

# How to Apply for a Job in Person

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In an increasingly competitive job market, you might feel tempted to simply stop by a local company or business and drop off your resume. But this can be a very risky tactic to use and it could actually hurt your chances of landing the job. Learning the best practices for applying to jobs will set you up for success.

## Part 1

### Part 1 of 3: Determining If You Should Apply in Person



**1 Read the job ad carefully.** In today's digital world, the vast majority of job applications are accepted online. Similarly, the corresponding job advertisement for the position is usually posted on the company's web site as well as popular job postings site such as Monster, Indeed, and Glassdoor (non-profits tend to use Idealist and Opportunity Knocks).

- Always check the company's web site to make sure they are currently hiring. You can usually find these listed under tabs labelled "Careers" or "Employment Opportunities." Do not just drop by a business if there is no job opening.
- Check the job ad for information on how to apply. If the job states you should apply in person at their store or office, then it is acceptable to do this.
- If the job ad says "No calls," it is safe to assume that they also do not want you to show up in person unless they ask you to.<sup>[1]</sup>
- Employers who commonly accept applications in person include restaurants, grocery stores, and other retail businesses. These employers often have an immediate need to fill and are therefore eager to expedite the hiring process. They also usually do not require a resume to apply.<sup>[2]</sup> Determine what time the business is least busy so that a manager will have time to speak with you when you come in.



**2 Look for a sign.** Some businesses will post a sign on their entrance stating "Help Wanted" or some version of that. If you see a sign like this, it is a clear indication you can inquire about a position in person.<sup>[3]</sup>

- Make sure you look presentable and polished when you go inside, even if you just plan on asking about a job instead of submitting a resume or cover letter. Have clean, brushed hair, fresh breath, and non-wrinkled clothes.
- While you don't need to wear a full suit simply to receive an application, you should look pulled together. Consider wearing slacks, a business skirt and blazer, and a tucked in, button-down shirt.



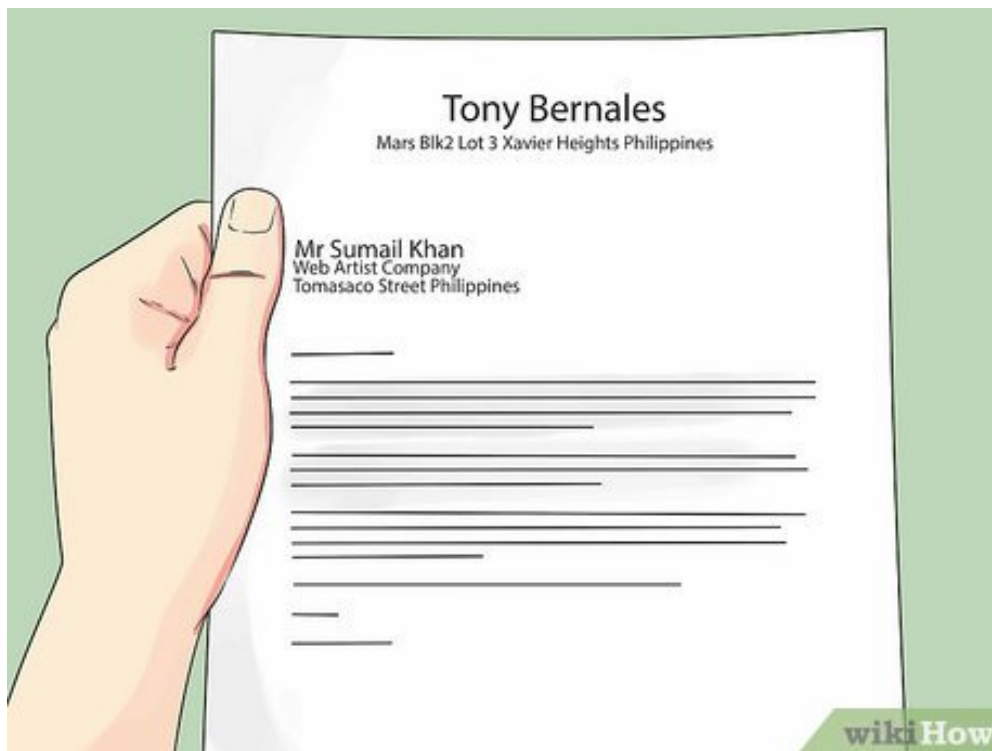
**3 Do not stop by unannounced.** If you have applied for a job, you might think it will give you a competitive edge to actually stop by the office. Perhaps you believe that this will show your sincere interest in the job. But the hiring manager could easily see this as an inconvenient or even disrespectful act.<sup>[4]</sup>

- Keep in mind that when a hiring manager has to sift through dozens, if not hundreds, of applications for a single position, they are looking for candidates who can follow instructions and respect their hiring system. Breaking their rules will most likely make them remember you for the wrong reasons.



**1 Bring a resume.** You have to provide the required materials in order to be considered seriously when you apply for a job. Most jobs will require a resume, which is a catalogue of your professional experience, and a cover letter, which is a letter in which you explain your interest in the position and why you are qualified to fill it.<sup>[5]</sup>

- For your resume, list your relevant work experience chronologically. Include the name of your employer, the title of your position, and the dates you worked there. As you describe your duties at each place, use active language such as "created," "executed," "met target," "designed," "produced," etc. for each entry in your history.<sup>[6]</sup>
- Include your transferable skills. If you are applying for a job that is in a new field or discipline, focus on skills from your previous experience that you can apply to this position. This would include things like conflict resolution, customer service, verbal and written communication, problem solving skills, etc.<sup>[7]</sup> <sup>[8]</sup>



**2 Bring a cover letter.** A cover letter is an opportunity to let your employer know more about you as a person and why you are interested in the company. It should not simply restate all of your experience listed in the resume. Use it as an opportunity to demonstrate your personality and professional writing skills. Also, explain why you are a good candidate for the position.<sup>[9]</sup>

- Your cover letter should be just a page in length and clearly organized. Most examples include roughly 3 paragraphs, with each paragraph covering a main point.
- In the first paragraph, you should introduce yourself and explain what position you are applying for. Include 1 or 2 sentences on how you are a good fit for the company generally.<sup>[10]</sup>
- In the second and third paragraphs, you should include a specific example of a time you accomplished something in your career that will make you a good fit for the demands of the job. Provide detail in your examples. Did you organize a seminar at your most recent job? Did you find creative ways to meet your quotas?<sup>[11]</sup>
- Be sure to thank the reader for their time and also include any contact information, such as an email or phone number.



- 3 Bring additional materials.** These might vary depending on the requirements of the job, but it might include a writing sample or a portfolio of creative work.<sup>[12]</sup>
- You should also include a list of references or even letters of recommendation if they are requested.<sup>[13]</sup>
  - Keep these documents in a folder or portfolio so they will not get wrinkled as you carry them with you.



**4 Dress appropriately.** If you are dropping off your resume and cover letter, you want to look professional and competent. While you don't need to be dressed for a full interview (a suit and tie), you should look like you could professionally represent the company.

- Business casual wear such as slacks or khakis and a button down shirt and blazer will be appropriate for men. Women can also wear business slacks, a button down shirt or blouse, a pencil skirt or a more professional dress.
- Make sure your footwear is also professional and understated. Leave the sneakers at home. Black or navy dress shoes with a heel under 3 inches (7.6 cm) are the most appropriate.





**5 Be polite.** When you enter the office, smile and introduce yourself to the administrative assistant at the front desk or reception area. Explain that you want to submit your application materials for the position. The administrative assistant might take these from you or he will direct you to the appropriate person for submitting these documents.<sup>[14]</sup>

- Do not be rude or talk down to the person at the front desk. Often the boss will ask the receptionist for their impressions of the applicants; you don't want to stand out for the wrong reasons.



**6 Be brief.** Do not ask to take a tour of the office or meet with your potential boss. This will be viewed as an imposition on the workers at the office.

- Similarly, do not harass the secretary about the status of your application after you have submitted it. If the company wants to interview you, they will contact you. Do not contact them.



## Part 3 of 3: Conducting Informational Interviews



**1 Consider asking for an informational interview.** If there is a business or an industry you would like to work for, but there are no current openings, consider asking for an informational interview.<sup>[15]</sup>

- An informational interview is an opportunity to talk to someone whose career you admire. Perhaps they work in an industry you are interested in transitioning into or maybe they work for your dream company.
- Remember that the informational interview is not a job interview. It is an opportunity for you to get advice from someone whom you admire, to learn more about their career path, and for you to put yourself in their professional network.<sup>[16]</sup>



**2 Look in your network.** Perhaps you have someone in mind that you would like to talk to, but if you don't, you can always start by looking within your network. Consider people who have graduated from your high school, college or graduate school. You will automatically have something in common with this person and it is likely they will want to help you.<sup>[17]</sup>

- While you can search alumni directories from your school, you can also search for alums on professional networking sites like LinkedIn.
- You can also ask friends of friends or contacts other colleagues may have for an informational interview.



**3 Ask appropriately.** Send an email or LinkedIn message to the interviewee asking them for an informational interview. Tell them you are interested in learning more about their work and career path. You can offer to take them out for a cup of coffee or ask to meet them at their office.<sup>[18]</sup>

- It might feel a little awkward to contact someone you've never met before, but it is likely your interviewee will be flattered to receive such a request. <sup>[19]</sup>



**4 Come to the interview prepared.** Even though the informational interview is a casual meeting, you should still be prepared with different questions. You could ask a question such as, "How much experience do you have in the field?"

- If your interviewee works in a more advanced or specialized role in your profession, you might ask them for details on their route to that position or what kinds of responsibility they take on there.
- Having questions prepared lets the interviewee know that you respect their time and want this to be a productive conversation.<sup>[20]</sup>
- Keep the interview short. You should budget somewhere between 20-30 minutes unless your interviewee states a longer time.



**5 Thank your interviewee.** After your interview, be sure to send a thank you note or email to your interviewee. It is very important to let your interviewee know you appreciate that they took time out of their schedule to share their wisdom with you.<sup>[21]</sup>



**6 Keep in touch.** Informational interviews are especially helpful because they allow you to expand your network. If you see your interviewee at an industry event or a conference, be sure to say hello and keep in touch.<sup>[22]</sup>

- Most importantly, when a job opens up at your dream company, you will already have a contact in place.



## Expert Q&A

### Question

Should I walk in and ask for a job?



**Kent Lee**  
Career & Executive Coach  
Expert Answer

It depends on the company you want to get a job with. Employers who commonly accept applications in person include restaurants, grocery stores, and other retail businesses. These employers often have an immediate need to fill and are therefore eager to expedite the hiring process. They also usually do not require a resume to apply, so it would be appropriate to walk into one of these businesses and ask to apply for an open position.

Helpful 2 Not Helpful 0

### Question

How do I get a job as a bartender?



**Tom De Backer**  
Top Answerer

Draw attention to such aspects as previous experience, great social skills, psychological insight, good arithmetic skills in your head, being very tidy and clean, caring for your appearance and the bar's appearance, willingness to learn additional skills.

Helpful 1 Not Helpful 0



### Question

What do I need to do if I want to be a doctor?



Community Answer

To become a doctor, you are required to obtain a medical degree or Ph.D. Undergraduate work should be done in a scientific field. After medical school, you must complete a residency and then you will be required to obtain a license to practice medicine.

Helpful ☐ 0 Not Helpful ☒ 1

### Question

If writing an application letter, is it good to wrap up my last paragraph by thanking in advance?



Community Answer

"Thank you in advance" is a standard ending; it is widely used in letters, and it can indeed be used here too.

Helpful ☒ 1 Not Helpful ☐ 0

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## About This Article



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This article was co-authored by **Kent Lee**. Kent Lee is a Career and Executive Coach and the Founder of the Perfect Resume, a career development services company based in Phoenix, Arizona. Kent specializes in creating customized resumes, LinkedIn profiles, cover letters, and thank you letters. Kent has over 15 years of career coaching and consulting experience. Previously, he has worked as a Career Consultant for Yahoo and has worked with thousands of clients including Fortune 500 executives from around the world. His work and career advice have been featured in ABC, NBC, CBS, Yahoo, Career Builder, and Monster.com. This article has been viewed 121,672 times.

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4 votes - 85%

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