yourself for getting started with your job hunt, for making this commitment to yourself and sticking with it. If you are employed you're three times less likely to go back to jail or prison. Too many people in this country are in jail or prison—one out every 100 according to research done by the Pew Center on the States. And 67.5 percent of those released will be back in within three years. Research also indicates that the key to keeping someone from ending back in jail or prison is for them to get and keep a job. Remember, the most critical factors to a successful job hunt are attitude and persistence.

### Why is it important to have a job hunting plan?

The answer is summed up by author Richard Lathrop, in his classic "Who's Hiring You?": He or she who gets hired is not necessarily the one who can do the job the best, but the one who knows the most about how to get hired.

### Focus on your strengths.

Remind yourself along the way to focus on your strengths, not on what you think are barriers to obtaining a job, or areas you believe need improvement. Move towards what you want rather than trying to avoid what you don't want. For many this can be a refreshing new mind set. Remember, there is more right with you than wrong with you!

### Social media and the Internet.

Since about 79% of employers use social networking sites and the Internet to screen potential employees you'll want to Google yourself and review everything the search engine pulls up about you. If you have created pages or allowed others to post on any social networking sites such as Facebook, or MySpace or YouTube, etc., go over them all. You are looking for questionable pictures and four-letter-word content that would make an employer not want to consider you.

Take it all down. Or, at the very minimum, be certain the privacy settings are set with a very narrow permission, such as "friends only". And be sure to test that it is blocked.

### Your e-mail address and voice mail message.

Be sure your e-mail address is simple and straightforward and appropriate—nothing with a double meaning or slang words. Your name, if it's not taken, is a good one. If it is taken, add some numbers to it. This can be set up using the American Job Center or public library computers.

No hiring manager wants to listen to 30 seconds of your favorite song or stylish greeting before they can leave a message. *Hi, this is (your name). I'm not available. Please leave a message and I'll get back to you shortly.* Or something to that affect.

Take inventory of your strengths and create a 15 second elevator pitch.

An elevator pitch is a sales pitch about yourself and what you would bring to the job. It's called an elevator pitch because it can be delivered in the time it would take to ride an elevator between floors. By creating an elevator pitch and practicing it over and over again, you will have something to use in interviews when asked "Tell me about yourself," or as an introduction for your cold calls, or when you contact a potential employer who you might find on the internet or in the telephone Yellow Pages. Make your elevator pitch no more than 30 seconds, but most people say 15 seconds is best.

Include what you are able to do and how your skills will benefit an employer. Most people have at least 30 skills that can benefit an employer. What are yours?

**Self-Assessments can help you know yourself better.**

And knowing yourself better can help you choose a satisfying job or occupational field to explore. If this type of exploration interests you, check out California Career Zone (<http://www.cacareerzone.org>). Their Quick Assessment only takes 5 minutes and the Interest Profiler and Work Importance Profiler take 30 minutes each. And it's all free. Your best chance of getting hired is to identify one or two types of work you like to do. You can then make a best case to the hiring managers of the organizations you are pursuing as to why they should hire you. You will also be motivated to stay with it.

**Know your record and know what you can do about it.**

Since most employers conduct background searches before hiring, we believe it is important to advise the employer of your ex-offender status at some point during the interview. Obtain a copy of your record from the court house(s) in which the crime occurred and go over it thoroughly so you understand the terminology within it, what it states, and what it leaves out. Also find

out if and when your record can be sealed, expunged, or legally minimized. This information should be available from the state court system as well. For more information including free legal help see Re-entry Legal Resources ([http://jailstojobs.org/html/new\\_entry.html](http://jailstojobs.org/html/new_entry.html)).

## Self-Talk and Personal Empowerment

Positive self-talk through affirmations is empowering. Experts have seen positive self-talk or affirmations work with clients. In the brain these positive thoughts can serve to rewire our thinking and reinforce a positive attitude.

I had an old teacher that shared one of his favorites with the class: *I think I can, I think I can, I know I can, I Will!* Find a positive affirmation that you like and can say with honesty. Examples include "I will find a job." "My vibrant attitude is contagious to everyone I meet." "I take the actions needed for success each day." "My positive actions attract people and money to me." "If it is to be, it is up to me." Say at least one aloud 10 times, several times a day while job hunting. Helpful when you are making your cold calls, filling out applications, e-mailing resumes, before and after interviewing.

**Have compassion for yourself.**

Self-acceptance can allow for baby steps moving you forward. Congratulate yourself at each step: when making the cold calls, sending out the resumes, following up on the resumes, etc. Baby steps count! In essence, working your plan and the executing of your plan is success in itself. Never give up!

## Your Resume, Cover Letter and Application

Creating your resume and cover letter. Microsoft.com has some excellent templates for free (<http://tinyurl.com/mstemplate>). You can also 'Google' "how to write a resume" and "how to write a cover letter." If you would like free help preparing them visit your local American Job Center (<http://www.servicelocator.org/>). The American Job Center is also a great place for job leads, help with career planning, job training, and transition solutions to re-enter the workforce. Free services include: academic and career assessment tools; job hunt

resources: high speed internet access, fax machines, photocopiers, and more; workshops essential for conducting a successful job hunt; listings of current job openings and on-site employer hiring events; links to training and educational funding sources; referrals to community services and resources; trained staff to assist you with your career goals and objectives.

There are two basic types of resumes, functional and chronological, but a functional resume can be better to use than chronological, particularly if there are gaps in time or excessive job changes. A functional resume focuses on skills rather than employment history. ‘Google’ “resumes functional” and “resumes chronological” or visit <http://templates.office.com>.

### Hide the resume game.

The resume’s purpose is to be your sales tool. If your resume is not going to be helpful enough because of a long period of unemployment, gaps in employment, short time at each job, you’re going to have to rely more on your network and other resources, building a relationship with someone in order to get a job.

*Great. I am working on my resume now, would you mind if I bring it to the interview?*

All resumes look better in person. Better to present in person, otherwise, it can work against you—nothing to sell on paper. Besides, this is consistent with what experts have been saying for years, a resume is something you should never send ahead of you, but always leave behind you, after the interview.

### What if my work history has gaps in employment and job hopping?

Many experts suggest whether this is your type of job history or not don’t send a resume, send just a well-crafted cover letter instead. Your cover letter would summarize all that a longer resume covered. You can ‘Google’ “cover letters”, use the Microsoft templates mentioned above or visit your local American Job Center (<http://www.servicelocator.org/>) for help with your cover letter and resume. Susan Ireland’s free cover letter guide is excellent too (<http://tinyurl.com/cvrletter>).

### If you're bilingual, mention it.

If you’re bilingual, especially if you speak fluent Spanish, be sure to include that fact in your resume, on your application. Hispanics are the fastest growing ethnic group in the U.S. and now make up nearly 20 percent of this nation’s population. More and more businesses—whether they are service providers, retail stores, restaurants or offices—are interested in reaching the Hispanic market, and if you can speak Spanish you may have an advantage for some jobs.

## Putting Together a Master Application

At the same time that you’re putting together your resume, you should use that same information to create a master application form. This document will have all of the details about the schools you attended, the jobs you’ve held and the places you volunteered. The form will also include the contact information for your references. It’s important to have one of these so when you fill out a job application, either at an interview or online, you will have all the information you need right there.

You can download a master application form online at <http://bas.berkeley.net/jobsearch.html>.

Employers often want job applicants to fill out application forms before they will consider them for an interview. These may be online or a paper application you fill out during the first time you visit the company.

### Try to avoid completing an application before you have an interview, if at all possible.

First of all, these applications are used to weed people out. And secondly, nearly all of these forms ask if you’ve ever been arrested or convicted of a crime.

You can lie, and say no, but if they find out—and they probably will since most companies do background checks these days—you won’t get the job. Furthermore, an application form is a legal document, so if you lie about your record, you are committing fraud.

Be sure to bring post-it-notes to your interview.

At the time of your interview leave the question related to convicted of a crime blank and fill out and attach a post-it-note with the penal code, the year of the conviction and “please see packet,” referring to your turn around packet we will discuss later.

Another thing you want to be careful about are questions regarding salary or wage desired. You never want to answer with a dollar amount. Instead write “negotiable” or “open.”

## Potential Employers and Managing Your Time

Making the most of your time.

Maintaining a daily routine helps your focus by building momentum in your job hunt rather than a search of “bits and spurts”. Your full time job is finding a job. Consequently, spend at least 35 hours per week on your job hunt. Read about Jerry Seinfeld’s “Don’t Break the Chain” ([www.jailstojobs.org/pdf/Seinfeld.pdf](http://www.jailstojobs.org/pdf/Seinfeld.pdf)) technique. You can do this too. It really works! Remember, your intention is key throughout your job hunt.

Curious about in-demand occupations along with the skills and education needed to obtain those jobs?

Then check out Career Voyages ([www.careeronestop.org/ExploreCareers/ExploreCareers.aspx](http://www.careeronestop.org/ExploreCareers/ExploreCareers.aspx)). This too is free. Skip this step if you don’t feel the need for this exploration.

Your job hunt should include all potential employers.

From a recent survey cited in a Bureau of Prisons report of more than 1,200 employers, only 8% reported that they would not hire an ex-offender. Since many employers will consider ex-offenders, feel free to look for work from any legitimate source. Limiting yourself to employers that you believe hire ex-offenders can limit your wages and job prospects. You should try to find employers who are a good match for your skills, experience and career goals.

It might be best to apply the 80/20 rule to your job search.

Larry Robbin, a nationally-known expert in the area of workforce development, has done research that indicates that 8% of employers will hire an ex-offender, 12% might hire an ex-offender and 80% won’t. Even if you were to be less optimistic and assume that 80% will say “No” and 20% will say “Maybe,” that’s still 20 out of 100. Those odds are definitely worth pursuing, and your job is to find employers that will say *yes!*

Experts say to make a list of 100 employers in the area you’d consider working for and go after them!

Remember, especially in a tough economy, employers don’t have to place job ads. In fact, only 10–15% of the job openings get published. Those are the visible jobs. Look for the invisible jobs. Employers are desperate for enthusiastic and motivated employees!

When you’re making the list don’t just go after big companies.

That would be a huge mistake. It’s the smaller employers who create most of the jobs in this country. Smaller employers, those under 250 people, hire nearly 75 percent of all workers in the U.S. So don’t ignore them. In fact, depending on what type of work you do, it might be best to concentrate on small companies. Your odds of finding a job would probably be better.

You must think like an employer when executing your job hunt!

Richard Bolles author of “What Color is Your Parachute?” the most popular job hunting book in the world, states *Many if not most employers hunt for job-hunters in the exact opposite way from how most job-hunters hunt for them.* Make it easier for employers to find you by showing up in their natural search path. ([www.Jailstojobs.org/pdf/naturalsearchpath.pdf](http://www.Jailstojobs.org/pdf/naturalsearchpath.pdf))

# Best Ways to Hunt for Your Job

Five of the Best Ways to Hunt for a Job.  
Make them part of your plan.

They offer the best results according to Richard Bolles, author and career expert.

1. **Asking for job leads** from family members, friends, and people in the community. Your contacts are key! 33% success rate.
2. **Knocking on the door of any employer** factory, or office that interests you, whether they are known to have a vacancy or not. 47% success rate.
3. **Using the phone book's yellow pages** (<http://www.yellowpages.com>) to identify subjects or fields of interest to you and calling up 20 employers listed in that field and speak with the hiring managers about your qualities for the type of position you can do and do well. 69% success rate.

Remember to pursue many companies that have 20 or fewer employees since they offer two-thirds of all the new jobs.

Use the Employer Locator to build your list of 100 employers to go after. Available online at the American Job Center. (<http://tinyurl.com/1stopemploc>).

4. **Search by Industry, Occupation, Location, Keyword and Firm Size** (number of employees). Once a job is advertised there is much more competition. Career Expert Marty Nemko states that cold calling and creating your own leads "Except for the highest level positions is the most potent strategy."
5. **Job hunt buddy or job-club.** Team up with someone else or create your own job hunting group with other job hunters. Hang out with positive people. Share ideas, provide emotional support to one another, and talk by phone and even meet one or more times per week. 70% success rate.

Here is a Networking Checklist ([http://jailstojobs.org/pdf/Networking\\_Checklist.pdf](http://jailstojobs.org/pdf/Networking_Checklist.pdf)) to get you started generating job leads! You can also use your [Circle-of-Contacts.pdf](#) to create job leads.

Use these sites in your job hunt to supplement the Best Ways to Hunt, above.

Remember, your focus should be on sourcing employers by directly making phone calls, getting referrals, sending e-mails and knocking on doors.

According to Richard Bolles, statistics change over time, but past studies have shown that using the Internet results in a job for 10 out of 100 job hunters who try it. The other 90 have to turn elsewhere. He calls it the 10% solution. Therefore, it deserves 10% of every job hunter's time.

These Web sites search for all job listings on the Internet, so you don't have to visit each job board one by one:

[Indeed.com](#)—Search job sites, newspapers, associations and company career pages.

[Simplyhired.com](#)—Search job sites and company career pages.

[Linkup.com](#)—Jobs come directly from company web sites.

[Craigslist.com](#)—Regional Community Board, a favorite of many employers.

Yes, answer ads and postings but it can be more productive to develop your own leads. And even more so for job hunters with any kind of barriers to employment.

Temp Agencies can be a good option too.

For many short term assignments can turn into job offers. Many employers like the temp to permanent model since they can see what kind of a worker you are before hiring you. You can find temporary agencies by looking in the telephone Yellow Pages or searching [www.whitepages.com](http://www.whitepages.com) on line.

Some agencies are national, with offices in major cities across the country. Others just have one or a handful of offices in a certain area.

We've heard good things about the following agencies:

Acrobat Staffing:

[www.acrobatoutsourcing.com](http://www.acrobatoutsourcing.com)

Barrett Business Systems:

[www.barrettbusiness.com](http://www.barrettbusiness.com)

Command Center:

[www.commandonline.com](http://www.commandonline.com)

Labor Ready:

[www.laborready.com](http://www.laborready.com)

Labor Systems:

[www.laborsystems.com](http://www.laborsystems.com)

Labor Works:

[www.laborworks.com](http://www.laborworks.com)

Link Staffing:

[www.linkstaffing.com](http://www.linkstaffing.com)

Manpower:

[www.us.manpower.com](http://www.us.manpower.com)

Nelson Staffing:

[www.nelsonstaffing.com](http://www.nelsonstaffing.com)

On the Move Staffing:

[www.onthemovestaffing.com](http://www.onthemovestaffing.com)

Staff Mark:

[www.staffmark.com](http://www.staffmark.com)

Wollborg/Michelson:

[www.wmjobs.com](http://www.wmjobs.com)

Workers.com:

[www.workers.com](http://www.workers.com)

## Finding the Person with the Authority to Hire You

Find the hiring manager, the person that has the power to offer a job.

Picking up the phone and calling the employer is usually the easiest way to get the hiring manager's name.

*I am trying to find out the name of the person who hires in (department) I want to send them a letter. How do you spell their last name? What is their official title?*

If they are not sure; *do you have a company directory handy?*

Wrong extensions can help direct you to the right person. Dial extension starting with 1 or 2.

**Avoid human resource departments.** Their typical role is to support hiring managers during the selection process but they don't usually decide who gets hired.

Their primary purpose is to screen you out! Spend your time with the people that have the power to offer a job.

Spend the time to find names of people to contact, not polishing your resume or researching companies.

Just walk in.

**Visit any potential employer, factory or office that interests you, even if they don't have any job openings.**

Be friendly to the receptionist or whomever else you meet when you enter. Tell them you'd like to talk to the hiring manager of the department you're interested in. It's probably best to call ahead and find out who that is, so you can ask for them by name. As mentioned before, avoid the human resources department, because you're usually wasting your time talking to them.

If you do get a chance to meet the hiring manager, ask them about working at the company. Tell them about your skills, and ask for their advice. If you make a good enough impression, you'll have an inside track. They may even be willing to create a job for you if they like you enough, but this is pretty unlikely. If nothing else, you've made contact with someone who may be able to help you find a job, either at their own company or through one of their contacts.

If the hiring manager is not in, ask to speak to someone else in the department. Have a brief chat—don't take more than 10 or 15 minutes, since they're probably busy—and get to know that person. Hopefully they will put in a good word about you with the hiring manager. When you contact the hiring manager, mention that you met with their colleague and are very interested in learning more about working at the company.

Since you've already made a positive contact, you could either email the hiring manager or go back to see them again. But don't go more than once a week. Going back shows reliability and persistence, the qualities employers are looking for. Don't be a pest, however. Be polite and apologize. Tell the receptionist or cashier something like, *"I'm sorry to bother you again, but I'd really like to see \_\_\_\_\_ (hiring manager's name)."*

**Retail jobs.** If you'd like to get a job in retail, for example, pick a store you think you might like to work at and walk in on a day when business is slow. A good time might be 9:00 a.m. or 10:00 a.m. on a weekday morning, when there is not likely to be many customers.

Ask for the manager. Share with them that you like their business because—fill in the blank—and that you would love to work at their store. This is just an example for one type of business. The approach works just as well for others, say auto repair shops, warehouses, etc.

**Restaurant work.** If you're interested in working at a particular restaurant, have lunch there—it's cheaper than dinner—a few times, if possible. Make sure to go later in the lunch period, maybe 1:30 or so, or when things begin to slow down. Get to know the wait staff, and after a few times, tell one of them that you would like to meet the hiring manager.

This technique takes a bit of courage, but if you put yourself on the line, you'll have a better chance of finding a job. Walk into 10 places per day—10 stores, 10 restaurants, 10 offices—and ask for the job! Go with your resume and most enthusiastic personality. If you keep doing this, you're going to get hired faster than if you just send in your resume. It is the unusual employer or hiring manager who does not appreciate diligence and persistence.

### Call/E-mail/Call/Call your list of 100 employers. Follow-up is critical!

There is a very effective technique known as the call, email, call/call technique, and you should use this on the list of 100 companies you put together.

Here's how it works:

**First call.** Call hiring managers from your list during work hours or after hours and leave a message on their voice mail.

Introduce yourself and leave a 15-to 30-second scripted message selling your strengths and advising them that you will be emailing your resume and want to get together.

Although you should write out what you're going to say, don't make it sound like you're reading it. Say, for example, "*Hi I'm \_\_\_\_\_ and my phone number is \_\_\_\_\_. I love doing \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm really good at it. I'm confident that I have the experience that could help your company succeed. I think I can offer you (give your three top assets). "Again, my phone number is \_\_\_\_\_ (say it and then repeat it) I'd like to get together so I may*

*elaborate more on my qualities and how I would be a good fit at (company name). I wonder if you would be kind enough to give me some information about working at your company. As soon as I get off the phone I'm going to follow up with an email, and I hope to hear from you soon.*

Remember if they have a job opening they'll tell you. Your approach is more like you're asking for job search guidance and advice.

**If you don't hear back.** If you don't receive a call back from the hiring manager within two to three days, call during business hours.

Say, "*This is \_\_\_\_\_. My phone number is \_\_\_\_\_ (if voice-mail). I left a voice-mail message and sent you an email on \_\_\_\_\_; I know how things can slip through the cracks, so I'm following up. I'd appreciate getting together with you to find out more about working at your company and would like to know when you might be available for a short informational meeting. (If voice mail) Again, this is \_\_\_\_\_ and my number is \_\_\_\_\_. I look forward to hearing from you soon.*

**If still no response.** If you don't receive a call back from the hiring manager within a week, call one more time during business hours. This demonstrates confidence—even if you have to fake it—and shows that you are pleasantly persistent and able to follow—up. Don't be a pest. Well—directed, polite persistence is usually welcome. Even if you are angry or irritated about not being called back, keep it out of your voice, and continue to sound positive and enthusiastic.

Remember, employers are desperate for enthusiastic, self-directed employees. By using this method, you will be light years ahead of the competition.

If this strategy does not work, however, it is usually for two reasons. Your target market is dead, and there aren't any jobs. Or your pitch may be dead; it is just not compelling. It's critical to sound enthusiastic. America is the land of enthusiasm—not irrational exuberance, but enthusiasm.

Be sure to keep a list of the people you called and the dates you called them, with notes about what they said if you were able to reach them.

# Interview Tips

## Going into the interview tips:

Reflect on when you felt most secure and at top of your game, or imagine what that might feel like. Pretend you are your most secure self if necessary. Get in that mind state. More tips can be found here ([www.jailstojobs.org/html/interview\\_tips.html](http://www.jailstojobs.org/html/interview_tips.html)).

Remember; provide short answers to hard questions and long answers to easy questions. Focus more time on what you want to talk about.

Have answers prepared for tough questions. Look for opportunity to play consultant during the interview, molding the conversation footing to what your strengths are.

Why did my predecessor leave the job? What in the end is most crucial for you (my boss) to be most happy with me if I am on this job?

What would you like me to accomplish in the first couple of weeks on the job?

## Four reasons why they don't want to hire you.

Professor Harry Holzer of Georgetown University has conducted research and held focus groups on the most common reasons hiring managers do not want to hire people in reentry.

Here are the top four:

1. **Cannot trust them.** Hiring managers fear that the person in reentry will steal or be dishonest. It's basically a character issue and important for you to tell them that you've never been arrested or convicted of theft if you haven't.
2. **Feel unsafe.** They fear that the person will commit an act of violence. Tell them that you've never been arrested or convicted of a violent crime if you haven't.
3. **Problem employee.** They're afraid that someone in reentry might commit harmful action against a co-worker, customer or other person or against company property that could result in a negligent

hiring lawsuit. Make sure you tell them that you are able to get along with all kinds of people and are a good team player. You could say that you were never in a fight and didn't get anytime added to your sentence—if it's true.

4. **Fear that the person will go back to crime and be a retention risk.** You need to convince the hiring manager that you have turned your life around and want to move forward, not backward. Pre-empt your record during the interview. Remember, be honest. Most employers run back-ground checks. They are going to find out about your past. You do not want to take the risk of getting fired by lying. On application any questions regarding convictions answer with, will explain in interview. It's also good to rehearse what you are going to say during the interview. Be brief and concise by spending a minute on the subject. It is best to have good eye contact with the hiring manager and a sense of openness, compassion, and peace. This energy can be picked up—power of deep connection. You're connecting as a person with their humanism. And remember to smile and make eye contact regularly during the interview. Try and cultivate quiet time before the interview, follow your breath for a minute or two, centering yourself, entering a peaceful space. Sense your feet on the ground, being in your body and offer an awareness of being connected to something bigger than yourself, a sense of being connected and cared for.

*Good judgment comes from experience, experience comes from bad judgment. –Mark Twain*

## Turnaround Talk Formula

Larry Robbin, a nationally-known expert in the area of workforce development, has created the idea of ex-offenders presenting a turnaround talk as part of their job interview process.

The ultimate goal is to turn your experience of being incarcerated into strength and a reason for the hiring manager to offer you a job. In spite of the fact that we refer to people as ex-offenders in this job hunting plan, you should refer to yourself as being in "reentry" and not as an ex-offender.

The turnaround talk is so important because it offers you a chance to give examples of what you have learned

and how you have changed your life. You can talk about volunteer work you've done, new friends you've made who are helping you out in your job search, and new attitudes you've developed that have made you a better person. Practice your turnaround talk with family, friends, counselors, and if possible, with people you don't know very well, because those can be some of the best practice sessions since the person who will interview you doesn't know you either.

When you are preparing your turnaround talk, be sure to consider the following:

1. **Be polite and begin by thanking the hiring manager for the interview.** After the interview gets going, you've established rapport and they ask you about your employment background, tell them *"There's something else I'd like to bring to your attention."* Or *"Before we move on, I just wanted to let you know about my life situation and give you a little bit of information about myself."* Then lead into your turnaround talk.
2. **Make sure you don't blame anyone else or deny what you did.** Explain your situation. Depending on what happened, you might want to just say that you were part of a bad crowd; that your parents stopped supporting you and you were forced to live on your own; or that you did something without thinking, learned your lesson and wouldn't do it again.
3. **Give a brief explanation of the facts. Make it clear and simple, with no "trigger words."** If the crime was not work related be sure to include this fact in your explanation. Instead of talking about burglary, say you took some things you shouldn't have taken. If you were a drug addict, say you had a substance abuse problem and, if true, you went through a recovery program and are fully cured. If you were an alcoholic, say you had a drinking problem and, if true, you went through a recovery program and are fully cured. If you attend AA or NA meetings or other 12-step programs, be sure to mention that. If you killed someone, say you took a life. If you were arrested for assault, say you hurt someone. If you dropped out of high school, say you left school early. You get the picture. Think about what you did and how to rephrase it in more gentle terms.

4. **Express extreme remorse, and be sorry for whatever crime you committed.** Show them that you understand what you did in terms of how it affected the victim, their family, your family and yourself. When you do this, you need to make eye contact and use appropriate body language.
5. **Establish a trust account.** Explain to the potential employer how they can and what you have done to turn your life around. Include any activities you've know it won't happen again. Tell them what you have learned from the experience participated in that prove you are trustworthy.
6. **You need to build a trust account to counter stereotypes concerning why people in reentry don't get hired, the most serious of which is that employers can't trust them not to steal.** From the employer's perspective, you need to have a "trust account." With no work history or if you have gaps in employment, you have NO trust account.

You must make deposits into this account in as many of the following ways as possible:

- Explain that you were a "trustee in the jail" (if you were).
  - Show that you were granted early release—for work, volunteering or whatever (if that is true).
  - Share testimonials from your parole or probation officer, etc.
  - Give examples of volunteer work and community service you have performed.
  - Display evidence of restitution.
  - Prove contributions to child support.
  - Show participation in victim reconciliation.
  - Prove that you are going to school (if you are).
  - Document participation in rehabilitation programs.
7. **Ask them if they have any questions, and tell them you'll be happy to answer them.**

## Turnaround packet formula

To go along with your turnaround talk, you should put together what Larry Robbin calls a “turnaround packet.”

**What to do with it.** You will give this packet to the hiring managers who interview you; because it includes information that is intended to turn the potential employer’s perception of you around and make them realize you would be a good employee.

**Why you should create one.** You want to convince the hiring manager that the person you were when you committed the crime is not the person you are today. And your turnaround packet demonstrates that and clearly shows you have been rehabilitated.

It’s quite a lot of work, but your potential employer is sure to be impressed that you took the time and effort to put all the information together. It is also a very organized way to state what you’ve done to improve your life and gives you a lot of positive things to talk about in your interview. In addition, the process of putting together the turnaround packet and sharing the information in the interview can be a very positive experience and give you more confidence for your interview.

**How to make one.** Put as many of the turnaround packet items listed below as possible into a binder or a file folder. Ideally each example should be in its own plastic sheet protector to keep everything neat and orderly. A typical turnaround packet is six to eight pages, starting with the first page where you put basic information about yourself and a note to thank them for the interview.

The Turnaround Packet could include some—or all—of these things:

- Four letters of reference—two of these should be from people who acknowledge the fact that you have a conviction. It is better to ask for references from someone, such as a former employer or landlord, who is used to evaluating people, rather than someone, such as a clergy member or social worker, who will write a reference for anyone.
- A clean printout from the DMV, if you have a good driving record. Visit your local DMV office, and ask them to print one out for you.

- Letters from groups you’ve done volunteer work for.
- School enrollment forms.
- Certificates of completion of training programs (both pre- and post-incarceration).
- Honorable or general discharge papers from the military, if you served. If it was a dishonorable discharge, don’t include it.
- Photos of your accomplishments as a volunteer.
- Copies of award certificates or other forms of recognition.
- If you have to go for a drug test, take along containers of the prescription drugs you are taking to show them.
- A copy of a clean drug/alcohol report, especially if you were arrested for drug use or have been in an alcohol or a drug rehab program.
- Documentation of restitution, if you had to pay restitution to a victim or victims.
- Photos of any hobbies or interests you might have, such as car or motorcycle restoration, dressmaking, artwork, furniture refinishing, gardening or whatever.
- Be sure to only include items that emphasize that you have been rehabilitated and not draw attention to areas that still need work.

## Six Tips to Land the Job—And Even Enjoy the Interview

1. **Make them like you.** My number one advice: Make sure that by the time you leave the room, you’ve found a way to make the person like you. That’s it: MAKE THEM LIKE YOU. Two arms, two legs and an MBA, being all fancy and important, are not going to get you there. Make that personal connection. Build instant intimacy.
2. **Find a reason to care about the person.** Do your homework in advance, understand their passions, and draw out the stories of their life that make them human. When you connect with them, and start to like them, they’ll start to like you, and care about you.

3. **Show them your passion!** Specifically, your passion for the job you're interviewing for. Passion and charisma go a long way. Talk about yourself if what you say offers some benefit to the company and their problems.
4. **Tell Problem Approach Resolution Stories (PAR stories) related to your skills.** Tell the story in 30–60 seconds. Can be from a job or volunteer position you have had. Problem you faced, the intelligent way you Approached it, and its positive Resolution. These action oriented stories demonstrate how you are a problem solver. Hiring managers are not used to hearing PAR stories. They can help move you to the top of the stack. Effective in resumes too.
5. **Traffic Light Rule for when it is your turn to talk.** First 30 seconds, light is green and hiring manager is paying attention. Second 30 seconds, 60 seconds into your answer, light is yellow. Hiring manager may think you are rambling or they are concerned they will forget what they want to say which is currently on their mind. Third 30 seconds, or 90 seconds into your answer red light time to shut up if you are still talking.
6. **Unless the job is not of interest to you, always, always ask for the job at the end of the interview.** In the language you feel comfortable using you need to close the sale. If the hiring manager says something to the effect, we're still in the interview process until 'date.' You reply, *May I follow-up with you on 'date' if I have not heard from you?* You want to come from a place of order and confidence, never sounding desperate.

### After the Interview and Keeping Your Job

Always send thank you note after the interview. Another opportunity to stand out since most job hunters don't make the effort. Besides thanking the hiring manager, it's an opportunity to sell yourself again or a second chance at a question that you believe you flubbed. It usually makes more of an impact via US Mail rather than e-mail.

Some experts suggest sending via both US Mail and e-mail. It is best to write it immediately after the interview, let it sit overnight, review with fresh eyes, and then mail and e-mail. Susan Ireland offers some free

thank you letter templates on her web site (<http://tinyurl.com/thxletter>).

**Turned down after interview.** Call the hiring manager. In this market it is challenging to get a job. I am not trying to convince you to hire me. I am trying to learn from my interview. What feedback can you give me that I should do differently to get hired by another firm? You may get feedback that could actually influence the employer to reconsider. And if not, hopefully something to go on that will help with future interviews. If you are following our advice and really hunting, being turned down happens to everyone at some point. In fact, if you are not getting turn downs you are likely not hunting enough.

**How to keep a job once you have it.** Most often the people that are let go are the ones that are not nice, moody, annoying, disagreeable (it's okay to disagree don't be disagreeable) or high maintenance over those that are less competent. In other words, if you make yourself likeable you greatly increase the likelihood of being kept on.

It's show time when you go to work. In addition to working hard you need to make yourself likeable. Smile and be pleasant. Remember the care and feeding of the boss and co-workers—pay attention! Being pleasant goes a long ways!

## Self-Employment

Starting your own business may take a lot of work, but it's definitely an option if you are hardworking, are full of good ideas and have an entrepreneurial spirit. Many people, in fact, prefer to work for themselves rather than someone else. It is estimated that 10 percent of all working Americans are self-employed, so you won't be alone. In fact, for a lot of ex-offenders, creating a job for themselves might be an easier way to go.

There's an old saying about businesses—"Find a need and fill it." And there are many needs in today's society that need to be filled. As people get busier and busier, they're outsourcing more and more of the things they used to do—everything from yard work to meal preparation—to others who are willing to do the work for them.

**Explore options.** If you have a special skill or interest—whether painting houses, making sandwiches, dog walking or trimming trees—think about what kind of business you could build around that skill. Brainstorm a few ideas, and go talk to people in other towns about the type of business you might be interested in. Don't talk to people in the area where you want to start the business, because they may look at you as potential competition.

Another route might be to decide what type of business you'd like to start, and get a job with someone who is doing that kind of work. Then when you have the experience, start the same type of business in another area.

**Initial investment.** In choosing a business, you'll have to figure what the initial investment would be for equipment, office space, if needed, supplies and advertising. For some jobs, you might need a truck to haul tools and equipment. For others, you might have to buy specialized equipment. After deciding what type of business to start, make a list of everything you'll need to start that business and find out how much it would cost to buy it. Then add up the total and try to figure out where you will get the money to pay for it all.

**Finding customers.** Don't forget that when you have your own business you're not just doing the work, but you also have to find customers, which is sometimes the hardest part of the job. Many customers will come by word-of-mouth from people who were pleased with your work. You may also want to create a website for your business.

**Business possibilities.** Here are some businesses to consider that don't require extensive startup costs, although most of these do require a vehicle:

- Chimney sweeping
- Handyman service
- Janitorial service
- Firewood service
- Graffiti cleanup
- Hauling service
- House painting
- Mobile auto body and dent repairing
- Dog walking
- Shoe shining
- Tree trimming

- Yard work
- Errand services
- Personal assistant
- Housekeeping
- Elder care—conversation and companionship, transportation

For more ideas go to <http://www.entrepreneur.com/businessideas/index.html> or search for “business ideas” and see what you come up with yourself.

A couple of businesses you can start with little money, for example, are house cleaning and yard work. Once you start working for someone, you can ask them if they need help with anything else and maybe get more work. You can also ask if they know of anyone else who might need your services. Doing this type of work is especially good if you don't have much experience or have gaps in your resume.

**Become a recycler.** One business that you may want to consider is to be a recycler. You would need a truck to haul the items, but it should be a rather straightforward business to set up. You can create a flyer of what you pick up for recycling with your contact information (phone number and e-mail address), make copies of it and deliver them to homes in affluent neighborhoods.

The flyer would say what day you'll be through the neighborhood picking things up and what you are willing to take—everything from water heaters and washing machines to cell phones and car batteries.

You can also pick up e-waste such as laptops and monitors, but to be able to make money at this, you need to apply to the California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery to participate in its CEW (Covered Electronic Waste Program). To access an application visit the department's website at [www.calrecycle.ca.gov/electronics/forms/calrecycle186.pdf](http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/electronics/forms/calrecycle186.pdf)

**Start a food cart business.** Another business possibility is to run a food cart business. You could do this selling coffee and desserts from a cart in a large office building or hospital or on the street. You'd have to check out the local permits for this, however, and, if it's inside, negotiate with the building owner and/or manager.

**Get a gig.** Craigslist has a “gigs” section where you can get short-term jobs for everything from yard work to waiting tables at special events. These could be a way to build up customers for your own small business, as well as earn a bit of cash while you’re getting established.

**Public storage company auctions.** Another interesting business that you can do on the side, while you’re putting together another business, is to go to public storage company auctions. These companies auction off items in storage units when people don’t pay the rent on those units. You never know what you will find at these auctions, and you can bid on items and then take them to sell at flea markets or on Craigslist or eBay.

**Join a chamber of commerce.** Another way to get work is to join a group like the local chamber of commerce in the area where you are doing business. Each chamber of commerce has a website listing all its members and the type of businesses they do, and many people like to hire companies that are members of their local chamber.

**Hit the pavement.** You can also knock on doors or distribute flyers to the homes of people who might be interested in your services.

## Jumpstart your business

If you do decide to start your own business, there are many people and organizations that can help you put it together. They provide great resources that are often low-cost or no-cost.

**Small Business Administration.** The Small Business Administration, which maintains offices in every major U.S. city, offers a series of workshops, most of which are free. These workshops deal with everything from accounting issues and how to use the Internet for marketing to getting organized and increasing sales. For more information go to [www.sba.org/](http://www.sba.org/).

**Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center.** The Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center provides classes, low-cost, one-on-one consulting services and a business incubator with low-priced office and cubicle space. For more information check it out online at [www.rencenter.org](http://www.rencenter.org).

**Women’s Initiative.** Women’s Initiative offers an intensive 20-session training program known as “Simple Steps to Business Success” in both English and Spanish at its seven training centers throughout the San Francisco Bay Area. The course helps low-income entrepreneurial women create a business plan and learn to carry it out. The organization also has a revolving loan fund, giving loans of \$1,000 to \$25,000 to some of its participants. Although it’s called Women’s Initiative, 2 percent of its clients are men. If you’re interested, check out [www.thewomensinitiative.org](http://www.thewomensinitiative.org).

**Service Corps of Retired Executive.** Another place to turn for help is SCORE, [www.score.org](http://www.score.org), the Service Corps of Retired Executives. This organization is a resource partner of the Small Business Administration. It matches successful former business owners with entrepreneurs who are just starting out. SCORE offers free and confidential business advice through online and face-to-face mentoring.