

# **A Guide for Graduating Engineering Students Seeking a Job**

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A number of students have asked me for advice concerning seeking a job so I thought I would write a general note concerning electrical engineers. This document is a work in progress and will be updated from time to time. I solicit emails from anyone with questions or comments as there is no way I can think of every scenario that is of interest. I will either incorporate those into this document or on a separate document of questions and answers.

If you think your life is private then think again! During your senior year but particularly around the time you graduate you may receive a lot of advertisements for resume services, job placement services, recruitment services, etc. My advice is to ignore all of them no matter how good the deal sounds. You do not need them. Using them can cost you a lot of money and time as well as put you in a job that you will later realize you did not want. How did so many people know of your impending graduation? You can follow the advice in this note for free and obtain a great job.

## **Your Resume**

Never use a resume service. Always write your own resume. The professional resume services will indeed craft a very sharp resume for you. However, the message this sends to the person reviewing your resume is that you are either unable or unwilling to write for yourself. Either way, the first impression is negative -- you would pay money to make a negative first impression? I review resumes and I am much more impressed by a resume that is obviously written by the individual -- even if there are subtle errors.

When I review resumes, I sort them into three stacks: definitely!, maybe, and definitely not. I think everyone who sorts resumes does this. Sometimes the definitely not resumes are excellent but the qualifications do not fit well with my company's needs. Most of the time the definitely nots are clearly people we do not want to waste time with. Maybe they actually are really good but have no clue about presenting themselves -- realistically a poor presentation is a clear indication. In the paragraphs that follow, I will tell you how to get your resume into the definitely! stack. Definitely! means they will be called for an interview. Some resumes in the maybe stack might be called too if there are insufficient others to choose from.

## **Recruiters**

Recruiters act as agents between an individual seeking employment and a company seeking to hire someone. There are basically three types of arrangements.

In one case the company has hired a recruiting service. This is generally done when a significant number of employees must be hired for a job that is going to involve issues

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that may be unpleasant. The job would typically be of limited duration and involve travel to an unpopular location, difficult work conditions, or other issues such that most people would not be interested in. The pay is usually very good (or at least seems so) and little if any experience is required. GPA and other attributes are generally not very important either. This seems ideal for an average student who feels that there is little chance of being employed by the mainstream companies. For some people this may actually be a good stepping stone to better things. But if you are not really interested in an adventure then I recommend that you avoid this approach. Some common tactics are lying to you about what the job entails and opportunities for advancement. What seems to be an excellent salary may be pitiful compared to the cost of living where you will work. They are looking for people who are bright enough but no more. Except for scams you pay no fee for this -- see the section on job scams.

A modern trend that I think is very bad is for companies to use recruiters or various staffing services instead of an internal personnel department. They typically list some service company on their web site or employment ads for job inquiries. The theory is that outsourcing this function saves money and it might actually do so but the result is generally going to be a lower quality employee – i.e. not as productive and likely to job hop – an expense that is ignored. Sometimes these firms only do the prescreening. People that are really good (like me) will write off a company that uses this practice and seek employment at a real company – if they can not talk to me directly then I have no use for them. Thus, exceptional people are going to be repelled by this approach – the basis for my previous comment about quality employees. Another reason a company might resort to this is for protection from lawsuits for failing to be in compliance with some bizarre employment law specifically crafted by the crooked elected lawyers in government to make business for their friends and associates outside of government. My advice is to never vote for a lawyer regardless of the political party – they only represent the interests of crooks, not you.

In other cases a recruiter acts on his own and bills the company (the typical bill is some number of months of your salary) if you are hired. Many companies will not deal with recruiters (I certainly will not and turn them away when they call – I do not care how “good” the person they represent is) so this may limit your options. You generally pay no fee although some may charge for printing resumes, etc. -- this should be only a small amount -- ideally zero -- large fees tend to be scams. Once you sign up with a recruiter then he will send letters on your behalf to various companies he knows are hiring (he sees their ads in the paper or other sources -- you could have done this yourself). If the company is interested (few are) then the recruiter will provide you with the company name and a contact. If you are hired then the recruiter will bill the company for his "services". Otherwise he is not paid.

### **Employment agencies or job placement services**

Employment agencies (typically operated by a state or local government) and job placement services (often operated by the school you graduate from) are a passive way to

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let a job find you. If you just want a job and do not care too much about what or where then this approach may be for you. You might also use this if you are new to an area and do not know about what jobs might be for you. If you are looking for a good and satisfying job then I recommend that you take a more active approach. You might supplement your approach with this just to cover all bases. Both of these services should be generally free although there might be some small charge to cover mailing costs, etc. This approach is being displaced by Internet job postings.

### **Internet job postings**

This is a new way to find a job or have a job find you. It is so new that I have little to say other than it could potentially be a very good thing if you use credible sites -- beware of scams. It is my belief that this will become the dominant way of finding a job in the future. Check out the websites of various professional engineering publications. They frequently have job ads and may have a section where you can post a resume -- often for free. The only problem with posting your resume for all to see is that you may be contacted by a lot of recruiters and perhaps other companies you would not be interested in. My guess is that for every quality response you receive you can expect at least ten if not several dozen responses you would rather not get.

### **Job ads in the newspaper or trade journals**

Internet job postings are beginning to displace this time proven method. However, this method will be around for some time. With any kind of job posting whether Internet or print, you want to see a concise description of the type of work, required qualifications, and a company name. Be wary of an ad that reads "A major company in the southeast seeks engineers ..." or if the company name is something indefinite -- it may be for a recruiter. Always use the Internet to check out the company prior to sending a resume. Also be wary if the address is only to a post office box -- this might be fine as some companies use a post office box (actually multiple post office boxes) to make mail sorting easier. The Sunday edition of the local paper generally has the most job listings.

### **Your cover letter**

A resume should always be sent with a cover letter so that there is no doubt what job you are applying for. The letter must be written by you and individually to the company you are applying to. A generic cover letter is an immediate negative. A crisp and professional cover letter prepared by a resume service is also a negative. People who review your cover letter and resume are looking for everything that tells them something about you. Material prepared by someone else is not you and hinders rather than helps your potential employer. Do some research on the company prior to writing your cover letter. You might discover that you would not want to work there. Ideally, your research would enable you to briefly describe why you want to work there and how your interests

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and abilities connect to what the company needs. Some of your valid reasons might involve a desire to be in the general geographic location of the company,

The salutation: If the ad provides a specific name to respond to then use that, either *Dear Mr. Jones*; or *Dear Ms. Jones*; as applicable. If the ad indicates to respond to the personnel department then use *Dear Director of Personnel*;. If no specific department is provided then use the generic *Dear Director of Human Resources*;. When you do not know the gender of the person who will process your letter it is perfectly fine to use *Dear Sir or Madam*;. In a large company the actual director will probably never see your letter -- it will first be processed by one of the clerical staff. Be sure to follow the directions below as you want to make it as easy as possible for the clerical staff to put your resume in the right file.

If you are responding to an employment ad then your opening sentence should read, *I am responding to your ad in XYZ newspaper (ad code 1234) seeking an electrical engineer for the position of ....* Check the ad carefully for some kind of code or response number -- large companies use these to help them sort the resumes when there are many different ads placed at the same time -- do all you can to make their job easier. The next sentence should read, *I graduated from XYZ University in June, 2005, with a BSEE degree and am seeking an entry level position.* The next sentences are customized for your particular situation and based on what you know about the company from your research. An example might be, *In college I took as many electives as possible relating to communications systems as that is what I want to make a career in. In viewing your website I see that you design and manufacture communication equipment for the military. It is this common interest that prompted me to respond to your ad.*

It is now time for a new paragraph. The first sentence of this paragraph should read, *Please review my enclosed resume. I would also be interested in other related positions you feel I might be appropriate for. I am looking forward to hearing from you.* At this point you are finished.

The cover letter should never be more than one page. The proper font size to use is ten characters to the inch. Larger or smaller fonts look wrong and make a negative impression. A person seeking a marketing job fax his resume (written in tiny 8-point type) to my company. Without reading anything on it my immediate recommendation was that he not be considered. Always provide your return address, phone number(s), and email contact.

Never include a picture of yourself -- you would not believe how much trouble that can cause -- your resume may be rejected. If a company needs a picture then they will inform you and explain why -- it would generally be related to some security issue. Never include any direct indication of your gender, race, national origin, religion, or other issues that can be sensitive and subject to prejudice. Companies do not want this information as it causes them all kinds of problems. All a sleazebag lawyer has to do is claim that the company used any of that information to reject you and the corrupt court system will grant a handsome fee to the crook. Your name and some resume details of organizations

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you are involved with are fine -- just do not state anything blatant such as, *I am a proud Christian male of the XYZ faith and had a proper upbringing in my native country of Somewhereistan*. The only good thing about stating something like this is that at least you are honest, however unemployed you may remain. Contrary to isolated cases that make big news, companies make a great effort not to discriminate against anyone for any reason in the hiring process. They also do not want narrow minded employees who may have issues dealing with their diverse staff. Any hint of a problem eliminates your chance at employment. I have seen this happen first hand where an otherwise qualified person was rejected because of a subtle racial remark. Be happy with what you are but do not carry that as a chip on your shoulder and you will find that all people of all backgrounds will respect you as you respect them. You earn their disrespect when you attempt to project yourself as a special human with special privileges. Do not interpret their justified disrespect as discrimination.

Do not be apologetic nor overly humble. It may not hurt but it looks stupid and does not buy you anything.

Common closings include: *Sincerely yours*, and *Cordially*,. An ancient and probably obsolete closing is, *Yours truly*,. My personal preference is, *Sincerely yours*. Then type your name two or three lines below this and do not forget to actually sign the letter in ink. It looks very bad when you forget to do this.

### **The job interview**

The reason you are called for a job interview is that your cover letter and resume indicated that you are a serious candidate for the position. The purpose of the interview is for both the company and the interviewee to learn more about each other so that a decision can be made as to whether there is a good match or not. It works both ways -- the interviewee may realize that there is no match with this company. By all means show up on time and follow all directions. Any failure here is a bad sign. If some accident or situation arises then call the company ASAP -- they understand and will generally be glad to alter the schedule and not fault you -- I have seen this first hand -- companies are not holding you some hypothetical perfect standard -- just a normal standard. A delay in contacting the company would be a bad sign. What you do when things go wrong tells more about you than when things go right -- adversity gives you an opportunity to demonstrate the real you.

An interview generally consists of a brief discussion with someone in the personnel department (often called human resources now), and interviews with several people in the group you would be working in, lunch, and closing discussions. In the personnel department you will fill out a job application and sometimes be given some literature about company benefits, etc. Then you will have an interview with a technical manager. Often the process begins with easy and casual talk to give you a chance to settle in and calm nerves. Then the real interview begins. Generally, this is not a test of anything specific. Rather, it is a discussion to reveal how aware you are of things important to the

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job you would be doing. You are not expected to know everything. The objective is to determine where you would begin at and how much you would have to learn to become proficient at the job. They already know that anyone they hire will have to learn a wide variety of things to be proficient. A short learning path is a positive sign but is not the only criteria.

A very important criteria is you as a person. Will you be an easy or difficult person to work with? Will you work effectively and without issues with the diverse staff at the company? Do you have personality quirks that are going to be continuous problems for the company? You could have a perfect technical knowledge and skill with a 4.0 GPA and not be hired because of a failure here. Another person could have a mediocre technical knowledge and skill and be hired because of excellence in these issues if it is believed that the person will work hard to become proficient. A good attitude makes up for a lot.

There are a number of standard questions that you should have thought about in advance and be able to provide confident answers to. In many cases there is not a specific right answer -- the issue is what have you thought about it and can you discuss the topic intelligently. Always answer honestly and never feed what you think is the "right" answer. Some of the questions are designed to reveal potential incompatibilities that are of interest to both interviewee and interviewer. Neither wants to discover the real answers after the hire. Some examples are:

- Why do you want to work at XYZ manufacturing?
- How did you hear about XYZ manufacturing?
- What were the reasons you chose electrical engineering as a career?
- What areas of electrical engineering interest you the most?
- What areas of electrical engineering interest you the least?
- What would be your idea of the dream job in your field?
- Are you interested in a technical career or a management career? Or consider management after a technical career?
- Do you want to earn advanced degrees in engineering?
- Do you see yourself as a generalist or a specialist (in electrical engineering)?
- Would you be willing to travel domestically or internationally?
- Are you a U.S. citizen or have paperwork authorizing you to work unrestricted? The government requires employers in certain areas to ask this.
- Would it bother you to work on weapon systems that can be used to kill people? (a defense contractor would very likely ask this question)
- This job requires a security clearance. Are there issues such as criminal prosecution, associations with adversaries of the United States, any mental problems, any financial problems, or other issues that could make it difficult or impossible for you to obtain the clearance?

In general you should focus on listening and not talk except to answer questions. However, if you know or see something about the company that relates to you personally then by all means bring up that point. It may not directly relate to the position but it

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provides a great talking point on a subject you are knowledgeable and confident in and allows the interviewer to see you at your best. It is a great positive if the interviewer can have an intelligent discussion with you.

### **Sometimes the interview is with a group rather than one-on-one .**

Companies that are trying to hire the best talent will generally have the most rigorous interviews. A candidate may be asked to do an impromptu presentation to a group concerning a provided subject. Although to some extent you are being judged on your knowledge of the subject but the real point is to see how you handle yourself in this stressful situation. You might be asked to draw a block diagram of some common piece of equipment and then describe the operation. You might be asked to discuss the merits of several common approaches to a problem. There is not necessarily a specific right answer to any of this -- that is not the point. ***The point is can you talk intelligently about the subject?*** I used this method when interviewing someone and based my question on an area the candidate specialized in school. Although the candidate did not provide the "right" answer (I would have been amazed if he had) he did demonstrate a knowledge and understanding that convinced me that he was competent. I recommended that he be hired.

A great resume is of no value if you are actually incompetent. An incompetent person is a major problem for a company and great efforts are made to prevent the mistake of hiring such a person. Unfortunately, it is possible for a person (thanks to some specialized government programs) to get through some schools with decent grades without learning anything. A company is foolish to base its hiring decision solely on your resume or GPA. The interview has to include some sort of challenge that enables you to demonstrate competence. The challenge is usually individually tailored to the candidate (like my example above) and the goal is to find a topic that a competent candidate would just have to be knowledgeable on. Thus, the test is rigged in favor of the candidate rather than against the candidate. This is contrary to what an incompetent candidate and his sleazebag lawyer might say. Over the years I have used a variety of "tests". In a few cases, the candidate amazed me by providing the exact right answer. In other cases I was able to make a good judgment as to the candidate's overall ability. The point is that when you are tested like this then do not panic because you realize you could not possibly know the exact right answer. Just answer the best you can and go from there. The interviewer is only looking for a reasonable answer -- one that would be reasonable for you to know. Also, there would likely be a variety of tests -- the better ones you would not realize you took. The outcome of any one test or question is of little consequence -- it is the aggregate that matters.

An important part of the interview comes near the end when you are given the opportunity to ask questions about whatever. You should have already prepared some reasonable questions that you can ask at this point. You might think of some other questions during the interview process. Good questions to ask generally concern

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company policies, procedures, and personality. It is hard to give examples here because the situations can be so varied. Some examples might be:

- Does the company encourage employees to obtain advanced degrees?
- Is it typical for employees (in my field) to remain with the company for a long time?
- Does the company encourage employees to write technical papers either for internal distribution or in professional journals?
- Is the environment of the company more towards procedural or more towards innovation? Either can be good depending on what you want but these are diametrically opposed so know what you might be getting into.

### **Rejection**

It is said that the cat gets the bird only about one time out of twenty. This seems pitiful but that is all that is needed. All you need is one job and hopefully the right job. If it takes ten interviews to obtain that job then you are successful (in this business one out of ten is great!). All you need is one job. The important thing is not to be discouraged or have ill feelings about the company -- you may yet work there someday. After rejection it is human nature to do a lot of picky self analysis and external analysis trying to find subtle technicalities that worked against you thus costing you a job. In spite of what you may feel I very seriously doubt that you were not hired because of some stupid technicality. People disregard unimportant subtleties as no one is perfect -- otherwise they would never hire anyone. It was the composite picture as compared to the person they did hire. You will generally receive a letter after several weeks *thanking you for your interest in the company but that the company has decided not to make an offer at this time* (carefully study the language -- the door has been left open for a future time). You should never call the company asking about your status -- they will let you know immediately by calling you when that has been determined. You may have been just fine and would have been offered the job if someone who better fit what they were for had not showed up. There is no point in calling the company to ask why you were not hired. Here is the answer in all cases -- there was another candidate that they felt was better suited to their needs. You might have been next in line if that candidate had not accepted. About the worst thing you can do is to argue with the company about not being hired. This only guarantees that you will never be hired. I knew someone who did such a thing - stupid, stupid, stupid. When a company is in a growth mode it is not unusual for hiring to be spread out over several months. Perhaps you did not get the first job but there may be another job either the same or similar opening in a few weeks. You might be called back for another interview or at least for a discussion provided you have not been negative in the meantime.

### **Receiving an offer**

Your first notification will generally be by telephone and then followed up with a letter

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making the formal offer. The company understands that you probably have or will have other offers (if they wanted to hire you then there are likely other companies that would want you too). Unless you have decided that you do not want to work at that company then your first response should be thank them for the offer and that when you receive the letter of offer that you will give it careful consideration and let them know promptly. The offer will have an expiration date which is generally only about two weeks give or take so you must act fast. The process for accepting the offer is to sign your name on it and mail it back to the company. **Call the company the moment you accept so that there will be no doubt in case something happens to the letter.**

Here is where life can all the sudden become very complicated. You may feel that your dream job is at another company that has not made you an offer but might. You may already have an offer for a job paying more or less than this offer (rank the job not the dollars). Now you have to make a decision. It is a major decision and you have probably not made many if any major decisions in your life. Do you wait for a better offer (that might never come) or accept this one? Think long and hard about the pros and cons of each job as that relates to your long term goals (i.e. your strategy). Financial issues have their place too but look at the big picture -- salary, benefits, cost of living at that location, other costs such as travel to visit family, etc. All of this adds up to what you should do. Do not make any decision until you have had plenty of sleep and perhaps some distracting entertainment so that your mind does not become obsessed with the decision. I highly recommend taking a long walk, preferably someplace away from people, and think things over and make your tentative decision. Then think about all the ramifications of that decision and identify what is comfortable and uncomfortable. The final question is can you live with the uncomfortable parts? If so then your decision becomes final. If not, then keep thinking. Call the company the next business day after making your decision (and after you have had one more good night's sleep). Congratulations -- you now have a job although it maybe subject to some conditions such as passing a drug test and perhaps obtaining a security clearance (Obtaining a security clearance takes months. The company will temporarily put you on non-classified work while the clearance is pending.).

### When you reject an offer

Rejection is a two way street. Just as some companies may reject your application, you will have to reject some offers as you can only accept one job. Always send a letter to the company as soon as possible. Never leave them in the dark about whether you are going to accept or not. The best way to reject an offer is to write a brief letter to the appropriate person and something to the effect of: *Thank you very much for offering me the position of \_\_\_\_\_ at your company. After careful consideration of the job offers I have received I decided to accept a position at another company (there is no need to provide the name). I appreciate the time you invested considering me for employment. I wish you the best. It is a small world and it is possible that our paths may cross in the future. Cordially yours,....* There is no need to explain why you made your decision. The letter should be very short and to the point as this example. A positive closing as in

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this example makes one last favorable impression that could work to your advantage someday -- you just never know what the future holds -- do not close any doors.

### **Salary**

This is always a difficult subject. You need to have already determined what is the minimum realistic salary you will accept. However, I would not let salary get in the way of what might be a great job. Large companies can offer higher starting and continuing salaries. Small companies can not offer as much but the work environment might be significantly superior to a large company -- that is worth something. The general trade-off between large and small companies is that large companies pay more and have a rigid structure with frequent layoffs and small companies pay less and have a more loose structure with infrequent layoffs. My personal preference has always been with small companies. I do not make as much money but I am a lot happier -- that is worth something -- a major mistake is to think that life is about money. You will be asked the question (typically on the job application form) as to what minimum salary you will accept. You should do some research as to what are typical starting salaries for the type of job you are seeking and for the size of the company you would be working for. Having done research makes a favorable impression to the company. If you really want the job then my advice is to not put a firm number such as \$55,000. It is better to say mid 50s instead. This gives some room on both sides to find balance. Another good answer for discussion (since it will not fit in a small blank) is to state that you realize that the position has a salary range and that you are willing to start at the appropriate position within that range commensurate with your qualifications and that you look forward to upward revisions as appropriate after you have proven yourself. The result of following either of my approaches is that you will likely start at a lower salary than if you used hard negotiation -- that is the good news. The bad news is that you might not start at all -- you won the negotiation but lost the job. Or perhaps you got the job but you will forever be seen as a money grabber. You must look at the big picture. In a number of years the actual salary you began at becomes a moot point. If you are good then you will be paid accordingly as the company wants to keep you. If you are not good then you will not move up (and may move out!). Showing this kind of flexibility is a major positive for you.

### **Moving expenses**

The company will offer to pay your moving expenses when you need to move a significant distance to take the job. One very nasty surprise from this is that the moving expenses are treated as income and you will have to pay taxes. Thus, it is in your interest to keep the moving expenses as low as possible. The more you can do yourself the better. Avoid hiring a professional moving company unless absolutely necessary -- you will pay roughly one third of the total in taxes -- that can be quite a surprise.

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## **After you start**

Make it a point to learn all you can about the job and what the company needs. Work lots of mathematics even on your own time so that you know everything about what you work on -- from analysis to design. The bottom line is to invest in yourself. The skills you acquire by doing this help you as well as benefit the company. Make yourself as valuable to the company as you can. The benefit to you is that you will likely be a survivor when the inevitable down times come and people have to be laid off. Having real skills you developed yourself also makes you more valuable and thus more likely to be hired by another employer if you are laid off. Word of your abilities spreads and you may receive better job offers. Investing in yourself definitely benefits you in multiple ways. It is stupid to not invest in yourself because you do not want to benefit your employer. Shooting yourself in the foot only hurts you, not someone else. Never think that your employer owes you -- entitlement syndrome is a serious problem and is proof that you are worthless. Successful people avoid this lazy man's affliction. You are paid for what you actually do for the company not for what pedigrees you hold. You have a duty to your employer to provide them with the best you can. You are welcome to start your own company if you think you are too good to work for someone.

## **Looking for another job**

Sometimes things do not work out. There may be a fundamental incompatibility between you and your employer and you and perhaps your employer are miserable. How you handle this situation can have a significant effect on your future employment elsewhere. The best way to handle this is to continue to do the best you can for your present employer while you are seeking another employer. Stay positive. Negative thoughts will result in negative actions that will only hurt you. It is said that bitterness is a poison you take in hopes of hurting someone else. Only the stupid hurt themselves. You want to leave a company in good grace. You never know when things might be different in the future and you find yourself wanting (or needing) to work for that company. If you left in good grace then you are eligible for rehire. If you left in bad grace then you can forget ever working there again. Do not do anything hateful as that comes under the category of the stupid hurting themselves. Never get mad and quit. Always keep your present job until you have secured a new job. It is much harder to get a job if you are presently unemployed.

At your job interview be prepared to answer the question of why you want to leave your present employer. Hateful answers are bad. The truth is always the best answer. How you present the truth makes a big difference. The best approach is to say that there is a fundamental incompatibility between what you want to do in life and what the company needs you to do. Avoid blame. Be prepared to discuss the issues in greater detail. It is to your benefit for your potential new employer to understand you so that the same mistake is not made again. Talking openly and honestly makes a very good impression and identifies you as a "straight shooter". This will very likely enhance your chance for new employment. I have said it before and I will say it again -- take advantage of every

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problem to show your best side, i.e. that which you have little opportunity to show when things are going well.

The issue may be a personal incompatibility between you and your boss. Perhaps your boss is really a jerk but do not be too negative -- say something to the effect of my boss works hard and expects a lot and I try my best but just can not please him. I can not spend the rest of my life being frustrated. This shows that you are a realist. Even if it is true, do not say something like my boss is a real jerk who thinks he knows everything and treats us all like crap. This only shows that you are a complainer.

### **Suppose another job looks for you**

If you are very good at what you do (i.e. you have invested in yourself) then a reputation spreads. You may be approached by another employer offering to match your present salary and then some. What should you do? I can say from a lot of personal experience with this that sometimes it is good to take the offer and other times it is better to decline. Reasons for accepting the offer would include such things as your present job has no more growth potential, maybe you are unhappy with your job, and the new job may provide good growth opportunities. None of these reasons had anything to do with money. It is always a mistake to take a job for the money -- you are not a prostitute. It is far better to have a lower paying job that you are happy with than a higher paying job that you may be unhappy with. The only reason to take the job is that it provides a growth path you want. The job might even begin at a lower salary but if it leads to greater things then that is fine. Think strategically (long term) rather than tactically (immediate gratification). Reasons to decline would include such things as you are very happy with your present job or there are aspects of the new job you would not like. If you decline then do so with good grace because you never know what the future holds -- you may want that job later. If you accept then leave your present employer in good grace. A good approach is to coordinate your departure to allow ample time to transfer your knowledge to someone else in the company so that the company is not left with a void. That is greatly appreciated and keeps you on excellent terms such that if things change in the future you may have a job waiting for you at your previous employer. Another benefit is that you will feel good too. I have practiced this and it has worked well for everyone. Your new employer may want you sooner but will respect you for this -- down the road they may appreciate you doing this for them too.

Some companies, particularly large ones, have a policy such that they want you to leave immediately upon giving notice. They will often pay you for some period of time (typically two weeks or more) but will have the guard escort you and your personal items out now. They are not being mean or hateful by this. They are very security conscious and do not want to take a chance that you might have ill desires against the company or some other hidden agenda. There really are some bad employees that should not be allowed to stay on. It is too complicated and risky to make a case by case decision so a simple policy for all is used. If this is the case then accept it with good grace and understanding so that you remain eligible for rehire in the future.

# **A Guide for Graduating Engineering Students Seeking a Job**

## **In conclusion**

Maintain a positive attitude and treat everyone with respect even when they do not deserve it. Hate is a bitter poison you regularly take to hurt yourself with the folly of hoping that it hurts someone else. Think in terms of long term strategy rather than short term tactics. Tactics never add up to a strategy. Focus on doing a quality job at something you really like rather than on quantity of dollars doing a job you hate. Money can not in of itself buy happiness nor make up for lack of job satisfaction. Study investing and use that to make up for the dollars you do not receive doing what you really like. Plan to retire on investment income. Leave your work problems at work and your home problems at home. Mixing the two is bad for both. Develop a hobby or some pursuit that is a reason for living. It is important that this is something that you have absolute control of. Spend quality time in this pursuit as an escape and recuperation from frustrations of the hectic pace of life. These are some of the secrets known to wise people who live long, happy, and successful lives that lesser people living self imposed miserable lives never figure out. I practice what I preach and can tell you from decades of experience that these wisdoms of life do in fact work well. I have seen these work well for others and I have seen many miserable people who refused to follow these.

This is a work in progress and I expect to add to and update various portions as I have time.