



# Van|Grace Associates LLC

*Placement Specialists since 1962*

## Recommendations regarding your job search

### Starting your job search

Think through the reason(s) you want to leave your position or reason(s) you are out of work  
Make sure you have attempted to resolve any reason(s) for wanting to leave  
Make sure you understand why you are out of work  
Discuss your reasons for dissatisfaction with someone you trust to make sure they are valid  
Make sure you fully understand what you may give up in terms of seniority, flexibility or benefits  
If unemployed, be prepared to describe **briefly** why you are out of work.  
Do not use a company or school email for employment related correspondence. This is public information and IT Departments have the right to read or review.  
Pick a professional email address for employment issues ex: [steve.smith@gmail.com](mailto:steve.smith@gmail.com)  
Don't share an email address with a friend or family member  
Set up an auto signature with full contact information for your email program  
Make sure you have a professional voice message at home and on your cell phone.  
Verify your educational credentials on line or with the schools Registrar.  
Google your name and do a credit check so you are aware of what is public information  
Go on any public web sites (Facebook etc.) and make sure you are professionally presentable.  
Set up a profile on Linked In and connect with professionals in your field.

### Think through your strengths and weaknesses

This is an area that will always be discussed so be prepared  
Write them out, review, and get opinions from others you trust  
Think about how to present these in a short professional manner

### Compensation and benefits: Know what you have before you start

You need to know your salary and what other components you have from your employer.  
You need to know your W-2 for the previous year and what was reflected in the figure. Salary, bonus potential and amount of vacation are typically the only areas open for negotiation. Bonus is paid for superior personal or company performance or both. They are usually paid after the fiscal year has closed, although some companies pay bonuses quarterly. Qualifying for a bonus is spelled out in terms of what is required and is normally a % of the individual's yearly salary.  
Profit sharing programs are a form of revenue sharing normally based on company profitability.  
Stock Options are available with some companies. There is a formula by which the individual has the right to buy stock in the company at an agreed price that is usually discounted or sometimes granted at no cost. There are differences between publicly held and privately held corporations. Benefits are provided by an employer such as medical, dental and life insurance, short and long term disability, vacation, tuition reimbursement, and reimbursement for money spent doing company business. Vehicle and related expenses may be included for positions that require travel.

## Non-Competes and Non-Disclosures: Know what you are signing

Most companies have a non-disclosure statement that is signed prior to starting work.

Some companies have a non-compete statement that will include specific language that protects them and keeps you from joining certain companies when you leave.

Make sure you know what you have already signed with your existing company and make sure to review the new company's documents before signing.

Always request a copy of anything you sign.

## Reviews by your Superiors

Many companies have formal review programs including documentation.

Always ask for a copy of the review and or any "informal notes" your superior uses in a review.

If you are asked to sign the review, make sure you are in agreement with everything that is written. If you disagree with any items, discuss them with your supervisor and ask that they be rewritten if your superior agrees to changes. Ask that the changes be hand written on the document until such time as they can be retyped for signature. Keep a copy of the "working document" until finalized.

If you receive a negative review and the supervisor will not change their opinion, initial all items you disagree with and add a note to the review that you disagree with the initialized sections and wish to discuss the items with the next level of management. Companies do not have to honor such requests.

## Resume

Word documents are the universally accepted format. PDF versions sometimes have problems with portals. It should be skimmable, readable, scannable and written without personal pronouns.

Keep it at two pages, one page if you have less than 10 years' experience and include all employers

Summary of accomplishments or key responsibilities using key phrases and current buzz words

Emphasize your most recent four to seven years of experience.

Give brief job descriptions, functional responsibilities and key accomplishments.

Publications and Presentations should be a separate document.

References should be a separate document and never included on your resume

## Cover Letters

Send one with every resume sent out separate from your resume

Email letters can be in the body of an email or a separate word document attachment

Brief letter that outline connections between the company and the job that is not on your resume.

Always use a positive close by letting them know when you will follow up.

## Phone Presentation

Write out a script as a reminder of what you want to cover in the call.

Have your resume, any related information, job description, company information printed.

Have paper and pen available to take notes and write down anything important.

Have a glass of water available just in case you get hoarse.

Make sure you answer their questions asked first before you ask your questions

Be concise; try not to go off on a tangent or veer from the question you were asked.

Don't get into long conversations on family details, work gossip, etc. Keep it professional.

Ask for a face-to-face meeting in the close.

If they won't commit to a face-to-face meeting, ask for a reasonable time to follow up.

## Interview Preparation

Remember an interview is a conversation between two people where the subject is you. Spend time thinking about what you do and how you do it.

Be prepared to give a brief summary of the different positions or situations you have been in.

Try to weave into each segment an achievement that could be personal or as a team member.

Think about problem areas and be prepared to deal with them objectively and directly.

Ask for a schedule and the names and titles of those you will meet prior to the interview.

Review the company web site making sure you have a good idea of the size of the company, product mix, locations and the ownership. If they have won any awards or appeared in the news recently, work that into the conversation. Check all names you will meet on Linked In, it should give you their history.

## Personal Presentation

First impressions are critical and almost impossible to undo.

When time permits drive the route to the interview ahead of time.

Arrive 10-15 minutes prior to the interview.

Dress professionally and appropriately; business casual is for current employees not candidates.

Have a 2 minute summary of who you are and what you do, practiced and polished.

Turn off your cell phone and leave it in the car.

If lunch or dinner is part of the process let them order first. Do not have an alcoholic beverage unless the manager is having one and insists. We strongly suggest having one and only one.

Try not to schedule interviews on the same day in case the first group asks you to stay longer than they projected to meet other team members.

If traffic causes you a problem that will make you late, call the person who set up the interview and give them a reasonable projected arrival time.

## The Interview

Bring extra resumes in case your original was misplaced.

Listen to the questions you are asked, and answer them!

If you remember something pertinent don't be afraid to add it to the conversation.

Once you have answered their questions, work your questions into the mix.

Suggested questions to ask:

- o Tell me what a normal day is like for you at the company.
- o Tell me what you think the top three priorities are for this position.
- o Tell me how we would interact (daily informally, weekly formally scheduled meetings, only when needed by each other)
- o Do you like to be updated on projects by email, phone or in person?
- o Tell me how long you have worked here and why you like working here.

Do not ask salary and benefit questions unless they broach the subject, and then stay general

Try to avoid getting plugged into a specific salary. Tell them you are flexible based on responsibilities Beware of the question "what would you like to make for salary". Tell them what you made only and that you would like to be paid appropriately for the position.

When closing with each person you meet, ask for their business card as you exit.

Thank people for their time.

Try to keep the word "I" to a minimum. This is not easy when you are talking about yourself.

Ask for the job in closing (if you really want it).

## References

Provide references only when asked, if you are interested in the opportunity.

Have a sheet prepared with reference names, titles, personal cell phone numbers and email addresses if possible. Outline their relationship to you and within what company you both worked. You should have at least three references that include one or two managers you worked for and a peer in an appropriate department.

Check on line to see if your college provides educational verification through a web site. Check and make sure you can verify your degree(s).

Always alert your references to a call from a company where you have interviewed. Tell them who the company is the type of job and the name of the person who will call if possible.

Google your name and also look at any postings you have, such as Facebook You Tube etc. employers will do this in their normal due diligence.

## Follow Up

Send a note or email of thanks to the hiring manager and human resource manager.

Use a positive close, indicating that you will call within a specific time frame if you haven't heard back.

Make the follow up call after 5 or 6 business days.

## Offer and Negotiating

Try to do this in person so that you can "read" the body language of the person making the offer.

Let them know you are strongly interested in the job (if you are) regardless of the initial salary figure.

If you have any vacation or personal time already scheduled make sure you bring up these time frames during this part of the process so there are no surprises.

Unless the offer is everything you expected (or more) ask for time to think the offer through and ask to have the offer formalized in a letter that they can send to you.

Commit to get back within a reasonable time period after reviewing.

If the offer is everything you expected, feel free to accept but tell them you will formally accept and set a start date after you have reviewed their non-disclosure agreements, offer letter, benefit package and have fulfilled any other requirements they have.

If the offer is not acceptable tell them what you would accept and be prepared to justify the number.

Make sure you know what day to start, what time to get there and who to see when you arrive.

Remember to ask for the dress code.

## Counter Offer

There are a number of reasons why someone should not take a counter offer from their current employer, assuming due diligence was done before starting a job search. Counter offers take place for a variety of reasons but in most cases the individual who accepts a counter offer will leave because the reasons they were looking in the first place did not change or they will be terminated or let go when a replacement is found or business drops off. Google the word counter offer and you can find a variety of articles written that will give you all the reasons why they don't make sense from a career point-of-view.

Van/Grace Associates, LLC

P.O. Box 622

Shrewsbury, MA 01545

Office 508-842-2333 Cell 508-868-9666

[www.vanqrace.com](http://www.vanqrace.com)

<http://www.linkedin.com/in/stevemorrisrecruiter>

Twitter SteveMrecruiter

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