



# Business Skills



**CHAPTER 20**  
Seeking  
Employment

**CHAPTER 21**  
On the Job

**CHAPTER 22**  
The Salon Business

# 20

## Seeking Employment

### Chapter Outline

- Why Study How to Prepare for and Seek Employment?
- Preparing for Licensure
- Preparing for Employment
- Résumé and Cover Letter Development
- Employment Portfolio
- Preparing for a Job Interview
- Doing It Right

# Job Search

## Categories

## Job Title

☒ Full time



# Learning Objectives

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- ✓ **LO1** Explain the process of passing your state licensing examination and securing the required credentials for nail technology.
- ✓ **LO2** Network and prepare to find a position by using the Inventory of Personal Characteristics and Inventory of Technical Skills forms.
- ✓ **LO3** Describe the different types of salon business categories.
- ✓ **LO4** Write a cover letter, develop a résumé, and prepare an employment portfolio.
- ✓ **LO5** Discuss how to explore the job market, research potential employers and the legal aspects of employment, and complete an employment application.

## Key Terms

Page number indicates where in the chapter the term is used.

**cover letter** / 431

**deductive reasoning** / 424

**employment portfolio** / 436

**networking** / 438

**résumé** / 431

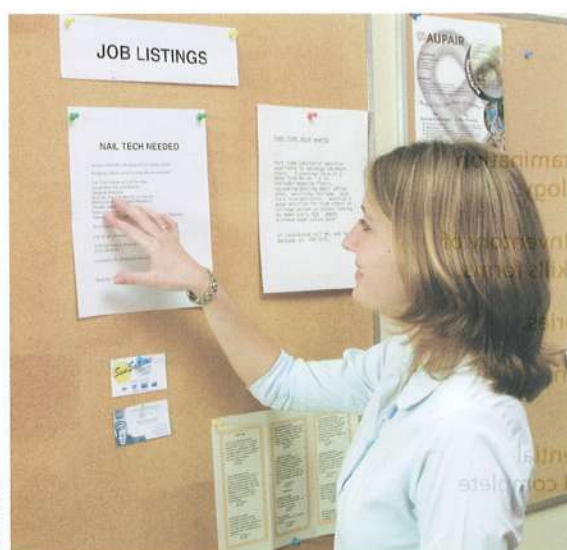
**test-wise** / 423

**transferable skills** / 436

**work ethic** / 429







**Figure 20-1** There are often more positions available for nail technology professionals than there are people to fill them.

There are plenty of great positions out there for energetic, hardworking, talented people. If you look at the top professionals in the field, you will find they were not born successful; they achieved success through self-motivation, energy, persistence, mentoring, and a supportive network of people. Like you, these practitioners began their careers by enrolling in nail technology school. They were the ones who used their time wisely, planned for the future, went the extra mile, and drew on a reservoir of self-confidence to meet any challenge. They owe their success to no one but themselves because they created it. If you want to enjoy this same success, you must prepare for the opportunities that await you.

No matter what changes occur in the economy, there often are more positions available for nail technology professionals than there are people to fill them. This is a tremendous advantage for you. Even so, you must still thoroughly research the job market in your geographical area before committing to your first offer of employment (**Figure 20-1**).

If you make the right choice, your career will put you on the road to success. If you make the wrong choice, it will not be a tragedy, but it may cause unnecessary delay.

## WHY STUDY HOW TO PREPARE FOR AND SEEK EMPLOYMENT?

Nail technicians should have a thorough understanding of how to prepare for and seek employment because:

- ▶ You must pass your state board exam to be licensed and must be licensed to be hired; therefore, preparing for licensure and passing your exam is your first step in the employment process.
- ▶ A successful employment search is a job unto itself. There are many tools that can give you the edge—but some mistakes can cost you an interview or a position.
- ▶ The ability to pinpoint the right salon or spa for you and target it as a potential employer is vital for your career success.
- ▶ Proactively preparing the right materials, such as a résumé, and practicing interviewing will give you the confidence you need to secure a position in a salon or spa you love.

## PREPARING FOR LICENSURE

Before you can obtain the position you are hoping for, you must first pass your state licensing examinations (usually a written and a practical exam) and secure the required credentials from your state's licensing board by filling out an application and paying a fee. For details on fees, testing dates, specific state licensure requirements, and more, visit the Web site of your state board of cosmetology or your state's Department of Licensing.



Many factors will affect how well you perform during the licensing examination and on tests in general. They include your physical and psychological state; your memory; time management; and your academic skills, such as reading, writing, note taking, test taking, and general learning.

Of all the factors that will affect your test performance, the most important is your mastery of course content. Even if you feel that you have truly learned the material, though, it is still very beneficial to have strong test-taking skills. Being **test-wise** means understanding the strategies for successfully taking tests. Milady has a variety of apps to help you prepare for your State Licensing exam and advance your career. Simply search for Milady in the App Store today.

## Preparing for the Exam

A test-wise student begins to prepare for taking a test by practicing good study habits and time management. These habits include the following:

- Have a planned, realistic study schedule.
- Read content carefully and becoming an active studier.
- Keep a well-organized notebook.
- Develop a detailed vocabulary list.
- Take effective notes during class.
- Organize and review handouts.
- Review past quizzes and tests.
- Listen carefully in class for cues and clues about what could be expected on the test.

In addition, keep these more holistic or “whole you” hints in mind:

- Make yourself mentally ready and develop a positive attitude toward taking the test.
- Maintain good physical, emotional, and spiritual health, including sound diet and eating habits.
- Get plenty of rest the night before the test.
- Dress comfortably.
- Anticipate some anxiety (feeling concerned about test results may actually help you do better).
- Avoid cramming the night before an examination.
- Find out if your state uses computers for the written portion of the test. If so, make certain you are comfortable with computerized test taking.

## On Test Day

After you have taken all the necessary steps to prepare for your test, there are a number of strategies you can adopt on the day of the actual exam that may be helpful (**Figure 20–2**).

1. Relax and try to slow down physically.
2. If possible, review the material lightly the day of the exam.
3. Arrive early with a self-confident attitude; be alert, calm, and ready for the challenge. Note: Some exams may be administered at your school and some may be given in alternate locations.

## Did You Know?

If you have a physician-documented disability (such as a learning disability), your state may allow you extra time to take the written exam, or even provide a special examiner. Ask your instructor and check with your state licensing board. Be certain to make any special arrangements well in advance of the test date.



▲ **Figure 20–2** Candidates taking the licensing examination.



Always know exactly where you are going and how to get there before the day of the exam.

4. Read all written directions and listen carefully to all verbal directions before beginning. For the practical portion of the exam, bring extra supplies and alternate tools, implements, and equipment.
5. If there are things you do not understand, do not hesitate to ask the examiner questions.
6. If possible, skim the entire test before beginning.
7. Budget your time to ensure that you will complete the test; do not spend too much time on any one question.
8. Wear a watch so that you can monitor the time and be aware of how much time is allocated for the examination before beginning.
9. Begin working as soon as possible and mark the answers in the space provided carefully but quickly.
10. Answer the easiest questions first in order to save time for the more difficult ones. Quickly scanning all the questions first may clue you in on which ones are more difficult.
11. Mark the questions you skip so that you can find them again later or indicate the item numbers on scratch paper.
12. Read and review each question carefully to make sure that you know exactly what the question is asking and that you understand all parts of the question.
13. Answer as many questions as possible. If you are unsure about some questions, guess or estimate. Use scrap paper for personal note taking, if allowed.
14. Look over the test when you are done to be sure that you have read all of the questions correctly and have answered as many as possible.
15. Make changes to answers only if there is a good reason to do so.
16. For paper tests, check the test booklet carefully before turning it in (for instance, you might have forgotten to put your name on it!).

## Deductive Reasoning

**Deductive reasoning** is the process of reaching logical conclusions by employing logical reasoning. Deductive reasoning is a technique that students should learn to use for better test results.

Some strategies associated with deductive reasoning include the following:

- Eliminate options known to be incorrect. The more answers you can eliminate as incorrect, the better your chances of identifying the correct answer.
- Watch for key words or terms. Look for any qualifying conditions or statements. Keep an eye out for such words and phrases as *usually*, *commonly*, *in most instances*, *never*, and *always*.
- Study the stem, which is the basic question or problem. It will often provide a clue to the correct answer. Look for a match between the stem and one of the choices.
- Watch for grammatical clues. For instance, if the last word in a stem is "an," the answer must begin with a vowel rather than a consonant.

© iStock.com/JohnFitzgerald

- Look for similar or related questions. They also may provide clues.
- When answering essay questions, watch for words such as *compare*, *contrast*, *discuss*, *evaluate*, *analyze*, *define*, or *describe* and develop your answer accordingly.
- When you are presented with paragraphs to read and questions to answer, read the questions first. This will help identify the important information as you read the paragraph.

## Understanding Test Formats

There are a few additional tips that all test-wise learners should know, especially with respect to the state licensing examination. Keep in mind, of course, that the most important strategy of test taking is to know your material. Beyond that, consider the following tips on the various types of question formats.

### True/False

- Watch for qualifying words (*all*, *most*, *some*, *none*, *always*, *usually*, *sometimes*, *never*, *little*, *no*, *equal*, *less*, *good*, *bad*). Absolutes (*all*, *none*, *always*, *never*) are generally not true.
- For a statement to be true, the *entire* statement must be true.
- Long statements are more likely to be true than short statements. It takes more detail to provide truthful, factual information.

### Multiple Choice

- Read the entire question carefully, including all the choices.
- Look for the best answer; more than one choice may be true.
- Eliminate incorrect answers by crossing them out (if taking the test on the test form).
- When two choices are close or similar, one of them is probably right.
- When two choices are identical, both must be wrong.
- When two choices are opposites, one is probably wrong and one is probably correct, depending on the number of other choices.
- "All of the above" and similar responses are often the correct choice.
- Pay special attention to words such as *not*, *except*, and *but*.
- If you do not know the answer, guess (provided there is no penalty).
- The answer to one question may be in the stem of another.

### Matching

- Read all items in each list before beginning.
- Check off items from the brief response list to eliminate choices.

### Essays

- Organize your answer according to the cue words in the question.
- Think carefully and outline your answer before you begin writing.
- Make sure that what you write is complete, accurate, relevant to the question, well organized, and clear.





Remember that even though you may understand test formats and effective test-taking strategies, this does not take the place of having a complete understanding of the material on which you are being tested. In order to be successful at taking tests, you must follow the rules of effective studying and be thoroughly knowledgeable of the exam content for both the written and the practical examination.

## The Practical Exam

In order to be better prepared for the practical portion of the examination, which is hands-on, the new graduate should follow these tips:

- Practice the correct skills required in the test as often as you can.
- Participate in mock licensing examinations, including the timing of applicable examination criteria.
- Familiarize yourself with the content contained in the examination bulletins sent by the licensing agency.
- Make a list of equipment and implements you are expected to bring to the examination.
  - Ensure that all equipment and implements are in good working order prior to the examination.
  - Make certain that all equipment and implements are cleaned, disinfected, and properly stored before the exam.
- If allowed by the regulatory or licensing agency, observe other practical examinations before taking your exam.
- If possible, locate the examination site the day before the exam to ensure that you do not get lost on test day. You can also time your drive the day before, just to make sure you are on time for the actual exam.
- As with any exam, listen carefully to the examiner's instructions and follow them explicitly.
- Focus on your own knowledge; do not allow yourself to be concerned with what other test candidates are doing.
- Follow all infection control and safety procedures throughout the entire examination.
- Look the part. Every little bit helps; make certain your appearance is neat, clean and professional. **LO1**

### Here's a Tip:

Practice makes perfect. You should find a trustworthy and serious person to act as your hand model. Your hand model must be willing to schedule some practice time for you so you can prepare for the exam. Check your state's regulations about the various procedures you will be required to perform for the practical exam and be sure to practice the steps on your model.

## PREPARING FOR EMPLOYMENT

When you chose to enter the field of nail technology, your primary goal was to find a good position after being licensed. Now you need to reaffirm that goal by reviewing a number of important questions.

- What do you really want out of a career in nail technology?
- What areas within the nail industry are the most interesting to you?
- What are your strongest practical skills? In what ways do you wish to use these skills?
- What personal qualities will help you have a successful career?



One way that you can answer these questions is to make a photocopy of, and then complete, the Inventory of Personal Characteristics and Inventory of Technical Skills form (**Figure 20-3**). After you have completed the

**Figure 20-3** Inventory of Personal Characteristics and Inventory of Technical Skills form.

INVENTORY OF PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS					
PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS	EXC.	GOOD	AVG.	POOR	PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT
Posture, Deportment, Poise					
Image, Grooming, Personal Hygiene					
Etiquette, Manners, Courtesy					
Communications Skills					
Personality, Attitude					
Goals, Self-Motivation					
Personal Habits, Procrastination					
Responsibility					
Self-esteem, Self Confidence					
Integrity, Honesty					
Dependability, Loyalty					

INVENTORY OF TECHNICAL SKILLS					
TECHNICAL SKILLS	EXC.	GOOD	AVG.	POOR	PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT
Manicures, Hand/Arm Massage					
Pedicures, Foot Massage					
Polish Applications					
Hand Filing, Electric Filing					
Nail Tip and Nail Form Applications					
Fabric Wrap Application					
UV and LED Gel Application					
Monomer Liquid and Polymer Powder Nail Enhancements Application					
Nail Art					
Paraffin Wax Treatments					

After analyzing the above responses, would you hire yourself as an employee in your nail salon? Why or why not?

State short-term goals that you hope to accomplish in 6 to 12 months:

State long-term goals that you hope to accomplish in 1 to 5 years:

Ask yourself: Do you want to work in a big city or small town? Are you compatible with a sophisticated, exclusive salon or a trendy salon? Which clientele are you able to communicate with more effectively? Do you want to start out slowly and carefully or do you want to jump in and throw everything into your career from the starting gate? Will you be in this industry throughout your working career or is this just a stopover? Will you only work a 30 or 40 hour week or will you go the extra mile when opportunities are available? How ambitious are you and how many risks are you willing to take? Will you split your time up between freelancing in the entertainment industry while working in a salon?



Copyright © Milady, a part of Cengage Learning. Photography by Dino Petrocchi.

▲ **Figure 20-4** Your school counselor can help you find employment.

inventory form and identified the areas that need further attention, you can determine where to focus the remainder of your training. In addition, you should also have a better idea of the type of establishment that would best suit you for eventual employment. **LO2**

During your training, you may have the opportunity to network with various industry professionals who are invited to the school as guest speakers. Be prepared to ask them questions about what they like most and least about their current positions. Ask them for any tips they might have that will assist you in your search for the right establishment. In addition, be sure to take advantage of your institution's in-house placement assistance program and postings on the school bulletin boards when you begin your employment search (**Figure 20-4**).

### Here's a Tip:

A license in nail technology opens the doors to many career opportunities in the beauty industry. The road you choose depends upon your lifestyle, your creativity, and the way you wish to interact with your clients. For some students, their passion may be to work in a traditional salon or spa setting, keeping scheduled hours and building relationships with their clients by performing services on a regular basis. For others, a freelance career traveling to clients at different locations with a varied schedule may be more suitable. When you determine the path you would like to follow, find someone in the field who is successful in that area and learn from that individual. Locate the person through professional organizations or through your personal network. Facebook and LinkedIn are valuable resources for making these connections. More often than not, these seasoned professionals will be flattered you have approached them to ask for tips and guidance as you embark on your new career.

Your willingness to work hard is a key ingredient to your success. The commitment you make now in terms of time and effort will pay off later in the workplace, where your energy will be appreciated and rewarded. Having enthusiasm for getting the job done can be contagious; when everyone works hard, everyone benefits. You can begin to develop this enthusiasm by establishing good work habits as a student.

© iStockphoto/Thinkstock





## Activity

For one week, keep a daily record of your performance in the following areas. Ask a few of your fellow students to provide feedback, too.

- Positive attitude
- Professional appearance
- Punctuality
- Regular class and clinic attendance
- Diligent practice of newly learned techniques
- Interpersonal skills
- Teamwork
- Helping others



## How to Get the Position You Want

There are several key personal characteristics that will not only help you get the position you want but will also help you keep it. These characteristics include:

- **Motivation.** This means having the drive to take the necessary action to achieve a goal. Although motivation can come from external sources—parental or peer pressure, for instance—the best kind of motivation is internal.
- **Integrity.** When you have integrity, you are committed to a strong code of moral and artistic values. Integrity is the compass that keeps you on course over the long haul of your career.
- **Good technical and communication skills.** While you may be better in either technical or communication skills, you must develop both to reach the level of success you desire.
- **Strong work ethic.** In the beauty business, having a strong **work ethic** means taking pride in your work and committing yourself to consistently doing a good job for your clients, employer, and salon or spa team.
- **Enthusiasm.** Try never to lose your eagerness to learn, grow, and expand your skills and knowledge.



## A Salon Survey

According to the most recently compiled data as of this printing, there are nearly 370,210 professional salon or spa establishments in the United States alone. These salons and spas employ more than 1,682,641 active beauty industry professionals. (To check for updates, go to <http://www.naccas.org>.) This year, like every year, thousands of nail technology school graduates will find their first position in one of the types of salons and spas described below.

As you research salons and spas, focus on the type of salon that you believe will be the best fit for you.





### Small Independent Salons

Owned by an individual or two or more partners, this kind of operation makes up the majority of professional nail salons and spas. The average independent salon or spa has three manicure tables and pedicure stations; however, many have as many as 10 nail techs working there regularly. Usually, the owners are nail technicians who maintain their own clientele while managing the business. There are nearly as many different kinds of independent salons and spas as there are owners. Their image, decor, services, prices, and clientele all reflect the owner's experience and taste. Depending on the owner's willingness to help a newcomer learn and grow, a beginning nail technician can learn a great deal in an independent salon or spa while also earning a good living.

© terezhovigor/www.Shutterstock.com

### Independent Salon Chains

These are usually chains of five or more salons or spas that are owned by one individual or two or more partners. Independent salon or spa chains range from basic nail salons to full-service salons and day spas and offer everything from low-priced to very high-priced services.

In large high-end salons or spas, nail technicians can advance to specialized positions, such as department manager or education director. Some larger salons or spas also employ education directors, trainers, and in-house educators. Nail technicians are often hired to manage particular or multiple locations.

### Large National Salon Chains

These companies operate salons and spas throughout the country, and even internationally. They can be budget or value priced, nails-only or full-service, mid-price or high-end. Some salon and spa chains operate within department store chains. Management and marketing professionals at the corporate headquarters make all the decisions for each salon or spa, such as size, decor, hours, services, prices, advertising, and profit targets. Many newly licensed professionals seek their first positions in national chain salons or spas because of the secure pay and benefits, additional paid training, management opportunities, and corporate advertising. And because the chains are large and widespread, employees have the added advantage of being able to transfer from one location to another.

### Franchise Salons

The franchise salon or spa is another form of chain salon and spa organization. These establishments have a national name with a consistent image and business formula that is used at every location. Franchises are owned by individuals who pay a fee to use the name; these individuals then receive a business plan and can take advantage of national marketing campaigns. Such decisions as size, location, decor, and prices are determined in advance by the parent company. Franchises can be owned by nail technicians and investors who seek a return on their investment. Franchise salons or spas commonly offer employees the same benefits as corporate-owned chain salons or spas, including on-the-job training, health-care benefits and advancement opportunities.

## Did You Know?

Nail chain salons make it a regular practice to hire newly graduated nail technicians.



### Basic Value-Priced Operations

Often located in busy shopping center strips that are anchored by a supermarket or other large business, value-priced nail salons or spas depend on a high volume of walk-in traffic. They hire recent nail technology graduates and generally pay them by the hour, sometimes adding commission-style bonuses if an individual's sales surpass a certain level. Manicures are usually reasonably priced, and nail technicians need to perform basic nail services quickly and effectively. This type of nail salon or spa provides novice nail techs with a wide range of experience and an opportunity to build their client base.

### Mid-Priced Full-Service Salons

These salons offer a complete menu of hair, nail, skin, and waxing services along with retail products. Successful mid-priced salons promote their most profitable services and typically offer service and retail packages to entice clients. They also run strong marketing programs to encourage client returns and referrals. These salons train their professional salon team to be as productive and profitable as possible. If you are inclined to give more time to each client during the consultation, you may like working in a full-service salon. Here you will have the opportunity to build a relationship with clients that may last over time.

### High-End Salons or Day Spas

The high-end salon or day spa employs well-trained beauty professionals and salon or spa assistants who offer higher-priced services that are filled with luxurious extras—such as a paraffin wax treatment—as part of the spa manicures and pedicures. Most high-end salons or spas are located in trendy, upscale sections of large cities; others may be located in elegant mansions, high-rent office and retail towers, or luxury hotels and resorts. Clients expect a high level of personal service, and such salons and spas hire practitioners whose technical expertise, personal appearance, and communication skills meet their high standards (Figure 20–5).

### Booth Rental Establishments

Booth renting (also called station or chair rental) is possibly the least expensive way of owning one's own business. Nail technicians now have the opportunity to rent a one-station salon suite housed independently or within a beauty salon/spa or shopping center or plaza. Check with your city and state for the laws governing your responsibilities as a booth renter. For a detailed discussion of booth rental, see Chapter 22, *The Salon Business*. **LO3**

## ■ RÉSUMÉ AND COVER LETTER DEVELOPMENT

A **résumé** is a written summary of a person's education and work experience. It tells potential employers at a glance what your achievements and accomplishments are. A **cover letter** (Figure 20–6) is a letter of introduction that highlights your goals, skills, and accomplishments. It can provide a more detailed overview of the key points in your résumé. If you are a new graduate, you may have little or no work experience—in which case, your résumé should focus on skills and accomplishments. If you have past experience in the industry, you may



Copyright © All rights reserved. A part of Cengage Learning. Photography by Dina Perocelli.

▲ Figure 20–5 High-end salon or spa.

Marie Luster

333 Full Circle | Any town, USA 11111 | (813) 555-1234

marieluster@gmail.com

DATE

Dear Ms. (or Mr.) \_\_\_\_\_,

I was recently a client of your salon and thoroughly enjoyed my experience. As a newly licensed nail technologist, I am looking to join a salon with the same high service standards and excellent reputation.

I am dedicated to growing my skills as a nail technologist and as a businessperson. As you can see from my attached résumé, my previous experience as an apprentice has groomed me for a position within a professional salon such as yours. Due to my passion for this industry, skills, and dedication to service, I have retained a high percentage of my clients.

I look forward to sharing my qualifications in person and to discussing either current or future career opportunities at your salon. I was extremely impressed with your staff and business, and I would like to share with you how my skills might add to your salon's success.

I will call you next week to discuss a time that is convenient for us to meet. I look forward to our conversation.

Sincerely,

(Your Name)

▲ **Figure 20-6** A sample cover letter for a salon or spa position.

Copyright © 2015 Milady, a part of Cengage Learning.



wish to construct a chronological résumé, covering a span of 7 to 10 years of job-related employment.

A résumé and cover letter provide a first impression: You must develop both with attention to detail, ensuring they are neat and free from typographical and syntax errors. For models and templates, search the Internet for the term “résumé styles.”

Here are some basic guidelines to follow when you are preparing your professional résumé.

- Keep it simple. Limit it to one page.
- Always include a cover letter. Figure 20–6 is an example of a cover letter appropriate for a salon or spa.
- Print your résumé, cover letter, and all documents on good-quality paper in a neutral tone.
- Include your name, address, phone number, and e-mail address on both the résumé and your cover letter.
- Make sure that your e-mail address and phone greeting are appropriate for business. These are an important part of your professional image.
- List recent and relevant work experience.
- List relevant education, the name of the institution from which you graduated, and any relevant courses that you took.
- List your professional skills and accomplishments.
- List your weekly retail sales if your school provided products to sell. If not, provide the number of services you preformed weekly and the number of regular client requests.
- Focus on information that is relevant to the position you are seeking.

The average time that a potential employer will spend scanning your résumé before deciding whether to grant you an interview is about 20 seconds. That means you must market yourself in such a manner that the reader will want to meet you. If your work experience has been in an unrelated field, show how the position helped you develop transferable skills. Restaurant work, for example, helps employees develop customer-service skills and learn to deal with a wide variety of patrons.

As you list former and current positions on your résumé, focus on your achievements and accomplishments instead of detailing duties and responsibilities. Accomplishment statements such as “Consistently in the top 2 percent of service sales in the academy” highlight your basic duties and responsibilities. The best way to show concrete accomplishments is to include numbers or percentages whenever possible. As you describe former positions on your résumé, ask yourself the following questions:

- How many regular clients did I serve?
- How many clients did I serve weekly?
- What was my service ticket average?
- What was my client retention rate?
- What percentage of my client revenue came from retailing?
- What percentage of client revenue came from nail enhancement services or UV and LED gels?





If you cannot express your accomplishments numerically, can you highlight problems that you solved or results that you achieved? For instance, did your office position help you to develop excellent organizational skills?

This type of questioning can help you develop accomplishment statements that will interest a potential employer. There is no better time for you to achieve significant accomplishments than while you are in school. Even though your experience may be minimal, you must still present evidence of your skills and accomplishments. This may seem a difficult task at this early stage in your working career, but by closely examining your training performance, extracurricular activities, and the full-or part-time jobs you have held, you should be able to create a solid, attention-getting résumé.

For example, consider the following questions when preparing your résumé and cover letter:

- Did you receive any honors during your course of training?
- Were you ever selected “student of the month”?
- Did you receive special recognition for your attendance or academic progress?
- Did you win any nail technology-related competitions while in school?
- What was your attendance average while in school?
- Did you work with the student body to organize any fundraisers? What were the results?

Answers to these types of questions may highlight your people skills, personal work habits, and personal commitment to success (**Figure 20-7**).

Since you have not yet completed your training, you still have the opportunity to make some of the examples listed above become a reality before you graduate. Positive developments of this nature while you are still in school can do much to improve your résumé.

## The Do's and Dont's of Résumés

You will save yourself many problems and a lot of disappointment right from the beginning of your career search if you have a clear idea of what to do and not to do when it comes to creating a résumé.

Here are some of the do's:

- Always put your complete contact information on your résumé. If your cell phone is your primary phone, list that number first along with a back-up number.
- Make it easy to read. Use concise, clear sentences and avoid overwriting or flowery language.
- Know your audience. Use vocabulary and language that will be understood by your potential employer.
- Keep it short. A one-page résumé is preferable.
- Stress accomplishments. Emphasize past accomplishments and the skills you used to achieve them.
- Focus on career goals. Highlight information that is relevant to your career goals and the position you are seeking.

© iStockphoto/Thinkstock



**Marie Luster** 333 Full Circle | Anytown, USA 11111 | (813) 555-1234

marieluster@gmail.com

## OBJECTIVE

To be a full service Nail Specialist and Nail Artist

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS/ABILITIES

**ACADEMICS** Achieved honor roll in theoretical requirements and excellent ratings in practical requirements; exceeded the number of practical skills required for graduation.

**SALES** Named "Student of the Month" for best attendance, best attitude, highest retail sales, and most clients served; Increased nail services to 30 percent of my clinic volume by graduation. Achieved a client ticket average comparable to \$30.00 in the local salon market.

Increased retail sales by 18 percent during part-time employment at local beauty supply and salon.

**CLIENT RETENTION** Developed and retained a personal client base of over 25 individuals of all ages, both male and female.

**IMAGE CONSULTING** Certified as an Image Consultant.

**ADMINISTRATION** Supervised a student nail team which developed a business plan for opening a three station, full service nail salon; project earned an "A" and was recognized for thoroughness, accuracy, and creativity. As President of the student council, organized fund raising activities including makeovers, bake sales, and yard sales which generated enough funds to send 10 students to a national trade show.

**APPRENTICESHIP** Trained one day weekly at a busy, full-service salon for 12 weeks in a student/recent graduate apprentice program.

**SPECIAL PROJECTS** Reorganized school nail room for more efficiency and client comfort. Organized the school dispensary which increased inventory control and streamlined operations within the clinic.

Catalogued the school's library of texts, reference books, videos and other periodicals by category and updated the library inventory list.

## EXPERIENCE

NAILS BEAUTY CENTER	Fall 2013	Training as an apprentice in all phases of nail care and nail art
NAIL COSMETICS INC.	Summer 2013	Marketing & retail sales of beauty products, nail products and cosmetics
J.M.O SALON	2012-2013	Salon public relations, marketing & special events coordinator

## EDUCATION

Diploma of Nail Technology, Nail Technology College, 2013  
B.A. in Mass Communications, Central State University (OH), 2011

▲ Figure 20-7 Achievement-oriented résumé.

- Emphasize **transferable skills**. These are skills you have mastered at other jobs that can be put to use in a new position.
- Use action verbs. Begin accomplishment statements with action verbs such as *achieved, coordinated, developed, increased, maintained, and strengthened*.
- Make it neat. A poorly structured, badly typed résumé does not reflect well on you.
- Include only professional references. Make sure you give potential employers the title, place of employment, and telephone number for your reference.
- Be realistic about what employers may offer to beginners. Remember that you are just starting out in a field that you hope will be a wonderful and fulfilling experience.
- Always include a cover letter.
- Note your skills in new nail technologies. Include your experience and training in the use of hybrid gel nail polishes, nail appliques, or other enhancements.
- Mention your experience with computer applications, including software programs, Web development tools, and computerized salon and spa management systems.

Here are some of the don'ts in résumé writing:

- Avoid salary references, including history or expectations.
- Avoid information about why you left your former positions.
- Don't stretch the truth. Misinformation or untruthful statements usually catch up with you.

If you do not feel comfortable writing your own résumé, consider seeking a professional résumé writer or a career coach. There may be employment agencies that can help you as well; many online job-search Web sites offer easy-to-use résumé templates. Figure 20-7 represents an achievement-oriented résumé for a recent graduate of a nail technology course.

Use all available resources during your résumé development and job search process. For example, there is an abundance of best practice information available on the Internet, or you can communicate with an individual you may already know who has gone through the hiring process and can provide recommendations. Milady also has fantastic resources that can provide you with résumé development and overall career success when you begin your job search, including the online publication *Milady's Beauty and Wellness Career Transitions*.

Copyright © 2011 Milady, a part of Cengage Learning. Photography by Dino Petrelli.

▲ **Figure 20-8** An employment portfolio.

## ■ EMPLOYMENT PORTFOLIO

As you prepare to work in the field of nail technology, an employment portfolio can be extremely useful. An **employment portfolio** is a collection, usually bound, of photos and documents that reflect your skills, accomplishments, and abilities in a chosen career field. Art stores and office supply stores offer many options for presenting your portfolio (**Figure 20-8**).



While the actual contents will vary from graduate to graduate, there are certain items that have a place in any portfolio. A powerful portfolio includes the following elements:

- Diplomas, including high school, college, and nail technology school
- Awards and achievements received while a nail technology student
- Current résumé, focusing on accomplishments
- Letters of reference from former employers and mentors
- Summary of continuing education and/or copies of training certificates
- Statement of membership in industry and other professional organizations
- Statement of relevant civic affiliations and/or community activities
- Before-and-after photographs of services that you have performed on clients or models
- Brief statement about why you have chosen a career in the nail profession
- Any other information that you regard as relevant

Once you have assembled your portfolio, ask yourself whether it accurately portrays you and your career skills. If it does not, identify what needs to be changed. If you are not sure, ask a neutral party for feedback about how to make it more interesting and accurate. This kind of feedback is also useful when creating a résumé. The portfolio, like the résumé, should be prepared in a way that projects professionalism.

- For ease of use, you may want to separate sections such as *Salon Work* and *Competition Nails* with tabs.
- If you are technologically savvy, you might want to create a digital portfolio or an online showcase of your work. However, don't expect potential employers to take extra time to visit a Web site or view a DVD. Bring a print copy of everything you want the employer to see.

When writing about why you chose a career in nail technology, you may wish to include:

- A statement that explains what you love about your new career.
- A description of your philosophy about the importance of teamwork and how you see yourself as a contributing team member.
- A description of methods you would use to increase service and retail revenue. **LO4**

## ■ PREPARING FOR A JOB INTERVIEW

You have gone to nail school, graduated, passed your written and practical exam, received your license, prepared your résumé and portfolio, and, finally, you are ready to go on some interviews! Congratulations, you are almost there—getting your first position in the nail profession. To help prepare for interviews, you will want to do some additional research so you can present a knowledgeable, confident persona to potential employers.

### Here's a Tip:

Make it a habit to take photos of your work for your portfolio. Bring in models and practice the latest nail art or manicuring techniques. Take compelling before-and-after photos to show your ability to transform your clients. For ideas, search the Internet for images of *manicuring portfolios* or *nail art*. Showcase your versatility by providing photos of various nail applications so your potential employer will gain a sense of your abilities.





## Targeting the Establishment

One of the most important steps in the process of job hunting is determining what you want in a salon or spa environment and narrowing your search so you can target potential employers. Listed below are some points to keep in mind when seeking out potential employers:

- Accept that your first position will probably not be your dream position. Few people are so fortunate. Be gracious about any opportunity and learn everything you can about serving clients and polishing your technical skills.
- Do not wait until graduation to begin your search. If you do, you may be tempted to take the first offer you receive instead of carefully investigating all possibilities before making a decision. When you prepare in advance, you will have time to evaluate the pros and cons of each opportunity.
- Locate a salon or spa that serves the type of clients you wish to serve. Finding a good fit with the clients and staff is critical from the outset of your career. The section on field research discusses ways to conduct a search for the salon or spa that will be the best fit for you.
- Make a list of area salons, spas, or establishments. The Internet might be your best source for this. If you are considering relocating to another area, go to [www.anywho.com](http://www.anywho.com) for a complete listing of businesses by category in every state. You can find top salons or spas in any region or city at [www.CitySearch.com](http://www.CitySearch.com). You may also want to go to [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) to search for your area of interest using key terms such as *nail salons*, *nail spas*, *Denver, Colorado*.
- Watch for salons or spas that advertise locally to get a feel for what market each salon is targeting. Then check the salon's or spa's Web site.
- Check out social networking sites such as Facebook or LinkedIn for various types of salons and spas. If you choose to contact a salon or spa, be brief and to the point by stating that you are a student. Ask specific questions about the salon or spa.
- Ensure that the salon's or spa's service offerings are in line with your goals. Find out about the salon or spa menu by looking at the Web site or by asking for specific services while on the phone. For example, if you have a passion for working with nail extensions, and the salon or spa caters to clients with natural nails only, it may not be the best fit for you.

## Field Research

A great way to find out about open positions is to network—to actually get out there, visit salons or spas and talk to owners, managers, educators and stylists. **Networking** is connecting with people, communities, and local businesses to build mutually beneficial relationships. Whether your first contact is online, in person, or on the phone, sooner or later

© eurobanks/www.shutterstock.com