

# [***How Young Workers Can Land a Gig With the Best Companies for Job Starters***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BND-Y4D1-JBR6-9005-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Highlight:** One human resources officer told Newsweek she looks for applicants who have "a demonstrated ability to learn" and "a thirst for bettering themselves."

**Body**

Anyone looking for a job today knows that it isn't easy—the field is crowded, the applications are tedious and the interview process is long.

*Newsweek* recently published its 2024 ranking of [*America's Greatest Workplaces for Job Starters*](https://www.newsweek.com/rankings/americas-greatest-workplaces-job-starters-2024?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), which highlights large, medium and small companies across 78 industries that offer the best environments for people just starting their career or looking to make a major career change.

The goal of the ranking is to help professionals navigate the job field and find the company that will not only align with their values but help them grow.

Companies across many industries are eager to recruit fresh talent that can offer a slew of new skills and perspectives.

"As an organization, you want to bring someone in that you can help to develop and bring along and retain throughout," Lauren Winans, the CEO and principal human resources consultant for women-owned HR consulting firm Next Level Benefits, told *Newsweek*. "There's a desire to bring in new, fresh talent who are open to possibilities, open to being trained and molded and shaped in a way that's really going to fill the gaps in an organization."

[*When applying for jobs*](https://www.newsweek.com/job-hunting-look-part-online-study-1847599?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), applicants can use all the help they can get to set themselves apart in a competitive pool and show companies that they are the best candidate for a given position.

*Newsweek* spoke with human resources experts, companies featured on the ranking and their employees to gather the best advice for job starters when dealing with the doubt and uncertainty of submitting applications.

These are the top five pieces of advice that were shared to help job starters find the right job—whether they are new to the workforce or looking to make a mid-career shift.

**Don't Be Afraid to Apply to a Job**

The most tedious part of the job search is often filling out the application. But while there is a lot of laborious paperwork to handle, [*doubt and anxiety can often be the biggest hurdles*](https://www.newsweek.com/insights/trouble-finding-good-work-then-you-need-to-read-this-story?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) for many people. Some of the simplest and most important advice a job starter can hear is to just apply.

Bobbi Schroeppel, the vice president of customer care, communications and human resources at NorthWestern Energy, said her main advice for job starters is to "not be afraid to apply for jobs, even if [you] don't have 100 percent of the requirements."

NorthWestern Energy, an electric utility company that services areas in Montana, South Dakota and Nebraska, was rated five stars in the utilities category on *Newsweek*'s ranking of America's Greatest Workplaces for Job Starters.

About four years ago, Owen Antonich joined NorthWestern Energy after working in civil construction for most of his life and is currently a construction superintendent in Great Falls, Montana. He understands how competitive the job market is and how intimidating it can be to make a career change. But his advice: Get out of your comfort zone.

"As a young person, your confidence is challenged [when] applying for a big company," he said. "If you think you need to make a transition in your life, you shouldn't be afraid to make that change."

Antonich said he was "scared to death" to shift careers because he has a wife and kids to think about. A career jump can be "unnerving and unsettling," but he said it was all worth it.

"It's scary [and] I think that's a good thing," he said. "It can lead to positive experiences overall. I'm still very happy I made that leap ... because now it was all worthwhile."

**Highlight Your Experience**

When entering the workforce or transitioning to a new field, applicants might feel lost because they don't check every box on the job listing. But experts said that applicants are often more qualified than they think they are—they just have to show it.

Yolanda Owens is a career coach with decades of experience working with young job starters, such as college students or others who are just starting out and may not have a lot of work experience in their desired field.

Owens recommends that these applicants highlight something on the job listing that is adjacent to what they've done, like any leadership, communication, teamwork or time management skills they've acquired.

"Taking inventory from things like the coursework that they've done or any internships or any outside jobs or hobbies or interest or extracurricular activities that can demonstrate their transferable skills," she said. "You may not have done that thing exactly, but you may have done something similar to it."

For folks in the midst of a career transition, the same advice applies.

"A lot of them have the mindset that they have to start off in the mailroom in order to start their careers over again," Owens said. "But they have to remember that they've already built a portfolio of skills that are going to translate."

**Be a Self-Starter Who Is Willing to Learn**

Attitude is everything when starting a new job, and hiring managers want to know that potential employees are excited about the work and able to be adaptable.

Susan LaMonica is the chief human resources officer for Citizens Bank, a five-star company on *Newsweek*'s ranking. She said her company values candidates who demonstrate "intellectual curiosity" in a work environment where skills become obsolete at an incredibly rapid rate.

"We need people who have a demonstrated ability to learn, who are agile learners and have a real thirst for bettering themselves," she said. "We can't possibly hire for everything we need in the future. What we can hire—people who are voracious learners, people who want to improve themselves."

NorthWestern Energy's Bobbi Schroeppel said she wants to hire people who are self-learners. She said the ideal candidate wants to learn and network with their co-workers.

"They're going to be reliable and are going to be committed to their own personal growth development [and] operate with high integrity," she said.

**Do Your Research**

Job applications are a two-way street—applicants want to impress companies, but those companies must also impress the applicants. But how do job starters know that [*they are choosing the right companies*](https://www.newsweek.com/gen-z-jobseekers-ai-resume-creation-xyz-ai-inc-rapid-success-1867989?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships)

Human resources consultant Lauren Winans said that picking the perfect company "really comes down to doing your research."

"It's not about finding someone who's willing to take you, it's about finding the right fit both ways," she said. "As a candidate, you want to be doing your due diligence to understand the most you can about a company, and so you can start by checking out their website and seeing what their mission or vision or values are."

In addition to making sure their values align with a company, applicants should examine the quality of employee benefits being offered and whether the company will foster long-term professional growth. Winans encourages applicants to look up current employees to ask questions and demonstrate why they would be a great fit for the job.

"Find people, reach out and be proactive and explain to people what experience you can bring, what values you have, how you can be a great member of the team," she said. "Don't hesitate to go after what you want after you thoroughly research what it is that is important and how you can get there."

**Look for Mentorship Opportunities**

Part of what makes a company great for job starters is the prospect for personal and professional development.

Bobbi Schroeppel of NorthWestern Energy suggests applicants look for organizations "that will offer mentoring and the ability for them to learn on the job and grow," in addition to having quality benefits, like a robust 401(k) program.

At NorthWestern Energy, Owen Antonich said he had great mentors that "showed [him] the ropes" when he first started. He has now taken on the role of mentor himself for new hires. Antonich said that employees just starting out in a new job can feel like they are "floundering" with their workload and don't often receive clear direction from superiors.

"When you have somebody there to support you, it's almost like that additional confidence boost that you are making the right decision," he said.

For career consultant Yolanda Owens, mentorship is essential. She suggests job starters find multiple mentors to help guide them at different stages of their careers.

"I often tell young professionals that they need a mentor inside of the company who can kind of help them navigate some of the ***politics*** and the nuances," she said. "And then a mentor outside of the company where it is a safer space that they can really be vulnerable and have conversations without coming back to haunt them."

The job market is an intimidating place, but following these tips can help job starters of all ages and experience levels find the right position. Overall, applicants should highlight their unique skills and remember to stay true to themselves and their values.

"Be patient and don't settle on the roles you eventually get offered," Tyler Stills, a human resources analyst at NorthWestern Energy, said. "Know what you want out of a company and know what you're willing to go to bat for so you get what you want out of the process."

[*Link to Image*](https://d.newsweek.com/en/full/2368915/job-applicant.jpg)

**Graphic**

Job Applicant

Scott Olson/Getty Images

Keenyriah Jarrett, 15, fills out an application as she searches for her first job during a job fair at Navy Pier on April 11, 2023 in Chicago, Illinois. Newsweek recently published its ranking of America's best workplaces for job starters to help job seekers find the companies that will help them grow as they start their careers.

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