

CHAPTER 3

Use Employment Help Wisely

WHERE will you find your kind of work? Of course, there are more positions in large cities than in small towns, but that doesn't mean that the best place for you is in a large city. Competition is great and expenses are greater in a large city than in a small town. You may find the best place for you to start is in your home town.

If you have lived in a rural community, you may be wise to look over possible positions in a medium-sized city rather than to get into the confusion of Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, or one of the other really large cities. A big city can be a very discouraging and lonely place for a small-town girl.

On the other hand, if you have ability to do specialized work, you may have to go to the city or locality that is the center for that kind of work. The textile, clothing, and related industries are centered in New York, Chicago, and California. Yet you may start to learn about textiles, consumer preferences, and sales problems by selling textiles in a store anywhere.

The best attitude or approach is to be willing to go wherever you can get a good starting position. It doesn't hurt to hope for a certain location and try to find work there, but you may have to sacrifice important advantages of training and advancement if

you limit the choice of location. Two college graduates once wrote a joint letter of application to a company. The letter read:

We will graduate from _____ college in June. Have you any positions in a foreign country? We would like to travel.

The recipient of that letter liked to travel, too. However, she hadn't reached her executive position without hard work on the job at the place where she could learn the most. It took considerable effort to marshal her sense of humor and her charitable understanding of naive youth to answer these two girls who so selfishly limited a job location. Whose expressed qualifications for positions were a desire to have a company finance their travels!

A beau, a favorite aunt, a sunny climate, or a commuting distance from home may be a deciding factor. But it won't impress a prospective employer with your sincerity to make a career of your work.

How Can You Contact Employers?

We might first raise the question, *when should you begin to contact employers?*

There is no one season when business positions are available. This is different from the teaching field where most positions begin at the first of a school term.

Some employers resent having an applicant come in for an interview too far ahead of the time when she is ready to begin work.

Begin planning as early as you wish for your campaign to get a position. The more background information you collect, the better. Generally, it is not wise to write application letters or ask for appointments earlier than *one month* before you graduate. If a position is available, few employers are willing to wait for you.

What about a vacation before you begin to work? In most positions, you will not be eligible for a vacation until you have been employed a year. Therefore, you may be wise to take a vacation and get yourself and your clothes ready before you start work. While you are in school, you should take care of your records, references, and counseling. If you are recommended for a position,

you should follow this lead, but make it clear to the employer just when you will be available.

Now to consider the many ways open for you to contact employers.

Counselors in High Schools and Specialized Schools

Many high schools and most business colleges and other specialized schools have counselors to help graduates find the right positions. Often these schools have close contacts with business concerns that need the graduates. Schools are proud of their graduates and want them to be successful. You will find it pays to know and use the vocational counseling service in any school you attend.

College Counsel and Placement Help

1. If you are in college, you will find some faculty members are especially helpful in guiding you into the best place to work. You will profit by getting to know these teachers well enough to visit with them about your future. Ask them how to start looking for your first position.

2. College and university placement offices at the school are the first consideration for the graduate from these institutions. Most business concerns look to colleges and universities for help in filling certain positions. As a graduate, you should take advantage of this service and be sure to fulfill every requirement in the placement office. Too often a girl expects to marry or to have financial security without work. But history is full of cases where fate steps in and this girl wants to, or must, work. Your college records at the placement office are pieces of security and an insurance against the future. Never fail to complete the records and keep them up-to-date.

3. Some universities have central placement offices in some of the large cities. You can get this information from the placement office on the campus.

Employment Agencies

Business placement or employment agencies play an important role in bringing together the employee and the employer. Some

employment agencies deal with positions in one field of work only, whereas others are general in scope. The purpose of these agencies is to save both time and money in job hunting and to increase the chance of good job placement by efficient direction.

The selection of an employment agency is very important. Good employment agencies are used by business to get good employees and by experienced as well as inexperienced women to obtain good positions.

A good employment agency evaluates the applicant's education, experience, interests, and attitudes, and then matches these with the expressed needs of employers. Such an agency should give counsel on current employment possibilities, arrange interviews selected because of applicant's background, and follow through until the applicant's employment problem is solved.

Such help in bringing together the girl and the job calls for counselors with specialized training in individual fields. If you can register at an agency through a personal call rather than by letter, you can judge whether or not the counseling service is adequate to meet your needs. If you find the counselor does not understand your special field, you will be wise to try another agency. In some states, employment agencies must be licensed by the state. Regulations and requirements vary so much that a license may not always mean a satisfactory service for you.

Before you register with an agency, try to find out something about the service. For example:

Talk with friends or acquaintances who have used an employment service to find satisfactory positions.

Ask your school counselor or advisor in the placement office about the rating of various employment agencies.

If you are a newcomer in a city, inquire at the Chamber of Commerce, Better Business Bureau, or YWCA. These organizations can advise you about the ethical practices and efficiency of the employment agencies.

Consult with men and women in executive positions who have had experience with employment agencies. They should be able to recommend agencies of good standing which are qualified to be of most help to you.

No standard fee is charged for placement service, but an employment agency of good reputation will discuss the fee



Get your clothes ready before you start work.



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with you. You should read the contract carefully to be certain of the terms. There is usually a registration fee of about two dollars. If you obtain a position through the efforts of the employment agency, the charge for this service may be from 40 to 60% or more of your first month's salary. This depends on the amount of your salary and use of the installment plan for paying the charge. Never enroll in an agency unless you read the contract and understand the terms. And never enroll if the fee charged is excessive, or if you have no knowledge of the ethics of the organization.

Other Placement Help for You

1. A PLACEMENT AND COUNSELING SERVICE is maintained by some professional organizations, such as the American Dietetic Association, the Restaurant Association, Home Economists in Business, the Bar Association. These services are available to qualified college students. There may be a charge for such a service.

2. THE YMCA AND YWCA usually have some form of placement service or are able to direct you to such a service. Other organizations for social service and aid to working women often give similar placement help. The Better Business Bureau in a city will have lists of reputable organizations of this type.

3. GOVERNMENT AGENCIES have employment services. These include the United States Employment Agencies, the State Employment Service, and the Civil Service Commission. You may be surprised at the variety of work listed in these offices.

Newspaper Placement Help

1. THE HELP WANTED COLUMNS in a city paper can be helpful to you, but you must be a critical reader. Some listings will be by employment agencies, some will give a box number only, some will list the name of the employer, and some advertisements will be for schools offering classes in a special skill.

You will save yourself time and disappointment if you analyze these advertisements carefully. Usually an advertisement that gives the name of the employer is a better guide to the worth of the notice. However, many times a company does not include the company name if it would cause dissatisfaction among present employees or give information to competitors. Often a list number with the newspaper is your only method of contact with the employer. Here are some typical clippings from a "Help Wanted — Women" column in a city paper:

Best Personnel Service . . . Dress buyer. Large volume department, quality merchandise. Knowledge of all markets essential; Middle West location. High salary.

(If you are a beginner, you'd waste your time to try for this one.)

College Women! Career assignments, claims or underwriting; large all line insurance branch office. Address R.O. 211 — News.

(This might be a lead, if you think you'd like to try insurance work.)

Personnel trainee . . . College graduate with good personality and ability to train for management branch office. No experience necessary. Office knowledge helps. Write P.O. Box 1376.

(This sounds interesting and may be worth a letter of inquiry.)

34 *The Young Woman in Business*

High School Graduates . . . Good opportunities for bright girls with ability to type and take dictation. Telephone Norwood 6-423.

(Sounds like a business college.)

Office Secretary . . . Receptionists . . . Personnel Workers! I work at James and Company so I ought to know! Working at James' has advantages you won't find in many offices. You have all kinds of little extras in benefits and a liberal merchandise discount that means more clothes and other things for you. So come in and meet us in James' office — you'll be glad you came!

P.S. The pay is good at James and Company. Apply employment office, 3rd floor. Week days 10 to 3.

(Don't you wish you had written this friendly advertisement? Even if you don't want to apply, you feel friendlier toward the store.)

2. THE WORK WANTED COLUMNS in newspapers may serve as a guide for you. If you have a definite skill and special experience, you may want to place an *ad* in a newspaper. Be specific in stating your qualifications. Use the newspaper code rather than your name and address. For example:

College woman wants position export business. Speaks German and French. B.S. Degree in Textiles and Clothing. Training in Journalism. No preference for location.

(A manufacturer, buyer, or seller of textiles, clothing, or interior decoration might be interested in such a notice. Other companies you'd never think of might also be interested.)



The Help Wanted columns can be helpful to you, but you must be a critical reader.

Professional Guides

1. PROFESSIONAL MAGAZINES sometimes carry HELP WANTED and WORK WANTED notices. A trip to the library may help you locate this service. The list of officers and the authors of the articles may be a hint for you to follow.

2. DIRECTORIES of members in special lines of work are issued by some professions. The *Directory of the Home Economists in Business Section* of The American Home Economics Association is an example of such a listing. If several names are listed for one company, you may assume there is a better chance for a beginner than when only one member is listed. Be sure to look for the name of the Director or Supervisor if you plan to write to the company about employment.

All These Are Helps for You

1. LECTURES by women who are doing worthwhile work are sponsored by professional and businesswomen's clubs and other civic groups. If you are in a city, the club notices in the newspapers will give you an idea of what meetings you may attend. Inspiration and a good hunch may be found at some of these meetings. You may get a chance, too, to talk to some of the club members and gain encouragement and advice.

2. COMPANY PUBLICATIONS often give a description of the kinds of work carried on by the company, as mentioned in Chapter 1.

3. REPRESENTATIVES from many companies go to high schools and colleges to talk with seniors or to participate in organized career and vocational guidance programs. Take advantage of these guidance talks and personal interviews to learn more about opportunities for work.

4. PUBLICITY STORIES in newspapers and magazines may give a good lead. Read the business page editorials on *who's who* in the business and professional field.

5. VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE MOVIES and slide films are provided by many companies, trade associations, and professional organizations for showing at colleges and club groups. These will give you a pictorial survey of what a company or field of work has to offer and how to contact an employer.

6. ADVERTISEMENTS of products and services may give you a new idea of a kind of work and a company to contact.

7. FRIENDS AND RELATIVES are listed last, but are by no means least in importance in bringing you and an employer together. It is wrong to refuse to take advantage of this help, just as it is foolish to sit back and wait for family and friends to get you a position.

With this large list of helpful services you should feel encouraged about finding the right position. You've decided what you have to sell, you've mapped your plan of attack, and you've sighted your objective.