



Getting a Job

Leanne Currie-McGhee



About the Author

Leanne Currie-McGhee has been writing for nearly two decades and loves her job. She lives in Norfolk, Virginia, with her husband, Keith, and their daughters, Grace and Hope.

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CHAPTER ONE

What Kind of Work Should I Do?

Eric Pait could not have been happier. Not only had he graduated from college, he was also one of the few graduating students who had been offered an actual job—as a front-end web developer—instead of simply an unpaid internship, which is more common. Soon after graduation, Pait dove into his job with enthusiasm. As days, then weeks, passed, however, his enthusiasm quickly waned. He realized he had made the wrong choice. “It was all pretty much menial grunt work,”⁴ he says of his job, explaining that it was not at all what he expected. Six months later, he quit.

Pait learned that you should not take a job simply because it is offered. Whether they work part time or full time, people spend hours at their jobs, and no one wants to spend those hours performing tasks they dislike or having to tolerate a negative work environment. This situation is, however, not uncommon. According to a survey of more than ten thousand tech employees by workplace-gossip site Blind, almost one out of four people are unhappy with their job.

That could be you, but it does not have to be. You can do your research, gain an idea of what you want to do, and determine what you are qualified for before you ever begin your job search. Experts suggest this will make the job search less stressful and

Understanding Job Restrictions

Getting a job is a major step for teens who want to take a step toward independence. However, you might not be able to work as many hours as you want or at the type of job you want, because of your age. In the United States the Fair Labor Standards Act sets the minimum age for employment at fourteen. It also limits the number of hours minors who are under age sixteen can work, and it prohibits the employment of a minor in work declared hazardous by the US secretary of labor. This hazardous work includes excavation, driving, and the operation of many types of power-driven equipment. States may also have specific laws that are stricter than the Fair Labor Standards Act. Because of this, it is important for teens to know whether there are any restrictions that might limit the types of jobs for which they can apply.

more likely to result in a satisfying job that is compatible with your interests and abilities.

What Do You Like?

The first step in a job search is to determine what your interests are. Begin by making a list of your hobbies, extracurricular and/or volunteer activities, and any previous jobs that you have enjoyed. This will help you recognize the areas that interest you most. For example, walking dogs and volunteering with the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) show an interest in working with animals, while watching kids during church services or babysitting for neighbors indicates you enjoy working with children.

Another way to zero in on your strengths and interests is to take online quizzes specifically developed by organizations with a background in career matching. For example, the Princeton Career Quiz asks questions to determine what types of jobs a person might find interesting. The questions cover areas such as

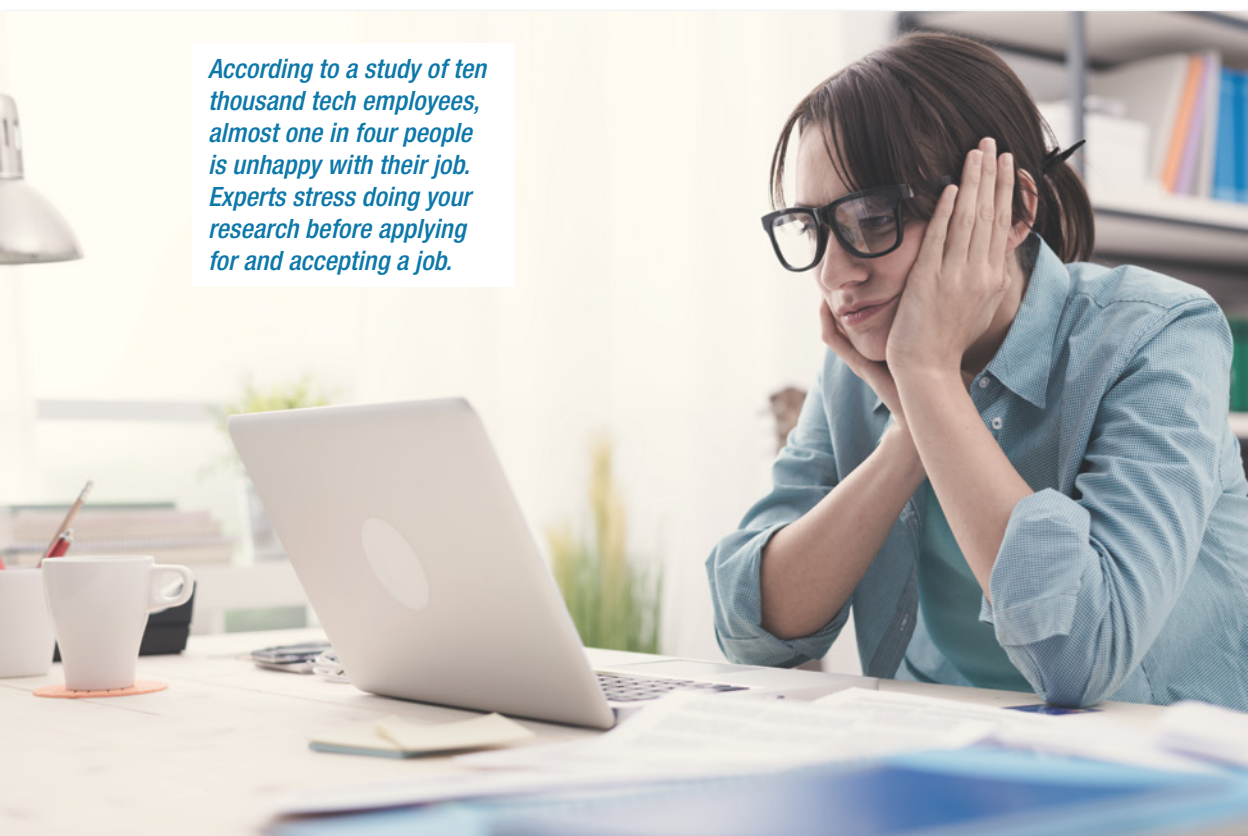
whether someone prefers to accept the asking price or bargain for a better price when buying an item such as a car and whether one prefers to be moving while doing work or sitting still and concentrating. The answers to questions like these help identify the kinds of careers and jobs most likely to fit one's personality.

Skills Needed

While it is important to know what you are interested in doing, it is equally important to be realistic about the job skills you have to offer. Understanding what your skills are and working to develop additional ones will increase your chances of finding a job. These skills can be hard skills, which are technical and measurable, such as being able to program in a specific computer language or fluently speak another language such as Spanish. Skills can also be soft, such as the ability to listen and communicate effectively, be a good motivator, or learn new tasks quickly.

As with interests, making a list of skills will help guide a person starting a job search. When considering what hard and soft skills

According to a study of ten thousand tech employees, almost one in four people is unhappy with their job. Experts stress doing your research before applying for and accepting a job.



you have, you should take into account all the different areas of your life, from school to clubs. Your skill set can include skills from classes that you excel in, such as knowing how to use Linux from a computer class. Other skills may have been obtained from activities, such as learning to write clearly while working on a school newspaper as a student reporter. Leadership and communication skills may be developed in pursuits such as being an organizer of a food drive or participating in a debate club. Additionally, if you have any work experience, you should list the skills learned at prior jobs. This list of skills will help you identify your strengths and interests and how these can transfer to a job.

Why I Want a Job

The most important factor is to understand why you are searching for a job. Whether searching for your first job or wanting to leave a current job for a new one, understanding your reasons for

Building Up Skills

What if you don't have many skills that could help you get a job? Ayn Bernos suggests acquiring additional skills and claims that it is not difficult to do. Bernos, a freelance writer and marketing specialist, explains that before she started her job search, she made sure she developed skills related to her field, such as knowing how to write a press release and how to create a presentation. "If you don't have any skills right now, then, work on it," she advises. "You can research and acquire skills. Google 'how to Photoshop' or 'how to write an essay,' or 'how to write an article.' Google different areas and then actually learn them, to add to your resume." By expanding her skills, Bernos was able to find a job in her desired field.

Ayn Bernos, "How to Make a CV/Resume," YouTube, November 10, 2017. www.youtube.com/watch?v=tUwoX6N_AZE.

doing so will point you in the right direction during your search.

Although money is often the driving force for a seeking a job, there can be other reasons as well, such as determining what you want to do for a long-term career. Alyssa, for example, viewed her first job as a way to determine if she wanted to work with dogs as a career. She grew up loving dogs and decided to follow that interest as she entered the workforce. At age nineteen she was hired as a veterinary assistant at a veterinary clinic. Over the two and a half years that she worked there, her interest in and knowledge about dog behavior continued to expand. Her next job was as a dog care attendant at a dog day care, and then she moved on to a job at Petco, where she attended a dog trainer program. “To put it simply,” says Alyssa, “I am crazy about dogs. For as long as I can remember, I have felt a deep connection to these wonderful creatures.”⁵ Today, she offers dog training and behavior services and is co-owner of a dog day care program, where owners can drop off their dogs to be watched during the day. She views her first job as the start to a satisfying career path.

“I am crazy about dogs. For as long as I can remember, I have felt a deep connection to these wonderful creatures.”⁵

—Alyssa, co-owner of a dog day care

Others may be looking for a job that will give them experience in a career field they are interested in pursuing. For example, a person might dream of being a video game designer, but to get a foot in the door, he or she could take a job as a game tester. This job is in the same industry but does not require as much experience as a designer. Though this may not be the person’s ideal job, it nonetheless provides experience and a foothold in the field.

Job Types

One more key point to remember before you start your search is to be realistic about the kind of job you can get. Typically, a teenager will have little or no work background. While there are instances of young adults becoming rich after they have become

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