

RESPONDING TO CLASSIFIED ADS

While the newspaper-classified sections can be valuable resources for finding jobs, less than twenty percent (20%) of jobs are advertised, so your job search shouldn't end here. The classified ads will often leave out a lot of information, like who the employer is, where the job is located, or what kind of competition you will be up against. You should remember that while it is a lot less work for you to learn about positions that are advertised; it is also less work for everyone competing for jobs. This means there is more competition for the few advertised positions than there will be for those positions available in the hidden job market.

Here are some guidelines that can help you evaluate and respond to newspaper ads:

- Read the newspaper every day first thing in the morning.
- Read every ad. New ads are printed daily. Some ads may even be misplaced, so read all of the help wanted ads.
- Write down ads that interest you.
- Don't be overly cautious about qualifications. Employers are looking for the ideal candidate. However, job seekers can learn or improve skills through on-the-job training or experience. If you think you would like the job, ask yourself, "Could I handle this job with a few weeks of experience?" or "Have I done something similar in the past?"
- Don't skip over the ads that have little information. Job seekers should assume the best about listing and follow up, even if the ad supplies little information. For example, employers often leave out information about salary, hours of work and duties, because these are negotiable.
- Beware of ads that appear too good to be true. They probably are.
- Analyze the ad. Advertisements that appear frequently may indicate that the position is difficult or unpleasant and has a high turnover rate. This may be the reason the employer frequently uses the classifieds.
- Tailor your resume and cover letter. List your specific skills as they relate to the announcement.
- Only include references if they are requested.