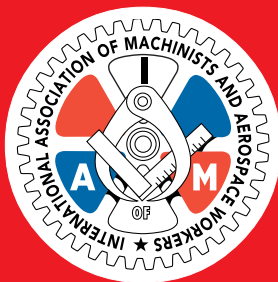


Decisions & Choices



**The IAMAW's
Resource Manual**

Prepared by the Retirees, Community and Membership Services Department

Check us out on the Internet:

<http://www.goiam.org/index.php/headquarters/departments/retirees-community-and-membership-services>

Please note, this guide was last updated in January 2010; however, be aware that laws, rules, regulations and programs are constantly changing.



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Introduction

The Time to Plan is Now

Make no mistake about it. Losing your job is no picnic. It takes a physical and emotional toll on the unemployed person and his/her family emotionally. The ramifications of a period of unemployment can haunt a family for years.

If you are unemployed, or are anticipating unemployment, please review this manual thoroughly. Compiled by the IAMAW's Retirees, Community and Membership Services Department, it contains a great number of resources you can take advantage of. There is help to be had, but you have to know where to find it, and be ready to ask for it.

Your union also stands ready to help. Contact your local lodge or steward immediately if you are fired or laid off. We need to know your employment situation to help you to the best of our ability.

You have your future and the future of your family to consider. This should be a time of exploration and action. The time to start planning is now.

R. Thomas Buffenbarger
International President

Notice of Layoff

in accordance with Section 21, Part B of the collective bargaining agreement negotiated between the union and this company, we hereby serve you with official notice that your services will be terminated as of March 21, 2004

Return all company material, including company keys, to your immediate supervisor, and remove all personal items from the company premises. Any items left behind will be disposed of. You will not be allowed to enter the premises after your layoff takes effect.

Chapter One

When the Layoff Comes

It can start with a rumor on the shop floor. It can come out of the blue. It can be gleaned from seeing a drop in sales and production. No matter how an individual finds out about being unemployed, it is always a time of unease and restlessness.

It is a time for decisions and choices. It is a time for contacting your union to learn of the benefits and services to members affected by job loss.

Faced with the reality of unemployment—people, regardless of position, age or career field—feel betrayed by the management of the company. The struggle to pay bills and contribute to the household crosses all lines of economic and social status.

It is no wonder that resentment and anger can cloud judgment and block the ability to sort through the necessary steps to move on with one's life.

Newspapers and labor statistics do not offer hope for the individual who finds him/herself on unemployment. The Economic Policy Institute states that one out of three individuals are likely to find employment in today's labor market.

Decisions and Choices

If you become unemployed you can do several different things:

Collect unemployment compensation and put off making a move towards employment.

Upgrade your skills; upgrade your employment status.

Find a job *now*.

Choose not to make a decision.

There is Help Available

In many societies, a person is defined by his/her identity as a worker. If a person's occupation is taken away—due to downsizing or dislocation—many feelings surface that make him/her ask “who am I?”

Apart from finding another job, most workers in this current economy have major concerns when unemployment strikes. Including but not limited to health insurance, paying the mortgage/rent, putting food on the table, finding resources without losing self-respect.

It's hard enough to choose a career path or find a job when you feel great about yourself. But if you feel lousy about yourself, it's a next-to-impossible task. Whether called self-esteem, self-confidence or self-worth, if yours is low, you'll struggle with just about any career-related issue. Why? Because your feelings about yourself are behind practically everything you do — or don't do — where your career is concerned.

At times, anyone can have trouble finding a job, or trouble looking for a job. Sometimes you just don't feel like trying—an attitude that often carries over into the rest of your life and emerges in feelings of anxiety, despair and worthlessness. These feelings can lead to more serious concerns, like clinical depression.

Other people feel they just don't deserve the job or career they really want, or that they won't be able to pursue their dream job even if they try. These people believe the good jobs and careers are for someone else.

Does this sound like you? If so, you're almost certainly wrestling with issues related to your self-esteem. And you'll almost certainly continue to struggle with them — and your career or job search — until you get some help.

Your best bet is to talk with someone who is familiar with career counseling and who can help you develop a more objective view of yourself.

Often, it takes an outsider to help you see that you are smart and talented, you do have skills and knowledge to offer the world — including the world of work — and that you can get to where you want to go.

Will you be able to quickly turn your attitude around and become completely positive overnight? Probably not. But with guidance and support, you can achieve a more balanced view of yourself. While you may still beat yourself up from time to time with one hand, you can pat yourself on the back with the other. You're worth at least that much. We all are.

Steps to take when you become unemployed

Apply for unemployment benefits. Often you will be eligible for six months of unemployment checks, sometimes longer when the government extends benefits, usually during times of higher than average unemployment rates. Unemployment compensation information: www.workforcesecurity.doleta.gov

Evaluate what you are worth. Look at the labor market and determine the industry and rate of pay you require. www.salary.com

Develop a resume. See the “Job Search” section in this manual for more information and assistance. Post your resume on the Internet.

Plan how to pay your bills. Information to assist you is included under “Budgeting” on www.goiam.org under the Retirees, Community and Membership Services Department, or go to the section on budgeting in this manual.

Check your personal credit report. Many employers will review your credit report before making a hiring decision. www.nfcc.org or www.myvesta.org

Search for a job. There is more information in this manual.

Consider ways to earn money other than salaried jobs. Consider bartering services with friends and neighbors or organizing a garage sale.

Devote part of your time to gathering helpful information about how to deal with unemployment (i.e., go to the library, call job search programs.)

You may be eligible for Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification

The purpose of the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act (WARN) is to provide protection to workers, their families and communities by requiring employers to provide notification 60 calendar days in advance of plant closings and mass layoffs. Advance notice provides workers and their families transition time to adjust to the prospective loss of employment, to seek and obtain alternative jobs and, if necessary, to enter skill training or retraining that will allow these workers to successfully compete in the job market. WARN also provides notice to state dislocated worker units so that dislocated worker assistance can be promptly provided.

In general, employers are covered by WARN if they have 100 or more employees, not counting employees who have worked less than 6 months in the last 12 months and not counting employees who work an average of less than 20 hours a week. Private, for-profit employers and private, nonprofit employers are covered, as are public and quasi-public entities which operate in a commercial context and are separately organized from the regular government.

Regular federal, state, and local government entities that provide public services are not covered.

Employees entitled to notice under WARN include hourly and salaried workers, as well as managerial and supervisory employees. Business partners are not entitled to notice.

For more information:

<http://www.dol.gov/compliance/laws/comp-warn.htm> .

As a Union Leader and Member

- Review advance notification contractual provisions
- Review federal notification regulations
- Investigate the applicability of Trade Adjustment Act in cases of job loss due to increased foreign trade
- Be sure your union has been fully informed and involved
- Coordinate “Rapid Response” team efforts with Union leadership to assist workers and companies facing layoffs

Rapid response services provide immediate aid to workers affected by announcements of plant closings and large layoffs. Your state Dislocated Worker Unit can get help to you as soon as possible. For layoffs that meet state criteria, Dislocated Worker Offices may send one or more representatives to the work site to

coordinate the layoff before it occurs.

During rapid response, specialists in helping workers cope with job change will gather information on workers' needs and begin to organize the services necessary to assist individuals in getting back to work.

Create a worker adjustment committee as soon as layoff notices arrive and begin designing a displaced-worker program. Develop a workforce adjustment committee with full union participation to develop a comprehensive plan for assisting workers.

Contact your central labor council and state federation. A number of these federations operate dislocated worker programs.

Contact the AFL-CIO Community Staff representative in your area.

An excellent resource for Union Leaders and Members is the Working for America Institute: www.workingforamerica.org



Chapter Two

Knowing Yourself

As IP Buffenbarger noted in the introduction to this manual, your period of unemployment should be accompanied by a period of exploration and action. The time for action will come soon, but now is the time for exploration. And the subject of the exploration is going to be you.

Throughout our life, we constantly assess the people around us. Through much practice, most of us become “good judges of character.” It’s rare, however, that we scrutinize ourselves in the same fashion. In this chapter, we are going to do just that.

The next few pages contain a series of questions that you should answer openly and truthfully. The answers you provide will help you in your self-assessment and aid you in determining what direction you should travel in the future.

While self-examinations of this type may be painful and difficult to accomplish, they can also be of immense value to you once they are properly completed.

So, find some spare time, a quiet spot, a sharp pencil, and complete this chapter.

Goal Setting

Your life is yours to shape as you see fit. Most people create their life through establishing and achieving goals. As you set your goals, please consider the following:

Make your own choices — Be aware of the effect of outside influences on your decision making, for example, family, transportation and social climate.

Write down your goals — Make them real - tangible. It heightens your sense of commitment, i.e., “I research employment opportunities at six companies each week.”

Begin with short-range goals — They are easier and more quickly obtained. Success is an excellent motivator because one success leads to another.

Goals should be realistic and attainable — Set your goals to challenge you, but not to frustrate you. Do not set too many goals to be worked on at the same time.

Deadlines help accomplish goals. — Break down the total goal and set a deadline for each segment. Handle a long project by taking small pieces one at a time. Short deadlines and successes give us a sense of control, continuity, and achievement.

Ask for support — We often need people to help us get where we want to go. If we know what we want, we can speed up the process by asking for and accepting help. When we do go to others for support and encouragement, we must be selective. A career counselor can offer constructive criticism and support coupled with knowledge of the labor market.

Plan ahead — It is important to consider problem areas and support systems at each step in the goal setting process. If potential problems are considered in advance, a way to plan around them can be thought through. To proceed without planning and hit a snag could be discouraging enough to stop the entire process.

Ask yourself these questions:

Is your goal achievable?

Is your mental attitude toward the goal a positive one?

Is your goal specific enough so that it can be measured?

Do you want to do whatever you have agreed to do?

Is your goal clearly focused?

Will your goal and its achievement harm anyone?

Is your goal really important to you?

Self-assessment

Think about your accomplishments to boost your confidence and motivation. Ask yourself, "What have I accomplished in my life that I am proud of and want to present to a prospective employer?"

Examples:

Exceeded the monthly quota of machine tool orders 18 months in a row.

Repaired fuel injection systems on Buicks and Fords and generated 8% annual increases in an auto repair business.

Introduced senior citizens in a community center to enrichment classes in high-energy cooking techniques and exercise strategies.

Accomplishments

Accomplishments are the key to distinguishing you as a person that an employer would want to hire. Employers hire people to solve problems and to meet their organizational needs. They look for past successes and experiences that indicate you can do the job. Accomplishments provide concrete, measurable examples of what you did for past employers that may be transferable to future employers.

Listing these accomplishments will help you to identify the skills that went into the accomplishments. The next step will be to transfer these accomplishments into a format that you can use in presenting yourself to an employer. An accomplishment is something that you personally did or contributed to that:

Improved a situation

Solved a problem

Met a need

Made a contribution

Demonstrated leadership

Accomplished a goal

Performed a job very well

Implemented an idea

Set and met a deadline

To do this, take each accomplishment and list the following:

Situation or problem you faced

Actions you took to solve this problem (be specific)

Outcome/result of your actions

When making your list you should include past experiences, unpaid/volunteer experiences, and educational experience.

Self-Evaluation Work Sheet

The following are some of the things you should consider in your own self-evaluation. Your answers should be honest. They are meant to help you.

What are the things you do best? Are they related to people, data, things?

Do you express yourself well and easily?

Orally: Yes_____ No_____

In writing: Yes_____ No_____

Do you see yourself as a leader of a group or team? Yes_____ No_____

Do you see yourself as an active participant of a group or team? Yes_____ No_____

Do you prefer to work on your own? Yes_____ No_____

Do you like supervision? Yes_____ No_____

Do you work well under pressure? Yes_____ No_____

Does pressure cause you anxiety; in fact, is it difficult for you to work well under pressure? Yes_____ No_____

Do you seek responsibility? Yes_____ No_____

Do you follow directions? Yes_____ No_____

Do you enjoy new ideas and situations? Yes_____ No_____

Are you more comfortable with known routines? Yes_____ No_____

In your future, which of the following things are most important to you:

Working for a regular salary

Working for a commission

Working for a combination of both

Do you want to work a regular schedule? Yes_____ No_____

Do you have a shift preference? Yes_____ No_____

Are you willing to travel more than 50% of your working time? Yes_____ No_____

Research & Planning — Specific knowledge search/Conceptualization of future needs and solutions for meeting them.

	Some Ability	Strong Ability	No Ability	Enough to get by with help
Forecasting, predicting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creating ideas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identifying problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Imagining alternatives	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identifying resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gathering information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Solving problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Setting goals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Extracting important information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Defining needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Analyzing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing evaluation strategies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Put a check mark in one of the yellow shaded areas to the right of each skill in the column which most closely matches your level of expertise.

Human Relations — Using interpersonal skills to resolve conflict, relate to and help people.

	Some Ability	Strong Ability	No Ability	Enough to get by with help
Developing rapport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being Sensitive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Listening	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conveying feelings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing support for others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Motivating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sharing credit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Counseling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cooperating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Delegating with respect	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Representing others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perceiving feelings, situations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asserting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Put a check mark in one of the yellow shaded areas to the right of each skill in the column which most closely matches your level of expertise.

Work Survival — The day-to-day skills which promote effective production and work satisfaction.

	● Some Ability	● Strong Ability	● No Ability	● Enough to get by with help
Implementing decisions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cooperating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enforcing policies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being punctual	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Managing time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attending to detail	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meeting goals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enlisting help	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accepting responsibility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Setting and meeting deadlines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organizing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Making decisions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Put a check mark in one of the yellow shaded areas to the right of each skill in the column which most closely matches your level of expertise.

Leadership — The ability to guide and direct individuals and groups in the fulfillment of goals.

	● Some Ability	● Strong Ability	● No Ability	● Enough to get by with help
Initiating new ideas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Handling details	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Coordinating tasks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Managing groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Delegating responsibility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teaching	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Coaching	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Counseling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Promoting change	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Selling ideas or products	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Decision making with others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Managing conflict	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Put a check mark in one of the yellow shaded areas to the right of each skill in the column which most closely matches your level of expertise.

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

JOB MARKET

SERVICE DIRECTORY • EMPLOYMENT • CAREER DIRECTORY

Health Care	240 Health Care	240 Health Care	240 Health Care	240
Experienced in	ADDRESS DONCH	BUSINESS		

ERS (LIST

APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT

(PRE-EMPLOYMENT QUESTIONNAIRE) (AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER)

DATE _____
SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER _____

PERSONAL INFORMATION

NAME _____ LAST _____ FIRST _____ MIDDLE _____ STATE _____
IF SENT ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ STATE _____
PERMANENT ADDRESS _____ STREET _____ CITY _____ STATE _____
HOME NO. _____ ARE YOU 18 YEARS OR OLDER Yes No

SPECIAL QUESTIONS
DO NOT ANSWER ANY OF THE QUESTIONS IN THIS FRAMED AREA UNLESS THE EMPLOYER BOX PRECEDING A QUESTION THEREBY INDICATING THAT THE INFORMATION IS REQUIRED OCCUPATIONAL QUALIFICATION, OR DICTATED BY NATIONAL SECURITY LAWS, OR IS LEGALLY PERMISSIBLE REASONS.

Height _____ feet _____ inches
 Weight _____ lbs.
 What Foreign Languages do you speak fluently? _____ Read _____

1967 prohibits discrimination on the basis of age with

Chapter Three

Marketing Yourself

By now, you probably have completed the portion of the manual devoted to self-exploration and self-assessment, and you should have a pretty good idea of your strengths, weaknesses, and what you can offer to a prospective employer. Congratulations! Few of us ever bother to do a full-scale, self-examination.

The next step is to take the results of your self-assessment and translate them into a course of action which ideally will end with you being re-employed in a job suited to particular set of skills and abilities.

The course of action you will be undertaking will be the marketing of yourself to prospective employers. How you go about this will mean the difference between a job search that ends successfully, and one that is marked by rejection and frustration.

Like most of us, you were probably raised not to call attention to yourself and to be modest about your accomplishments. Marketing yourself to an employer is different. You aren't bragging; you are being factual about the skills and abilities you have to offer an employer. This is the time for you to aim the spotlight directly on *you*.

The Job Application

First impressions count for a lot in a job search. You have to make the most of every contact you have with a prospective employer. This is particularly true when it comes to filling out a job application or preparing a resume. An employer may base his/her hiring decision on how information is presented on a piece of paper — *and without ever meeting you.*

Resumes are covered later in this chapter; job applications have their own unique set of qualifications. While every job application is different, there are basic rules that apply to completing any application.

Be Neat Wash your hands before filling it out. Use a black or blue ink; never a pencil. Not every employer has a place for you to complete an application so bring something hard like a thick magazine or binder you can write on. Not everyone has the best penmanship, so take your time and print clearly. Legibility is important.

Be Complete Read the application over completely before you begin and follow the directions exactly. Fill in every blank; if the subject does not pertain to you write “n/a.” Double-check the application to make sure you have fully completed it before you turn it in. When turning in the application, ask who will be reviewing the application. Make a note of this. You may want to call later and check on the application status.

Be Accurate Make a “master” application for each type of position for which you are qualified. Carry them with you when you apply for jobs. Each master should contain accurate information which can be copied to a new application. Telephone numbers are especially important. Make sure the telephone numbers of your previous employers and references are in service.

Be Truthful While some potential employers take an applicant at his/her word, many employers do check applications for veracity, so make sure the information is truthful. Some companies will fire even a long-term employee if they discover he/she lied on an application. While it is tempting to lie about a poor work history, the downside is being discovered in the lie and not being hired. Employers realize not every potential employee is perfect and will be willing to give someone a second chance.

Be Ready You never know when a potential employer will be calling you about your application. Have ready answers for questions about your work history (especially if it is spotty) and you should have a neat and clean outfit ready for an interview. (While not every job is a shirt & tie, dress & heels kind of job, it never hurts to show a prospective employer that you cared enough to get dressed up for an interview.)

Sample Master Application

Personal Information

Full Name _____
Address _____
telephone/email/fax _____
Social Security number _____

Employment History

Most recent address/phone _____
Job duties/employment dates _____
reason for leaving _____

Next most recent address/phone _____
Job duties/employment dates _____
reason for leaving _____

Next most recent address/phone _____
Job duties/employment dates _____
reason for leaving _____

Next most recent address/phone _____
Job duties/employment dates _____
reason for leaving _____

Education

High School Diploma/GED _____
School Name/address _____
Graduation Date _____
College/Vocational School _____
School Name/address _____
Length of Attendance _____
Any other Training _____

Military Service

Branch of Service _____
Length of Service _____
Discharge Rating _____

Personal References

Name/Relationship/Telephone _____
Name/Relationship/Telephone _____
Name/Relationship/Telephone _____

The Resume

Hiring managers have love-hate relationships with resumes. They need resumes to find candidates to fill job openings, but they often have to wade through piles of poorly written work histories. If you give a hiring manager the information needed to make a quick decision about your credentials, you will have an edge over other applicants. Here are nine ways you can jazz up your experience section to capture the attention of hiring managers:

Ditch the Job Description

One of the most common mistakes is to write experience sections that read like job descriptions. Some job seekers go so far as to copy job descriptions word for word. The result is a boring recap of job duties with no indication of actual job performance.

Make It Readable

Some resumes use bullets to outline work histories, but this tends to blur duties and accomplishments, which dilutes the impact of achievements. Other resumes use a narrative style to describe work history, which tends to be cumbersome to read, especially for hiring managers who are quickly scanning resumes to extract key information. Instead, use a combination of paragraphs and bullets. For each employer, provide a brief paragraph that details the scope of your responsibilities. Then create a bulleted list of your top contributions. The bullets draw attention to your accomplishments, while giving the eye a place to rest. Preface accomplishments with a heading such as “Key Accomplishments” or “Significant Contributions.”

Target Your Experience to Your Goal

Resumes are marketing tools. Your employment history should effectively market you for your current job objective. Focus on accomplishments that relate to your goal and remove job duties and accomplishments that don’t support your objective.

Use Power Words

The quality of the writing makes or breaks your chances for an interview, so select your words carefully. Avoid dull or stale phrases such as “responsible for” and “duties include.” Rather, use words like, *implemented*, *developed*, *initiated*.

Be Honest

Studies indicate that job seekers can misrepresent their work experiences on their resumes. But with honest and well-written employment histories, even job seekers with less-than-perfect backgrounds will secure interviews. The best strategy for your resume is to always be truthful about your background.

Information to include:

Contact information - name, address, day/evening telephone numbers, e-mail address
Employment objective
Summary of qualifications
Relevant experience/accomplishments/skills
Educational qualifications/relevant to targeted position or area
Professional associations/affiliations

Information to leave out:

Salary history or requirements (unless specifically requested)
Company addresses
References (unless specifically requested)
Personal information other than name, address and phone numbers
Personal pronouns (i.e., "I," "me")
Reason for leaving past employers
Irrelevant associations not related to your employment objective

Make your career objective clear

A resume is a marketing tool rather than a data sheet. If you are targeting more than one type of position or more than one area, you may need two or three different resumes.

Each resume would organize your qualifications in a way that best markets you for that particular targeted area. State the position or career area you wish to pursue, be selective, and be focused.

(Example: Airplane Assembler utilizing 10 years of experience with expertise in B53 Bombers, hands on experience with proven leadership skills)

Develop a skill summary:

(Examples)

Production planning and implementation
Quality assurance
Testing and analytical capabilities
Supervision and leadership abilities

Describe Work Experience

List employer, location, dates, duties, title — including volunteer work for ten years.

(Example: Acme Iron , Kent WA, 3/89 -4/92, A multimillion dollar steel production plant; Production worker, responsible for production and planning implementation)

Highlight accomplishments

(Example: Developed and implemented procedures to increase productivity of department leading to reducing time of delivery 15%)

(Example: Defined and implemented a shelf-life extension program for limited shelf-life items, reducing waste and reinvestment of material by 80%.)

Detail educational accomplishments and awards

List the name, location, dates and diplomas, certificates, or degrees of schools, vocational schools, college or training you have experienced.

(Example: Pontiac High School, Fort Worth, Texas 1989-1992, Diploma, General Studies, OSHA training course, Roman Tech Center, Dallas, Texas 1999, CPR training, Red Cross, Dallas, Texas, 2002)

Be sure to record the qualification that the company specifies.

(Example: High School Diploma, Associate Degree)

List skills from education or training programs

(Examples: Data Entry Clerk — increased speeds and accuracy by 50 %.

Janitor — improved maintenance skills by learning electrical wiring circuitry.

Welder — improved basic skills learning mig/tig welding)

Include licenses or special titles or awards

(Example: Washington State Drivers License #ACE 1480)

Sample Resume

Thomas Barker
789 Oak Street
Wonderful, Ohio 57342
tbarker@jobweb.com

Objective

To obtain an entry-level position requiring strong analytical and organizational skills in the engineering department.

Education

Ohio Tech
Associates Degree, Applied Engineering

Experience

Assistant Engineer, Atlas Motor Corp., Detroit, MI, March 2001 — August 2003
Worked on advanced test project that involved mechanical design, CAD/CAM composites technology, automobile structures, and coordination among project groups.

Assembly Supervisor, Acme Manufacturing, Columbus, OH, June 1990 — March 2001
Directed six-person crew in manufacturing piston shut-off valve; established an integrated sequence chain to the assembly line which increased productivity and saved maintenance costs.

Assistant Mechanic, Dewey's Garage, Toledo, OH, October 1976 — June 1990
Performed oil changes, tire rotations, radiator flushes, troubleshooting problems with customers' cars.

Licenses

Ohio Repairman's Certificate

Professional Affiliations

Ohio Association of Mechanics
USA Engineers

Awards

Acme Manufacturing Employee of the Year, 1993

The Cover Letter

A cover letter is designed to accompany your resume and is intended to stimulate interest about you. A resume should always be accompanied by a cover letter. An effective cover letter should be:

Personalized Address a specific individual within the organization, preferably the one who is most likely to have decision-making authority over your hiring. If you are answering a blind ad and are not able to obtain a name, it is usually best to use a simplified letter style that omits both the salutation and closing, or use a subject line instead of a salutation (ex, Re: data entry position). Using one standard cover letter and filling in the blanks is ill-advised but better than no cover letter at all.

Specific The cover letter should highlight specific skills and experiences that are relevant to the organization; that same information may or may not be included in the resume. It is the task of the job seeker to make the connection between his or her qualifications and the perceived needs of the company.

Researched It is important that you indicate that you have done your homework and researched positive information about the company (*Sources: the library business section, newspaper articles, company literature, or the internet*).

Targeted The job seeker should indicate who shall do what and when to follow-up; i.e., "I shall be contacting you within one week to schedule an appointment with you." The follow-through is as essential as the initial contact.

Complete Content should include: the reason for writing the cover letter; an overview of your qualifications; the contribution you can make to the organization; what you know about the organization; a notation of accompanying resume; follow-through information.

Attractive Consider the visual impact of your cover letter and resume as critically and carefully as you would consider your physical appearance for an interview. Remember a cover letter may not land the job, but it certainly will influence how favorably your resume is received. Take the time to ensure that your cover letter looks attractive.

Concise Like other workers, personnel employees have a lot to do in a limited amount of time. Make sure your cover letter does not unduly impose upon these limits. Use as much care composing your cover letter as you do your resume. Don't doom your resume to the unread pile because of a wordy, overwritten cover letter.

Sample Cover Letter

789 Oak Street
Wonderful, Ohio 57342

Mr. Andrew Weber
Personnel Director
Geronomo Aerospace
6532 Erie Street
Charleston, WV 33221

Dear Mr. Weber:

This letter is in response to the advertisement in the Charleston *News* on August 12, 2003 for a Maintenance Supervisor position with Geronomo Aerospace. My experience includes ten years as a Maintenance Mechanic with direct responsibility for maintaining a facility of 300,000 square feet and the machinery. I am knowledgeable in electrical repair of equipment, plumbing, hydraulics and carpentry. I have a keen sense of order and am adept at organizing and prioritizing work schedules and trouble-shooting problems.

As a Lead, I was responsible for overseeing the work of the Maintenance Department and staff. Through responsible budgeting of the department, we were able to reduce costs in our department by 23% and increase productivity up to 85%, which was a savings of over \$234,000 per year to the company.

Enclosed please find my resume and qualifications. I look forward to meeting with you to discuss my skills and potential as an asset to Geronomo Aerospace in the position of a Lead Mechanic.

I will be contacting you the week of February 1, 2003, to schedule a meeting at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Thomas Barker

The Interview

Up until now, your only contact with your prospective employer has been based on the application you filled out, or the resume and cover letter you sent. The interview is when they get to judge the real you. You should prepare for this phase of the job search as diligently as you have done so far. Appearance and attitude are going to count for a great deal.

What to wear A shirt and tie or dress and heels would be acceptable. Your grooming should be impeccable. Your appearance is one aspect of the interview over which you have complete control. Make the most of it.

Your attitude How you carry yourself is an important part of the impression you want to leave. Wear an enthusiastic smile. Use respectful language. Give your interviewer a firm, confident handshake (not a bonecrusher, but not a limp fish, either — practice your handshake with someone before the interview). Exhibit positive body language.

Prepare your answers There are basic questions that every interviewer asks. You should have ready answers for these and be prepared to give them without delay. This might require some in-depth personal assessment, but then you already did that in Chapter Two. Review the answers you listed in your personal assessment, think about the following standard interview questions, and formulate answers that honestly acknowledge what you feel.

What are your skills, interests and motivations?

Why do you want this job?

Why should the company select you?

What are your long-term ambitions?

What are your strengths? Weaknesses?

You should be ready to discuss the job itself and how your interests, motivations, and skills relate to it. You should have ready replies as to how you would be an asset to the company and the knowledge you have already learned about the job.

You should also have questions for the interviewer to answer about what you can expect from the company and how they will best make use of your skills, what chances for advancement there are, and what you can expect in benefits.

Sample Thank You Letter — Always follow up an interview with a thank-you letter. It's not only the courteous thing to do, but it might win you the job.

789 Oak Street
Wonderful, Ohio 57342

August 21, 2003

Ms. Suzi Que
Smith and Jones Manufacturing
342 Main Street
Nirvana, Ohio 57334

Dear Ms. Que:

Thank you for the opportunity to meet with you yesterday to discuss your needs for a Quality Control Inspector in your parts division. The tour of your facility was quite impressive, and I enjoyed the opportunity to meet your staff.

My initial impression is that your organization is one very much in line with my own interest and skills. I am very enthusiastic about the opportunity to combine my experience and education in Quality Control to enhance performance and productivity at Smith and Jones Manufacturing.

Again, thank you for your time and consideration. Please let me know if there is any additional information you need from me.

Sincerely,

David B. Bologna



Chapter Four

The Hidden Job Market

It's probably safe to say that a job is not going to get up and find you. On the other hand, you will be surprised how prevalent job leads really are. It just takes a bit of effort to locate them.

It's also probably safe to say there are lots of employers out there who do little or no advertising of job openings and *do* expect employees to come and find *them*. This is a good thing and a bad thing; it's bad in that you have to find these employers and it's good in that there is usually little competition for these jobs.

The hidden job market almost necessitates you have a network of friends keeping their eyes and ears open for you. Don't be afraid to ask them to do this. Would you be part of a network to help a friend find a job? Of course you would! Chances are very good your friends and relatives feel the same way.

Your job search is also going to lean heavily on the Internet. There are tons of resources online to take advantage of. If you haven't sharpened up your computer skills lately, now is the time.

Finding the Vacancies

The vacancies are there. The task at hand is finding them. The following suggestions might give you an idea of how to do just that.

Find the job you *want* Send speculative applications targeted to companies, that you have researched thoroughly. Identify industry sectors in which you would like to work and look beyond the big names to their suppliers, distributors, customers and competitors. In particular, look at the small businesses growing within these sectors.

Be seen and be heard Find out what careers your family, friends, and colleagues are in and how they can help you in your job search, or if they know anybody else who can help you. Get as many people as possible looking on your behalf

Ask people for an information interview Identify people working in your chosen field and seek an information interview. Ask how to research the market, who to speak to, where to find information and what questions to ask. Keep them informed of your progress. Utilize electronic media for company/sector research, professional updating.

Scan your local paper for signs of growth, e.g. companies that are expanding; new developments. Make your inquiries before new jobs are advertised.

Keep in touch with changes in your chosen field by keeping up with professional and trade journals, newsletters, electronic media - databases, Internet, CD Roms

Look for work-shadowing opportunities Find out if companies have open day/visits. Use career presentations (check career service websites, employment fairs and conferences to find out what various job roles involve).

Volunteer to work unpaid or on a trial basis (especially useful in small businesses which see recruiting new staff as risky).

Keep in touch with people in your chosen field Tap into their information networks, e.g. internal vacancy lists, newsletters, press announcements, etc.

Draw up a list of organizations to target Get names from Yellow Pages, trade association directories, professional journals, Chambers of Commerce, National Training Organizations and local business associations, and surf the Internet.

Get out and about Visit your local business park or office complex. Check all the business opportunities on your doorstep. Use them to make speculative contacts.

Job search via the Internet The Internet is a valuable tool. It can be used to research careers and employers, find job openings, get valuable information about the labor market, make resumes available, and even contact employers directly. As with all techniques, you must be careful not to rely too heavily upon it. Don't make the mistake of thinking that you will be able to conduct a successful job search using only the Internet. However, combining Internet resources and search abilities with existing job search techniques can give you a competitive edge.

The following list of websites are some examples of sites you will want to explore:

The Job Search Manual http://www.sunraye.com/job_net is a comprehensive job search manual that covers the entire job search, including "worksheets" that job seekers can use to evaluate themselves and refine their job search. It will also help you prepare for information interviews and help you get the most out of them.

The Riley Guide <http://www.rileyguide.com> by Margaret Dikel is a great resource for using the Internet to find work. It contains helpful advice and links to job search information.

The Occupational Outlook Handbook <http://www.bls.gov> the government's premier career reference book on occupations and tomorrow's job market, allows you to use a simple search form to look up information on particular occupations or just browse through possible careers.

The America's Career InfoNet <http://www.acinet.org> provides comprehensive information on careers. It provides a general outlook, wages and trends, state profile search and career resources. This resource includes skill levels, task and activities, education and training, detailed wage expectations and more.

Researching Companies on Line <http://www.careerbuilder.com> provides an easy step-by-step process for finding employers' information online.

Fortune Magazine Online Career Resource Center <http://cgi.pathfinder.com/fortune/careers/> provides advice for building a powerful network.

The Damn Good Resume <http://www.damngood.com> by Yana Parker is an example of many sites that contain advice and examples for crafting effective resumes.

Resources in the Community

AFL-CIO State and Local Councils may have various job training, job search or placement programs available under federal, state or local grants through your local union, the AFL-CIO state or local council, the AFL-CIO Working for America Institute (WAI) or the Appalachian Council (Appalachian region only).

WAI is a union-supported organization that works with unions to build their capacity in economic and workforce development areas. Call: **202-508-3717**.

State Employment Service, each state has an employment service which usually provides lists of current job openings, trained counselors, aptitude testing (to determine what kind of job you can do), training in job search skills, job training programs and information on education and retraining programs.

Be sure to ask your state employment service counselor about programs available in your state.

Most states require that an unemployed worker register with the state employment service as a condition of receiving unemployment compensation. Some states provide tax breaks to employers who hire through the state employment service. Contact your union representative or state employment service to determine your eligibility.

Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers

This program provides special income protection and job training, as well as tax credits for health insurance premiums, for workers who lose their jobs or have their work hours and wages reduced as a result of foreign trade.

You may be eligible for placement, retraining and educational services.

Community centers can provide a person with resources and job leads.

College or University Placement Offices offer services and have information on grants and student loans that can help you to continue your education or seek retraining.

State Vocational Rehabilitation Services have programs for persons with disabilities that meet the eligibility criteria. Eligibility varies from state to state. This career-oriented service offers skill assessment, counseling, career exploration, training, retraining and educational services.

United Way Services have listings of community services and agencies that they fund. Contact the local office in your community.

One-Stop Centers under the *Workforce Investment Act* are funded state and local programs for a wide variety of job search, skill assessment, training, counseling, transportation and educational programs for adults, dislocated workers and youth.

To find the nearest One-Stop Career Center, State TAA Coordinator and Dislocated Worker Units call **877-US2-JOBS (1-877-872-5627)**, or visit the America's Service Locator Web site at:

<http://www.servicelocator.org>.

The Veterans Workforce Investment Program

This federal program helps unemployed veterans receive benefits and locate jobs. It is usually operated through the One-Stop centers. Department of Veterans Affairs has information on other veterans' employment and assistance programs. Veteran's Administration **800-827-1000**



Chapter Five

Health Insurance

As noted in Chapter One, the Economic Policy Institute states that only one out of three individuals is likely to find employment in today's labor market. In that same chapter, it also detailed what concerns unemployed families the most. Among the top concerns were being unable to pay the rent/mortgage, inability to put food on the table, and lack of access to health care.

Recognizing the plight of so many unemployed Machinist families across the country, IAM leadership—along with Employee Benefit Systems, Inc., the IAM worksite, supplemental benefit provider—has finalized arrangements for a temporary individual major medical policy for Machinists union members and their families.

Information and application material for this plan is available by calling Employee Benefit Systems at **888-521-2900**.

COBRA

Congress passed the landmark Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) health benefit provisions in 1986. The law amends the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA), the Internal Revenue Code and the Public Health Service Act to provide continuation of group health coverage that otherwise would be terminated.

COBRA contains provisions giving certain former employees, retirees, spouses and dependent children the right to temporary continuation of health coverage at group rates. This coverage, however, is only available in specific instances. Group health coverage for COBRA participants is usually more expensive than health coverage for active employees, since usually the employer formerly paid a part of the premium. It is ordinarily less expensive, though, than individual health coverage.

COBRA coverage works like this: Most workers who are laid off are allowed to remain in their employer-based health plan for up to 18 months, provided they pay the full premium (their share plus the employer share) and a small administrative fee.

The problem is, the full premium for employment-based coverage averages about \$200 per month for individual coverage (\$2,400 a year) or almost \$575 per month (\$6,900 a year) for family coverage. Since COBRA coverage is very expensive, many laid-off workers choose to remain uninsured, gambling that they won't get sick before they find another job. However, workers who already have a chronic health condition generally accept COBRA coverage, despite the high cost. Otherwise they would have no protection against high medical bills they know they will face.

In the jargon of health insurance, employers offering COBRA coverage experience "adverse selection," that is, healthier-than-average ex-workers decline the continuing coverage that sicker-than-average workers accept. Even though the workers (in some cases) who accept coverage pay the full premium, their costs are sometimes actually higher than average, which drives up the premium for the employer's whole group. That's why employers dislike the COBRA requirement: even though only a small fraction of ex-employees accept the coverage, it still drives employers' health costs up.

Things to Think About

Decide as soon as possible whether to continue coverage through COBRA. Depending on your employer, current coverage may stop the day you are laid-off.

If you have a pre-existing condition, it may be important to continue health care coverage through COBRA.

Once you elect COBRA and pay for it, coverage begins on the date that health care coverage ceased. It is essentially retroactive.

Under COBRA, you usually pay the full premium amount—what you paid as an employee, plus the amount of the contribution made by your employer. In addition, there may be a 2% administrative fee.

Changes in the company (such as bankruptcy or termination of the health plan) may affect your coverage.

Keep in touch with your employer or plan administrator about these changes and how they affect your plan.

Even if you do not elect COBRA, your employer must provide a HIPAA certificate (Certificate of Credible Coverage) that states the dates you were covered by the employer's health plan. Save this certificate for future use in obtaining health insurance.

How to apply: To apply for COBRA or for more details about your plan, contact your employer's human resources department, union or plan administrator. You may also call the Pension and Welfare Benefits Administration of the U.S. Department of Labor at **1-866-487-2365** for specific questions about your rights.

Things to read

Contact the U.S. Labor Dept at **1-866-444-3272** or go to: www.dol.gov/ebsa/publications/main/html. Ask for (or download) the following free publications that relate to health care coverage; ask the representative when you phone or browse the web site.

Health Benefits under COBRA

Work Changes Require Health Choice . . . Protect your right

Retirement and Health Care Coverage...Questions and Answers for Dislocated Workers

Health Insurance Alternatives

Services in Your State Many states offer families a variety of options for getting health care services. These options are funded through Medicaid and are administered by the county Department of Jobs and Family Services/Department of Human Services. The name of the Department varies from state to state. Some states refer to this program as "Healthy Start" others as "CHIPS." Family eligibility is based on income and the eligibility criteria varies from state to state. Healthy Start and Healthy Families offer free & low cost health care coverage to families, children (up to age 19) and

pregnant women. Coverage includes doctor visits, hospital care, pregnancy related services, prescriptions, vision, dental, substance abuse, mental health services and much more. Contact your local Medicaid office, or call **1-877-KIDSNOW (1-877-543-7669)**.

www.insurekidsnow.gov

Foundation for Health Coverage Education

Provides an online guide www.coverageforall.org to determine for which public or private programs you qualify. It also offers help over the phone, toll free, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, via the help hotline **800-234-1317**.

Contact your union

Contact your union rep, local lodge or district office. They may know of services that will better serve your health insurance requirements.

Purchasing Health Insurance

What you need to ask before buying health insurance, so you can avoid unpleasant surprises when you make a claim:

What is not covered in the plan? These are called “exclusions.”

Is there a deductible that you must pay for each claim? What is the maximum?

Are there other charges or “co-payments” that you are responsible to pay?

What is the worst case “out-of-pocket” amount that you could be responsible to pay?

What is the maximum coverage per day or lifetime?

Does the plan deny benefits if your medical problem arises because of a health problem you already had when your policy started? (This is called “pre-existing” condition.)

Does the plan require you to determine by yourself whether you meet the insurance company’s health standards before you can buy?

How long is the premium rate guaranteed? What are the renewal guarantees?

Are there specific exclusions that pertain to sports or other activities?



Chapter Six

Budgeting

Of all the challenges unemployment presents, nothing cuts closer to a family than altered financial circumstances. And little else has as much immediate impact. This chapter is crucial to the unemployed person and the family which relies on that income. The family must work together during the period of unemployment.

Unemployment creates radical changes in families' lives and causes them to adjust to a new set of circumstances, an altered sense of expectations, and new ways of relating to familiar issues. Nothing illustrates this more than the problem of budgeting money during a period of unemployment.

If you haven't already done so, apply for unemployment benefits. It takes a certain amount of time to process a claim. The more quickly you apply, the more timely your benefits will begin.

Talking about money is hard. It means more than just discussing the amount of income, who's spending what, and how much things cost. Preventing and overcoming money problems takes honest and open communication. It takes some time and effort.

How to talk about money

Choose a place where you won't be interrupted. Turn off the television, radio, video games, etc. There should be no distractions. Here are some other suggested tips to follow:

Make it a family discussion People in general, are more supportive of decisions when they have been involved. Try taking the democratic approach: include all family members, even children, in helping make decisions about money as a team. Let everyone have a chance to express an opinion. You will find that family members are more likely to be satisfied if they helped in making the decision.

Clearly identify financial issues or concerns Just what is the problem? Is the problem spending too much money, spending at the wrong time, or spending on unnecessary or unimportant items? Financial problems are made more serious by certain addictive behaviors (ex: drugs, alcohol, gambling etc.) If you suspect any of these might be the cause of the problem, please seek help from a local counseling/mental health center or from a qualified professional.

Make it an open discussion Every family member should state his or her feelings, wants and needs freely. Others should not judge or criticize. Talk about the present. Try using "I" messages instead of saying "you always" or "you never."

Listen carefully Let the family know you understand what they said. Be willing to negotiate a realistic settlement of differences. Families must be ready to compromise. A verbal agreement is fine, but a written agreement may help even more to avoid conflicts.

The Money & Values Worksheet

Money is often a source of conflict in families because of the different values each family member attaches to it. This worksheet will help you learn more about your family's values and feelings about money.

Each family member should answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper. Afterwards, compare and discuss your answers.

You've just won \$10,000 in the lottery. What will you do with the money?

You have just been laid off from your job. You must make a major cut in spending. What would you cut first?

What would you like your family to spend *more* money on?

What would you like your family to spend *less* money on?

Estimate how much money the family spends monthly on the following?

Rent or mortgage payment

Groceries

Car payment

Utilities

Entertainment

What money problem is the most frequent cause of arguments?

What is the most foolish thing you've spent money on?

What is the most sensible thing you've spent money on?

How do you feel about buying on credit?

Do you agree or disagree with these statements?

- 1) I am too tight with money.
- 2) My spouse is too tight with money.
- 3) I want to be included in making decisions about spending money.
- 4) I like to buy things because it makes me feel good.
- 5) I feel good about the way our family handles money.
- 6) Our family needs to develop a better way to manage money.
- 7) I think it is important to set goals and plan for the future.
- 8) Why worry about tomorrow? I live from day to day.
- 9) I would like to go out more often even if it means doing without something.
- 10) I would rather do without something for now to have a more secure future.

Assessing your monthly expenses

The first thing to consider when making a budget is what you currently spend each month — this goes for people who are working as well as unemployed people. There are an awful lot of us who have no idea where the family income goes.

The Monthly Expense Survey on the next page will give you a pretty accurate breakdown of how the paychecks are spent. Spend some time on this survey. Pull out all old bank statements, receipts, invoices, and other paperwork. This is what will form the very foundation of your family budget, so it needs to be done right.

Spending Guidelines

Spending guideline percentages may be useful as you examine your spending habits. These spending guidelines are for comparison purposes *only*. They are not hard and fast rules. One family may choose to spend forty percent of their income on housing and less on clothing and transportation. Another may choose to spend more on transportation and less on housing. It's up to you to decide your priorities.

These figures are from the Department of Labor Consumer Expenditure Survey. Remember, these show only the average expenditures of surveyed households, *not* the amounts families should spend. You can see housing, food and transportation take about two-thirds of the family budget and about one-third goes for all other expenses. That's where the challenges of money management come in.

Housing 31.8%

Food 15.6%

Transportation 17.6%

Clothing and Services 7.1%

Health Care 4.6%

Entertainment 5.6%

All Other 17.6%

(All other includes alcoholic beverages, reading, education, tobacco, personal care, cash contributions personal insurance and pensions, and miscellaneous expenditures.)

Calculate your spending percentages. Here's an example. If you spend \$350 a month on housing and your take-home pay is \$1,000, you are spending 35% of your income on housing: $\$350 \text{ divided by } \$1,000. \times 100 = 35\%$

Remember, your take-home pay is like a pie. If you cut one slice too big, the other pieces will have to be cut smaller so everyone gets a taste. Or there will be someone who won't get a piece of the pie. If you do this with your paycheck, you will probably find yourself having to borrow to make ends meet.

Developing a Spending Plan

Most people feel no matter what their income, they need more money to meet their expenses. Money may not always be the answer. More important is how you plan and actually spend your money. The following are some signals that may mean real money problems are just "down the road." Do any of these apply to you?

Do you:

Dip into savings to pay current bills?

Pay only the minimum amount due each month on charge accounts?

Delay payment of some bills you normally would have paid on time?

Borrow to pay for items you used to buy with cash?

Take out new loans to pay old ones or to get lower monthly payments?

Really know exactly where your money goes?

Even if you answered “yes” to all of the above, there is still hope for you. There are things you can do to get more from your dollar and have greater satisfaction from your spending. You must come to grips with the fact you have only a certain amount of money available to you and live within these limits. You may feel this is an impossible task right now, but it is possible for most people to accomplish.

Recognize the shopping triggers

Learn to recognize the “triggers” that place you in a spending situation. Maybe you enjoy shopping yard sales or flea markets. Or perhaps, when you go to buy milk, other items in the store catch your eye. Whatever the reason, you are in a situation where you have the option to spend your money or not.

Learn to recognize the “temptations” in your surroundings that got your attention and tempted you to buy. Stores often place their merchandise in locations designed to attract your attention. Temptations can also be people, places, things, or even the mood you are in. Do you find yourself spending more money when you go shopping with a certain friend? Do you spend money when you are feeling “blue?”

Learn to control the environment so you can shop wisely. Here are some other suggestions that might be helpful:

Avoid exposing yourself to things that will tempt you to spend.

Stay away from the stores except when there is something you absolutely need.

Make a list. Stick to it when shopping and then leave the store. Just browsing can lead to buying. Extras you don’t really need can push up the total at the cash register.

Plan your shopping trip.

Go with a purpose in mind.

Limit your number of trips to the store or the mall.

Don't shop in a weakened condition—by shopping when hungry, tired, or depressed.

Before you spend money, think through all of the possible consequences. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Is this the best use I can make of my money right now?
- Am I buying to satisfy an impulse?
- Will buying this help or hurt me reach the goals I have set?

Examine past spending habits to see where changes need to be made. If your money runs out before your next paycheck, it's time you find out what kind of spending habits you have.

The results of your past actions are often good motivators for changing your present way of doing things. Keep the "Weekly Spending Log" for several weeks. Write down *everything* you spend. Don't cheat! Use this feedback to give you accurate information about your past behavior.

You can also take this information and fill it in on a ledger sheet from a home account book. The ledger sheet simply categorizes different spending areas. This allows you to see where your money is going and provides a way to identify those leaks. You will be able to see patterns developing.

By knowing your spending patterns, it will be far easier for you to be able to reach your financial goals.

Keep credit purchases to a minimum. Think about what credit will cost and how else you might use that money. Remember, charges usually add to the cost of the product.

Buy from reliable dealers and make choices that best meet your needs. Keep all purchase records. If a problem occurs, be sure to register a complaint.

Try to reduce waste to help save some money. Examples of wasted money include: excessive use of water, lights, or automobile; abuse or lack of care which leads to expensive repairs or shortens the service life of a product; and throwing away useful items.

Substitute your time, talent and resources for money when possible. Can you make the item yourself? Can you do the service yourself instead of buying it or hiring someone else to do it for you? Examples: painting, sewing etc.

Total the amount you have spent during this week. Are you spending more than you actually have? If so, now is the time to take some steps to “plug those spending leaks.”

Your family is special and different from every other family. It has special needs, wants and resources. You should manage your money to get what you want and need and to get the most from your income.

What do you do if your current income just isn't enough to pay monthly expenses and debts? Putting your bills in a stack and paying them until the money runs out won't work. You have a legal obligation to pay all of your creditors. Not paying bills will affect your credit record and possibly involve court action. Not paying some bills may have greater consequences than not paying other bills.

When your income is reduced, your spending habits must change. The sooner you change, the more likely your financial problems can be lessened.

Take charge by setting priorities to make sure the basic needs of your family are met. Thinking ahead can minimize the legal and economic risks when you can't pay all your bills.

Who Gets Paid First

Refer back to the Monthly Expense Survey (Page 52) to see what your debts and monthly expenses are. Decide which debts would result in the worst consequences for your family if they weren't paid or were paid less than the amount due. Ask yourself the following questions:

What will affect my family's health and security the most? Usually the house, utilities, food, transportation and medical insurance take priority. Don't be tempted to let medical insurance slide when money is tight. If anyone in your family becomes ill, uninsured medical costs could be devastating. Pay high-priority bills or contact the creditors at once to work out smaller payments.

What will I lose if the bills aren't paid? You can lose your purchases if the creditor holds the title of the property as security for the loan: a home mortgage or car loan, for example. Sometimes furniture and large appliance loans are secured loans. If you aren't sure which loans are secured, check the credit contract. Unsecured debts may have to take lower priority, although you are obligated to pay them, too.

How much do you still owe on the loan? Determine how much you have paid on each loan and how much you owe. If you have only one or two payments to make on a loan, it's probably a good idea to get that debt out of the way. You may be able to return newer items or sell them to pay off the debt. If you choose to voluntarily surrender the item, you'll still be required to pay the difference between the market value of the item and the amount remaining on the loan, but getting you out from under some of your debts can reduce the pressure you feel.

What interest rate are you paying? If you have a loan with a lower interest rate, you may decide to pay off a higher-interest credit card balance first, to reduce the amount of finance charges you are paying. Put credit cards away in a safe place so you are not tempted to use them.

Is a consolidation loan a good idea? Personal finance companies want you to think so, but generally a consolidation loan charges a higher interest rate, often 20 percent or more. And, refinancing to smaller monthly payments will extend the number of payments you must make, adding to the total cost. While a single loan may make payment easier, that's a small benefit considering the additional costs involved.

What about your credit record? Nonpayment of bills is recorded on your credit record and can damage your ability to get credit in the future. That's why contacting all of your creditors immediately if you cannot pay your bills is important. If you can pay something on each debt, it's less likely that your problems will be reported on your credit record. For guidelines of what constitutes a good credit rating go to: www.myfico.com.

Your Repayment Plan

Once you have calculated how much money you have for monthly living expenses and for paying off your debts, decide how much you can pay to each creditor, based on priorities you determined while answering the questions above.

Work out a repayment plan that shows how much you plan to pay each creditor. Now you are ready to contact each of your creditors to explain your situation. You'll need to tell them how much you are able to pay and when you will be able to pay it.

Some businesses, such as utility companies, have special counselors for customers who can't pay their bills. These counselors can help you set up a budget plan to even out your payments during the year. They can also tell you if you qualify for fuel assistance or any available programs.

Look to the Future

Don't ignore your bills and creditors. Prompt action is very important; let your creditors know you are having trouble *before* you miss payments and the situation becomes worse. Once you have a plan for paying bills, stick to it. Contact any creditors you cannot pay. Offer to pay only the interest, arrange for a longer period of financing or make minimum payments. Avoid taking on any new debt for family living expenses. When you have reduced debts to a manageable level, start a regular savings account. Build an emergency fund to help pay unexpected expenses.

Communicating with Credit Card Companies

Call creditors as soon as you realize you can't pay your bills Explain the situation that is causing financial difficulty.

Explain any encouraging financial developments such as a pending divorce settlement, disability benefits, or a new job. Creditors may be more inclined to work with you if you'll have future income.

Propose an affordable alternate payment plan for example, half of the required minimum payment for three months with no late fees.

Keep a log of the dates and times of phone calls to creditors. Note the name of the customer service representative you talked with and terms of the agreement.

Follow up calls with a letter that restates the agreed-upon terms. Send the letter by certified mail with a return receipt requested and include the following information:

- Account number and current interest rate required payment
- Cause of financial difficulty (brief description)
- Specific reduced payment proposal
- Request for a response, stating that the creditor agrees to the terms
- Contact information: Address, day/evening phone numbers and email address

Resist pressure to pay more than you can afford. Neither you nor the creditor will benefit from an agreement that is doomed from the start.

Request that creditors remove negative information, such as late payments, and re-age your account. (That means that it is reported positively as long as negotiated payments are made.) Get a copy of your credit report: www.nfcc.org or www.myvesta.org

If creditors resist your efforts to negotiate a reduced payment, call a consumer credit counseling service office. Often, creditors will waive late fees and reduce minimum payments for people receiving counseling. For more information about credit-counseling, call **800-388-2227** or visit the National Foundation for Credit Counseling online. www.nfcc.org

Keep creditors informed about continuing changes in your financial situation, such as prolonged illness or prolonged unemployment. If necessary, negotiate another extended repayment plan.

When all else fails, send creditors a small monthly payment even if it is only \$5 or \$10. This shows that you're not ignoring your debts, and you'll avoid those computer-generated letters that automatically get mailed when no payment is made.



Appendix

Other Resources

Links and Phone Numbers

There are many sources of assistance throughout the community. Your union can assist you in many ways and may have the information you need. Check with your district and local lodge offices. Your local lodge or district may have a community service committee which also provides information and resources.

Go to the IAM website and to the Retirees, Community and Membership Services Department for additional information.

www.goiam.org/index.php/headquarters/departments/retirees-community-and-membership-services

Government Links

There is a website available to assist you in identifying governmental benefits for which you and your family may be eligible.

www.govbenefits.gov

Unemployment Compensation Information

www.workforcesecurity.doleta.gov

Social Security Administration

www.ssa.gov

Medicare/Medicaid

www.cms.hhs.gov

www.medicare.gov

www.cms.hhs.gov/home/medicaid.asp

National Legal Aid and Defender Associations

202-452-0620

www.nlada.org

Assistance with utilities

Contact a Community Action Agency in your community, or go to:

www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/liheap

Links for union leaders and members

Learn more about “WARN” and other Government Programs under the Workforce Investment Act

www.doleta.gov/programs

Checklists for union leaders and members regarding layoffs

www.workingforamerica.org

Additional Job Search Links

Job Search Manual

www.sunraye.com/job_net

Information about careers and jobs

www.job-hunt.org

Job Banks

www.rileyguide.com/multiple.html

Housing Assistance

Contact your mortgage holder and try to negotiate a reduced payment plan. Do this immediately following the loss of a job.

Consumer Credit Counseling or FHA/HUD can help you understand your mortgage options to help prevent foreclosure. If you have a FHA/HUD federally insured mortgage, contact the FHA/HUD (1-888-995-HOPE). There are special provisions for helping people avoid foreclosure. Contact Consumer Credit Counseling at 800-355-2227. www.hud.gov

Financial Assistance for Rent and Mortgage

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provides funding for small grants through local community agencies for one time assistance with a rent or mortgage payment. Usually a housing or community action agency dispenses these funds. The United Way www.liveunited.org is a good place to gain information.

Union Plus Program

The Union Plus program was developed especially for union members. Many of the Union Plus programs provide extra help needed if a member becomes unemployed. www.unionpriv.org

Community Services

Information and Referral Services in your individual communities can direct you to the proper agency for assistance.

Some agencies that may provide these services are:

- United Way
- Catholic Charities
- AFL-CIO, Central Labor Councils or United Labor Agencies
- Salvation Army
- Community Action Agency

