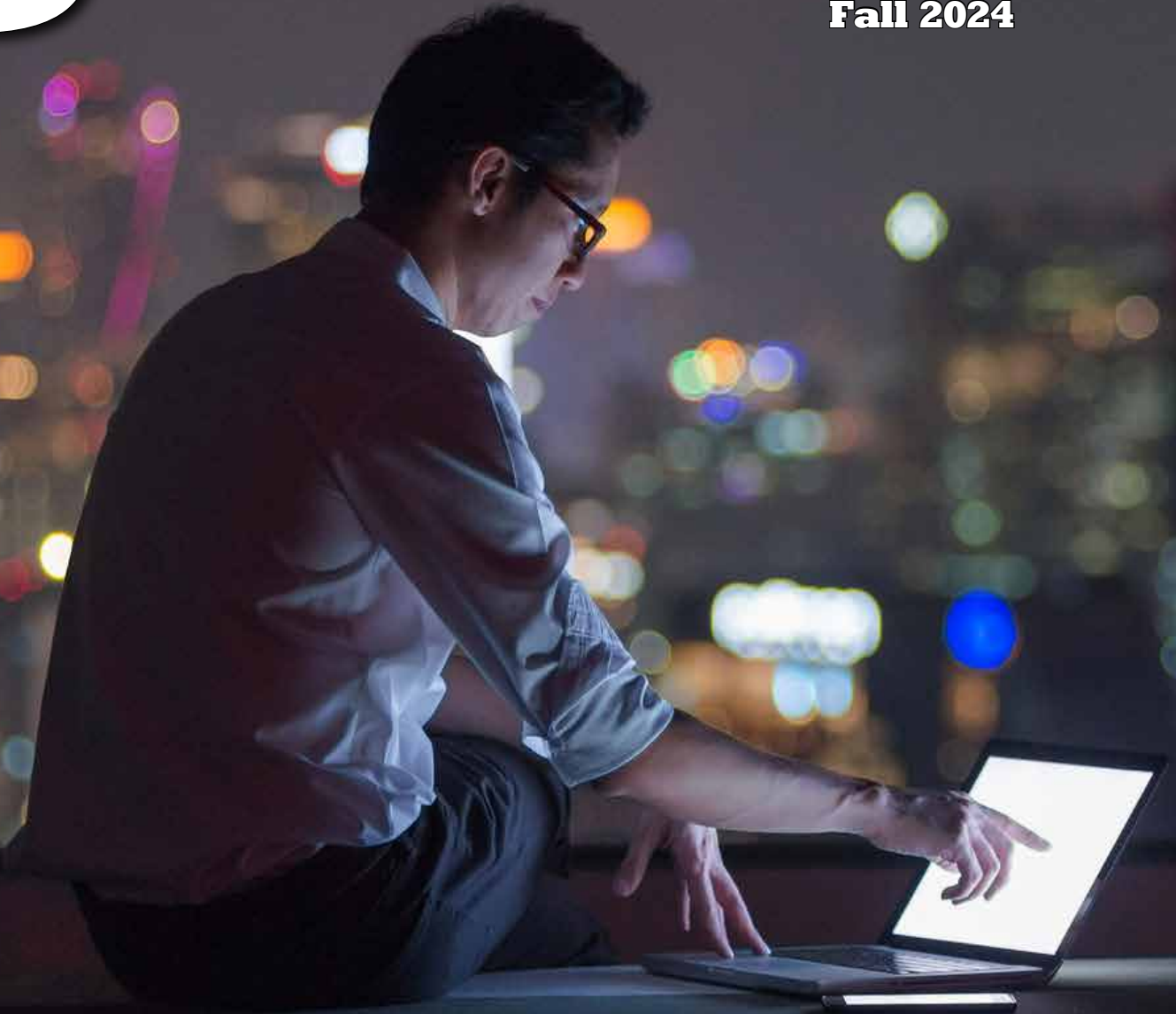


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CAPITAL CITY

JOBS

Fall 2024

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Neurodiagnostic technologists perform brain diagnostic testing, sleep apnea tests and more. LLCC offers both a 12-month certificate program and a 21-month associate's degree program for NDT. PHOTO COURTESY LLCC

Lesser-known careers can lead to secure futures

JOB | Lynn Whalen

Looking to enter the workforce or change careers quickly and affordably? Look no further than your local community college. They offer many workforce and health care training programs, such as welding and nursing, but also lesser-known career paths that lead to well-paying jobs.

Community colleges are in tune with area workforce needs and committed to preparing students for local jobs using the latest technologies. In some programs, qualified students can receive assistance for training costs and even be paid while in school.

Here are some lesser-known careers you can train for in two years or less at Lincoln Land Community College (LLCC) in Springfield.

Industrial technology

Understanding how machines work and how to repair them is the job of the industrial technologist.

"Take what an electrician does and add in mechanical drive systems, pneumatics, hydraulics and process controls, and you have an industrial technologist," said Doug Hoy, industrial technologies program director at LLCC's Workforce Institute. "They can work on and repair not only the electrical but all parts of a machine."

A certificate of completion in industrial technologies takes one year to complete and a certificate of achievement in industrial maintenance technology can be earned in 16 months.

"Job security in this field is great," noted Hoy. "You can work in manufacturing and production facilities, power

plants, renewable energy, transportation, health care, railroads, food processing plants, government facilities, high schools and universities ... the list goes on. These positions are a key cog in many operations and are highly valued."

He said starting salaries are approximately \$25-\$35 an hour but may be much higher where there is a shortage of skilled workers in this field. He says the successful industrial technology student is one with problem-solving abilities, trouble-shooting skills, a keen eye to diagnose mechanical problems and proactive with time-management skills.

"Industrial technology is one of LLCC's programs now incorporating virtual reality to instruct students. We're using zSpace apps that allow students

to see inside a motor; instead of tearing a real machine motor apart we can click on it, enlarge it in 3D and see all of the components, move them around and diagnose the problem," said Hoy.

Cardiovascular sonography

This brand-new program at LLCC joins related programs in diagnostic medical sonography and vascular sonography.

"The cardiovascular sonographer looks at the heart and vascular systems, including veins and arteries," said Dr. Cynthia Maskey, dean of health professions. "Students learn to perform and read EKGs (echocardiograms) which assist doctors in diagnosing and treating patients. This two-year, associate degree program is the result of local demand and need for professionals in this field."

Maskey added that this career is rewarding through patient interactions and offers competitive salaries with a median of \$89,000 per year. Two specialty areas are covered, adult echocardiography and vascular sonography, through hands-on training and clinical experiences.

Neurodiagnostic technology (NDT)

Have you had a brain scan or sleep apnea test? If so, they were likely performed by a neurodiagnostic technologist. LLCC offers both a 12-month certificate program and a 21-month associate degree program in the field.

"Graduates go straight to work administering and analyzing EEGs (electroencephalograms) or brain wave tests," said Maskey. "They also perform other types of brain diagnostic testing to



Students who become certified in industrial technology can work in industries such as manufacturing, transportation, health care, government or educational facilities and more.
PHOTO COURTESY LLCC



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She said the career offers good pay and benefits, starting at an average of \$52,000 per year. However, with the high demand for these positions, employers often offer signing and retention bonuses. Jobs are available locally and nationally for graduates of LLCC’s NDT program, which is the only one of its kind in Illinois.

Surgical technology

“Surgical technologists are an integral part of the operating team,” said Maskey. “They assist surgeons and nurses, making sure all equipment is in place, sterile and ready for an operation.”

She said there are many jobs open for surgical technologists locally and beyond, and they are well-paid at a median of \$78,000 per year. She noted that “surg techs” may start their careers in hospitals and go on to other positions including surgical equipment representatives. LLCC’s surgical technology program takes two years to complete.

Grants available

Community colleges like LLCC often receive state and federal grants that help students pay for training and fill workforce needs. For individuals interested in entering or advancing in health care careers, LLCC offers the grant-funded Pipeline for the Advancement of the Healthcare Workforce (PATH) program. PATH participants, depending on their individual circumstances, may qualify for assistance with tuition and fees, books and materials; stipends while they attend class; transportation and childcare assistance; specialized tutoring and job placement; and

equipment loans. More information on eligibility can be found at www.llcc.edu/path.

LLCC also received a grant from the Illinois Community College Board to implement virtual reality equipment into career and technical programs to “provide new cutting-edge training opportunities to better position (students) for success in their chosen career fields,” said ICCB executive director Brian Durham.

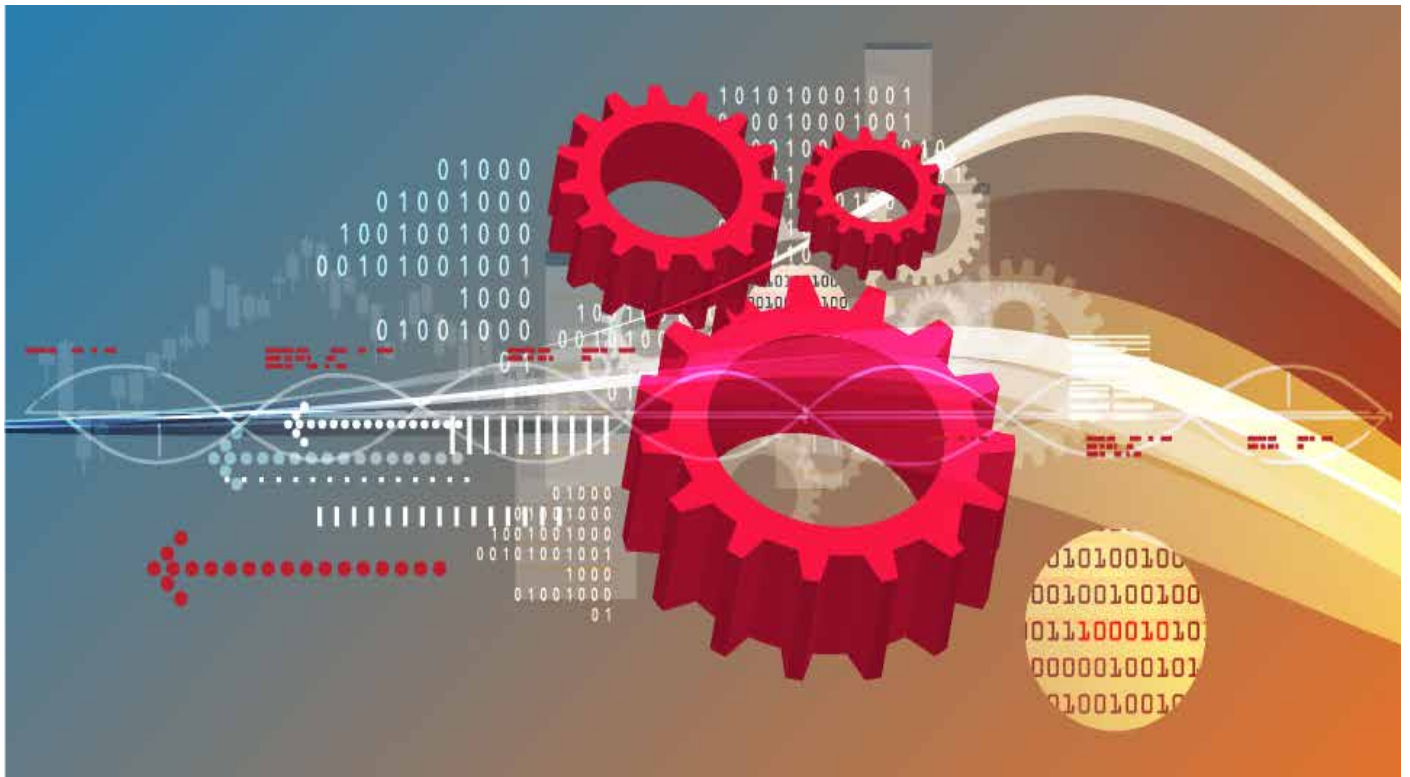
In addition to industrial technology, LLCC is incorporating VR in programs such as sonography and emergency medical services, among others.

“The grant has allowed us to purchase phantoms (medical mannequins that simulate patient conditions and trauma), which are very expensive and very helpful in simulating both normal and abnormal symptoms for students to diagnose,” said Maskey.

Lynn Whalen is a freelance writer with a background in broadcast journalism and higher education public relations and marketing, most recently as Chief Communications Officer at Lincoln Land Community College. She also serves as President Emerita of the National Council for Marketing and Public Relations, the nation’s premier organization for communications professionals at community colleges.



Surgical technologists are well-paid, with a median income of \$78,000 a year. LLCC’s surgical technology program takes two years to complete. PHOTO COURTESY LLCC



Beat the bots

Improve your chances of outsmarting AI screening tools

CC JOBS | Kelly Gust

“Tik-toker applies for over 550 jobs and doesn’t hear back from any of them.”

“Florida man tests the ‘no one wants to work’ theory by applying to 60 entry-level jobs and only gets one interview.”

“I hit send on my online application, then received an automatic rejection email less than a minute later.”

We hear stories like this from frustrated job-seekers all of the time. Unfortunately, as companies rush to incorporate AI screening tools to (supposedly) make the hiring process more efficient, the candidate experience has become increasingly labor-intensive. While there aren’t any sure-fire guarantees to “beating the bots” when applying for a job in today’s market, there are a few actions you can take to increase your chances that your resume gets reviewed by an actual living,

breathing human.

Trade your WiFi network for your in-person network. When it feels like you can’t win the online game, take your job-search offline by reaching out to your professional network. Call on former coworkers, former bosses or classmates. Let them know you’re searching for a job and ask if they know of anything that might be a good fit for your skills, or if they know any employees at companies you’re applying to. You might be surprised how many “friends of friends” can help you land your next position.

Use ChatGPT to update your application. You can use ChatGPT to proof-read your resume, tailor it to a specific job posting, draft a cover letter, role play written interview questions and answers, or draft content to update

your LinkedIn profile. Once you create an account for ChatGPT, test out different prompts such as “draft a cover letter to match this (copy-pasted) job posting,” or “tell me the best answer to five common interview questions for a customer service representative.” Of course, you’ll have to review suggested output and practice interview Q&A yourself. Doing so adds personality and will help you deliver interview answers with confidence.

Use candidate AI to fight fire with fire. AI isn’t just for big companies. New apps such as Interview Prep AI and Final Round provide practice opportunities and even teleprompter-style interview support for job applicants. Users can set up mock interviews for specific jobs and practice questions and answers. Not sure how you’d answer a question

about problem-solving, conflict resolution or teamwork? Let AI teach you new approaches to answering these questions. Users can also set up a real-time teleprompter feature which, while it would take a little getting used to in order to use it seamlessly, can coach candidates in real-time during their interview.

Keep your resume simple and machine-readable. Remember, artificial intelligence has no ability to interpret fancy fonts, colorful formatting, unique designs or images. Keep a version of your resume in simple plain text format, loaded with skills, past duties performed and accomplishments (rather than names of schools, companies or references). Make it easy for the AI resume reader to “match” keywords from the posting to your resume. With many companies using AI, once you’ve used ChatGPT as suggested above, don’t forget to list this as a skill on your resume.

Artificial intelligence in the hiring process is not new – companies have been using keywords to search and prioritize resumes and using automated assessments for years – but it is a space that is evolving rapidly. Job applicants can face this challenge head on and beat the bots by applying a few simple methods. By expanding your search efforts to include in-person networking, leveraging candidate-facing AI and keeping your resume clean and simple, you can increase your chances of landing your next new position.

Kelly Gust is the CEO of HR Full Circle, a Springfield-based consulting firm that provides talent management and human resources consulting to organizations of all sizes and stages. “Tik-toker applies for over 550 jobs and doesn’t hear back from any of them.”

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Take control of your job search

Develop a personal brand to find a good job fit

CC JOBS | Holly A. Whisler

If you're a job seeker, you might be looking for your first career position, your next move up the ladder or a complete transformation of your life by embarking upon a different career field. Whichever type of job seeker you are, you'll find the following job-search strategies useful.

First, begin with the end in mind. Know the job you are seeking and be able to describe it succinctly whenever you're asked. Know the type of company you want to work with: is it large or small, what is its mission, vision and values, and how do they align with yours? In what type of environment do you flourish? Do you enjoy collaboration or working independently? Do you do your best work in the office, hybrid

or 100% remote? Taking the time to answer these questions will help you focus your search and allow you to quickly identify the job descriptions that match your ideal. You only want to spend your time applying for positions that are a good fit. You don't want just a job, you want the job – the position that is such a good match you can see yourself growing with the organization and making it your career home.

Likewise, prior to beginning your job search, you need to know who you are, what you bring to the table and why you fit the job description you just articulated. In other words, what is your personal brand? Sound crazy? Well, it is a thing for job seekers in 2024.

Articles published by *Forbes* and *Harvard Business Review* emphasize the importance of having a personal brand. Your brand is how you want people to see you. It's an intentional exercise of defining what motivates you, your values, strengths and competencies, including the skills you're curious about building in the future. Your brand also highlights your key personal attributes. Harvard Business Review suggests if you are a creative person who likes to problem-solve, your attribute would be that of an innovator.

Once you have a handle on your brand, it's important to connect with influencers in your field and make your brand visible. And when it

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comes to visibility, the *Forbes* article recommends elevating your brand by making sure your “online profiles support the qualifications listed in your resume.” Google your name, as according to *Forbes*, “this view is most likely what hiring managers will see.”

Your personal brand has to be authentic, or it won't be believed. *Forbes* included survey results from The Harris Poll that states 71% of U.S. hiring decision-makers believe that viewing candidates' social media profiles is an effective way to screen applicants. Use this opportunity to make your brand known.

Speaking of connecting, this may sound old-school, but it works. Make a list of the people you know who are employed in your field of interest. Why? Because you cannot put a price on human connection, and this is your list of human connections within the context of your job search. In the digital age you have the opportunity to build your brand online and connect with those who are employed in your field of interest. Let these people know you are looking for a position and ask if they know of open positions in their organizations. Are they willing to be a reference for you or introduce you to someone in a department that has open positions? Having permission to include the name of a current employee in your cover letter or application is worth a million bucks. Especially if they can speak to your personal brand. It builds a bridge of familiarity and humanizes your digital application package.

Another way of augmenting your search is to work with the job-search experts in your own backyard. Community colleges and universities have career services departments staffed with people who know every aspect of the job search process. They have the resources to help you focus your search, write your personal-brand statement, cover letter and resume. They can assist with practice interviews and provide guidance on how to complete online applications and resume submissions.

Partnering with an employment agency is another strategy for finding your next position. Springfield is home to a number of successful employment agencies that are in the business of matching people with employers. An employment specialist at the agency will interview you, much like an employer would. This is to inventory your work history, skills and abilities so that they can accurately match you with an employer. Once the agency matches you, it is

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news, there are more than 2,000 jobs available in Springfield on Indeed's platform alone. The odds are in your favor. Let this be your time to shine.

Holly Whisler is the associate editor of Springfield Business Journal, and someone who appreciates the joy a good career fit can bring to your life.

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Leave the lies off LinkedIn

Fibbing could mess up your job hunt

CC JOBS | Asia Johnson



In the digital age, your LinkedIn profile serves as your professional storefront. It's where future employers go to check you out – your skills, achievements, and what kind of person you are. Sure, you might want to polish up how you present your skills and experience, but exaggerating can backfire big time. Let's dive into why staying genuine on LinkedIn is your best bet.

A matter of trust

A recent ResumeLab study reveals 70% of workers admitted to falsifying their resumes. It's likely these fibs extend to LinkedIn profiles as well. Lying on LinkedIn erodes trust and compromises your integrity; a lie caught by employers can not only eliminate you from job contention but also harm your professional reputation, relationships and future career opportunities.

The verification vortex

In our interconnected world, verifying information is easier than ever. Employers often conduct background checks, reference calls and online searches. A discrepancy between your LinkedIn claims and reality can be quickly uncovered, leaving you to face the consequences of your dishonesty.

Authenticity attracts

Authenticity is magnetic. Being truthful about your experiences and skills attracts employers who will value you for who you are. This can lead to better job matches, more fulfilling roles, and a career built on a solid foundation of trust.

Your LinkedIn profile reflects your professional self. Sticking to the truth means your career and work life are rooted in honesty, set-

ting you up for real chances of finding a job that is a perfect fit for who you are.

Asia Johnson is an award-winning content marketing specialist for Express Employment International, covering a variety of career topics for job seekers and associated audiences. This article first appeared in the July 31, 2024 edition of Job Journey. Visit blog/expresspros.com to sign up for this monthly newsletter by Express Employment Professionals, which provides tips and advice for every stage of your working life.

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O'Shea provides scholarship for LLCC Construction students



Matt O'Shea, left, with Alexis Bowman of Palmyra, the first recipient of an O'Shea-funded scholarship for LLCC students in the construction trades program. PHOTO COURTESY LLCC

JOBS | Michelle Ownbey

Lincoln Land Community College has received a gift from the O'Shea family to fund a scholarship for LLCC students in the construction trades program.

The first recipient of the O'Shea Family Scholarship is Alexis Bowman of Palmyra, a 2024 graduate of North Mac High School. "The O'Shea Family Scholarship has opened the door for more opportunities and relationships in the area of construction management," said Bowman. "I plan for this scholarship to lead me to my goal of a leadership role in the construction industry."

Led by Beth and Mike O'Shea, longtime supporters of education and students at LLCC, the O'Shea family has established a scholarship for students pursuing a two-year construction management degree in the Workforce Institute at LLCC.

This fund is being established to help ensure

that the cost of education is not a barrier for students who are interested in a career in construction. Scholarships are being provided for students seeking an associate in applied science degree in construction management. If funds are available after supporting these students, scholarships may also be available to those pursuing a degree in education or engineering.

The Illinois Department of Employment Security projects an 8.5% growth in the construction trades over the next 10 years (2020-2030). A report by the Associated Builders and Contractors estimates there is a need for 500,000 workers on top of current hiring.

"The shortage is due to retirements and fewer young people entering the skills trades," explained Chris Edmonds, program director of construction trades at LLCC. "With the anticipated demand in the industry, it is important to

note there is also currently a shortage of skilled construction workers."

"As a teacher at Lincoln Land Community College, I have witnessed firsthand how our new construction management program is transforming careers," said Matt O'Shea. "It's incredibly rewarding to see our students seize this opportunity and lay a solid foundation for their future success in the construction industry."

"We are grateful for the incredible generosity of the O'Shea family in supporting and providing opportunities for LLCC students," said Karen Sanders, executive director of the LLCC Foundation and vice president for advancement. "This major gift will support many students as they train to enter the high-demand career field of construction and impact the local workforce, as employers hire our work-ready graduates."



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A family affair?

Gen Z's job hunt

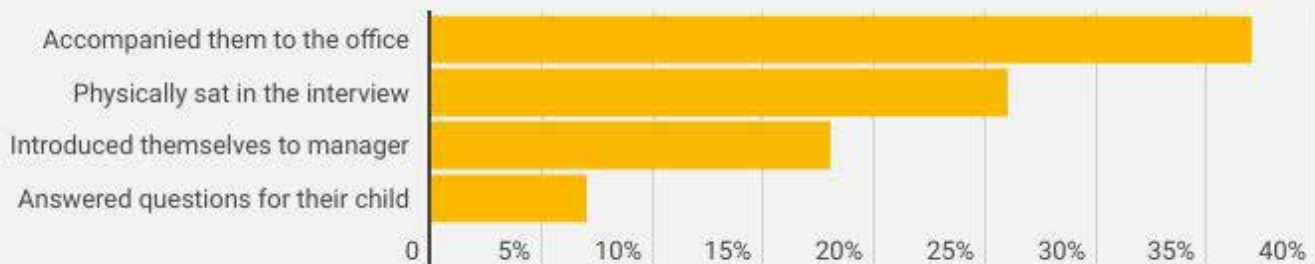
JOBS | Asia Johnson

In a surprising twist on traditional job search tactics, Gen Z is rewriting the rules of interviewing by bringing a plus-one to their job

interviews: their parents. A recent survey by ResumeTemplates.com revealed 25% of Gen Z job seekers have their parents in tow during

interviews, while 70% seek parental guidance throughout their job search.

How Parents Attended Their Child's In-Person Interviews

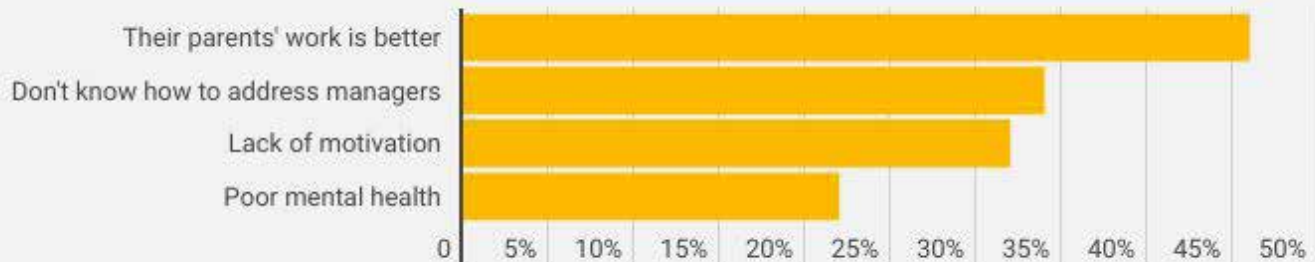


 ResumeTemplates

Parental involvement doesn't stop at moral support. For Gen Z job seekers, 16% have their job applications submitted by their parents, and one in 10 even outsource their resume writing

to mom and dad. Of Gen Zers who asked for help in their recent job search, 69% say that they have since found a job.

Reasons Gen Zers Ask Their Parents to Complete Their Job Applications

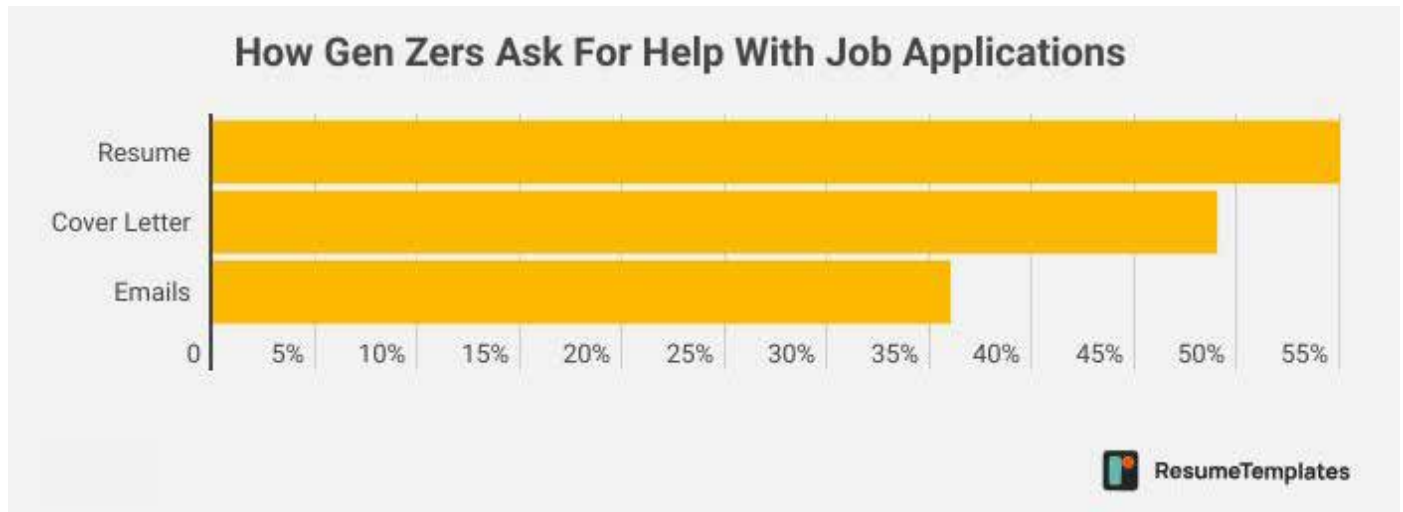


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The main factors leading Gen Z to request their parents to fill out and send their applications

are believing their parents' work is better 46%, lacking communication skills with hiring manag-

ers 34%, being unmotivated 32% and poor mental health 22%.



The trends among Gen Z job seekers emphasize the evolving nature of the employment landscape, as well as the significance of having supportive networks while seeking professional roles. It's imperative for employers to observe these trends, considering the distinct views and requirements of this new generation of workers.

Asia Johnson is an award-winning content marketing specialist for Express Employment International, covering a variety of career topics for job seekers and associated audiences. This article first appeared in the July 23, 2024 edition of Job Journey.

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