

QUALITY EMPLOYMENT SOLUTIONS

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**SUPPLEMENTAL STAFFING**

THE EMPLOYMENT SOLUTIONS PROVIDER

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## How do I gain relevant experience when I've been out of the workforce for too long?

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Try thinking outside the cubicle. While you may not have a previous job to draw from, you may already have a wealth of experience in the form of other activities. Most of the time, you don't have to look too far. Check out the **12 creative strategies outlined here** to help you land an interview and gain crucial job experience:

### 01 INTERNSHIPS

A great opportunity for college students or recent graduates to gain experience. Typically, you need to apply for these. Find a company in the career field you would like to get into. It's a great way to gain hands on experience. Often companies offer a salary or stipend for new graduates who intern with their company. An internship can potentially lead to a job within that company. It can also help build your Reference List.

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### 02 VOLUNTEERING

There are many Non-Profits organizations that have volunteer positions where you can gain work experience. When choosing a non-profit organization, it doesn't have to be with an organization in the field you're looking. You just need to find one that can benefit from the skills you want to use. For example, if you want to get into the marketing field, you could choose an animal welfare organization and become their marketing volunteer. You can focus on photography, social media, local media, networking, etc. These organizations can put your skills to good use. Some companies look favorably on volunteer activities, so reach out to organizations that interest you.

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### 03 NETWORKING

This is a great way to make professional connections that could lead to your job. Join student and/or professional organizations based on your career objectives. Most organizations sponsor networking events, conferences and workshops. Each interaction you have with people in your field of interest could foster a new relationship or contact that can get you an interview for a job you really want. Check out organizations based on your industry of interest.



## 04 FREELANCING

Sometimes you must prove you can do the work before you are hired. Freelancing is a great way to show what you can do. You may have to do your first freelance job for free or low pay, just to gain the experience and positive reference. This will allow you to add additional experience to your resume. Freelance jobs can be as short as a day or two or last several months. Sometimes a job that starts out as freelance can turn into a full-time position. Employers not only want to see what skills you have, but also how dependable you are as an employee.

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## 05 EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

While you may consider your extracurriculars as a pursuit of passion or “just for fun,” they can actually help prep you for your job. Undoubtedly, you are learning how to work with others, taking on various roles and experiencing the highs and lows that come with all of that. It also can allow you to engage with the community.

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## 06 JOB SHADOW

This is a great way to get work experience without actually having a job. Pick a field or a role in an industry that interests you and contact the company about a day that you would be able to shadow an employee. A typical job shadow is either half a day or a full day. Dress professionally if working in an office. If working in a manufacturing industry, know the required dress attire prior to your job shadowing. Bring a notepad so that you can ask questions and take notes about different aspects of the job. From your job shadow day, you’ll be able to observe what skills and achievements you would need for that type of job.

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## 07 START A BLOG

This exercise is particularly useful if you want to be a writer. Many publications care less about the employers that are on your resume than they do about the quality of your writing, so having an online hub that shows it off is incredibly valuable. Even if you’re not gunning for a writing job, penning compelling thoughts about your industry of choice can go a long way in showing, not just telling, that you’re committed to the role even without traditional experience. Not a writer? There are plenty of other media on which you can share thoughts on your desired career – think podcasting, launching a YouTube video series, hosting a regular industry-related meetup, even creating Snapchat stories.

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## 08 HEAD TO THE CLASSROOM

There are plenty of options besides going back to school full-time (though that’s certainly an option), whether it’s part-time professional education, an intensive bootcamp, or online classes. The learning aspect is obviously great, but what’s really key is the hands-on projects you’ll complete as part of the coursework. Do your homework before you go, asking current and former students how the experience has been, what types of projects they’ve gotten to work on, and how it’s helped them professionally. Ideally, you’ll want a course that’ll give you something to show at the end of it (so you can put it on your resume).

## 09 DO WORK BEFORE

## 10 BRAND YOURSELF

## 11 CERTIFICATIONS

## 12 EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Employers want to know you can do that job, so know how you can show them. If you're applying for a job but don't have the traditional experience, bring samples of the type of work you could do for them if you're hired. If the hiring manager says you don't have enough experience for the position, have a list of reasons why you feel you do have the experience – like a list of taglines.

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Building your own brand is a critical step, though it's commonly forgotten. Branding yourself can help people understand your values and objectives quickly. Before talking to any professional or going to an interview, start with your 30-second elevator pitch by answering the following questions: Who are you? What do you do? and What are you looking for?

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According to the Certification and Accreditation Programs Directory, there are more than 1,600 different certifications currently available. Earning certifications that are relevant to your field might be your ticket to landing a job. Certifications show that you are serious about your field and competent enough to do the job at hand.

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This is a great way to have someone else sell your skills and strengths to the decision makers that you can't get in front of. Nearly 90% of companies in North America have used employment services at some point to find temporary and permanent employees. They can also help you evaluate the job offers you receive, to help you choose the best one for you. Getting your foot in the door via an employment service could lead to long-term employment. Worst-case scenario, you'll get job experience that can be included on a resume.

## **You can gain a wealth of experience outside the workforce.**

The next time you are told that you don't have enough experience for the job you want, try using one or more of the techniques offered here. They can help you gain more experience and quality references to assist you with getting your foot in the door. As you navigate your career search, branch out and search for the types of experiences that will translate well to the working world. In short, when it comes to gaining the required experience to land your dream job, remember to think outside the cubicle. That plus some networking and learning how to position your transferrable skills, can be exactly what it takes to put you on the right path.

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