

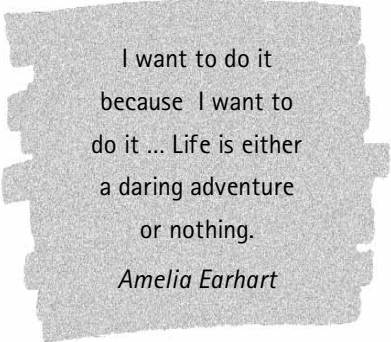
About this book

Good job seeking skills don't grow on trees. They have to be learned and practised.

Job seeking is a game of skill and, as with any other game, there are rules to learn, skills to master and tactics to practise. If you haven't done it before, you'll need lessons. Having a good coach, mentors, an excellent game plan and keen supporters can make all the difference to whether you're successful or not.

Finding a job is often a full-time job in itself. It includes:

- looking in newspapers, on touch screens, phoning everyone you know or contacting an agency
- finding out more about the job and the type of person they're looking for
- checking to see you've got what the employer is looking for
- finding out more about the organisation
- fixing up your résumé to fit the selection criteria
- addressing the selection criteria in a letter
- deciding who would be the best people to ask to be referees
- checking you've got their correct details – their name, position, address and phone number



I want to do it
because I want to
do it ... Life is either
a daring adventure
or nothing.

Amelia Earhart

- checking that what you've written is clear and the spelling and grammar are correct
- if you get an interview, working out what questions they'll ask
- practising an interview – with a friend or on tape
- working out what to wear, what kind of impression you want to make
- doing the interview
- dealing with your feelings and expectations when you are offered the job or not.

This might seem like a lot to do just to get a job! But it's what it takes.

Like everyone who's ever applied for jobs, I've made lots of mistakes and learned along the way. For every job I've been successful in getting, there have been many more I've missed out on. So this book is based on those experiences, as well as working with and training long term unemployed people to assist them to get back into the workforce.

Learning and using new skills

To learn a new skill, you have to do more than just read about it. New skills must be *practised*, so this book includes exercises for you to do along the way. Doing these will help you learn about yourself, plan your short-term and long-term future and take some practical steps to finding a job. It's a step-by-step process.

Some of you will have excellent trainers and will work through this book while doing Job Search Training. Others may be working alone. Whether you live in city, town or country, I hope you find the book easy to learn from.

Success is never guaranteed. Even with the best game plan in the world, outstanding coaches and the utmost preparation, you may still be unsuccessful. In fact, there may be many unsuccessful job applications and interviews before you land a job at all.

Whatever happens and no matter how tough things get, the key to success is to *keep believing in yourself*. Stay focused, learn from your experiences and never ever give up. Blaming and shaming, either from yourself to yourself, or from those around you, is simply not acceptable.

Of course setbacks can feel personal – they can even feel like failure. Words like ‘unsuccessful’ and ‘rejection’ don’t help.

The quotes throughout this book are ones that inspire me when the going gets tough or doubt creeps in. Choose the ones you like, write them on cards and put them where you will see them every day.

Lastly and most importantly, finding the job you want takes courage and determination. Having the support of family, friends, other job seekers, neighbours and community will be very important in keeping you focused and positive. Keep them informed about how you are going and let them help you when and if they can. And remember to tell them how much you appreciate their support. They are your most valuable asset in the job seeking game!

What do these words mean?

Every subject, every sport, every game has its own language and rules. Here are some of the main words you’ll come across in job seeking.

Covering letter A brief letter that goes with a résumé in a job application. Usually no longer than a page (two or three paragraphs), it will include a summary of your work experience, skills, abilities and qualities.

If you have been asked to address *essential* and *desirable* selection criteria, you will need to write a *letter of application*, where you show how you meet each of the criteria. This letter may be one to three pages long. These letters are discussed in chapter 7.

Employee (also **worker** or **staff**) A person who is paid to work by another person or an organisation. As employees, people have certain rights and responsibilities.

Employer An organisation or person who employs people – that is, gives them jobs.

Employers include small and large businesses, government departments, universities, institutes of TAFE, hospitals, farmers, schools, shopkeepers or community-based organisations such as clubs, neighbourhood centres or some child care centres.

True life is lived
when tiny
changes occur.

Leo Tolstoy

Employment When you are being paid to do a job. It may be permanent, contract, full time, part time or casual. The wages and conditions for each type of job vary. For example, casual workers are usually paid at a higher hourly rate.

Employment agencies (also known as **recruitment agencies**) Companies that find new staff for employers. Many companies (especially large ones) use these agencies. They might pay the agency a fee for finding them a group of suitable job seekers to interview. (See also *labour hire*)

Human resources Medium to large organisations will often have a human resources division or manager (also known as the **personnel** division or manager). This division deals with employment issues including hiring new staff, deciding what they are entitled to, keeping records, organising staff training and ensuring staff are treated fairly and according to the law.

Interview An interview is a face-to-face meeting between an employer and a person applying for a job. After reading your résumé and covering letter or letter of application, the employer (or someone working for them) will decide whether or not to interview you.

An interview may last between 15 and 60 minutes. It is your opportunity to convince the employer that you are the right person for the job. Interviews are discussed in chapter 8.

Job Network members Organisations that provide job search support services for job seekers and assist people who have been unemployed for a long time to find jobs. They are funded by the federal government as part of the Job Network.

Labour hire Where an employment agency recruits people and pays them to work for someone else. Some examples are seasonal workers to do picking or pruning in the fruit industry or temporary office staff.

Letter of application See 'Covering letter' on page xii

Referee A person chosen by you who can answer questions about you.

A **Reference** is a letter that tells an employer something about you – for example, where you have

worked, for how long, how well you performed, your character, attitude to work, how you work as part of a team, your skills and capabilities. Referees and references are discussed in chapter 5.

Résumé (rez-u-may: also known as CV, which stands for *Curriculum Vitae*) A summary of your career or achievements to date. It forms a part of your job application and, depending on the job and the person, will usually include educational achievements, work history and any community involvement or additional accomplishments that might assist you to get an interview. Résumés are discussed in chapter 5.

Selection criteria A list of the qualifications an employer is looking for in a new employee. These may include education and training, work experience, skills, qualities and attitudes. Although some employers won't have such a clear list, others (such as government departments and other large organisations) must advertise essential and desirable selection criteria. See chapter 6 for more information.

Wages and conditions *Wages* are the money that is paid to a person for doing a job. (*Salary* means approximately the same thing, but sometimes a person on a salary is not entitled to overtime.) Wages may be paid daily, weekly, fortnightly or monthly, by cash, cheque, or straight into a bank account. Tax is taken out first.

Conditions include such things as hours worked per day or week, leave and other arrangements such as using vehicles or flexible working arrangements.

Wages and conditions are discussed in chapter 10.

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Getting started



Your job seeking toolkit

A **workbook** is a valuable tool for anyone starting out to look for a job. To start, you will need:

- an A4 size workbook with or without lines
- a pen
- coloured pencils or textas
- a pencil, rubber and pencil sharpener
- scissors
- glue.



Being able to imagine a future for ourselves gives us the courage to take the first small steps to achieving our dreams.

Using the workbook

Use the workbook as a scrap book to do the exercises in each chapter, make notes and lists for yourself, paste in advertisements and pictures about jobs and lifestyles you would like, and write about your job seeking experiences.

These will be useful for developing résumés and letters of application and preparing for interviews.

Your workbook is private and personal. Cover it, make it special. Do a title page if you like. Keep it in a safe place. Do not let anyone else look at or read it. It's for your eyes only.

Treat it like a best friend, someone to talk to about what is happening in your life. You may want to make notes on your job seeking progress: who you spoke to, what you talked about, what you think or feel, what you learned or discovered.

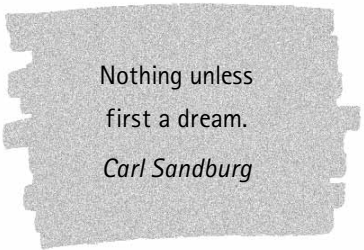
If you're feeling anxious or worried, just writing three pages in your workbook can help you to feel positive again. Don't worry about spelling, grammar, repeating yourself. Just write whatever comes into your head, even if it's just 'I can't think of what to write next'. Whinge, moan, rage, send up, feel sorry for yourself. Get it out. If you don't like writing, draw instead.

Dreaming your future

It helps to know what kind of work you would most like to do. Therefore, an important first step in the game of job seeking is to let yourself dream.

Dreams light your way. Some of us have never had an opportunity to really dream about what we'd like to do in our lives. Some people's dreams were squashed at an early age. Someone (perhaps a parent) might have said, 'You might love music but you need to get a *real* job!' or 'What's a woman need an education for anyway?' or 'Playing golf's not going to pay the bills'.

Maybe we took the first job that came along and worked there until we were made redundant. Perhaps we're returning to work after raising children, or we've had health problems in the past that made work difficult, or we've recently left school or finished university and found it hard to find a job.



Nothing unless
first a dream.

Carl Sandburg



Just dreaming!

Put the date on a page in your workbook and complete the following sentences.

For example, in number 1, you could write:

If I lived my life over again some of the things I'd like to try are:

- being a DJ in a nightclub
- watercolour painting
- flying aeroplanes
- backpacking in China
- playing the piano
- sheep farming.

Remember, it's just a game: there are no right or wrong answers. If something comes into your mind, put it down – even if it seems crazy.

Don't censor yourself! Aim high if you want to!

You might want to repeat this exercise every six months to see if your lists change.

1. If I lived my life over again some of the things I'd like to try are:

2. If I'd been born into a different family I think I would've become a:

3. If I was given 10 million dollars tomorrow I would:

4. If I could have any job or career I liked, I would most love to be a:

5. If I was really talented, I would most like to be a:

How did you feel when you were doing these exercises – happy, sad, angry, excited, disappointed, free?

Were there any surprises?

These exercises are good to do if you're feeling gloomy or down. They remind us of who we are and contribute to self respect. Simply expressing what we love and value makes us feel better. Life feels better – full of possibilities.