

Obtaining an Entry-Level Job

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Key Takeaways

- While entry-level jobs do not require specialized training, they are the most common gateway into an organization.
- Use job-search websites and generative AI tools to search for job opportunities.
- Create a well-structured résumé that aligns with the job description; use generative AI to polish the documents.
- To prepare for an interview, practice responding to interview questions while maintaining eye contact to demonstrate knowledge and confidence.

Entry-level jobs are designed for people with little to no work experience. These jobs do not require previous education or training. Entry-level roles range from labor-intensive jobs (e.g., stocking shelves, preparing food, cleaning equipment) to customer service jobs (e.g., cashier, bank teller, retail associate). Entry-level jobs are the most common gateway into an organization. This fact sheet explains how to find entry-level jobs and outlines the fundamentals to improve one's prospects of gaining employment.

How to Find Entry-Level Work

The most common approach to finding an entry-level job is to search the internet for open roles. [LinkedIn.com](#) and [Indeed.com](#) are a few examples of websites designed to help people find jobs (Kreemers et al., 2022; van Hooft et al., 2021). However, job seekers can also gain employment through their social networks, which are connections and relationships with the people they personally know who can help them obtain a job (van Hooft et al., 2021). LinkedIn is not only one of the world's largest websites for job postings, but also the largest

website for professional social networking (Rajkumar et al., 2022). One of the most influential and frequently cited articles in the social network literature is Granovetter's (1973) *The Strength of Weak Ties*. This study introduced the concept that acquaintances, or "weak ties," often provide access to new information and opportunities unavailable through close relationships. On LinkedIn, these weak ties (i.e., mutual connections with little to no interaction) can actually lead to greater job mobility than strong ties (i.e., connections with whom one also shares many mutual connections). However, weak ties are more helpful in high-tech industries, whereas strong ties are more helpful in low-tech industries (Granovetter, 1973; Rajkumar et al., 2022). Using generative artificial intelligence (gen AI) tools can also help a job seeker identify job opportunities that align with the type of position they desire (Jawhar et al., 2025; Otten & Schaberg, 2025).

Entry-Level Job Skills

Durable skills are the most important abilities to bring to any job. Also referred to as "soft skills," these include:

- *Communication,*
- *Teamwork,*
- *Learning ability,*
- *Problem-solving,*
- *Conflict resolution, and*
- *Time management.*

Although entry-level positions do not require extensive education, as training is typically provided upon hire, some skills are desirable to employers (Cappel, 2002; Doe et al., 2025; Lynch, 1993). Durable skills, often referred to as soft or transferable skills, are the most important skills to bring to any job (Cappel, 2002). Durable skills include interpersonal communication, teamwork, learning ability, problem-solving, conflict resolution, and time management (Cappel, 2002; Deo et al., 2025). An influential study by Cappel (2002) explains that durable skills combined with personal qualities such as "motivation, initiative, professional ethics, attention to detail, persistence, patience, leadership, and maturity" make an individual an excellent candidate for an entry-level job. GenAI is a helpful tool for comparing a job description to one's own skills. A job seeker can use GenAI to compare their current skills with those required for a specific job. This can help them see which strengths they already have, which skills they need to improve or develop, and which jobs may be a good fit for them (Abhishek et al., 2025).

The Résumé

Résumés are a summary of an individual's skills, education, and work experience (Raut et al., 2022). The ability to align one's durable skills with a job description and requirements is necessary to improve the chances of being hired (Raut et al., 2022). Recruiters or hiring managers are more likely to notice a well-structured résumé that showcases these skills (Raut et al., 2022). Numerous free online resources can assist job seekers in drafting well-structured résumés, and GenAI tools can help them organize, review, and edit these documents for the position they seek (Moran & Ackerman, 2024).



The Interview

The most important part of securing a job is the interview process (Adiani et al., 2022). Interviews are the final step of the hiring process and are structured around questions for candidates to answer; however, not all interviews are structured the same way. Some interviewers may focus on the job's responsibilities, while others use impromptu, open-ended questions to determine whether a candidate is a culture fit (Huffcutt & Arthur, 1994). During the interview, it's essential to maintain eye contact, as limited eye contact may be perceived as a lack of social skills or interest in the job. We recommend candidates practice delivering brief, relevant responses to interview questions. These responses suggest a knowledgeable candidate with an effective thought process to an interviewer (Adiani et al., 2022). Chatting with gen AI tools to practice interview questions and responses can help candidates become interview-ready (Abhishek et al., 2025; Moran & Ackerman, 2024).

Summary

The literature has established that entry-level jobs are positions that help people enter the workforce (Topel & Ward, 1992; Freeman & Wise, 1982). These jobs can be obtained by applying online or through personal connections (van Hooft et al., 2021). When seeking an entry-level job, durable skills such as communication,

problem-solving, and learning ability are attractive to employers (Cappel, 2002). Relating these durable skills in a résumé tailored to a specific job description will increase one's chances of being noticed and contacted for an interview (Raut et al., 2022). Before the interview process, it is important to practice interview questions and prepare brief responses to demonstrate knowledge and confidence as a candidate capable of performing in the position. During the interview, maintaining eye contact is essential (Adiani et al., 2022).

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