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HOW TO GET A JOB IN THE USA

*A Step-by-Step Guide for Immigrants, Foreign Nationals
and Anyone Entering or Re-entering the US Job Market
(Emphasizing American Business Communication Basics)*

By Nara Venditti Ph.D.

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Prologue

On the Way to Success in America

Olga Petrovskaya did not understand why it took so long for her to get a job in America. She had graduated from the top technical school in Ukraine, Kharkiv Polytechnic, with honors. She had been the most valuable IT manager in a very successful Ukrainian jewelry manufacturing plant for the past two years. When her family moved to the US, she was not worried at all about the transition. Her English, she thought, was fairly good and her profession was in great demand in America.

But things did not go as smoothly as she had anticipated. Potential employers were impressed with her credentials as well as her resume, which she had created with the help of an American friend. However, although she went to many interviews, she did not receive any job offers.

She could not understand why. In her mind she replayed again and again her most recent interview. Yes, she wore her best dress, the one with a little lace collar and buttons down the back; it went perfectly well with her new red patent leather shoes with silver buckles. She recalled that the recruiter, a man, seemed somewhat strange to her: he extended his hand for a handshake first. How rude, thought Olga. Shouldn't he wait until she, a woman, extended hers first? Then he had smiled at her throughout the interview. Did that mean he fancied her? She tried to avoid his eyes and maintain a very somber expression so that he did not get any ideas. Instead of asking for documents such as her diploma, which she had translated and notarized he asked strange questions like, "Tell me about a time when you had to think out of the box." Do they put you into a box so that you can think better? Olga wondered. She did not understand some of the questions, but was too shy to ask him what he meant. During the interview she became so stressed that she had to light a cigarette to relax. But these incidents seemed minor to her. After all, he kept smiling, didn't he? At one point, however, she acknowledged, he had stopped his smiling and friendly manners. Was it when she asked about the salary and vacation days?

Can you guess why Olga did not get the job offer? What went wrong? The fact is, despite her best efforts, she did almost **everything** wrong. And probably somebody else with similar credentials — but who was knowledgeable about American interviewing culture and how to handle the interview process — got the job.

What do you think of Olga's interview experience? I invite you to identify the behaviors that kept Olga from being offered a job for which she was well qualified.

Olga's Mistakes

Listed below are reasons Olga's interview performance was diminished. In the right hand column, write what you think Olga should have done or said.

What Olga Did Wrong Or Did Not Know

Was dressed inappropriately

Did not maintain eye contact

Misinterpreted her interviewer's smile

Did not understand a phrase

What Olga Should Have Done Or Said

Lit a cigarette

After you have read this book and completed the worksheets provided, re-read the examples above, and review your list. See how your perception of Olga's behavior has changed, and how much you've learned! This book will give you the information and insight you need to find a job in the United States of America.

Introduction

Why This Book Was Written and For Whom

This book is about the American job search culture. It is a guide that will help turn you into a successful job seeker.

Every year millions of people come to the United States. They come for many reasons: to study, to build a new life, to join another family member on a corporate assignment, or to escape an oppressive regime. No matter what your reason for coming, getting a job is a critical step in building your version of the "American Dream". Whether you are from Denmark or Namibia, Sweden or Armenia, China or Hungary, Lebanon or India, Brazil, Russia, Mexico or any other country in the world, once you have arrived, you must understand and conform to the American way of job hunting in order to be successful.

When I arrived in America fifteen years ago, I had no idea how to look for a job. In my country (maybe in yours, too) you find work through the people you know, and those who owe favors to your family. I found that knowing the right people is also important in the US; however job hunting here works very differently — it is about **marketing yourself**. I learned this the hard way — by making mistakes and having to overcome and correct my misconceptions. That's why I decided to write this book: to help you avoid the mistakes I made and in the process save you months, maybe years of your valuable job search time.

As you read this book, you will see that looking for a job in the United States is a process. Once you know the process, it is easier to manage it, and you can be very successful in finding employment.

Although this book is directed primarily towards foreign nationals visiting the US, immigrants, and naturalized citizens (people with acquired American citizenship), anyone looking for a job (foreign or American born) will benefit from topics in the book such as crafting a resume, interview skills, and networking.

In addition to helping you with the basics of job hunting, the book offers tips on appropriate verbal and non-verbal behaviors that you can apply immediately — not only in your job search but in communicating in other areas of life in America. Again, the most important thing to remember throughout this process is that you are marketing *yourself*. I have written the book with one goal in mind – to help my readers develop the confidence, knowledge and tools to compete successfully in the American job market.

Job Hunting in America: Knowing the Rules

Do not be deceived by American informality — strict rules apply to the job search process. I designed this book to help you recognize and understand these rules, so that you can successfully market yourself and your professional skills. As I point out in the book, these rules can vary

within business and academia, big corporations and small companies, and within different industries.

This book takes you through the basics of finding a job in the US. To succeed, i.e., to get those all-important job offers, you need the right tools. We will start with finding job openings and finish with how to negotiate a job offer.

How the book is organized

The book has eight chapters, followed by glossaries containing key words and phrases to help you understand general business and job search related terminology. A powerful vocabulary is one key to a successful job search. All chapters include a list of useful Websites and resources. Some chapters also have exercises to reinforce the knowledge and skills discussed. I recommend that you complete each exercise right after you read the chapter, to reinforce what you have just read.

Throughout the book you will find lists of useful resources and recommended literature for further study. Additional resources are listed on www.SucceedinAmerica.com website. A trip to your local library or bookstore will help you find more resources.

Icons used in this Book

Throughout “How to Get a Job in the USA,” you will see several small symbols highlighting information that is useful, interesting or especially important to remember in your job search. So look for these icons throughout the book:



**TIP FOR
SUCCESS!**

TIP FOR SUCCESS: *Specific information to help you succeed in your search.*



NOTE!

NOTE: *Behaviors or situations to be particularly aware of.*



STATISTIC

STATISTICS: *Figures relating to the job market and related issues in the United States.*



COMPARE

COMPARISON: *Information comparing or contrasting the job market in the United States with that of other cultures.*



CAUTION!

CAUTION! *Not in America! A reminder of a behavior or practice that is either considered unacceptable in America or is not part of the American culture.*

NOTE: These symbols are typical of those used in American culture. We understand that some images may be interpreted differently in other cultures, but these particular symbols were chosen because they are representative of the American way. In addition, the spelling, grammar and usage in this book reflect the American version of the English language.

After you read this book, I encourage you to supplement your learning by seeking more in-depth information by exploring the resources listed at the end of each section.

Postscript

Following her initial disappointments, Olga Petrovskaya received coaching from me on how to behave during the interview — what to wear, when and what questions to ask. In time, Olga got the job she deserved. She achieved her goal. Now it is your turn!

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