

PIVOTAL

Integrated HR Solutions



OUTPLACEMENT GUIDE

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Introduction

What is Outplacement?

Outplacement is the process of assisting you with your job search. We are here to provide you with personal support and professional guidance as you look for new employment.

Our Outplacement Program has several key objectives:

- Help you stay focused and positive
- Help you create or update your resume
- Help prepare you for interviews



Who is Pivotal?

Pivotal Integrated HR Solutions (www.pivotalolutions.com) has been in business for over 20 years. Our dedicated team of HR and Recruiting professionals have drawn on our collective experiences from dealing with thousands of job seekers over the years, as well as extensive research of best practice trends in order to assist you with your job searching efforts.

The Resume – Your First Impression

Your resume provides a very important first impression and you should make sure that it contains the correct information and looks professional. Your resume should indicate your skills, training, and achievements.

Common Mistakes

- The resume contains too much information. Your resume should contain just enough information to be clear. Any detail can be provided when you are in an interview.
- The resume contains too little information. Many of us take for granted what we do, and do not list important duties. You are leaving out key information that could help you. If possible, ask your company for a job description to help you determine what to include.
- Including personal information. Do not include pictures, or state if you are married, have children, religious views, etc. Most resumes do not include a 'hobbies' or 'interests' section anymore.



The Format

Your resume should list your job experiences starting with the most recent and working back approximately 20 years.

Your resume should be divided into specific sections so that it is organized and easy to read. Not all resumes will have the same sections, but in general, here is a brief look at the sections of a typical resume:

Heading:	Name. Address. Telephone. E-mail. Keep it professional and simple. Ensure voice mails and e-mails are set up in a professional manner.
Objective (optional):	A statement that briefly outlines the type of position you are looking for. Example: To obtain full time (day shift) general labour work in which I can apply my 20+ years of factory work experience in a team environment.
Skills Summary (optional):	List selected skills, knowledge, and/or qualifications. Use information from the job ad where possible.
Experience:	A summary of the jobs you have held, the general duties you performed and accomplishments you achieved.
Education:	Only provide the name of the school if it is college or above. If you have not completed high school, do not include this section. Do not forget to indicate any training you have taken in the workplace such as WHMIS or First Aid.
Other	You may also want to include information such as any computer skills or language skills if you have not already included them on the resume. The title of this section will depend on the information you include.

Resume Example

Joe Smith
1234 Pivotal Lane

(905) 890-8558

jsmith@pivotalolutions.com

Career Objective:

To obtain full time factory position (day shift) in which I can apply my 20+ years of factory work experience in a team environment.

Key Skills and Abilities

- ✓ Work Ethic
- ✓ Health & Safety
- ✓ Factory Experience
- ✓ Teamwork
- ✓ Reliability
- ✓ Leadership

Highlighted Work History

1988-present

**TEAM LEADER (PROMOTED FROM ASSEMBLY LINE)
Company ABC, Mississauga**

- Reporting into the Production Supervisor, provide leadership to the line team on assigned shifts by ensuring organization of work and efficient production of widgets
- Machine set up and operation
- Implement quality control initiatives through following processes, record-keeping, and inspections
- Ensure that all work is performed to organizational performance standards (often first response to performance issues)
- Ensure all work is performed within the Occupational Health and Safety Act
- Provide instruction and guidance to assembly team as requested/required
- Participate in inventory

1987-1988

ASSEMBLY LINE

- Line production of widgets (team environment)
- Placed widgets into machine for assembly
- Removed defective product as required
- Visually inspected product to quality control standards
- Kept work area clean and organized
- Packed finished product for shipping
- Followed production standards and Occupational Health and Safety standards

Completed Training

- WHMIS
- Health & Safety
- HAC

REFERENCES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

Writing Your Resume

1. Eliminate the pronoun “I” (it ‘sounds’ better and is easier to brag about yourself when you are not referring to yourself in the first person). For example, do not say “I set up the machine” or “I was a member of the Health and Safety Committee”. The entire resume is about you, and so the “I” is assumed and implied.
2. Use familiar terms. Use language that fits the type of job that interests you.
3. Limit your resume to 1-2 pages. Use bullet points, phrases, and short statements.
4. Check spelling and grammar. Review your resume and then have someone check it over for you.
5. Be *neat*. Choose an easy to read, professional font such as Times New Roman or Arial.

If possible, use 12 point font and never go below 10 point.

This is 12 point type

This is 11 point type

This is 10 point type

This is 8 point type

Reviewing Your Resume

Appearance & Style

Does it *look* good? Is it neat? Is the content nicely balanced on the page? Have you checked for grammar and spelling? Is it 2 pages or less? Make sure you have used short, concise sentences. List your responsibilities using action words and avoid using “I”. It should be easy to read and understand.

Content

Does your resume show off your experience, skills and strengths? Make sure you have been as positive as possible while remaining honest. Consult a job description or a co-worker for assistance in developing the content of your resume.

Cover Letters

A cover letter is a short introduction to yourself that you can submit with your resume (your cover letter should always be on a separate page). An example of a simple, professional cover letter is as follows:

Sample Wording:

Dear Hiring Manager,

I am submitting my resume in response to your job advertisement for a Forklift Driver posted in the Mississauga News on March 14, 2008.

In addition to my valid forklift license, I have been serving on the Joint Health and Safety Committee for 2 years and am certified by the WSIB.

I would very much like to have an interview to discuss my skills further.

Thank you.

Follow Up

Whether or not to follow up after you have submitted your resume is a judgement call. Follow up can demonstrate commitment and enthusiasm but when taken too far, can also be considered a nuisance. As a general guideline, you should follow up *once* by e-mail or phone (not both) if you have not heard back after one week. If you do not hear back after you have followed up once, do not continue to follow up.

When you are following up, always remind the Hiring Manager or HR Recruiter of your first and last name and the specific position to which you have applied for. Keep in mind that these individuals may be receiving hundreds of resumes and dozens of calls. It is always good to ask something very specific such as:

“My name is Joe Smith. I wanted to confirm that you received my resume and ask you about the status of my application.”

This is much more specific and professional than something that is not a question but rather a statement, such as:

“Hi, I sent my resume in last week.”

Some organizations will indicate ‘*No phone calls please*’ in the job posting. Always respect this request and do not phone or e-mail (even if the wording does not specifically address e-mail follow up, it is implied that follow up is not desired). If you insist on following up, you risk leaving the impression that you are pushy, cannot follow direction and may stand out in all the wrong ways.

Job Search Strategies

What is a Job Search Strategy?

It is a common mistake to think that a job search strategy means applying for as many jobs as possible. While responding to job ads will likely be a major activity, it will only be part of your overall job search *strategy*.

A job search strategy starts with a clear understanding of *you*. You would be surprised at the number of people who are looking for work who do not know how to answer the question “what is it you are looking for”. In fairness, it is not as easy a question as it may seem.

It is critical that you narrow down which jobs you will pursue, to ensure that you make the best use of your time. In order to do that you will need to decide what is *really* important to you. For example, how much money do you need to earn? How far will you commute and do you need to be on the bus route? What type of work (and work environment!) do you want? What are you qualified to do? All of these questions will lead you to apply to the right jobs, and not simply ‘any and all’ jobs.

It is important to remember that there are no right or wrong answers to these questions. But there is a lot to consider and the questions call for you to give your job search strategy some serious thought. The effort and time will be well worth it because it will result in a clear understanding of both what you want to do, and what you can do.

From there, you can develop a strategy that may include:

- Responding to job advertisements (i.e., open positions)
- Contacting the right individuals within your networks for assistance
- Researching ways in which to upgrade your skills in desired ways

General Job Search Strategy - Example

CAREER GOALS / JOB PREFERENCES / GENERAL STRATEGY:

Will canvas all manufacturing companies on the bus route.

FOCUS	GENERAL ACTION PLANNED	SEQUENCE	START DATE
Targeting & Research	Go to library and access the local business directory. Get names and locations of employment agencies servicing my area.		January 6
Networking	Inform extended family that I am looking for a job. Provide copies of my resume.	Call 10 most comfortable contacts first.	January 7
Search Firms & Agencies	Contact employment agencies	Contact 2 agencies.	January 23
Answering Ads	Review ads in the Toronto Star, Mississauga News & HRDC database. Respond only to jobs that fit my background	2 hours/day	January 6

How to Job Search

Job Advertisements

This is the most obvious place to look for jobs – anywhere that an employer would advertise an opening. Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC) has an electronic job board and space for employees to use their computers at their location. Include local newspapers that are targeted to your geographic location. Community centres and local colleges can also provide job searching assistance, including job boards where employers post openings.

Networking

It is believed that approximately 80% of the job openings available at any one time are *never advertised*. Therefore, if you spend 90% of your time responding to job ads, then you are spending 90% of your time on only 20% of the opportunities.

The other 80% (or so) of jobs exist in *hidden job markets*. To gain access to hidden job markets, your best strategy is *networking*. Simply stated, networks are about people communicating with other people, sharing ideas, information and resources.

Successful networking requires *building* relationships with people, *maintaining* those relationships over time (even when you are not job searching) and then *drawing* on these established relationships for information, advice, and job leads. Your next-door neighbour may have a job opening at his company that you could learn about before the job is ever advertised.

Networking involves personally contacting family, friends, neighbors, previous co-workers or anyone else who can give you information about possible jobs. Remember you are not asking them for a job. You are making them aware that you are available and to keep you in mind if they hear of anything.

Employment Agencies

It is important to realize that some agencies are better than others, and you should do your research and make sure that any agency you join is running their business in a way that you feel comfortable and that benefits *you*. For example, ask about the types of jobs they fill, the current opportunities available and how much they know about the companies that hire them.

When meeting with an agency you should always make and maintain a very good impression. If the agency is not confident in your abilities to present yourself, they will not forward your resume to potential opportunities.

Temporary Work

There are many employment agencies that offer temporary work because there are a number of employers who require temporary staff. For example, if someone is off on sick leave, a company could be looking for an individual to work the forklift for 6 weeks until the employee returns. Or, a packaging company may require line workers during the Christmas rush due to increased volumes but will not require the staff when the volume decreases. When you get temporary work through an agency, you are an employee of the *agency* and not the company you are assigned to. A typical arrangement involves you tracking your hours, submitting them to the agency, and then the agency pays you directly. The hiring company pays the agency a certain wage, and from that, the agency will pay you.

For example, the agency may receive \$16.00/hour from the company, and pay you \$12.00/hour and keep \$4.00 as a charge for their services. Some individuals shy away from temporary work because they feel cheated by the agency (who they perceive to be 'keeping money from them') or because the arrangement appears too insecure for those seeking full time work. But don't reject temporary work until you have considered it, as it can be an ideal solution for some.

Keep in mind that 'agency employees' are typically paid more than non-agency employees because of the mark-up added by the agency. It is not that the agency is keeping any money

from you – it is that the rates are different. So, using our example, it is not likely that you would be earning \$16.00 if you were *not* an agency employee.

Temporary work can be defined quite broadly, and should not be assumed to be 1-2 day assignments (although some are). Some 'temporary' work can go on for months. There is also a 'temp to perm' arrangement by which sometimes the employer will want to hire a temporary staff member from an agency full time.

The point is not to convince you that temporary work is for you, but to encourage you to keep an open mind, consider all your options and only then make an informed decision about whether to pursue temporary work.

Searching on-line

The Internet has forever changed the job application process. You can now access *hundreds* of opportunities and apply quickly (literally, with the click of a button).

When job searching on-line, it is important to focus on those opportunities that are a *fit* for you. Some individuals go to extremes and apply for everything and anything on-line (it's called 'resume blasting'). Because it is so much easier and faster to apply for jobs, it can give you a false sense of confidence to simply apply for more jobs. This is a chaotic, unorganized approach and it is hard to keep track of what you are doing. Just because you could do a job does not mean you will do a job. Do not apply for anything that you would not interview for if given the opportunity.

Where to go online

1. Job Databank Sites

A very well-known job databank site is the Government of Canada Job Bank <http://www.jobbank.gc.ca/> which has a large database that allows you to search opportunities by criteria such as location and job title. So a Production Worker in Brampton can first look to see what opportunities are available close to home.

If you do not have internet access at home, your local HRSDC office will likely have computers available at no charge for use during business hours. In addition, you can also go to your nearest public library as they will have computers for public use at no charge.



2. Company websites

You may come to realize that there is a specific company, or set of companies, that you would most like to work for (and be suited for). Many companies, especially larger ones, invite you to apply online for current or future opportunities, advertise for Job Fairs and/or provide information about working at the company.

Interviews

An interview provides you with an opportunity to show that *you* are the best person for the job. You need to believe in yourself and everything you have to offer.

The interviewer will be looking and listening for things that convince them that you are a good fit with the opportunity. To make the best impression you need to be consistently 'selling' your strengths. Beyond your experience, pay attention to your body language – things like your posture, eye contact and a firm handshake will all contribute to the impression you leave behind.

Gather job data

Obtain all the information you can on the position you are applying to and the hiring company. This includes information contained in the job ad, information on the company website, information about the company available on the internet, and consulting with your networks. Find out everything you can about the company's products, services, history, and culture. Take the time to think about how you can apply your skills and experience to the company.

Match your experience & skills to the opportunity

You need to go back to your resume and prepare yourself to comfortably discuss your, skills, experience and anything else provided, in detail. Many candidates skip this step, thinking that since the resume was prepared by them and is about them, then talking about it will be easy. This is, in fact, not likely to be the case.

Most of us are not used to talking about what we have accomplished. When you are asked to expand on anything on your resume, you should be comfortable doing so. Do not just repeat what is on the resume – you will miss a valuable opportunity to provide more information about yourself. You also need to answer the questions in a way that speaks to the *specific* opportunity. By doing your research you will be able to provide responses that better relate to the job and allow you to stand out.

For example, if the company website lists "teamwork" as a core value, you can be prepared to incorporate your team approach, team experience, etc. into your responses. Do not exaggerate or lie. But you can certainly be sure to emphasize certain points and can only do that effectively if you have done the pre-work before the interview to prepare.

Practice Out Loud

It may seem silly, but you may be surprised to realize that your comfort level when you are just thinking in your head is far greater than your comfort level when you have to communicate about yourself out loud. In general, most people are *not* comfortable talking about themselves especially to individuals they do not know very well. Putting your thoughts into words, and actually making yourself say those words out loud, will help you feel more comfortable.

The more comfortable you are, the more likely you are to come across as calm, confident and professional. Practice also allows you to ensure your tone and word choices are appropriate. Effective communication establishes rapport between you and the interviewer, which results in a more successful interview.

A Note about Telephone Interviews

Interviewers can conduct any type of interview over the phone, but typically they would use the phone for screening interviews, to further narrow down their list and help them decide who to invite for an in-person interview.

The interviewer will want to obtain a general understanding of your background, what you are looking for etc. The information that interviewers provide during a telephone interview really do vary by interviewer. Only some will provide information about the job, the company, etc. while others are primarily focused on *asking* questions.

During a phone interview, you still have to make a good impression. Make sure you can take the call away from household noises like the television, pets or children. Most interviewers are fine with setting up a time and do not expect that you take the call the moment it comes in.

Set up a time where you can have the privacy you need. Keep your resume in front of you, and pen and paper handy. Watch your tone, and speak professionally at all times – you are being evaluated on your verbal communication skills as well as anything else. Do not interrupt. Do not take other calls. Do not chew gum or eat.

Smile. Smiling is something that the listener can 'hear' and will help you project a positive image. And never forget to say thank you, and state your interest in being invited for an in-person meeting.

Dress Code

It is important that you make a first impression that is very professional. Before you have done much more than shake the interviewer's hand, s/he is taking in how you have chosen to present yourself. Make sure you dress professionally (do not wear jeans to the interview, even if it is in a factory environment). Your clothes should be neatly pressed, free from rips and/or stains and give the impression that you take yourself, the opportunity and the interview seriously.

Beyond what you wear, you should be a model of good hygiene. This includes being well groomed (e.g., clean fingernails, no body odour), no heavy perfumes or cologne, etc.

'Typical' Interview Questions

It is impossible to 'predict' what questions you will be asked, but there are some questions that, in some form or another, are likely to come up. Think about how you would address these questions, and realize that you may be asked this type of information in any number of different ways.

Tell me about yourself?

This question is frequently the first question an interviewer asks simply because many interviewers consider it to be a good icebreaker. A good way to handle the response is begin your answer with what is currently going on in your career and then work your way backward. This question seeks to gather information about your *professional* (i.e., not personal) life.

Why did you leave your last job?

This question may seem more frightening than it actually is, so don't overreact or get defensive. It is important to be prepared to discuss why and how you exited from your last position(s). Being terminated by your last employer, if that is your situation, will not disqualify you from consideration, but you need to be able to answer the question in a mature and professional manner.

What are your strengths?

Everyone has a lot of strengths, so you should make choices about the ones you want to make sure to communicate. Have 2-3 key strengths in mind that you are prepared to discuss in detail and focus on those that you feel would be useful in the job for which you are interviewing.

What are your weaknesses?

Be prepared to talk about areas in which you could develop. Everyone has areas in which they can improve. It is important that you do not indicate that you are without something but rather that you could benefit from more of a competency to improve your work. For example, instead of stating "I have no patience" (this is likely very untrue, everyone has some patience) it is better to say that you work on improving your patience so that you can approach situations in a better frame of mind.

Tell me about your previous managers.

You may be asked to describe your best and worst manager. The best tactic here is to give as thoughtful and diplomatic an answer as possible, focusing mainly on their managerial styles. Never describe a previous manager as "bad". This situation is best described as "challenging", and you should explain how you overcame any difficult situations.

Your Turn to Ask Questions

Once you have answered the interviewer's questions, you will normally be given the opportunity to ask questions as well. It is good to ask one or two questions that (a) you really want to know the answer to (remember, you are there to gather information too) and (b) demonstrate your interest in the position. Having no questions sends the message that you lack interest in the job.

QUESTIONS YOU MIGHT ASK A PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYER

- ✓ How many employees work in the organization?
- ✓ How many employees work in the department? In the Plant?
- ✓ Is this a new position?
- ✓ What do you consider ideal experience for this job?
- ✓ What type of employee is successful in this role?

REMEMBER:

✓ do your research	✓ be positive
✓ be on time	✓ stay on topic
✓ be honest	✓ speak clearly
✓ dress appropriately	✓ listen attentively
✓ maintain eye contact	✓ answer questions fully

Follow Up

Always say thank you when you leave, and send a note, fax or phone call (it is certainly appropriate to ask the interviewer their preferred method of communication).

If you are interested in the role, communicate your appreciation for the time and interest and remind the interviewer(s) about any important strength(s) that your application offers.



Even if you know the job is not for you, never fail to communicate your appreciation for the interest and time taken. Certainly never decline a position (remember, no position has been offered at this stage!) in your follow up.

You should only follow up once, unless you have been told that more frequent follow up is appropriate.

While you are waiting to hear back from any one opportunity, keep job searching. It is perfectly appropriate and very common, to be interviewing for several opportunities simultaneously, while you are still applying to others. Staying organized will be critical in managing your search process.

Managing your References

In general, you want to keep in regular contact with your references (whether you are job searching or not) as this will keep them continually invested in the relationship with you, and more likely to assist you in a timely way. If the person has not heard from you since you last worked for them 5 years ago, you are not likely to be a priority to them.

While keeping in contact with your references throughout your career is ideal, certainly alert them to your job search when you are interviewing. This also enables you to ensure that the contact information you have is most current and that you have their continued permission to be contacted. Do not count on the interviewer letting you know if they had problems contacting your reference(s). They may let you know or they may simply move forward with another candidate.

If you are having trouble determining who your references should be, you need to sort that out before you go on an interview. You should arrive at every interview with at least two, professional (i.e., individuals you have worked for or with) references that are aware that you are job searching. Your best references are prior Supervisors or Managers.

Most companies conduct reference checks on multiple candidates. You don't want to fall behind, or even fall out of the process, because your references could not be reached.

Keep in mind that being asked for your references lets you know that you are being seriously considered and moving forward in the interview process. Be sure to acknowledge this achievement as a positive result in your job searching.



New Job Transition

While working, you should always be building your resume by improving your skills and learning new things. It is advantageous for you to join committees and *participate* in the workplace. This increases your internal value within the company, and also increases your external value should you find yourself job searching in the future.

The most successful, committed workers are always asking:

- ✓ How can I improve on my attitude & performance levels?
- ✓ What can I do to be more successful?
- ✓ How can I be more marketable to my employer?
- ✓ What are my career objectives in the next 5 years?

What if you don't get the job?

Certainly this can be discouraging, especially if the information obtained through the interview process has further excited you about the opportunity. And the further you go in the interview process, the harder it can be if you are not selected. It is very difficult not to take their decision personally and feel rejected.

The reality is that you are still the same capable person you have always been. While it is understandable that you would feel disappointed, frustrated and even angry, it is important that you not let these feelings control your attitude.

Your Ongoing Commitment to Yourself

- ✓ Develop your skills and knowledge and continue to grow and develop.
- ✓ Seek out accomplishments and keep track of them.
- ✓ Ask for feedback from your managers and peers so that you can continuously improve.
- ✓ Keep up the contacts in your networks.

For most, leaving your job has made you feel uncertain about the future. Many feel powerless, and as a result may develop unhealthy attitudes about themselves. It is not difficult to understand this; beyond providing needed income, having a job contributes to our confidence and esteem.

While disappointment and frustration are common and understandable, over time continued unemployment can lead to serious illness such as depression. It is important that you maintain a heightened self-awareness while you are between jobs, monitoring your physical and mental well being and following up with your doctor if you have any concerns. Also listen to feedback from others that are close to you, as often they can see changes in us that are hard for us to notice ourselves.

Negative attitudes, in general, can certainly hinder your ability to job search, and can begin an endless cycle of defeat and negativity. It is critical that you make every effort to stay positive during this transition



**Life is full of factors beyond our control.
It is also full of opportunities.**