



2016

# NAB/ACHCA AIT Career Development Toolkit



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## NAB/ACHCA AIT Career Development Kit

The National AIT Program Manual and this career development kit was created by long-term care and human resource professionals to help aspiring administrators secure an internship and ultimately become successful leaders. In order to sell your skills to others, you must first identify those skills, strengths, and weaknesses. One tool that may be helpful is the SWOT analysis: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. List items in each category so that you can build on your strengths, and be aware of and create a plan to address your weaknesses. More self-assessment tools are listed in the resources section of this kit.

Another important consideration is to contact your state licensing board to make sure that you have all of the information and paperwork necessary to start your internship. The board will likely need to approve your place of internship and your start date, and there will definitely be paperwork for you to complete. You may find contact information for your state board on the NAB website:

[www.nabweb.org](http://www.nabweb.org), under the "State Boards and Agencies" tab.

### **Creating a Cover Letter**

If you haven't already done so, you will want to create a resume and cover letter. You may be wondering why you need a cover letter when your resume includes everything about your education and experience. Your resume tells who you are, but your cover letter explains why you're the right person for the position. The cover letter gives you a chance to provide more explanation and detail about relevant items on your resume.

1. Research the organization. Go online and get to know as much as you can about the company and facility where you want to work. Check with your peers to see if you know anyone, or can get connection with someone who works there. Including information about the employer in your cover letter shows that you take initiative and really care about the position.
2. Make a good first impression. Include your name, address, permanent professional email and phone number at the top of the page. Your letter should be three to four paragraphs long – no longer than a page. Use standard business letter formatting, 12-point black text in the same readable font as your resume. Include your "signature"...scan your signature, save it as a PDF and insert it in place. Do not use colors, pictures or fancy font.
3. Include a salutation. Find out who will be reading your cover letter and address it to a specific person. You can go online and to get the name of the person in HR or call and ask who is the hiring manager for the position being filled.
  - If you know the name of the hiring manager, your salutation should be something like "Dear [insert name]" followed by either a comma or a colon. Make sure to address the manager formally using their proper title (Mr., Ms., Dr., etc.).
  - If you don't know the name of the hiring manager, consider addressing your letter "Dear Hiring Manager," "Dear Recruiting Team," or "Dear [insert company name] Team."
  - As a last resort, address the letter "To whom it may concern," though it is best to avoid this salutation, as it could come across as a template letter.

4. Include the position you are applying for at the top of your letter (after "Dear Mr. /Ms. Jones") "RE: Application for Administrator in Training." Or include the position title in your first paragraph "regarding your opening for an **Administrator in Training**" in bold. Keep in mind that a large company/facility may be filling a dozen positions at the same time.

5. Use the body of the letter to make a clear case for why you are the right person for the job.

- In the first paragraph explain the title or type of the position you are seeking, and where you heard about it. If possible, include the name of a networking contact--someone who knows both you and the employer. It only needs to be 1 to 2 sentences in length.
- If you are writing a letter of interest (also known as a prospecting or inquiry letter) in which you are asking about positions that might be available, specify why you are interested in working for the employer.
- Paragraphs two and three are your chance to sell yourself. Match your skills, experience and interest to the job description. Show how you fit their requirements and provide additional information on any relevant experience. Don't exaggerate or oversell yourself. Try to answer the following questions in your body paragraphs:
  - Why am I a qualified candidate for this position?
  - What work experience do I have that fits the job requirements in the company's listing?
  - Why do I want to work for this company specifically?
- Finally, outline the action you will take to follow up on your application. If the advertisement requests no phone calls, end your letter with a statement such as, "I look forward to hearing from you soon." Provide your contact information. Include your email address and your phone number so the hiring manager can get in touch with you.

6. Thank the person for their time. End the letter with a thank you and a respectful closing statement. "Best" or "Sincerely" are both classic options. If sending via email in which you won't be able to sign your letter, finish the letter by typing your full name.

7. Make a notation of the enclosures. If you enclose something, such as a resume, with a letter, you should indicate that the letter contains enclosures by making the notation "Enclosure" or "Enclosures" at the bottom of the letter.

8. Use good grammar and proof carefully. This is your opportunity to demonstrate your written communication skills and attention to detail. If you have a spell-check feature, use it. Some programs, such as Microsoft Word, also include a grammar check that you should use. Proofread your letter yourself.

9. Unless the job posting asks for your salary requirements, don't mention salary.

10. Have your references ready before you start sending out resumes and cover letters. Unless asked in the posting, you should not send references with your resume. However, you should be prepared if you are called in for an interview. Make sure your references know that they may be contacted.

11. Remember the purpose of the cover letter and your resume is to secure an interview. If you have any special considerations or requirements, save them for when you receive the job offer.

## **Creating a resume**

A well-structured resume will help you gain an advantage over applicants who don't put as much time and effort into effectively marketing themselves. An excellent resume showcases your education, career progression, professional skills and significant experiences.

For maximum impact, you'll want to break down that information into easy-to-read sections. Here's what recruiters and hiring managers need to see.

### **Contact Information and Credentials**

Your contact information will be the first thing to catch a recruiter or hiring manager's eye. Make sure you put your credentials and certifications behind your name. Are you an MHA or an LNHA? Do you have a certification? Don't make people have to work too hard to find out. Your name should be in a slightly larger size - either 14 or 16-point font. Do not list anything that would not stand up to a reference check.

It's important to include all your contact information on your resume so employers can easily get in touch with you. Include your full name, street address, city, state, and zip, home phone number, cell phone number, and professional email address. `DungeonMaster25@yahoo.com` might be a long-standing inside joke among your friends, but it could also make a prospective employer doubt your professionalism.

### **Objective Statement/Professional Summary**

A strong objective statement lets employers know the type of position you're hoping to secure. When writing your objective, tailor it to the position and keep it concise. Steer clear of vague language, such as "resident-focused." Instead use quantifiable statements and powerful action verbs.

### **Professional Experience**

Your professional experience section is the heart of your resume. This is where you tell the story of your professional journey, typically by listing jobs in reverse chronological order with the most recent at the top. When listing the places you've worked, give a description of the facility and type of work you did.

List your present or most recent job, first, and then work backwards. State the complete name of the company you work for, or have worked for, and what they do, how long you were there—month and year. Then list the position you held and your accomplishments. You don't have to use full sentences. Begin with verbs. "Managed company tax reporting, finance, invoicing, purchasing," for example.

It's important to prioritize the content of your resume so that your most important and relevant experience is listed first, with key accomplishments listed at the top of each position.

This kind of information is important to facilities looking to hire because if they know you've worked at a similar facility, you might be a good fit for the position. Make sure you also include the duties you performed in addition to resident care. Did you help train new hires or serve on a board? Include the size/number of beds of the facility in which you worked.

For an experienced professional, an effective resume will demonstrate increasing responsibilities with increasing experience. If you're a new professional, include details about any other paid and volunteer work experience, including Hospice, Assisted Living, and Home Health organizations.

## **Education**

Your education section should include all professional degrees you've earned, with the institution's name, city and state, and the dates you attended. For degrees in progress, include your projected completion date. You should list all of your education in chronological order with your most recent schooling first.

## **Accomplishments**

Present your awards and achievements. If you were ever given a special award or recognition, list it here with the name, date, and purpose of the award. A common thing to list here is your presence on the "dean's list" for high GPA at a university. Make yourself sound as successful and hardworking as you can by adding as many awards as you are able.

## **Skills and Certifications**

In your skills and certification section, detail all your accreditations and expiration dates, equipment you're comfortable operating, and relevant computer skills including charting systems. You can choose to list anything else you find important.

If you are fluent in more than one language, list the multiple languages here. Be sure to make note of your level of knowledge - for example, beginner, intermediate, novice, advanced, fluent, etc. If you are well versed in a special area of work that other applicants might not be - such as MDS data - be sure to include your level of expertise here.

## **Mind the Details**

Once you have all the essential information in place, go back and proofread it before you send it on to any prospective employers. If you have a spell-check feature, use it. Make sure your resume is clean, easy to read and bulleted. It should be no more than two pages. Have a seasoned administrator review your resume if possible.

Stick to traditional font of Times New Roman, 11 or 12 point size, and black type against a white paper. You might try a different type size for your name and the companies you have worked for, perhaps your title. But try to be consistent. Go easy on boldface type, italics, and underlining.

Your page should have one inch margins all the way around with 1.5 or 2 point line spacing. The body of your resume will be aligned to the left and your header should be centered at the top of your page

Skip personal information such as married with three kids. Do not use photos on your resume.

When you're sending an email resume, it's important to follow the employer's instructions on how to submit your cover letter and resume. The employer may want your resume attached to the email message and sent in specific format, typically as a Word document or a PDF.

## **Networking/Cold calling**

Networking and/or cold calling is an important part of an internship or job search. Searching on line and filling out applications is not an effective job search strategy. Only about 15% of jobs, according to CareerXroads, are sourced through on line job boards. A massive number of job seekers, competing for those same posted positions, congregate on search sites (Indeed.com gets about 1.2 billion hits per month).

Online job searching and applying should make up 20% effort of a job seeker's effort. The remaining 80% should be focused on off line searches, networking, informational interviews, research, cold calling, and more. Watch for public or industry announcements of company promotions, AIT completions, or newly licensed administrators, as there may be vacancies created as a result of these advancements. Monitor those sites already training AITs for when those programs are scheduled for completion and you could be first in line for the vacancy.

The hiring process takes time. Most jobs are sourced through referrals and relationship connections. You'll need time to build those connections, your personal network, and have the conversations that will move you forward.

You have to create and present all that you offer to employers, networking contacts and others you'll meet on the job search journey.

Networking means developing a broad list of contacts -- people you've met through various social and business functions -- and using them to your advantage when you look for a job. People in your network may be able to give you job leads, offer you advice and information about a particular company or industry, and introduce you to others so that you can expand your network.

The best place to start developing your network is with your family, friends, and neighbors -- and with their family, friends, and neighbors, but don't stop there. Talk to co-workers, colleagues in your industry, and those you meet at industry gatherings, such as trade shows and conferences. Talk with former co-workers, bosses, and professors.

Networking is one of the most important -- if not the *most* important -- activities that job-seekers need to master to be truly successful in their job-search. Because the vast majority of job openings are never advertised, job-seekers need to have a network of contacts -- a career network -- that can provide support, information, and job leads.

### **Build Relationships**

Understand that you are networking *every* place you go. Networking is about building relationships. It's about learning things about other people. You already know everything you know. You are doing yourself a disservice if you do all the talking. People have had amazing experiences in their lives, and it is great to hear about the wisdom they have gained and the challenges that they have overcome.

### **Join a Professional Association**

Professional associations are great resource for networking with members of your own profession, trade, or job title. It's a well-known fact that the best way to find a job is through networking. An abundance of ready-made networking opportunities exists out there, but maybe none of them are right for you or accessible to you. A professional association not only enables you to expand your network of contacts but also serves as a support group. The empathy and encouragement provided by supportive peers can be particularly uplifting in times of economic recession.

### **Utilize Online Social Networks**

While online social networks, such as LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter, are useful in terms of helping you make connections, developing a great "brand" identity and maintaining a good online reputation is of critical importance.

- Be Selective. It's not who you know, it is "who knows you back." Connect only with friends and colleagues who will speak favorably of you, and who you will recommend to others.
- Be a Good Friend. One of the best ways to create loyalty, brand identity and a good online reputation is to share non-proprietary information that is of potential interest to your contacts. You can greatly increase the value of your network by sharing what you know.
- Be Polite and Cautious. If you don't have anything nice to say, don't say it all. Remember that adding comments to blogs and uploading pictures can leave a permanent trail and written record. Posting information online is like sending a postcard -- anyone can see it, and it could get in the hand of the wrong person.
- Be Vigilant. Many employers search the Web prior to making interview invitations or employment offers. Be careful how you share personal information. For example, never tweet about a job offer until you've accepted. Negative comments can spread like a nasty pandemic. A general rule of thumb: if your mom would be embarrassed, publish under a pseudonym if you must.
- Be Transparent. Share information about your career, your interests, and what's important to you. Update your info regularly with care. The more your contacts know of your interests, the more they can be of help to you.

### **Attend Trade Shows, Meetings, Conferences**

Avoid Saying, "I Need a Job" in a networking conversation - It scares people and it's too much responsibility for them if they feel like they have to help you get a job. Start using the phrase "I'm developing my job search strategy, targeting employers and will find the job that's a perfect match for me, and the employer."

- At an industry function, try to speak to as many people as possible. Tell people what type of job interests you and ask them to consider you if they hear anything.
- Be clear; identify your objective, skill set, target market, and time frame. Whether or not people want to support you or recommend you depend on whether they think you are qualified. Be sure to provide examples of your accomplishments to share with potential contacts. The best examples have clear and measurable accomplishments.
- Be authentic, open, honest, and positive about the progress of your job search. In today's job market people generally like to help because someday they or someone they know will need the same favor.
- Before you speak with someone at a professional meeting, create a list of targeted organizations for which you would like to work and names of key people in the organization. Then gather information by talking to insiders in those organizations. If you don't find insiders, make sure you ask your contacts if they know key people you've targeted.
- Seek advice. Most people love to help and offer ideas and suggestions. Their advice may result in an organization you had not considered. It may also lead to additional contacts inside companies and organizations.
- Generate referrals. One of the main goals of networking is getting referrals. A person is more likely to meet with you via an introduction or referral.
- Return the favors. One key to networking is to remember what you can give back. Look for opportunities to assist your contacts, and remember them when you are looking for a job. Listen carefully for clues, including the person's interests and hobbies so you can build relationships.



- Send notes of thanks for your contacts' time. An email is fine, but many people appreciate a handwritten note.
- Always look professional.
- Create a business card with your name and contact information.

### Other Ways to Network

- Read your local paper and don't hesitate to contact those featured in the articles
- Read industry magazines and blogs; doing so will provide you with conversation topics and examples for an interview or when meeting new people
- Volunteer doing something you love; you never know who you will meet
- Start a simple business while you are unemployed, you may be hired on full-time by one of your clients
- Take a class at your local college, get more training, or obtain a certificate in something that will add value to you as a candidate.

### Cold Calling

There are many avenues of job-hunting for jobseekers looking for employment. Job-hunting on the net is one method that has been receiving the most attention, but there is a traditional method of job-hunting that can be quite effective for you - cold calling potential employers.

Cold calling, or uninvited job-hunting, is a proven method of finding employment. When you consider that about 85% of the job market is "closed," meaning they are not posted to a job board, you must prospect for them. Cold calling is the most effective way to do this. Here are some steps to help get you started.

1. Compile a list of all companies that you might be interested in working for -- and don't worry if the list is a long one. In fact, it is better to have a longer list than a shorter one since your odds increase as your list gets longer. You could gather this list of companies by focusing on a specific geographic area, a specific industry, a ranking of the [Top 50 Largest Nursing Facility Companies](#), or any other method. Target the company, not the job. Don't forget to include rural and smaller facilities, as these sites may have more difficulty filling openings.
2. Gather the names of the people who have the power to offer you a job. This step is accomplished by calling each company's main number and asking the receptionist (or department assistant) for the name and title of the hiring manager in your field of expertise. Don't let them give you the name of the Human Resources manager (unless that is the department where you are trying to get a job) because your first point of contact should be with the hiring manager in your field. This step is essential -- you must get a name and title. Many hiring managers have said they throw away *any* letter that is not addressed to them by name.
3. Write a dynamic cover letter. While you may be sending out a great many letters, make sure that each letter is individualized by addressing each to a named individual, and, if possible, saying something about the company to showcase that you've done some homework about the company. Remember that your cover letter is extremely important since it serves as the point of first contact with the employer. Enclose a clean copy of your resume with each letter you mail.

4. Contact the people you wrote to in the third step. For many people, this step is the hardest. It means getting on the phone and contacting these people and asking for a job interview. Chances are they won't answer the phone or be interested in talking to you the first time you call. Follow up again via email. Make one last attempt by emailing them a week or two later. It's very normal to contact busy people a few times before getting a response.

If the potential employer says there are no current job openings, do not be rude or too pushy. If the person is unwilling to grant you a job interview, you should request an informational interview, where you can gain more knowledge of the field -- and perhaps get the names of more people to contact. Your goal should be to get as many interviews with potential employers as possible. Even if the majority of them say there are no current openings, interviewing with them gives you the opportunity to dazzle them -- and then ask for referrals to other employers who might have job openings available.

5. Send a follow-up by letter/email to thank the person for their time and information.

### **What is Informational Interviewing?**

Informational interviewing is exactly what it sounds like -- interviewing designed to yield the information you need to choose a career path and learn how to break in and find out if you have what it takes to succeed. It's a highly focused conversation with someone in your career field who can provide you with key information you need to launch your career often including a critique of your resume.

- Learn about the realities of the work world and what to expect.
- Discover opportunities that are available in a given field including jobs and career paths you may not have thought of or known existed.
- Affirm your career path or narrow a wide field down to a specific niche.
- Glean information you need to strategize entry into your chosen career.
- Gain access to information that not many other entry-level candidates will have.

At a minimum you can count each informational interviewee as a valuable member of your network. You can forge strong and memorable bonds with your interviewees who become invested in your career remember you and are eager to hear about your progress.

## Sample Letter Requesting an Informational Interview

Mark Steppe, Esq.  
VAVILOV, WEBB, WALSH & RIVER  
1313 Avenue of the Harbors  
Suite 4444  
Silver City, CA 12345

September 1, 2015

Dear Mr. Steppe:

I am student at California Western School of Law, beginning my third trimester. Labor law has been of interest to me since I took a class in that subject as an undergraduate. Your firm has an outstanding reputation in that field of practice.

My area of concentration in law school will be labor law. I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you briefly and discuss the practice of your specialty. I am especially interested in your views regarding public vs. private employment experience. Any further insights you have would be greatly appreciated.

I will contact your office the week of October 2 to set up a mutually convenient time for this informational meeting.

Sincerely,

Jeremy D. Mondaca

## Job-Seeker Career Networking Thank You Letter Sample

7 Greenway Court  
Eugene, OR 97401  
503-555-0303

Ms. Barnett Jones  
UPP Business Systems, Inc.  
1000 SW 4th Avenue  
Portland, OR 97204

September 1, 2015

Dear Barnett,

Thank you again for agreeing to be a member of my personal network when we met at your office on August 27<sup>th</sup>. This is an important time in my life as I take the plunge to change careers, and I truly value the advice of professionals like you who know the consulting field so well.

I especially appreciate your offer to introduce me to other professionals and consults in your network, which I know will be extremely helpful to me in establishing myself.

Barnett, I can't thank you enough for your willingness to help me launch this next phase of my career. I will be sure to keep you informed of my progress. And please do not hesitate to contact me if you think of any additional suggestions for expanding my network and establishing myself as a consultant.

Sincerely,

John Oakley

### **What employers want**

Don't just focus on what you want or need, think about what the company can gain by providing you an internship. Companies today are seeking individuals that can quickly make a contribution to the organization. Today's nursing home administrator is expected to be knowledgeable of numerous regulations, an adept problem solver, a skilled communicator, a financial manager, and able to successfully lead small to large teams made up of a diverse group of people.

It is difficult to point to the top three qualities that make a successful administrator in long term care; however, there are certain key qualities that serve as a solid foundation for a new administrator. Knowledge, skills and abilities can and should be developed throughout your career.

### **Key Qualities:**

#### **Passion**

The first quality senior living organizations are looking for in an administrator is passion. What is driving you want to work in senior care? Do you desire to and believe you can make a difference or contribution to this field? A career is a "good fit" when you can find meaning in the work you are performing. This is especially important on those days when it seems everything that can go wrong does go wrong. Without the passion for your chosen profession, it would be easy to give up or be a mediocre administrator at best. This isn't fair to your residents or to your staff. *Suggestion:* Find and value people who can be mentors and be one yourself when you can.

#### **Continuous Learner**

Organizations also need leaders who are open to continuous learning. Continuous learners are constantly seeking new and better ways to do things as well as having the humility to admit when they don't know something. You should see problems, conflicts, and other circumstances as opportunities to learn. A person who is not open to learning can easily become complacent, and if you are the top leader at your facility, this feeling or attitude can easily trickle down to all of your staff. You set the tone.

*“Every person you meet and everything you do in life is an opportunity to learn something new.”*  
 – Tom Clancy

### **Leadership potential**

Leadership is another key quality hiring managers seek in administrators. What makes a good leader? Of course, strong intellectual skills, “big picture” thinking and long term vision are very important; however, a person lacking self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills, typically won’t be a great leader. Daniel Goleman refers to these traits as emotional intelligence. He outlined the Five Components of Emotional Intelligence at Work in his 1998 article featured in the Harvard Business Review.<sup>1</sup>

#### The Five Components of Emotional Intelligence at Work

	Definition	Hallmarks
Self-Awareness	The ability to recognize and understand your moods, emotions, and drives as well as their effect on others	Self-confidence Realistic self-assessment Self-deprecating sense of humor
Self-Regulation	The ability to control or redirect disruptive impulses and moods; The propensity to suspend judgment – to think before acting	Trustworthiness and integrity Comfort with ambiguity Openness to change
Motivation	A passion to work for reasons that go beyond money or status; A propensity to pursue goals with energy and persistence	Strong drive to achieve Optimism even in the face of failure Organizational commitment
Empathy	The ability to understand the emotional makeup of other people; Skill in treating people according to their emotional reactions	Expertise in building and retaining talent Cross-cultural sensitivity Service to clients and customers
Social Skill	Proficiency in managing relationships and building networks; An ability to find common ground and build rapport	Effectiveness in leading change Persuasiveness Expertise in building and leading teams

Effective leaders also consider the individual or team of people they are leading. This leadership theory is referred to as Situational Leadership and was first introduced by Paul Hersey in his book “The Situational Leader”.<sup>2</sup> In summary, the “best” leadership style to use depends on the situation. In certain situations, it is appropriate to coach. In other situations, after setting a clear goal, the leader can delegate. Sometimes just support is needed. In other cases, direction is needed to develop an individual’s skills. Situational leadership isn’t something you do “to” people but something you do “with” people.

An administrator lacking good leadership skills is like a cake without baking soda or powder. The cake won’t rise and the business won’t flourish.

## **Integrity**

Reputable organizations are looking for individuals with integrity. People with integrity are able to build trusting relationships with others because they consistently do what is “right.” They are reliable and predictable in dealing with others, keep promises, and don’t sacrifice what is right for their own personal gain. People with integrity are valued as colleagues, supervisors, mentors and friends.

Integrity is the foundation of the Turknett Leadership Character model, and without integrity, no leader can be successful.<sup>3</sup> Good people desire to work for leaders with integrity. A culture of integrity has been proven to lead to the long term success of organizations.

Finally, other qualities sought by hiring managers may include your willingness to accept different open positions within the company and flexibility in job location. For example, if you recently completed an Administrator in Training program, you should consider filling a role as a department manager or assistant administrator to gain experience. This gives you the chance to learn more about the company and for them to learn more about you. Candidates who are willing to relocate for open positions are also attractive to hiring managers. Make sure to share this information with the recruiter or hiring manager.

Now that you’ve secured an interview, do your research. Visit the facility’s website to learn more about its programs and services and its needs. Check Medicare.gov for quality ratings, survey history, and other information about the facility. Being able to speak intelligently about the organization will impress the interviewer.

## **Interview Stages**

The interview should be viewed as a professional conversation in which both sides are exchanging information to determine if you are a good “fit” for each other. It’s also an opportunity for you to gain information about the job, the organization and future career opportunities.

There are three distinct stages in the interview process. The pre-interview, interview and post-interview.

### **Pre-Interview**

- Do your homework. Find out as much as possible about the company, facility, and the person(s) you will be interviewing with. A few sources include Medicare.gov in which you can review survey history and quality ratings as well as the company’s website. If you know someone who works with the company, try to obtain additional information about the company’s history, culture, future plans, etc.
- Prepare for competency based questions or behavior based interview questions. Examples of behavior based interview questions are located in the resources section.
- Practice answering interview questions with a friend.
- Find out what to expect in the interview such as who will be the interviewer(s) and how long you will be there.

- Bring extra copies of your resume with you to the interview in case you have multiple interviewers and everyone does not have a copy. This shows that you were prepared.
- Do not be late. It's best to take a test drive to the interview location before the interview date/time if you have not been there in the past in order to eliminate the possibility of getting lost. By taking this extra step, you can eliminate at least one less stressor on the day of the interview.
- Turn off your phone before going in to the interview. Eliminate distractions. The interview is your most important task at hand.
- Greet everyone you meet before the actual interviewer(s) with respect. The informal interactions you have with other team members who are not a part of the formal interview may be considered by the hiring manager(s).

### **The Interview**

- Make a good first impression with appropriate dress and confidence. It is acceptable to dress a step above what the typical day to day attire in the particular role might call for. The interviewer expects you to be trying to impress them; however, don't make the mistake of wearing too much cologne, perfume or flashy jewelry.
- It is acceptable to take a little time to think about a response or to seek clarification on a question before answering.
- You should be doing most of the talking (80/20 rule) but do not interrupt the interviewer or talk too much.
- Never say anything negative about past employers but don't hesitate to share something positive.
- Bring a short list of questions with you to ask at the end of the interview. It is appropriate to take notes at the end but could be a distraction during the interview. Your questions might include information about the company's main challenge or goals, what the interviewer feels your biggest challenge might be, development opportunities, your support team, etc.
- Don't ask about salary during the first interview.
- At closing, thank your interviewer(s), ask about a timeline for a decision or the next steps in the process, and collect business cards for follow up purposes.

### **Post-Interview**

- Write down notes about the interview while the conversation is still fresh on your mind.
- Send a thank you e-mail or letter to all interviewers within 48 hours and let them know why you are excited about the position and feel the opportunity is a good fit.
- If you are not hired for the position, ask for leads or possibly the opportunity to serve in another role until an Administrator position becomes available.

### **Avenues to gain experience and marketability in senior care**

Hopefully, you already know exactly why you want to work in senior care and can express those reasons to the hiring manager during the initial interview. The hiring manager needs to get a comfort level that

you have a solid grasp on what it is like to work in senior care. In other words, she wants to feel like you have a good understanding of a “Day in the life of an Administrator.” And remember, no two days are ever just alike.

There are a few good ways to gain insight into working in senior care such as taking a nursing assistant certification course, volunteering in a facility and working as a department manager.

Nursing assistant courses are often taught through technical colleges, the Red Cross and sometimes they are offered by nursing facilities. The classroom and clinical rotations can typically be completed in just a few weeks. Following the completion of your training, you will take a written and practical exam. While you are waiting on to take your exam or exam results, you can work for a period of up to four (4) months in a nursing facility.

If you are not comfortable taking a nursing assistant course and working as a nursing assistant, you could always contact your local nursing facilities to offer assistance with their activities program. It is best to contact the Activity Director and explain that you are an AIT or that you recently completed a program and would like to offer your volunteer services in their facility. Volunteering is a benefit to the facility and can be very rewarding to you as well.

As previously mentioned, another avenue to gain experience and marketability in senior care is to serve in roles other than that of the Administrator. Maybe you have marketing or sales experience and could work as the marketing director or could serve as an assistant administrator and oversee multiple departments. Keep your options open. Most people want to start at the top; however, working your way up and understanding what it is like to work in other roles provides insight into the responsibilities of the positions you will supervise one day.

Don't burn your bridges...if you leave an internship or employment with an organization (voluntarily or involuntarily), be professional. Give proper notice if resigning and leave things in order as best you can. Don't badmouth individuals or the organization publicly or on social media, and don't recruit away staff left behind...they can always contact you if they choose. Never forget that staff, residents, families, regulators, community members, and employers all have access to and may monitor social media sites, so be careful what you choose to post or make public.

### **Goal Setting**

The importance of setting and periodically reviewing short and long term goals shouldn't be overlooked. A common thread among successful people is that they all set goals and they work very hard to make them a reality. Goal setting is a tool that can greatly increase your chances of success. Setting both long and short term goals is important: if your end goal is 10 years away, how do you measure progress in the meantime? Set short term goals that you can begin working towards now. One tool you may use in goal setting is the SMART tool. Goals should be:

Specific: list exactly what you want to accomplish. This helps you create a mental picture of your goal and make it more concrete in your mind.



Measurable: you need to know if you are advancing and if so, how much. What is your measurement tool?

Achievable: don't set a goal so high that you will not be able to achieve it. That will just make you discouraged. Dream big, but be sure to set some achievable goals as well.

Realistic: it must be something you can realistically achieve, even if it is a stretch goal. Be honest with yourself, or consider asking a trusted friend for feedback.

Time-bound: if you don't decide when you will be finished, you run the risk of never starting. You can set smaller goals and use them to work toward the larger goal. The important thing is to get started.

For example: "obtain a position as an AIT in a skilled nursing facility within 30 miles of my home by December 31, 2015". A smaller goal working toward this goal might be to obtain three interviews for AIT positions within the next month.

In many ways, "life is like a vacation; we're given a finite amount of time to pursue the experiences we want and then before you know it, it's time to go. If you want to get the most out of your precious moments of life, you have to know what you want." ([www.keepinspiring.me](http://www.keepinspiring.me))

We're glad you have chosen long-term care administration as your profession. We hope that this toolkit provided you with helpful information and resources that you can use in your journey. Best wishes for a long and productive career!

## **Resources**

### **Leadership Self-Assessment Tools**

Daniel Kehoe Leadership and Management Self-Assessment Tool: [www.dkmanagementtools.com/free-leadership-self-assessment-tool](http://www.dkmanagementtools.com/free-leadership-self-assessment-tool)

Leadership articles, templates, and worksheets: [www.mindtools.com](http://www.mindtools.com)

Make a Dent Leadership: [www.makeadentleadership.com](http://www.makeadentleadership.com)

### **Leadership Resources**

Stand Out, by Marcus Buckingham

Crucibles of Leadership, by Robert J. Thomas

Harvard Business Review of Crucibles of Leadership, by Robert J. Thomas and Warren G. Bennis

The Speed of Trust, by Stephen M. R. Covey

Our Iceberg Is Melting, by John Kotter

The Success Principles; How to Get From Where You Are to Where You Want to Be by Jack Canfield

Meeting the Leadership Challenge in Long-Term Care; What you Do Matters by David Farrell, Cathie Brady and Barbara Frank

The Secret; What Great Leaders Know – and Do by Ken Blanchard and Mark Miller

First, Break all The Rules; What the World's Greatest Managers Do Differently by Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman

Good to Great by Jim Collins

Crucial Conversations by Kerry Patterson

7 Habits by Stephen Covey

Listen up Leader by David Cottrell

Monday Morning Leadership by David Cottrell

If Disney Ran your Hospital by Fred Lee

### **Resume/Cover Letter Resources**

<http://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Cover-Letter>

<http://www.roberthalf.com/blog/resumania-3-resume-questions-recent-grads-should-ask-themselves>

American Nurses Association, Inc.

CareerBuilder.com

Resumes That Knock 'em Dead (Knock 'em Dead Resumes) by Martin Yate

Cover Letters that Knock 'em Dead by Martin Yate

YouTern (<http://www.youtern.com>)

Quintessential Careers (<http://www.quintcareers.com>)

### **Job Search Resources**

<http://www.roberthalf.com/blog/understanding-the-hiring-process-5-things-new-grads-need-to-know>

<http://www.roberthalf.com/blog/want-to-succeed-in-business-get-serious-about-developing-soft-skills>

<http://jobsearch.about.com/>

<http://jobsearch.about.com/cs/jobsearchhelp/a/jobtips.htm>

<http://www.careeronestop.org/JobSearch/job-search.aspx?&frd=true>

### **Networking/Cold-Calling Resources**

<http://www.businessknowhow.com/tips/networking.htm>

<http://www.businessknowhow.com/marketing/approach.htm>

<http://www.businessknowhow.com/marketing/business-networking.htm>

<http://jobsearch.about.com/cs/networking/a/networking.htm>

<http://jobsearch.about.com/cs/networking/a/networking.htm>

<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/7-steps-to-a-perfect-cold-call-20-09-2012/>

## **Behavior Based Interview Questions - Examples**

### **Adaptability**

- Tell me about a time when you had to adjust to a colleague's working style in order to complete a project or achieve your objectives.

### **Analytical Skills/Problem Solving**

- Tell me about a situation where you had to solve a difficult problem. What did you do? What was your thought process? What was the outcome? What do you wish you had done differently?

### **Communication**

- What is your typical way of dealing with conflict? Give me an example.
- Give me an example of a time when you were able to successfully communicate with another person even when that individual may not have personally liked you (or vice versa). How did you handle the situation? What obstacles or difficulties did you face? How did you deal with him or her?

### **Creativity**

- Tell me about a time when you had to use your presentation skills to influence someone's opinion.
- Tell me about a problem that you've solved in a unique or unusual way. What was the outcome? Were you happy or satisfied with it?

### **Decision Making**

- Tell me about a difficult decision you've made in the last year.
- Describe a situation where you have had to overcome a problem or obstacle in order to move forward with something. What did you do?
- Tell me about a time when you had to make a decision without all the information you needed. How did you handle it? Why? Were you happy with the outcome?

### **Flexibility**

- Give me a specific example of a time when you had to conform to a policy with which you did not agree.
- Describe a time when you put your needs aside to help a co-worker understand a task. How did you assist them? What was the result?

### **Goal Setting**

- Give me an example of a time when you set a goal and were able to meet or achieve it.
- What do you consider to be your greatest achievement so far and why?
- Tell me about a goal that you set that you did not reach. What steps did you take? What obstacles did you encounter? How did it make you feel?

### **Initiative**

- Describe a time when you anticipated potential problems and developed preventative measures.
- What tricks or techniques have you learned to make school or a job easier, or to make yourself more effective? How did you learn them?
- Describe a situation where you have had to use your initiative to solve a problem. What did you do?
- What was the best idea you came up with during your professional or college career? How did you apply it?
- Give me an example of a time when something you tried to accomplish failed.
- Give me an example of when you showed initiative and took the lead.

### **Integrity/Honesty**

- Tell me about a time when you missed an obvious solution to a problem.
- Tell me about a time when you were forced to make an unpopular decision.
- Tell me about a time you had to fire a friend.
- Describe a time when you set your sights too high (or too low).
- Tell of the most difficult customer service experience that you have ever had to handle-perhaps an angry or irate customer. Be specific and tell what you did and what the outcome was.
- Tell me about a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.
- Give a specific example of a policy you conformed to with which you did not agree. Why?

### **Leadership**

- Give me an example of a time when you motivated others.
- Tell me about a time when you delegated a project effectively.
- What has been your experience in giving presentations to small or large groups?
- Tell me about a team project when you had to take the lead or take charge of the project? What did you do? How did you do it? What was the result?

### **Interpersonal Skills**

- Give me an example of a time when you used your fact-finding skills to solve a problem.
- Describe a situation in which you were able to use persuasion to successfully convince someone to see things your way.
- Give an example of when you had to work with someone who was difficult to get along with. How/why was this person difficult? How did you handle it? How did the relationship progress?

### **Planning and Organization/Time Management**

- How do you determine priorities in scheduling your time? Give examples.
- Describe a time in school when you had many projects or assignments due at the same time. What steps did you take to get them all done?
- Tell me about a time when you had too many things to do and you were required to prioritize your tasks.

- How do you prioritize projects and tasks when scheduling your time? Give me some examples.

### **Teamwork**

- Tell me about a time you were able to successfully deal with another person even when that individual may not have personally liked you (or vice versa).
- Tell me about a recent situation in which you had to deal with a very upset customer or co-worker.
- Describe a situation where you have had to work as part of a team to achieve a result. What was your role in this?
- Describe a situation where others you were working with on a project disagreed with your ideas. What did you do?

### **Exam Preparation Resources**

Allen, James E., (2011-6<sup>th</sup> Edition) **Nursing Home Administration** New York, NY Springer Publishing Company, Inc.

Davis, Winborn E., Townsend, Joseph E., **The Principles of Health Care Administration** Shreveport, LA BNB Systems.

Pratt, John R., (2010- 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition) **Long Term Care: Managing Across the Continuum** Sudberry, MA Jones and Bartlett Publishers.

**NAB Study Guide-How To Prepare for the Nursing Home Administrators Examination** (5<sup>th</sup> Edition) Washington, DC National Association of Long-Term Care Administrator Boards, Inc.

Singh, Douglas A., (2010) **Effective Management of Long-Term Care Facilities** Sudberry, MA Jones and Bartlett Publishers.

**The Long Term Care Survey** (May 2013) Washington DC American Health Care Association

McSweeney-Feld, Mary Helen and Reid Oetjen, editors (2012) **Dimensions of Long-Term Care Management: An Introduction** Chicago, IL Health Administration Press.

**The Long Term Care Enforcement Procedures** (revised 2010) Washington, DC American Health Care Association (AHCA), AHCA/NCAL Publications.

Pozgar, George. **Legal Aspects of Health Care Administration, 11<sup>th</sup> edition** (2012). Jones and Bartlett Learning, LLC.

Gilster, Susan D., (2006) **A Way of Life: Developing an Exemplary Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia Program** Baltimore, MD Health Professions Press

### **Goal Setting Resources**

Koury, Fred (August 2015) "Stating Your Purpose". Smart Business, Cleveland, Oh.

The Magic of Thinking Big, by David Schwartz

The Magic Lamp: Goal Setting for People Who Hate Setting Goals, by Keith Ellis

Goal Setting: How to Create an Action Plan and Achieve Your Goals, by Michael S. Dobson

The Power of Positive Thinking, by Dr. Norman Vincent Peale

Setting Goals, by Harvard Business School Press

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

### **Recommended Websites**

Examinees are encouraged to visit the following websites for additional information related to nursing home administration:

- U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration: <https://www.osha.gov>
- Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services: <http://www.cms.gov>
- U.S. Department of Labor: <http://www.dol.gov>
- National Fire Protection Association: [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org)
- NAB: <http://www.nabweb.org>
- Medicare: [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov)

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2. Hersey, P. (1985). The Situational Leader. New York, NY: Warner Books
3. Turknnett Leadership Group (n.D.). The Leadership Character Model online. <http://www.leadershipcharacter.com/model.php>
4. Keep Inspiring Me. [www.keepinspiring.me/why-you-need-to-set-goals](http://www.keepinspiring.me/why-you-need-to-set-goals)
5. CareerXroads®, 2014 Sources of Hire Slideshow Released July 2014: <http://www.careerxroads.com/index.asp>
6. Provider, 2015 list of the Top 50 Largest Nursing Facility Companies: <http://www.providermagazine.com/reports/Pages/2015/2015-Top-50.aspx>
7. Quintessential Careers, Randall S. Hansen, Ph.D: [http://www.quintcareers.com/cold\\_calling.html](http://www.quintcareers.com/cold_calling.html)
8. YouTern (<http://www.youtern.com>)
9. Go Guerrilla: 10 Job Search Tactics that Work, Posted on June 16, 2014 by Nicole Emerick: <http://www.youtern.com/thesavvyintern/index.php/2014/06/16/go-guerrilla-10-job-search-tactics-that-work/>

10. For a Successful Job Search... Focus First on Strategy, Posted on December 2, 2013 by Lea McLeod: <http://www.youtern.com/thesavvyintern/index.php/2013/12/02/for-a-successful-job-search-focus-first-on-strategy/>
11. [The National AIT Program Manual](#)