

# The Virgin Islands Consortium

## Letter To The Editor: How To Prepare For Employment

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Staff **February 18, 2016**



Dear Editor,

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the unemployment rate has fallen from 5.3 to 4.9 percent in 2015, but that's not the case in the U.S. Virgin Islands. The unemployment rate in the territory was double at 11.3 and higher at 11.5 percent on St. Croix, in particular, as of December 2015. However, the V.I. Government's Division of Personnel announced recently that there will be [some 800 public sector jobs](#) available over the next few weeks. I suspect that there will be fierce competition for each one of these work opportunities. Therefore, it is never too early for applicants to start preparing for employment.

Begin by taking the preparation and updates to your resume seriously. According to Skip Freeman, a seasoned headhunter, "A sizable percentage of candidates still don't seem to get how very, very important it is that they make a good first impression on hiring companies". I assure you that this could be critical in your quest to become employed. Additionally, be sure your work experience is written to clearly demonstrate what you have achieved on the job and not just the standard (but forgettable) resume word salad of endless bulleted tasks and duties.

Also, prepare for the employment interview. Find out as much as you can about the department/agency you want to work in. What are their legal mandates, goals and objectives? As a professor of business management for over 30 years and a former Director of Human Resources, you learn how to cleave away the applicants who just "show up" over those who took time to come prepared and informed for their job interview.

Attend the interview appropriately dressed. Your attire should depend on the job you are interviewing for. If it is an office job, don't arrive in jeans or in party clothes, but in business attire. However, this is not to suggest you should break the bank in the effort to make your best impression; it's a matter of taste, not costs.

At the interview, be very conversant about your strengths (skill sets) and your weaknesses. Refer to your weaknesses as challenges - not problems - that you are striving to overcome. In my book, "[Self-Help for Employees: Achieving Success in the Organizational Jungle](#)," I mention the importance of focusing the discussion on the value you bring and will add to the organization.

Try to relax during the interview but demonstrate self-confidence in your ability to do the job applied for. Don't become defensive and angry if you are asked questions that are tough for you to adequately respond to. Rather, address those types of questions sincerely, truthfully and in a tone that reflects a willingness to learn and contribute.

Now let's wish them all the best of luck and success in their quest for employment and contributions to our work force.

Submitted by:

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