

**The Past is
Behind You,
Now It's Time
to Get to Work**

Jobs For Felons



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Introduction

Many times in our lives we deal with things that seem like insurmountable challenges.

For some people, these issues are trivial. For instance, there are many people out there that stress about what type of boat they should purchase or which job they should take.

This isn't real struggle.

Real struggle is what you are experiencing. Struggling to get a job, struggling to put a roof over your head, struggling to feed yourself and your family, that's real struggle.

Because you have access to this guide, I'm going to assume that you are having trouble finding employment. While this is a simple problem for most people, the unique thing about this situation is that you also have a felony record which is making your job search that much more difficult.

As unfortunate your situation is, this guide has been created specifically for people like you.

The truth is, you screwed up. The other truth is that all of us make mistakes in life, except you ended up getting caught and now you have a felony on your record.

Does that mean that you're a bad person? Does that mean that you're a bad employee?

Absolutely not, and this guide is going to help you get employed again.

Your situation isn't unique

Let's start with the biggest misconception that most people have when they are having issues finding a job with a felony.

"I'm unique and no one else knows my struggle."

[According to the US Department of Justice](#), in 2009 a survey revealed that the 75 largest counties in America accounted for 55,902 total felonies. But let's put this statistic into perspective...

The study that the Department of Justice did only included the 75 largest counties in the US and was done in 2009. If you were to add all of the felonies up in every state and did it for a more recent year, it's a certainty that the total amount of felonies would surpass that figure from 2009.

Also keep in mind that this figure represents people in the United States that are convicted of a felony each year.

Do you think that every one of those people is unable to get employed?

The answer is no, I can guarantee that a number of these people serve their time, go to the proper [reentry programs](#), and become employed again.

What I'm getting at is that you can't use the fact that you have a felony as an excuse. You are absolutely right if your mindset is that it's going to be more difficult to get a job with a felony, but don't use that as an excuse and give up hope and turn to crime.

You can still do this, it's just going to be more difficult than it was before.

Success isn't unattainable

I know that many of you may not be fans of the "rah-rah, you can do it" speech, so I wanted to point out people who are ex-felons that have gone on to do amazing things.

Below are five examples of people who have been convicted of serious felonies, served their time, and moved forward and to be very successful professionally.

I was able to pull the stories with a few quick Google searches and 30 minutes of research.

As insurmountable as your situation may seem, I'm sure that these five stories are only a fraction of those who have gone on to have a very successful professional career.

Kweisi Mfume - Congressman and former president of the NAACP

Mfume was a bright-eyed 16-year-old when his mother had passed away from cancer and at that point he took a turn for the worst in his mindset and no one was there to steer him in the right direction.

"Not only did I run with all the worst people, I became the leader," Mfume told [U.S. News and World Report](#). "I was locked up a couple of times on suspicion of theft because I happened to be black and happened to be young."

While in his teenage years, Mfume fathered five children and dropped out of high school. It was incarcerated numerous times and there didn't seem to be much hope for him as a repeat offender.

While I can't find the exact reason for what inspired him to change his life, at the age of 23 he went back to college and obtained his GED. From there he became immersed in education and joined the Black student union as well as the school newspaper.

Eventually he ended up getting a masters degree from Johns Hopkins University and went on to be a member of the US House of Representatives from 1996-2004.

Larry Jay Levine - Entrepreneur and Owner of Wall Street Prison Consultants

On August 3rd, 1998, Levine was arrested by a US department of justice task force and in December 1999, he was convicted on conspiracy charges related to narcotics trafficking, securities fraud, obstruction of justice, racketeering, and possession of automatic weapons.

In 2000, Levine was sentenced to 10 years in federal prison and obviously things looked pretty bleak for him.

However, while in prison, Levine used his mind to escape the walls of his prison cell and study meticulously about federal law and many of his other interests. His studies led to a class action lawsuit against the US Department of Justice and Federal Bureau of Prisons for violating their own policies about transferring inmates to different security levels of custody.

Though he was still in prison, Levine was able to win the lawsuit and went on to complete his sentence without issue.

Upon being released, Levine used his experience and knowledge to become a federal prison consultant and started a company named "American Prison Consultants" which provides information and criminal litigation assistance for offenders.

Greg Mathis - Judge and star of his own TV Show

Many people know Judge Mathis from his popular TV show that has been on air since 1999, but few realize that he is an ex-felon.

Mathis grew up in Detroit, Michigan and ended up joining a street gang named "Errol Flynn's". Prior to his 18th birthday, he was arrested numerous times and was incarcerated as a 17-year-old juvenile.

However, while being incarcerated, his mother visited him and informed him that she had been diagnosed with colon cancer. For Mathis, this was the turning point in his life. After leaving Wayne County jail, he got a job at McDonald's and studied at Eastern Michigan University.

After graduating, he ended up becoming the Honorable Judge Mathis.

Stephen Richards - Professor of Criminal Justice

Richards went to prison for nine years and then went on to become a self-proclaimed "convict criminologist" where he regularly challenges the status quo in academia from criminology professors who have never spent time in prison.

He received his bachelor's degree while incarcerated and after being released, got his graduate degree from University of Wisconsin and a Ph.D. from Iowa State University. He has gone on to become a professor of criminal justice at University of Wisconsin - Oshkosh and has published several guides on criminology.

Daniel Murphy - Professor at Appalachian State University

Murphy obtained his degree in sociology from the University of Wisconsin and started a legitimate business. He looked like he was well on his way to a successful career when it was derailed by a marijuana charge that got him sentenced to five years in prison in 1994.

After being in prison for two years, he was frustrated by his treatment and began to study for a master's degree in criminology. Upon release, he enrolled at Iowa State and obtained his doctorate in sociology and criminology.

So, you see, having a criminal conviction doesn't make success impossible.

Those mentioned above (and I am certain there are many more like them) have been convicted of serious crimes and have gone on to do outstanding things in their professionally and personal lives.

Knowing this, you need to realize something.

You can do it too.

It won't be easy, you're going to have to work hard, you'll hit a lot of stumbling blocks, but you can succeed even with a felony on your record and the goal of this guide is to help you do it.

The purpose of this guide

This guide was created to open your eyes and help you realize that even with a felony conviction, you have your entire professional career ahead of you.

It doesn't matter what your charge is, how much time you served, or what doubts you have about moving forward professionally. The reality is that you can succeed in your career and this guide is going to walk you through the different paths that you can take to make that happen.

This guide is broken down into four parts:

Working for traditional employers: For those who just want to work for someone else, this guide will review all of the tips and tricks that you need to succeed when applying for positions against those who don't have convictions.

Becoming a student with or without traditional schooling: If you've decided that you'd like to focus on your education and get a diploma or a degree, this area will help you understand how you can do that and what financial aid is available. In addition, it also covers alternative sources you can use to become educated that are very cheap and accessible, but give you job skills needed to succeed.

Becoming a freelancer or consultant: If you decide that you want to work for yourself and help other businesses, this area will discuss how you can make that happen. It includes the exact process I've used (and coached others to use) to succeed in this role.

Starting your own website or blog: If the other three areas aren't for you because you're fully entrepreneurial and want to have a website or blog to call your own, this area is for y

Mindset

Before we even begin this section, I want to give appropriate disclosure. This area of the guide contains inspirational content and is going to be a little "rah-rah". I'm not doing this because I'm a motivational speaker or writer, I'm doing this because the majority of the folks who have felonies on their record typically assume that they are destined for failure because every job will turn them away.

Put simply, that just isn't true and you need to have an open mind about being positive as well as applying to numerous positions at companies that you may think would turn you away specifically because of your felony conviction.

On our website you can see that we have an [ever-growing list of companies](#) that (based on our research) hire felons. Some of these company names you may not recognize, but you'll recognize the majority of them and it may surprise you who is listed.

Optimism is key

In my opinion, optimism is key for those that have felony convictions, but it's also key for anybody that wants to succeed in anything that they do. If you spend all of your time focusing on the negative, you aren't going to find the positives.

In fact, it's likely that positive things will present themselves to you, but you'll be so focused on your negative outlook that you'll miss them.

I realize that everybody reading this is coming from a different mindset. Some of you reading this are probably fresh out of prison and trying to figure out what the next move is, while some of you have been unemployed for a few years and can't seem to find anything because your felony conviction gets in the way.

Regardless of your situation, realize that negative feelings and a negative attitude won't get you anywhere.

Get rid of "I can't" from your vocabulary and change it to "I will". As I've already said, it's not going to be easy but you need to realize that it is possible to do whatever you'd like professionally even with a felony conviction and having that optimistic point of view can lead to your success because you won't be discouraged so easily.

Think like an employer

When looking for a job, regardless of whether or not you have a felony on your record, one of the best things that you can do is think like an employer. Imagine yourself sitting on the other side of the hiring table in the interview process. Let's pretend for a minute that you have your own company and are looking at hiring someone;

What is it that you would want to see in the ideal job candidate?

What type of questions would you ask the candidate in order to gauge whether or not they are a good fit?

You've been to prison, how would you feel about hiring your cellmate or some of the people that you met while incarcerated?

I'm sure that there are going to be some people that pop into your head and you think "Yea, they would be a good employee." But also, there are going to be some people that you crossed who you would never trust or hire and unfortunately, most people will generalize all felons into that same category.

If you begin to think like an employer, you'll start to understand why they are hesitant to hire felons and what it is that you can do to break down those barriers.

Let's start out by summarizing what most people will think of someone who has a felony on the record.

- Willingly broke the law

- Not trustworthy
- May steal from the business
- Could be dangerous to other employees
- If criminal record is exposed, it could cause safety concerns from other employees
- Hasn't worked a 'real job' in a long time because they've been incarcerated
- Uneducated (May not be an issue if you were educated while incarcerated)
- Possibly has a substance abuse problem

Unfortunately, these are the types of things that people are going to think of you when they realize that you have a criminal record. I'm going to go ahead and assume that everyone reading this guide has the best intentions in mind and that these stereotypes aren't accurate.

The reality is that if you have a felony on your record, people are going to automatically assume that you aren't untrustworthy. The truth hurts, but most people feel this way because they watch the news or see how prisoners are depicted on TV and usually that's negatively.

Later in the guide we are going to discuss how you can counter all of these generalities, but the thing to understand is that you shouldn't get frustrated with the employer because they think this way. Obviously the law is in place for a reason and regardless of what led to you being arrested, you broke the law and that is going to be frowned upon.

The key point here is that you don't want to take the thoughts that people have personally. The main reason why people think this way is because they probably haven't been exposed to someone who is a reformed criminal that is trying to change their life.

Think of shows like "Prison Break" and "Breaking Bad", in both shows you rooted for the villain, but you would never want to have them working for you.

Go into this job search with the understanding that people are going to immediately think this way and it's going to be your effort and persistence that shows these concerns aren't warranted.

Image is everything

Let's stick to role-playing for a minute and pretend like you are an employer yourself. You've built up a business that currently does \$500,000 worth of sales every year and you are looking for a new sales representative. You've gone through the initial phone interviews and have invited two candidates into your office for job interviews.

Let's go over two scenarios and the psychology behind them.

Scenario 1:

While sitting behind your beautifully crafted oak desk on your leather chair, a new job candidate walks into your office for their 1:00 interview (it's 1:05 by the way) with scraggly hair, tattoos covering their

arms, an untucked dress shirt with rolled-up sleeves, a pair of ripped jeans, and a pad of paper with a pen.

Though you aren't necessarily impressed with their appearance, your past has helped you realize that the way someone dresses doesn't define them so you invite your interviewee to sit down.

You try to make small talk with the interviewee and notice that they tend to mumble often, but that's okay, maybe they are nervous. You then ask for a copy of their resume and they explain that they didn't get a chance to print it and assumed that you would have a copy.

Scenario 2:

While sitting behind your beautifully designed oak desk on your leather chair, a new job candidate walks into your office for their 2:00 interview (it's 1:55 by the way, but you decide you can take the interview now) with their clean-cut hair, shaved face, a suit coat and shirt that have been ironed and pressed which is tucked into a pair of appropriate fitting slacks, and a small leather binder.

You welcome the potential employee into your office and stick out your hand for a firm handshake and make eye contact while saying hello. The interviewee smiles and begins small talk with you about how nice the weather is and the local sports team and after you invite them to sit down across the desk from you, they do so while sliding a printed resume and cover letter across the desk.

Which of these two potential employees are you more likely to hire?

The interesting thing about these two scenarios is that what I just described occurs within a matter of the first minute of you meeting a potential employer. Regardless of what your resume says, or your experience, that first impression is going to be absolutely key in determining whether or not you are the right fit for the company.

Sure, more of the interview is required to determine whether or not you are the right fit, and that conversation will happen, but that first impression will either begin your interview off on a high note, or a low note, and it's completely within your control.

Whether we like to believe it or not, appearance really does play a huge part in how we perceive people. It doesn't matter what you dress like outside of work, how many tattoos you have, or what your style is, when you step into an interview you need to have your "A" game ready to go and look put together.

If you don't have a suit or dress clothes, rent one for buy them from your local Goodwill store or thrift shop.

The reality is that when interviewing for any job there are going to be folks who are really prepared and dress appropriately, and there are going to be folks that don't put the effort or time into getting prepared and adjusting their appearance. This is something that rings true with all job candidates, regardless of their previous criminal background.

I'll tell you what, if I were an employer and had the candidate from scenario one and the candidate from scenario two to choose from, even if I knew that the candidate from scenario two had a felony on their record from five years ago for selling marijuana, the candidate from scenario two would still be my first choice.

Although a felony can be considered a deal breaker, the thing that will get you booted out of an office quicker than a felony is a terrible first impression and terrible interview. Realize this and understand that if you have a great interview it's still going to be possible to get a job.

Admitting mistakes is okay

We all make mistakes. Seriously, every single person that I know has broken the law at one point or another.

I have a lot of personal and professional contacts that enjoy recreational use of marijuana, plenty of contacts who have had one too many drinks (sometimes even at work outings!) and drove home, a handful of people that I know who have stolen property of some sort, people who have gotten into fist fights with others, and practically everybody is guilty of time theft from their employers.

If every person I knew was brought into the court of law, I'd be willing to bet that over 90% of them could be convicted of some type of crime and I'm not excluded.

But you know what?

Most of them were never caught and don't have a felony on their record.

You, on the other hand, do have a record but that doesn't mean that you are unemployable.

The point that I'm trying to make is that you need to minimize your felony conviction in your head. Obviously, some felony convictions are more serious than others, but in the court of law a judge sentenced you to a specific amount of time and decided that the time you would serve was punishment enough for the activity that you were involved in.

At this point, you've done your time and it's okay to move on with your life.

If you walk into every interview thinking that there is no way the employer is going to hire you because of the felony, that's exactly what's going to happen.

Instead, it's better to admit the mistake and explain how you've grown since then.

If you have rehearsed your exact response to someone who says "So I saw you have a felony on your record", and it's an honest response with insight into what happened, how it was a mistake, and what you've done to further yourself personally and professionally since then, it's possible that your response could lead to becoming employed again.

Deciding Your Path

There are five different paths that I think are appropriate for those who have been to prison. Keep in mind that we are in the age of technology and one of the best ways to get ahead is to embrace the tools that are at your disposal.

In our society, three of the most powerful tools are; an internet connection, an internet enabled device, and hard work.

If you are "terrible with computers", you need to find someone who isn't and have them help you understand how they work or you need to use two wonderful websites called YouTube and Google to learn. With that being said, here are the paths that you can take:

- **Work for traditional employers:** Take a job that is typically well below your intelligence level and capabilities as a person. These are the types of jobs that can *almost* be replicated by machines and you aren't really valued as an employee because anybody can step into your place and do what it is that you do every day.
- **Becoming a student with or without traditional schooling:** Whether or not you go to a traditional college and pay a hefty tuition fee, or you find a great online marketplace to learn skills that are in demand, becoming a student is always an option that can lead to a promising career once you've finished the learning curve.
- **Becoming a Freelancer:** Although I feel that becoming a student is the first step to becoming a freelancer, the nice thing about doing freelance work is that you are the boss and you choose what clients you work with. Your criminal record doesn't matter to them as long as you complete your work and you can work from wherever you'd like as long as there's an Internet connection and a computer to work on.
- **Start a website or blog:** Not many people realize this, but creating a website or blog can be a pretty simple endeavor that can potentially lead not only to freelance work, but also a scenario where you make money while you are literally asleep. You've probably heard of these types of businesses before on the Internet and although the majority of them are scams, there are legitimate ways to create online businesses that earn cash while you are asleep.
- **Become a career criminal:** Okay, I put this option only because some people unfortunately are going to take it. They're going to think that it's too difficult to do anything else and they may as well continue committing crimes as that is the only way that they know how to make a living. If this is something that popped into your mind, you need to immediately promise yourself that you are going to put that out of your head for good. ***If you can't do that, you may as well get rid of this guide because it's not going to help you.***

Work for traditional employers

Working for a traditional employer and having a job that is eight hours a day and 40+ hours a week is the most common thought process of somebody who gets released from prison.

The reason?

This is what we have all been conditioned to do. Society has taught us that in order to be a productive member of society, we need to find a job that will give us steady income and work 40 hours a week. I personally don't agree with this mantra at all and have left "Corporate America" for good about six months ago and became a consulting.

But, for those of you that just want to find a job at a traditional employer, this section is for you.

If you are interested in finding a way to work for yourself, I encourage you to read beyond this section about "Becoming a student with or without traditional schooling".

The Resume of a Felon

Ahhh yes, the resume.

One of the absolute essential requirements if you are trying to get a position at an employer, but also one of the most difficult things that you'll have to deal with if you're a felon.

Conventional wisdom for resumes is to list all of your previous employers chronologically, and this would be fine, but obviously you have a large gap in your resume due to the time that you spent in prison.

But that's okay, there's still a way to present this information appropriately.

Realize that your resume has one goal and that is to get you in for an interview. It isn't a place to confess your checkered past or to admit your wrongdoings, the goal is to get you in front of a person at the company so that you can have that conversation there if needed. With that being said, I'm not advocating that you lie on your resume, but I want you to realize that you don't need to say everything upfront.

Employers are able to check your work history and can speak with references to determine what type of employee you are, so lying isn't going to help as it will immediately disqualify you from the running for the position if you get caught.

First things first, when creating a resume for yourself or having someone else create a resume for you, it makes the most sense to make a *functional resume*. This type of resume emphasizes skills, education, and professional contributions. It focuses less on the actual employers that you've worked for and the dates associated with your employment. Obviously this is perfect for someone that has a large gap in employment history.

These resumes are typically for job seekers that are changing industries, just getting out of college, or leaving a single job, but it is the perfect resume type for someone who has been incarcerated as well.

The key to these resumes is that the top/middle portion of the first page of the resume is filled with skills and qualifications and doesn't focus on employers or employment dates of the candidate.

There are many different functional resume examples that you can find by doing a simple Google search, but below is a great example that I was able to get from Monster.com.

YOUR NAME
567 Rosewood Lane
Colorado Springs, CO 81207
(960) 555-5555
cattw@somedomain.com

OBJECTIVE

Executive assistant position allowing for parlay of demonstrated organization, customer service, communication and project management skills proven by 13 years of successful, profitable self-employment.

PROFILE

Motivated, personable business professional with multiple college degrees and a successful 13-year track record of profitable small business ownership. Talent for quickly mastering technology -- recently completed Microsoft Office Suite certificate course. Diplomatic and tactful with professionals and nonprofessionals at all levels. Accustomed to handling sensitive, confidential records. Demonstrated history of producing accurate, timely reports meeting stringent HMO and insurance guidelines.

SKILLS SUMMARY

Project Management	Computer Savvy	Insurance Billing
Report Preparation	Customer Service	Accounting/Guidekeeping
Written Correspondence	Scheduling	Front-Office Operations
General Office Skills	Marketing & Sales	Professional Presentations

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Communication: Reports/Presentations/Technology

- Prepare complex reports for managed-care organizations and insurance companies, ensuring full compliance with agency requirements and tight deadlines.
- Author professional correspondence to customers and vendors.
- Design and deliver series of classes for local businesses and associations, providing ergonomic counseling and educating employees on proper lifting techniques to avoid injury.
- Conduct small-group sessions on meditation/relaxation techniques.
- Communicate medical concepts to patients using layman's terms to facilitate understanding.
- Rapidly learn and master varied computer programs; recently completed Microsoft Office Suite certificate course.

Customer Service/Marketing/Problem Solving

- Oversee front-office operations and provide impeccable customer service:
--Built a clientele supported by 60% referral business.
- Develop and implement strategic marketing plan for business:
-- Launched a thriving private practice, building revenue from \$0 to over \$72K in first three years with minimal overhead.
-- Create special promotions, write/design print and outdoor advertising and coordinate all media buying.
- Won over a highly skeptical medical community as the first chiropractor to target MDs for informative in-service demonstrations, classes and booths:
-- Presentations resulted in standing-room-only crowds of 50+.
-- Four MDs subsequently became patients and referred family members as well.
-- Increased client base by one-third resulting from MD referrals.

Detail Mastery & Organization

- Manage all aspects of day-to-day operations as multisite owner and practitioner of Attwater Chiropractic:
 - Facility rental/maintenance.
 - Patient scheduling for busy office averaging 52 appointments weekly.
 - Finances: accounts payable/receivable, invoicing, insurance billing, budgeting.
 - Supervision of a total of eight medical receptionist interns.
 - Compliance with all healthcare facility, HMO and insurance requirements.

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

ATTWATER CHIROPRACTIC -- Colorado Springs, CO; Pueblo, CO; Cheyenne, WY
Owner/Operator, 1997 to Present

LAKEVIEW RESTAURANT & CAFÉ -- Minneapolis, MN
Waitress, 1994 to 1997

EDUCATION

BARTON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE -- Great Bend, KS
Associate's Degree in Pre-chiropractic, 1993

- GPA: 4.0/4.0

SOME NAME HIGH SCHOOL -- Great Bend, KS
High School Diploma, 1989

COMPUTER SKILLS

Microsoft Word

Visio

Microsoft Excel

Microsoft Access

Microsoft PowerPoint

Medisoft (Insurance Billing Software)

Available for relocation

567 Rosewood Lane | Colorado Springs, CO 81207 | (960) 555-5555 | cattw@somedomain.com

Again, there are plenty of other functional resume examples on the internet and I highly recommend that you do a few searches on Google to figure out which format you like and go from there.

Beyond the format of your resume, there are a few other pieces of advice that I think you should follow:

1) **Whenever possible, use percentages and statistics to showcase accomplishments.** You need to understand that at all companies, numbers rule. Personal thoughts and ideas are almost always ignored if data shows otherwise. This is because most companies (and the managerial staff) look at data to determine what the best course of action is in most situations. Use this to your advantage.

From your employment in the past, try to think of information that you can present which showcases a positive work accomplishment. Stay away from using actual numbers, and instead focus on percentage increases and decreases as it is more representative of what you actually did. If you don't have exact numbers, make an educated guess as closely as you can to what your percentage increases and decreases were at your position.

2) **Don't mention your criminal background.** There is going to be nothing gained by mentioning in your resume that you served time in prison. In fact, the only thing that's going to happen is that many potential employers will see that one line and toss your resume to the side for the next candidate. Instead, make the resume focus on your job skills, education, associations, and accomplishments.

3) **If you worked in prison, it's okay to highlight that as an employer.** While in prison, it's likely that you were assigned some type of job that you worked on a regular basis. If this is the case, you are encouraged to include that position on your resume just like you would at any other employer.

The recommended way to do this is:

State of New Mexico, Commissary clerk.

From there you list the dates and your responsibilities and accomplishments. Truth is, from an employer's perspective, they may just assume that you worked for the state, not that you were serving time in a penitentiary. While this is bending the truth a little bit, this will allow you to sit in front of someone and look them in the eyes while telling your story.

4) **If you didn't work while in prison, the gap in your resume will be asked about.** Know this ahead of time and have an answer prepared. I feel that this is a good place to be honest about your time served and discuss what happened.

Here's a good way to approach this question;

"I'm glad you asked about that as I want to be very clear about my past. From X to X I had to serve time in STATE FEDERAL PENITENTIARY. I served this time because when I was younger I made some bad decisions and hung out with the wrong crowd, and I ended up getting in trouble for it.

*After serving time **for a non-violent and non-drug related offense (This is a good time to mention that your crime wasn't drug or violence related if it applies)**, I've changed drastically and have no intention of going down that path again. I've been out of prison for (LENGTH OF TIME) and am trying really hard to get my life on track and bring my skills and great work ethic to an employer to make their business better.*

*When I've spoken with others, this particular mistake has had them question my integrity but I assure you that I'm a great employee and I just want a chance to show you and this company the excellent work that I'm capable of doing. **In addition, I just want to mention that if you are willing to give me a chance and let me prove that I can really help your company, there is a Work Opportunity Tax Credit available to the company for giving me a shot.**" [The last line only applies if you meet this criteria.](#)*

5) If you don't feel comfortable writing your resume, you may want to [hire a specialist to write it for you](#). The company that I recommend is Resume Writers and they have over 15 years of experience. As an extra step, if you're interested, you may also want to use [ResumeExposure.com](#) which will blast your resume out to hundreds of recruiters which can also be helpful.

The Cover Letter

In my opinion, most people think too hard about a cover letter and don't realize what it's true purpose is.

A cover letter is a summary of your resume, that's it.

Oftentimes, people put too much detail in their cover letter and it detracts from the resume. Though I'm not necessarily a specialist in writing cover letters and resumes, I have had a lot of success in finding jobs for myself and others and here is what I recommend you do.

- At the top-most area of your cover letter you should have your name, address, email, and phone number. This header should be the exact same as what is on your resume. Don't change the font, or the size of the font.

YOUR NAME

567 Rosewood Lane

Colorado Springs, CO 81207

(960) 555-5555

cattw@somedomain.com

- The next area of your cover letter should be a opening paragraph. This opening paragraph doesn't need to go into great detail about your experience, but instead it should focus on the employer and what they need. Below is an example of this section:

Every company needs professionals that are hard working and knowledgeable to meet the goals that are set forth and consistently changing within the organization. I am certain that I could bring those qualities to [COMPANY NAME] because of my previous experience and education with [INDUSTRY NAME] as a whole.

- Next, there needs to be a section that summarizes your qualifications and accomplishments. One of the key things to realize here is that numbers are what managers like to see. Make your years of experience numeric, and summarize any experience that you have with percentages and data. Below is an example of this section:

Experience:

7+ Years of Marketing experience

4+ Years Marketing management experience

Education:

Bachelors of Science in Business Administration;

Masters of Business Administration with a concentration of Marketing

Results: (This is the key area of your cover letter. It should include results that you've achieved both professionally and educationally.)

Achieved Summa Cum Laude honors (4.0 GPA) for MBA with concentration in Marketing.

Successfully managed over paid search accounts that generated roughly \$450,000 revenue per year and reduced cost per acquisition by 40% year over year.

Optimized PPC campaign from a monthly cost of \$5000+ to a monthly profit of \$3000+, increasing efficiency by nearly 800%.

Wrote the course curriculum for various internet marketing courses.

- To close out your cover letter, you want to finish with a strong statement as to why you are the right candidate for the position.

I am a knowledgeable individual who thrives with the challenge of a fast paced environment where my performance has a direct impact on the company. As a leader, I am currently pursuing a [POSITION NAME] position in which I can uphold strong performance standards. As a member of your team, I am confident that my creative, innovative and results driven approach will make a significant contribution to the continued success of your [Sales/Marketing/Customer Service] initiatives and your organization.

That's it! That's all that you need to do in a cover letter.

Remember, this is just a summary of what your resume is all about. In the resume itself you can go into much clearer detail about all of your accomplishments professionally, but the cover letter just needs to be focused on a summary of what you've achieved.

It's a numbers game

With any job search that you have, you're going to have to "kiss a lot of frogs before you find your prince".

What do I mean by this?

Aside from finding scammy jobs that are "Great potential with 100% commission", you are going to have to fill out a large amount applications before you even get a phone call. As frustrating as this may be, realize that this is something that everyone does.

If you go to some of the leading job-search platforms on the Internet such as CareerBuilder and Monster, you're going to see an obscene amount of work from home opportunities and also numerous commission only positions.

Realize that even if times are tough, that is likely a waste of your time.

Instead, I highly recommend that you use a job search engine such as the one located on the [JobsForFelonsHub website](#).

The jobs you find listed here aren't just from the big job search engines, instead these jobs are from other search engines and individual company career pages. Beyond that, we also keep an always updated list of companies that hire felons for your viewing pleasure.

Now that we have a good job search engine to use, it's time to buckle down and begin to fill out applications. The most important thing to understand here is that it's a numbers game and you need to be okay with that when you start. I don't recommend that you fill out 100 applications in a day. Instead, you should make it a goal to fill out at least 10 job applications every single day.

By doing this, you will fill out 70 applications in a week (you don't take the weekends off by the way), which means 280 applications in a month.

You may be thinking, "There's no way that I'm going to find 280 jobs that I'm interested in".

This is probably true and I want to let you know that this is okay.

The reason why you are filling out 280 applications in a month is not necessarily to get your dream job, though it would be nice if that happens, but rather, it's because you need to practice phone interviews and in-person interviews.

When you apply to 280 jobs, if only 5% of them call you back that means that you'll have 14 chances to practice your pitch and get comfortable with interviewing again. Hopefully, a few of those 14 chances that you have are jobs that you actually want.

Target small to medium sized businesses

One common mistake that ex-felons make is they spend hours upon hours applying to really large corporate companies trying to find the job of their dreams.

While this may randomly work on occasion, it's likely a waste of your time. Usually these companies are so large that they have specific rules in place, such as not hiring anybody who has a felony on the record, that can deter you from becoming employed.

The good news though is that there are tens of thousands of small to medium-sized businesses that are looking for help. Depending on the size of the company, they may not even do background checks because they'd rather not spend the extra money to get them done.

You are probably wondering where you can find these job listings. Below is a list of a few different sources that you should check out to find these types of businesses.

1. JobsForFelonsHub.com: As I already mentioned, our website has partnered with the largest job search engine on the Internet and will give you the best job results that you are unlikely to find anywhere else.
2. Craigslist: Many of you probably know Craigslist already, but if not, this is a great marketplace for people who are looking for work. Many of the companies that list jobs here are small and although they have limited resources, they may have a great product or service that you can get

a job selling, marketing, providing customer service for, or whatever your business specialty is. If that isn't your style, there are also plenty of manual labor jobs available if you need them.

One word of warning, there are a lot of scam job posts on Craigslist and you need to be careful and only apply to jobs that don't require you to purchase something up front. Also, usually the ones that state they are "work from home" are scams as well. Just realize that if a job sounds too good to be true, it probably is and you need to be very skeptical and ask a ton of questions to make sure that the job is legitimate before taking it.

3. **[LinkedIn](#)**: You may or may not know of LinkedIn, but this is essentially Facebook for professionals. Instead of sharing pictures of your family or your pet, this is the place where you share what your work experience is and industry insights that you have. The great thing about LinkedIn is that many small businesses will place job postings here in hopes of finding talent that can fulfill the organizational needs.
4. **Startup Community Websites**: There are various startup community websites out there which is a place for startup companies to come to network and share information to help each other out. Every geographic area is going to have different websites, but a good example of this for the Chicago market is [Built in Chicago](#). Although there is a lot of good content on this website, the most interesting place for those with a felony is the [job section](#) which, at the time of this writing, has 756 listings. Many of these listings require specific expertise, and we will get further into how you can get those skills in a later section, but realize that many of these listings are companies that are very young and eager to work with qualified candidates who are hungry to get things done.

Startups typically move at a very fast pace and may be more inclined to hire you if they see that you are willing to work extremely hard for them and I feel that they are more lenient about having a felony conviction. The reason I feel this way is because I used to work at one and an employee there had numerous DUI's which resulted in felony convictions, but they still had a job.

5. **Freelance Websites**: There are a plethora of freelance websites out there and although this won't be a full-time job, there are many small to medium-size businesses that are looking to hire freelancers that are good at their craft to complete work for them. I'm not going to get into much of the process here as we talk at great lengths about this in the "become a freelancer" area of this book, but one such website is [Upwork.com](#).

Social Media is vital

Times have changed and social media is often used by employers to find candidates and by candidates to find employers. It can be a great asset if used correctly because social media allows you to openly display your professional experience. On the other hand, realize that social media can also ruin your chances of getting a job if you write the wrong kind of messages and they are public.

People are often confused about what the purpose is of each social media platform and how they should use them in order to be successful in finding a job.

First off, let's cover some ground rules about using social media.

1. **Potential Employers WILL check your social media profiles:** According to a [press release](#) created by CareerBuilder.com, just over 43% of employers used social media to screen applicants in mid 2014. As companies continue to get more tech savvy, I'm confident that this number will continue to rise.
2. **Privacy doesn't exist on Social Media:** Regardless of the settings that you put on your social media accounts, one thing that always holds true is that these platforms will make updates and when they do, they are able to change their privacy settings without notice. Knowing this, you need to understand that everything that you post on social media could potentially be seen by employers.

If you have any pictures of yourself partying, recreational drug use, posing with questionable objects (such as a gun), or anything that can be considered in poor taste, I highly recommend that you either change the privacy settings on the images so that only you can see them or delete them all together.

Obviously this is just a recommendation, but by eliminating those potentially harmful photos, it will be much less likely that you lose job opportunities based on images on your social networks.

3. **Don't say anything that can get you in trouble:** Sometimes it may be tempting, in the heat of the moment, to say something that you may regret later. For instance, I've seen many times when people are on Facebook on a topic such as politics and will verbally attack each other's intelligence because of their views on a specific candidate. This is only one example, and there are many other ones out there, but the point that you need to understand is that once you say something on social media, there's the possibility that it may never go away. Obviously there is the delete function and you can delete content that you've written, but there's always a possibility that someone took a screenshot of what you said and can then they can use it against you.

Unfortunately this is something that occurs rather commonly and you don't want to be the person that wrote a message out of anger that ends up being posted to public forums and goes viral. My advice is to stay in the clear, be polite on social media and limit your usage. If you have something that you'd like to talk to someone about, give them a call or meet with them in person instead of writing everything for the world to see.

4. **Positive content can change perceptions:** The general consensus about social media is that it is the "real" you. In other words, what you say on your Facebook or Twitter profile depicts how

you are in your everyday life. One great way to take advantage of social media is to post positive content and always write things that are kind to others as well as share interesting articles related to your industry. It's very possible that if an employer is on the fence about hiring you due to a felony conviction, when reviewing your social media profiles they'll see a lot of positive things and may be willing to take a chance.

5. **Social Media can be an amazing place to meet new contacts:** Social media can be an unbelievable place to make contacts in a specific industry or job that you would like to be employed in. Facebook has groups (by the way, if you haven't joined the Jobs For Felons group yet, I highly recommend you do so by [clicking here](#)), LinkedIn has LinkedIn Groups, Twitter has various live chats, and Google Plus has communities.

What you need to do is completely immerse yourself in the industry or position that you'd like to be employed in. In order to do this, you should join numerous groups and actively ask and answer questions so that people become familiar with you. After you've been active in the group for a week or two, you'll probably begin to see some of the same names of people you converse with. Feel free to politely reach out to them and connect. go ahead and ask them questions and career advice if you have some. Who knows, they may even know of a job you're qualified for at their employer or be able to connect you with someone else who could help.

While we could take the next 20 pages to explain the subtleties of social media, I want to keep this guide succinct and focused on what really matters. With that, I'm going to close this section by simply giving you a basic understanding of what each social media platform should be used for in my opinion.

- [Twitter](#): This can be used for personal or professional use, but I recommend that you use it for professional use only as it allows you to easily connect with other people in your industry and posting your personal ramblings probably won't help you in being considered for jobs. Twitter is the most open social network, meaning you can tag anyone and speak with them directly. This can be a HUGE advantage when you are looking for work, but the problem is that everyone doesn't actively use the social network.
- [LinkedIn](#): This is strictly a professional network and if you plan on having a professional presence online, you need to join this social network. In order to be successful on it, you should completely fill out your profile and utilize LinkedIn groups to connect /network with people in your desired industry. **DO NOT** post personal status updates here, this is basically an online resume and you need to always have a professional demeanor while on this network.
- [Facebook](#): I recommend you use this network for personal use and if you do so, make sure that your profile has the [right privacy settings](#). The interesting thing about Facebook that people don't always realize is that there are great communities of people in Facebook Groups and I use these often with great success. Remember, if your Facebook is for personal use, you have to use that same profile for these groups so it's best to keep your posts positive and delete any content or images that could be considered offensive.

- [Google Plus](#): Again this is one of those social networks that people use both personally and professionally, but I choose to keep this one strictly professional and frankly, I don't use it all that often. The nice thing about Google plus is that you can join communities and discuss industry topics within those communities themselves. This is a helpful for networking, but I think LinkedIn Groups are more powerful simply because they are more popular.
- [Pinterest](#): Although some people use this network to drive traffic to their websites, at an individual level I feel that this is mainly going to be used for personal use.
- [Instagram](#): Similar to Pinterest, this is used by businesses to drive traffic to their company website, but you can use it for personal use.
- [Vine](#): This is a social network that almost everybody uses for personal entertainment. I think that's fine, just make sure that you don't give yourself profile a name that's identifiable to you.
- [Snapchat](#): In my opinion, Vine and Snapchat are interchangeable in their usage. As long as you have a username that isn't identifiable to you, you'll probably be okay.
- [Meetup](#): Strictly used for professional networking, Meetup is a great place to find people locally who have the same professional interests that you do. This can be a great place for networking if you're comfortable with doing so in person.

Interview Secrets

Going through an interview is often one of the most stressful and difficult things that anyone can do, let alone someone who has a felony on their record.

Interviews, just like any skill, require practice to be successful. This is why it's always a good idea to apply to a number of jobs and to even take interviews for the ones that you aren't that interested in. In these cases it isn't about the jobs, it's about the experience of the interviews.

Below are some helpful hints for when you begin the interview process. These aren't in any particular order or importance, but keep them all in mind prior to meeting a new potential employer.

1. **Be Prepared:** Before you begin any interview, you should have already visited the company website and written down 3-5 facts about the company. This is especially helpful in a phone interview because one very common question is, "What do you know about *our company?*" When that question is asked, it's always good to rely on these 3-5 facts about the company while explaining everything. This shows that you've done your research and really took an interest in the company before the interview. This preparedness will impress your interviewer.
2. **Have questions ready:** Whether it be a phone interview or an in-person interview, having questions written down or typed out before you begin the interview shows that you are prepared. I usually write 5-7 questions before an interview. Make sure that you don't ask questions that are easily answered by the job description or from the company's website, it'll backfire and make you look foolish.

Good example questions are:

What's a typical day like in this position?

Why is the position open?

What makes your company better than your competitors?

What do you enjoy most about working here?

3. **Think like the interviewer:** Before you go into any interview, realize that your questions and responses need to be specific to that person's job title. What I mean is, don't ask the person in your first interview the same questions as the person in your second interviewer. What you really need to do is think like the person who is interviewing you and cater your questions to them and their level within the company.

As an example, if your first interview is with a senior sales associate, it makes sense to ask them what a typical work day is like, what they like about working at the company, what they think makes a sales associate successful, what it's like being an employee at the company, etc.

If your second interview is with a manager of sales, you should be asking higher level questions like things focused on where the company is headed, why the department is a good place to work, their past experience and why they choose to work at the company, what are key characteristics of the best sales representatives, etc.

If you have a third interview with someone who is a Vice President or C-level executive, you need to think even higher level of questioning. Questions about where the company is headed, why the company is better than competitors, their history at the company, why they are hiring for the position, etc.

Remember, after you have answered all of the questions they have, you NEED to ask these questions and have them written down, or better yet, typed out. It's okay to show that you are referencing these questions as you go through them, it will impress the interviewer that you thought of all of this and came prepared. Also, make sure that if you already covered a question in conversation during the interview that you say something like, "I was wondering about X, but we already covered that. So my next question is..." By simply stating what the question was and that it's been covered, you're showing the interviewer that you have thought through the interview and anticipated the topic coming up.

4. **Don't dress sloppy:** As much as I pride myself in not being someone who is materialistic, the reality is that a sharply dressed person is going to give a great first impression versus someone who isn't sharply dressed. As we talked about in the "Image is Everything" section, if you want to impress an interviewer, you're going to have to be dressed nicely and be well groomed.

While I personally believe that this has absolutely no indication of whether or not you will be a good employee, it does infer that you take pride in your. While this may not seem like much, this is going to influence the hiring decision.

5. **Cover Tattoos:** I understand that tattoos are a way to express yourself and give you a unique appearance. In fact, I personally have a tattoo and many members of my family have tattoos that are visible at all times. With that being said, an interview isn't the place where you want to show off your ink unless you're trying to be a tattoo artist.

Many people associate tattoos with irresponsibility and immaturity, and it's best to avoid that problem if you can. If it isn't possible to cover your tattoos, make sure that you do everything you can to dress nicely and give a good impression.

6. **Be well-groomed:** Take a shower, comb your hair, shave your face, blow dry, whatever you have to do to look well put together is necessary for every interview that you go on.

Again, this is all about your appearance and it may not seem like it's really important, but someone who is well-groomed gives off a vibe that they care about their appearance and therefore, will care about their work.

7. **Smile:** Possibly one of the easiest things that you can do, but many people are too nervous to follow through with it. It's really as simple as smiling during your interview. Interviewers are going to want to work with friendly people and are more willing to connect their own staff with someone who seems to have an upbeat and positive personality.

8. **Sit up straight:** Your posture is another huge sign of nonverbal communication that interviewers will rely on to decide whether or not you are going to be right for the position. If you're slouching in your chair and mumble while speaking, the interview will end quickly and you won't be getting a job offer. Sit up straight, look attentive, and smile.

9. **Start with small talk:** Right after you walk into an interview, one of the best things that you can do to get comfortable is to build rapport. What I mean is, simply ask "How's your day going?" Once your interviewer starts speaking, listen. Just listen to what they say and react as you would with a friend.

When I say that you need to react as you would with a friend, I don't mean you should vent about everything that happened in your day or complain about how many interviews you are scheduling. No, what I mean is that you should respond to them with the normal flow of conversation but definitely don't discredit yourself by saying something silly or complaining.

10. **Don't chew gum:** Let's be honest, gum is a wonderful thing and can keep your breath fresh when it needs it. However, gum doesn't have a place in an interview. If you begin to talk and are smacking your lips together while chewing a piece of gum, it's very likely that this going to irritate your interviewer. Gum is great, just don't walk into an interview with it in your mouth, spit it out before you enter.

11. **Take water/coffee/pop if they offer it:** One of the most common things that happens when you walk into an interview is that the interviewee will ask you if you'd like some sort of beverage.

Every single time that this happens, I advise people to take the beverage. The reason why I say this is that it will help you psychologically while you're going through an interview. It gives you a level of comfort and allows you to sit back and think about what's being said as if you are at a coffee shop with a friend.

In addition to that, the interviewer will also leave the room to grab your beverage while you sit there nervously trying to calm yourself. This is always a great moment to take a deep breath and realize that this isn't that big of a deal. If you deny the beverage, you're going to have to dive right into the interview and your nervousness will likely be conveyed. By taking this extra 30 to 60 seconds to calm yourself and get comfortable, you'll feel much more comfortable when the interview begins.

Lastly, beverages are nice during the interview because if you are asked a question and don't know how to respond, simply grab your beverage and take a sip. Not only does this make you appear confident and comfortable, but it also gives you a valuable 3 to 5 seconds to think about your response before you answer.

12. **Build rapport before and after the interview:** We already talked about how you should ask your interviewer about their day at the beginning of the interview, but it also makes sense to try to build a more rapport at the end of the interview if you feel that things went well.

Building rapport and connecting with your interviewers could be the difference between whether you get hired or not. For instance, maybe during the interview you notice that on the wall there is a picture of a professional sports team. If you also have a similar interest in that team, it makes sense to discuss what the team is doing and how well or how terrible they are.

13. **When asked about your criminal conviction:** Depending on the state that you live in and the people that you give as your personal references, there is a chance that you may be asked about your criminal conviction during an interview. While the laws differ by state, here is an excellent example of how to handle that question.

"I'm glad you asked about that as I want to be very clear about my past. From X to X I had to serve time in WHATEVER STATE FEDERAL PENITENTIARY. I served this time because in my past I've made some bad decisions and hung out with the wrong crowd, and I ended up getting in trouble for it.

After serving time for a non-violent and non-drug related offense (This is a good time to mention that your crime wasn't drug or violence related if it applies, that will put the employers mind at ease), I've changed drastically and have no intention of going down that path again. I've been

out of prison for (LENGTH OF TIME) and am trying really hard to get my life back on track and help an employer make their company more successful.

*When I've spoken with others, this particular mistake has had them question my integrity, but I assure you that I'm a great employee and I just want a chance to show you and this company the positive work that I'm capable of doing. **In addition, I just want to mention that if you are willing to give me a chance and let me prove that I can really help your company, there is a Work Opportunity Tax Credit available from the government for giving me a shot.**" The last line only applies if you meet this criteria.*

- 14. If asked about a gap of employment:** Obviously, if you served a year-long sentence in prison and there is a year-long gap in your employment history, a potential employer is going to become curious as to why that is.

Here you have two options;

The first is that you can use honesty and explain how you made a mistake and served time for something that is now in your past. Obviously you can get as detailed as you want here, but make sure that you explain to the employer what the circumstances were, how you now understand that it wasn't the right thing to do, what you've learned from the mistake, and what you've done to change your life since then.

This isn't the time to play the blame game and explain how someone "framed you" and you were caught. Even if that is true, it's better just to explain that you were hanging out with the wrong people, got mixed up in the wrong type of environment, made a mistake, and have learned and made yourself better because of it.

The second response that you can have is a blatant lie. While I don't condone lying, if you've already lied on your application and have decided to avoid these types of questions in hopes that a background check is never gets completed, you could very easily put that you were self-employed or worked for a family business.

Again, I don't condone lying to potential employers because if they think that you are the best candidate and hire you, your employment can be terminated at any time if they realize that you have a record and you didn't disclose it. Furthermore, it isn't morally correct and from this point forward, you should strive to always make moral decisions.

- 15. Practice before you have the interview:** Just like athletes practice for games, you need to practice for your interview. It doesn't matter if your interview is for something simple like serving at a fast food restaurant. The truth of the matter is that when you prepare for an interview practice it, you'll be more prepared for all the questions that get thrown your way.

16. Research who you are interviewing: Something that always impresses interviewers is when you show that you've done research on them. Typically when you have a interview request, the person who is in contact with you will let you know who the person is that you are interviewing with. When they tell you that information, write down that person's name and utilize a website like LinkedIn.com to find out who they are and what their background is.

One of the best ways to do this is by using Google and all that you need to do is type in the following term, "[FIRST NAME] [LAST NAME] LinkedIn [STATE] {COMPANY NAME}"

It isn't likely that every single person who interviews you will be on LinkedIn, but if they are, it's definitely a great talking point while you are doing a phone interview or in-person interview. For instance, if you mention to them that you saw their LinkedIn profile and that they used to work at XYZ company, the interviewer is going to be very impressed that you took the time to understand more about them.

17. Highlight accomplishments verbally: In your resume you should always have the accomplishments that you've made professionally. Whether the accomplishments are in your education, production, sales numbers, or efficiencies that you've made at a past employer, you always want to highlight what accomplishments you have had in your professional career. However, it isn't enough to just list these in your resume. Beyond that, you should also mention your accomplishments while going through the interview and briefly brush over them as you explain your experience.

For instance, when someone asks you for a general background of your work experience, it's always a good idea to explain what company you worked at, what the position was, what your responsibilities were, and a positive accomplishment that you've had. By voicing these accomplishments verbally, you'll reinforce their importance and it will also make sure that the interviewer actually knows about them. You'd be shocked how many interviewers don't fully read resumes, most of them just skim the page.

18. Print 5 copies of your resume: One of the best things you can do when you walk into an interview is to have at least five copies of your resume printed out. The reason for this is because you never know how many people will be interviewing with you. I can't tell you how many times I've walked into an interview expecting to meet one person, and then someone else is sitting across from the table as well.

In addition to having extra copies of your resume, you should also have a copy sitting in front of you so that you can follow along with the interviewer. This may sound silly, but it's really helpful if you are nervous to have a copy in front of you can reference your entire work history in sequential order. If you don't have a way to print your resume at home, go to Kinko's and print multiple copies there.

19. Bring a pen, paper and a folder: Again, appearing to be prepared is one of the biggest things you can do for an interview. So, having a pen, paper, and a folder with your resumes neatly stacked inside is going to impress your interviewer.

20. Don't let the building fool you: As I've said previously, I think it makes the most sense for those with a criminal record to interview at small to medium-size businesses. However, one thing that can be off-putting is when you arrive at the office of one of these small or medium-sized businesses and see that it's not in a nice building.

I've made the mistake of thinking that an unimpressive building means that the company doesn't have money, but I can tell you with absolute certainty that many small businesses don't have the most enviable offices, but you shouldn't count them out based on the building that they interview you in.

21. Don't ask about salary in the first interview: In your first interview with the company, whether it be in person or over the phone, don't ask about salary. The only exception to this is if you're working with a recruiter, but if you are working with somebody that is at the company you don't want to ask them anything related to salary. The reason is that you need to prove your worth to the company in the first interview to be considered for a second interview. If, in the first interview, someone asks what your desired salary is, then it's okay to answer.

22. Focus on explaining why you are good for them, not why you need the job: One common mistake of people that are looking for a job make, especially if they haven't had a job for a while, is that they focus on why they really need the job. Even if you are completely desperate for a job, you don't want to tell your interviewer this.

It may seem harsh, but the reality is that the interviewer doesn't really care if you need the job, they care what you are going to bring to the company. If you focus on telling the company why you're right for them and how much value you bring, then it's a much better conversation.

23. Mention specific situations that are relevant: When reviewing your previous work history, feel free to bring up examples of things that you did at previous employers which could be considered a skill for this new employer.

For example, if you did sales at your last job and this new job is looking for a salesman, you should definitely talk about a difficult customer that you worked with or a large account that you closed and how you did it. By relating past work experiences with the current employer, it will prove your value.

24. Don't be combative if challenged: You may not like this, but there are going to be some people who interview you that are having bad days. Beyond that, there are to be some people that interview you who might just be flat out rude. In either case, instead of getting angry and

irritated by comments that they may make while you are in the interview, do your best to answer the questions honestly and smile. Unfortunately, we never know who we are going to interview with and some people just don't know how to talk to other people.

25. Have a firm handshake and eye contact: Regardless of how much you weigh, how tall you are, or if you're male or female, you need to have a firm handshake with your interviewers and give eye contact. A handshake is typically the first impression that people get and the last memory that they have of you before you walk out the door. If you have a firm handshake with eye contact, it shows that you are confident and comfortable. I'm not going to say that you could potentially blow an entire job chance based on a handshake and eye contact, but it definitely doesn't hurt.

Interview follow-up

Once you've gone through an interview and exited a company's building, you can breathe a sigh of relief. The hard part is over, and now all you have to do is make sure that you follow up the next day.

Many people over think how they should follow up with an interview and decide that it's best to send a really long email summarizing everything that was discussed in the interview.

This isn't the right way to do it, but I do have the perfect template for you.

Dear [NAME OF INTERVIEWER],

I want to say thank you for having me at [COMPANY NAME] yesterday. I really appreciate the time that you took out of your busy day to discuss the [JOB NAME] position with me.

Some of the key points that I took from the interview was that your team is looking for someone who [IMPORTANT POINT 1], [IMPORTANT POINT 2], and [IMPORTANT POINT 3]. I know that I'm the right candidate for this position because I encompass all of these personality traits/know what it takes to succeed even with these problems (choose what phrase works best).

Thank you again for your time and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

-[YOUR NAME]

That's it. You don't need to mention everything in the interview or write a long email, just mention three important points that were discussed, emphasize the fact that you are good for the position, and tell your contact at the company that you're looking forward to hearing from them soon.

At this point in the process, your interviewee has already decided whether or not they want to talk to you again. If they don't contact you after this email, move on to the next employer. Even if it felt like a good interview to you, realize that something went wrong and the employer doesn't want to talk to anymore. This is okay, don't take it personal. Most people won't tell you directly that you aren't a good

fit, usually they will just ignore you and hope that you get the hint. it's annoying and rude, but it's reality.

Background Checks

A big point of confusion for many people is understanding what exactly is disclosed in a background check. What can potential employers see? What will they be able to tell by the background check that they submit?

As much as I would love to give you an answer that makes sense in every situation, unfortunately, it depends. It mostly depends on two factors; how much an employer wants to spend and the goals of the employer. For instance, if a company is hiring a driver they may want to also get a background check regarding your driving record.

So you see, there is no answer for every single situation, but here is what is available to an employer when they do a background check:

- Your local and federal criminal record
- Your driving record
- Employment History
- Education verification
- Reference checks
- Drug testing
- Your Credit Score
- Name, address, age.
- Fingerprinting checks
- Social media presence

As reported by this [background check service](#), it is estimated that a felony or misdemeanor will show up on a background check only 10% of the time. According to Nick Fishman, the chief marketing director with [EmployeeScreenIQ](#), there is a 57% discrepancy rate between what an applicant puts on an application and what the company finds in his or her background.

These statistics were very surprising to me when I researched them, but this goes to show the reality of finding a job. While I always advocate that candidates tell the truth, it's good to know data around this information as it could potentially help you in your job search in the future.

First day on the job

If you were able to find a way to get employed, you need to now focus on impressing your employer. You did so much to get to this point, so make sure that you don't drop the ball on your first day at the company. Similar to your interview, make sure you are well-groomed and dressed appropriately.

The night before you go to work, get a good night's rest and eat a good breakfast. Even if you don't intend on staying at this employer for a long time, making a good impression on your first day is going to be vital.

Pay close attention, listen carefully to what's being taught to you, and ask questions when appropriate. You've finally arrived at your destination of finding a job and where you go from here all depends on you.

Become a student with or without traditional schooling

When I talk about becoming a student, many people automatically assume that I'm talking about going to college. Usually the response is, "But with a felony, I can't go to college anyway!"

First off, that statement isn't correct. It is possible to go to college with a felony, but there are a lot of elements that play a part in determining whether or not you are accepted for financial aid.

Secondly, that actually isn't the type of student I'm talking about.

You see, many people think that the only way to be successful professionally is to get a college degree. While I personally feel that a degree will help you and is a great "insurance policy" for employment, it is NOT a requirement.

What is a requirement though is that you get trained on the skills you need to get the job done and develop a track record of doing good work. I know, I know, right now you may not have the skills or a good track record, but that's okay.

The idea of becoming a student isn't about sitting in a classroom for 3-4 hours at a time and listening to theory-based lectures. Instead, I am an advocate of using the [various online platforms](#) out there to learn skills yourself and then find freelance work to test how good you actually are.

If this sounds overwhelming to you or something that isn't possible, [keep reading](#).

This really isn't impossible and because technology has become such a big part of our lives, there are a ton of resources out there to make it so that you can get moving right away. In fact, depending on your level of motivation, it's very possible for you to be trained and freelancing for other companies in the next 30 days.

But this area of the guide isn't about freelancing, that's what the next section is. For now, let's just stick to talking about how you can develop the skills you need to become confident in your skills while working for others.

Need skills to be successful

In order to become a consultant or freelancer for any company, you're going to have to have a specific set of skills to be successful. Although I'm a huge believer that the best type of skills that you acquire are on the job, the fact that you are having a difficult time finding employment makes that impossible. But that's okay, there are numerous resources available online that can give you the skills you need to be successful.

First off, there is traditional schooling and while this resource is good for the theory-based learning, it doesn't always apply very well in a real-world work environment. What I mean is, in many classes you

will sit in a room with somewhere between 20 to 500 other students and hear a specialist in a particular field who has studied a subject for a very long time lecture about what works and what doesn't work and how things have changed in the industry. This is how traditional schooling typically works and while this is beneficial to a point, it isn't very helpful if you are looking to get job skills.

Instead of that, think about what would happen if you went to a trade school. In these types of schools, it's much more hands-on learning and instead of focusing on theories, you focus on the application of skills that you learn. However, the problem with trade schools is that some of them may not accept you because of your criminal background or you may not qualify for financial aid.

So, what is it that you can do?

If you've exhausted your options or they just don't seem like the right fit for you, I highly recommend that you utilize a platform like [Lynda.com](https://www.lynda.com). This company was recently purchased by LinkedIn.com and, in my opinion, has the highest quality courses out there. The platform has over 3,500 courses available that focus on topics which will give you highly sought after job skills.

The best thing you can do for yourself is to [start a free 10 day trial](#) and dive right into a course that you'd really like to learn. If you want my recommendation, I suggest that you go to the "marketing" courses and view what is available there.

Obviously though, this is my preference because I am a marketer by trade, but they also have courses focused on animation, audio and music, general business, CAD, design, web development, education, IT, photography, and video.

The reason why this is such a good idea is that our society as a whole is heading down the path of becoming increasingly reliant on technology. These job skills that you can get learn online aren't going to go away and with a [free 10 day trial and a cost of \\$25 per month after that](#), this platform is an amazing investment. To be clear, having a membership here will give you unlimited access to 3,735+ courses which can be accessed on any device, even a smartphone.

There are additional job training platforms that we like as well and you can see them [here on our website](#).

Traditional Schooling is still an option (usually)

First things first, if you didn't get a high school diploma or GED, it's relatively easy to fix that. If you want to stay local, I highly recommend that you contact a local college and explain to them that you'd like to go to a program to get a GED. Oftentimes local colleges have relationships with established GED programs and will refer you to a trustworthy source.

The other option is to take classes online to receive your GED. Online schooling is no longer a fad and it's become mainstream over the last 10 years. The biggest thing with going this route is that you need to make sure that the school you choose to attend online has the proper accreditation.

If you're wondering, accreditation basically means that there is a third-party agency auditing the schools GED program to make sure that it meets the standards of the department of education. If the program doesn't hasn't been accredited, you may as well throw your money away. Even if you go through the program and get your "GED", it's going to be nothing more than a useless piece of paper because the school wasn't recognized as an approved resource for those seeking an education.

Now, let's move on to college.

There are two extremely common thoughts that felons have when they consider going back to college.

1. **I can't afford to go to school because it's too expensive**
2. **I can't get accepted to college with a felony**

What if I told you that both of these thoughts are incorrect?

First off, let's discuss the idea that **college is too expensive**.

While this is true (trust me, I could barely go to college for this same reason), did you know that there are many cases where you can receive financial aid to help pay for school? Some of this money is completely free, while some of the money is through student loans that you pay back later with a low interest rate.

One of the biggest misconceptions from those who have a felony is that they won't qualify for financial aid and this isn't entirely true. While there are certain limitations to receiving financial aid, in many cases it is still possible even if you have a felony on your record.

Based on our research from various outlets, and the [federal student aid website](#), here is the best explanation that I can come up with to explain whether or not you can get financial aid to help pay for college.

The Federal Student Aid program has been created specifically to help perspective students attend college even with limited finances by giving free money. This free money comes in the form of "Pell Grants" as well as subsidized and unsubsidized federal student loans that need to begin to be paid back six months after graduation, although you can extend that date if you are seeing financial hardship.

There are three very specific situations which may make someone ineligible to receive Federal Student Aid:

1. Not a US citizen
2. Defaulted on a previous student loan
3. Convicted of a felony drug crime **while enrolled as a student, and while receiving federal student aid money.**

The key to #3 is "while enrolled as a student" and "while receiving federal student aid money".

You are still eligible to receive federal student aid money if:

1. Your felony conviction is not drug-related, or
2. Your felony drug conviction happened while you were NOT a student, or
3. Your felony drug conviction happened while you were a student, but during a time in which you were not using Title IV money (if you paid for your classes using cash or private scholarships).

The Federal Student Aid program is very specific and every situation is considered carefully. For instance, if you were arrested and charged for a drug crime while in college, but not actually convicted until after you left school, you would still be eligible. In fact, even those who have been convicted of a drug related felony that have gone through an approved drug treatment may be able to reapply and get accepted for federal student aid.

The reality about college is that it is expensive, but that shouldn't hold you back. The Federal student aid program has been created specifically to help those who are in need and it's very possible that you may qualify. In fact, even those that are currently incarcerated can get federal aid with the [Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant \(FSEOG\)](#).

Beyond the federal government, you may also be able to receive aid from:

- The state that you live in
- The college that you attend
- Non-profit and private organizations

Getting accepted to College with a Felony

Contrary to popular belief, having a felony doesn't necessarily put a damper on getting accepted to college. Many colleges will look beyond felonies and be willing to accept you, but unfortunately there isn't a single clear cut answer for every single college out there.

The two things you need to realize about applying to college with a felony are as follows:

1. As mentioned above, your financial aid may be limited.
2. You need to be very careful with the classes/concentration you focus in.

We have already spoken about financial aid, so let's focus now on why you need to be so careful about the classes you take and the concentration you choose.

Obviously when you go to college, you take classes in an effort to get trained for a specific job or career. For instance, many people will go into a nursing because it's a great career, has plenty of work available, and pays a livable wage.

However, as a felon that would be a terrible concentration for you to work towards. Why?

Because nursing requires a state license and if the state won't allow you to have a license because of a felony, then you will waste years of your life and a lot of money in the process. It's also important to realize that colleges are there to educate you and are willing to give you a chance to better yourself, but you should definitely speak with an admissions advisor about your felony and be as honest as possible. Ask them what your career options are and work with them to come up with a plan for your future.

Once your admissions advisor explains what you can expect, it doesn't hurt to get a second opinion from someone else to confirm everything that you were told. It may seem like overkill, but it's a much better idea to do this than to go through an entire educational program and find out that you can never get employed anyway.

Now, if you have a drug conviction, sexual offense, or violent crime on your record, it may be that the college won't accept you at all. Even though [this report](#) shows that criminal records don't necessarily equate to problem students on campus, there is little regulation around college acceptance due to having a felony on your record so it is at the schools discretion.

If you find that being a student on-campus isn't possible, it's okay! There are plenty of distance learning programs out there that are high quality and even allow you to take classes out of your home or a local library.

It may seem odd going to school on the "computer", but realize that it has become common for job applicants to get hired with a degree from a distance learning college. In fact, I have a bachelor degree from an online program myself and it has never held me back professionally.

Non-traditional schooling works too

If sitting through classes each day, or utilizing a computer to type in discussion boards and write papers isn't your thing, there's other alternatives to traditional schooling. We've come to a time in our society where technology is everywhere and it's easier than ever to sit at home and work from your computer to make a living.

In my opinion, I think that everybody should take advantage of this and find a way to get the training that they need to be successful professionally. Most of you are probably wondering exactly how that works, but it's much easier than you think.

The great thing about the Internet is that it allows people who are specialists in a specific subject to easily create courses that can be consumed by the general public. While this information used to be extremely costly and sometimes even required an individual to travel to a specific location to see a workshop, that's no longer the case and now courses can be delivered virtually, it's really changed the game.

In my opinion, there's no better skills to have than the those that are relevant to the tech industry.

As an example, what would you say are the three biggest companies in the U.S. right now?

Odds are, at least one of those companies, and possibly two or even three of those companies are tech related. Whether it be Apple who creates technology products, Google that runs the world's largest search engine, or Facebook which is the world's largest social media platform, all of these companies are technology focused.

While I can't promise that you'll get employed at one of these companies, I can promise that if you decide to focus on taking a few courses in a specific technology-related skill, such as web design or Internet marketing, there will be plenty of work for you down the road.

I've already recommended [Lynda.com](https://www.lynda.com) as a learning platform, but realize that they have a strong focus on technology and that's why I think they are the best place to learn your skills. I've used them myself numerous times for training and each time I'm never disappointed with the result.

Digital employment is the future

Take a moment to think about how much society has changed in the last 10 years. Remember, at one point there was no Facebook and social media didn't even exist. Beyond that, most of our cell phones had black-and-white screens and the only game that we could play (which is still one of my favorites) was called snake.

In the last 10 years, technology has evolved substantially and this trend isn't going to slow down anytime soon.

For a long time our country went through a phase where we were the best at creating quality products with the use of assembly lines and production-focused warehouses. Although that industry will never die, it's no longer where there's a lot of opportunity.

The great thing about where we are at as a country is that the internet technology sector is still in its infancy. I firmly believe that our culture will become even further ingrained with technology and with this comes immense opportunity for those who are trained in the skills that are needed.

The good news is, just like going to school for a trade such as woodworking, HVAC, or a CDL license, you don't necessarily need a degree to make this happen. What you need is to learn the skills that it takes to be able to perform these tasks that are high in demand.

My personal favorite thing about this industry is that everything can be done remotely. Meaning, you don't need to go into an office to do your work.

As an example, I'm currently an Internet entrepreneur and marketing consultant but I don't need to go into an employer's office to do my work. Instead, I wake up when I like, work the hours that I want to work, and I work for myself.

My personal background makes no difference to my client. Instead, the only thing that matters to them is that I have a proven track record of successfully helping others and that I can do so for a reasonable price in a preferred time frame.

Picking the right skills to train for

When you take the leap and decide to get trained for additional job skills, it's incredibly important to get trained in the right job skills. Meaning, before you invest your time learning a skill, you need to make sure that it's something that can actually make you money.

While I feel strongly that [Lynda.com](https://www.lynda.com) has a lot of very marketable and useful skills, it's still important to verify the need for the skills and to recognize particular areas that have a lot of potential. Below are my thoughts on some of the courses available there.

Developer Courses: Without a doubt, one of the best skills that you can get training in is website/software design and development. These courses are focused on helping you understand how to create websites and applications from scratch. The number of websites still needed by small businesses is very large and I'm confident that this trend will continue to grow as time goes on as more and more people use mobile devices. On a side note, I recommend that you focus on understanding the **Wordpress** CMS as it is incredibly popular.

Graphic Design: If you're a visual person and have a talent drawing and painting images, it's very likely that you would do well in graphic design. Basically this skill is something that is used by all businesses for both online and off-line marketing materials. In this day and age it's very uncommon for businesses to use sketches on a piece of paper, instead they rely on designs created on a computer to get ad content created.

General Web Courses: As we've already discussed in this guide, there is a universal trend where the majority of business is being done on the Internet. Instead of shying away from this industry, your best move is to embrace it and to train yourself to understand how the web works. There are many courses listed here that will be helpful, but it's important to get that general understanding in order to succeed.

Photography: If you're big on photography, these courses are going to help you tremendously in understanding how to use photography editing software and to hone your skills as a photographer. These skills are incredibly helpful as many businesses need experts to edit photos and images in order to make them appropriate for their business.

3D and Animation: If you're big on video games and like the idea of creating three-dimensional characters and animation, this can be helpful for you. It should be noted that 3-D and animation is a pretty competitive field as a lot of people enjoy these activities, but it's still possible to pick up work if you're good at what you do.

Video producing and editing: If you have an interest in shooting and editing videos, this is a good area for you to focus on. I can tell you from experience that video editors, especially the good ones, are always in demand and make a very livable wage with what they do.

Audio and Music: If you have an interest in audio and music, this is a great place for you. Oftentimes businesses need people to edit interviews and videos, and having these skills will make you a valuable hire.

General Business Skills: If you don't have an understanding of Microsoft office products such as Microsoft Word and Excel, this section is great for you. Beyond that, if you don't have other general business skills this is also a good section for you too.

Internet Marketing: This is where I have made my career and there is still plenty of room for others to join in the industry. Simply search for things like **Google Adwords**, **Facebook Marketing**, etc. Once you are trained in these skills, you'll be able to freelance for small companies and run their advertising programs.

I'd say the key with any of these areas is to do research around what it is that you want to train on and then go to a website like [Upwork.com](https://www.upwork.com) and see how many people are hiring for a specialist trained in that skill.. For example, if you decided that you want to focus on learning web design, you can search for "web designers" and see how many jobs have been posted. Please make sure to do your research before you begin training on anything, otherwise you might be wasting your time.

The last thing to note about the courses that you elect to train in is that you should always keep in mind other computer programs you'll need to fulfill your job. For instance, if you want to become a photo editor, you'll probably need Photoshop. This comes at a cost of \$30/month. However, if you choose to specialize in Wordpress or Google Adwords, there is no extra cost because the program is free to use.

Become a freelancer

I'm a firm believer that the best route for anyone with a felony on their record (or even those without it) is to become a consultant or freelancer. I have a lot of reasons for thinking this way and below is a list of the reasons why.

- You are your own boss and don't have to answer to anyone but your client(s)

To me, this was one of the biggest lures of becoming a freelancer. I can't tell you how many times I despised having to answer to a boss and when you work with clients, they are the only people that you have to answer to.

- Your criminal record doesn't have to be disclosed to your client(s)

Your criminal record is irrelevant and your client doesn't need to know anything about it. What they care about is whether or not you can get the job done. It doesn't matter if your felony was class A or class D, the employer just wants you to work on their project and deliver something that is of high quality. All of the work that I do (and the work that you could do too) is completely virtual and you never have to leave the house if you don't want to.

- You have absolute freedom to work with who you want, when you want

Over time, I've learned that some clients are terrible to work with. Once you've reached the point in consulting to where you have a full list of clients, you can very easily turn those a way that you don't enjoy working with, or those that are late with paying their bills. This is a very nice perk and can make your freelancing experience much more enjoyable.

- You keep 100% of the profit for your hard work

Many people don't realize just how much money businesses make on a regular basis. For instance, if you are an employee that gets paid \$15 an hour, you probably make the company (directly or indirectly) at least \$50 an hour. The beauty about working for yourself is that you don't have to continue to get a fraction of the profit. Although you have to pay taxes on all of your income, you can retain a much larger percentage of the money that you work hard for.

- You get to decide what your hourly or project rate is

In the beginning of your quest to becoming a freelancer, I recommended that you have a hourly rate that is similar to others in your market. However, what ends up happening over time is that once you become well known and have a lot of clients, you can continually increase your hourly or project rates. I started out charging \$45/hour and now I charge \$100+/hr for my services. What's more, I know of other consultants the charge upwards of \$500/hr. I know that this seems like a crazy concept, but those who are skilled in these technology trades are in very high demand and there is no shortage of work.

- You can determine your own income

Whether you want to work 10 hours per week or 60 hours per week, you'll be able to determine that. It all starts with your first client, but if you continue to deliver quality services and ask for referrals/prospect for new clients, you'll be able to get as much work as you want. The sky really is the limit, it just depends on how hard you want to work.

But before you become a freelancer, the biggest thing that you need to focus on is making sure that you get the training required to deliver the services that you offer. The worst thing that you can do is work really hard to get a client and then completely bomb on the services that you trying to deliver.

Start with small clients

A big mistake that freelancers make when they first start out is they try to land a really big client. I'm here to tell you that this a foolish way of doing things and the main reason is because you're just not ready. What you need to do when you start out is find small clients for jobs that are \$250 or less.

There are a few reasons why recommend the strategy.

First, any job that costs \$250 or less to complete is going to be rather quick. For a business, \$250 is a pretty small amount of money and the amount of work is going to reflect that.

Second, it's better when you start to get 10 small jobs from 10 different clients than one big job from one client. The reason is because when you get 10 small jobs, you can use them as references and also begin to build a book of business. With the skills that we're talking about, many of the clients who hire you for a small job once will continually hire you for more difficult/time consuming jobs in the future. If you only have one employer and one big job, you don't grow your network and if that employer let's you go, it will be bad news.

Third, there's always a possibility that you are going to completely screw up on your first few freelancing gigs. While it would be ideal that this didn't happen, there's always a possibility that it will and if that's the case, it's better to have a small client never want to use your services again than a big client.

Fourth, and my final point, when I utilize freelancers I always make sure that they have a track record of success. If I had to choose between one freelancer who has a portfolio of ten companies that they worked with and 5 positive reviews versus a freelancer who has only worked with one company and has one positive review, I'm probably going to go with the freelancer who has worked with more companies

and has more reviews. The thought process there is that this person has worked with numerous companies and can adjust themselves and their approach to work in many different scenarios.

Understand what you're up against

When you first start out as a freelancer, you have to be very eager to take any work that comes your way. This means that you'll probably have to work for less than what you're worth, you'll have to deal with some clients that you really don't want to work with, and you'll have to work harder than the next person to get ahead.

But the good news about this is that it will get easier as time goes on, just understand that when you the a new consultant you're going to have to just focus on getting business.

In addition to that, you also should realize that if you go with my recommendation and use an online job board like [Upwork](#) than you're going to be bidding against people from other countries. These people will likely work for less than you will and you'll have to compete on price very much when you first start out.

The good news is that once you have a high quality profile and many good reviews, you'll be able raise your hourly rate substantially and people will pay it. On a side note, and something that we will talk about later in this guide, realize that the fact that you speak English and are in a United States time zone is a huge asset to beat out other freelancers. Most freelancers from other countries aren't fluent in the English language and communication is a huge issue when working with them. I've personally spent over \$10,000 working with them over the last five years and that's the biggest problem that I always have.

Do your absolute best

When you first start out, try to go above and beyond in every single freelance gig that you get. Work incredibly hard to get your gig done before the estimated timeframe and make sure that you over communicate as opposed to not communicating enough. Lastly, it doesn't hurt to do something a little extra for your client as well. For instance, you could suggest an improvement on what they're working on or a faster way of getting something done.

Do everything you can to try to increase the perceived value of your deliverable. Even if you complete a small amount of extra work, make sure to highlight that when you tell your client that the project is completed. This type of freelancer is what every small business wants and one that the business owner will trust very quickly.

Learn on other people's dime

This particular point sounds a little shady, but hear me out. What I mean when I say "learn on other people's dime" is that you should get your initial training from [Lynda.com](#) and then every new job that you are awarded, you'll have an opportunity to learn while you work, but you'll be getting paid to do it.

It doesn't matter how many guides are read or how many training courses you go through, seeing and doing are two different things. When you start out and have clients that you do work for, the reality is that they are pretty much paying you to learn.

One important thing to realize is that you should always have your clients best interest in mind. I'm not advocating that you tack on extra hours of labor as you study a particular skill set that you should already know for the job, but I am telling you that when you first start out and work through your projects, you can learn a lot just by completing your work.

Communication is vital

It was already mentioned earlier, but having good communication with your clients is the number one thing that you need to do when you begin as a freelancer. In my opinion, it makes sense to give a recap/update of a project that you're working on every single day. Doing so will impress your client and make more willing to work with you again.

There's also going to be certain situations when you'll do this and clients will tell you that you don't need to communicate as often and that you can just tell them when major milestones of a project are reached. I assure you that this is much better than being yelled at by a frustrated customer because you haven't discussed any parts of the project with them.

Although this seems like a lot of extra work, it's only going to be a lot of extra work the first few times that you work with the client while they're getting comfortable with you. When a client has finally grown comfortable with you, they will need these updates less often and will trust that you are doing your work and will update them when major milestones have been completed.

Where can you get clients?

One of the most important things you need to do as a consultant is to find clients. While it would be ideal if you could just ask a neighbor for some work, that isn't always the case. With that being said, there are other options that I suggest that can help you land clients.

Use Upwork.com: I mentioned [Upwork.com](https://www.upwork.com) previously, but this is the best place on the internet to find freelance work. I'll be honest in telling you that you'll have to work for less than an ideal hourly wage at first to build up your portfolio, but after you have a few satisfied clients you can add to your hourly wage and continue to bid on new projects.

Craigslist: It's possible that you've already looked on [Craigslist.com](https://www.craigslist.com) for work in the past, but did you know that if you look under "gigs" and "services" you can find jobs outside of manual labor as well. I recommend you check this out if Upwork.com isn't doing it for you.

Social Media Accounts: There are numerous social media platforms that you can use to find freelance work, you just need to search the right places. First, fill out a LinkedIn.com profile and list all of the skills you have that will be important to those looking to hire you. After the profile is completely filled out, go into the LinkedIn groups section and start to network with people in your industry. You'd be surprised how effective this can be if you make it known that you need more work AFTER you have been involved with the community for a few weeks.

You can do this exact same in Facebook too as many brands have opted to use Facebook groups as opposed to Facebook pages. The biggest thing here though is that you need to make sure that your

profile is reflective of a professional in the field. If you have a bunch of inappropriate pictures and statements on your personal Facebook, it's going to be in your best interest to clean it up before you try to network with others.

Lastly, Twitter can be a surprisingly great resource to connect with industry professionals as it is one of the few social networks that is completely open and gives you the ability to reach out to people even if you aren't connected. Before you reach out, make sure that you retweet a few of their statuses and comment about their shares, but if you've said a few nice things they'll be more likely to message you back.

Ask Family and Friends: It sounds cliché, but yes, you should absolutely mention what you are doing to family and friends. The best way to position it with them is to say;

"If you need work done or know of anyone, let me know."

The best thing about your friends and family is that they care about you and will typically do whatever they can to help you out. If you have the right personal network, this can be the best source for new work, but I understand that everyone doesn't have this so it isn't always the most reliable source.

Create a Blog or website and share on social media: One thing that I highly suggest for everyone that is looking to become a freelancer is to create their own website with their name as the URL. I say this for three reasons.

- 1) By creating a website with your name and picture, you'll push content on Google search results about your conviction down the page, thus reducing the chance that someone will find out about your criminal past.
- 2) When you have your own website or blog, share your blog posts on your social media feeds for everyone to view. You don't need to ask everyone to hire you, but I have gotten a handful of clients with this exact method because they have their own project that they've been working on and my name kept popping up.
- 3) By having your own website/blog, you'll be able to showcase your skills to others. When people see that you have a website with a handful of satisfied clients, it's much more likely that they will trust hiring you and be willing to move forward with a consulting engagement.

Email Outreach: One final way to get work is to simply email small businesses that you have services available. I'm not a huge fan of this method, but I literally get an email every day of someone trying to do sell me their services, so I have to assume it works. I think the biggest thing here is that it depends on your industry and what skills you have.

This strategy is highly adaptable, but the key is to be specific to the individuals situation and personalize it so that it doesn't seem like another one of "those" emails. A great way to do that is to point out some issues with their current website and offer to help.

Start a website or blog

One of the things that I have done over the years is create a number of websites which have provided me both with consulting and passive income.

If you don't know what passive income is, it's basically income that you make while you sleep. I mean, you literally sleep and while you are doing this the website works for you. Although this probably seems like it's impossible, which is what I thought at first, there are ways to actually make money without busting your butt 8-12 hours a day.

However, realize that if you go this route it isn't going to be instant. Creating a successful website that makes you money month after month takes a lot of time upfront.

How to make a website

One of the biggest problems that people have when they want to start a website is trying to figure out how to actually make one. While I understand that this can be a daunting task if you've never made a website before, it's actually MUCH easier than you think.

To do this, there are two steps you need to take:

- 1) Create your blog or website and this [3-step guide](#) will help you understand how.
- 2) Learn how to use [Wordpress with these tutorials](#).

There is obviously a lot to learn as you work on your website, just remember that [Lynda.com](#) and [YouTube.com](#) are always there to help if you are looking for an answer to a question.

Different types of websites

There are multiple types of websites that you can make if you want to go down this road.

1) Personal blog: When you create a website with the purpose of being a personal blog, it's going to be a branding tool for your own name. When you have this type of blog, you need to remember that every post that you create is going to be in the public domain. Meaning, every person on the Internet is going to be able to access everything that you've written. This can be very beneficial, but it can also do a lot of harm if you don't realize this up front. Make sure that whatever you write, you're okay with having a potential employer or client see it.

2) Website selling product: Another type of a website is one that sells a product. This could be a product that you create yourself, or it could be a product that you purchase and resell. It could also be a product that is digitally delivered. For instance, you could sell access to a course and once people purchase it, you'll give them the ability to view it.

3) Selling a service: The next type of website is one that sells a service. If you've decided that being a consultant is something that you want to do, this can be a great complement to your work. With any service website, you want to showcase the clients that you've worked for, how long you've been around, the skills that you have, pricing, and why you're better than other people in the industry.

4) Authority Website: One of my personal favorite types of websites is an authority website. In fact, JobsForFelonsHub.com is one of my authority sites and one that I take great pride in. With this particular website, you take a subject that you are passionate about and research/write everything you can for that particular Demographic.

5) Affiliate website: Although this type of website is probably foreign to most of you, this is one in which you take someone else's product and sell it to your audience and make a commission for each sale. This is great if you have products that you think your audience would like and a great way to make extra money without taking the time to create a product yourself.

However, the most important thing with any type of affiliate partnership is that you believe in the product. If you recommend bad products to people, you may anger them and they will no longer trust you.

Brand URL with name

Regardless of what type of website you'd like to create, you should give very strong consideration to the idea of purchasing a URL with your name in it. The reason I say this is because unless you have the same name as someone who's famous or a very common name, it's likely that potential employers and clients will do a Google search before hiring you.

As you've probably discovered, there are many companies out there that will post mugshots online and charge you a fee to get them removed. One of the best ways to fight this is to get their listings and pictures pushed down the search engine results page. In other words, the more personal profiles/websites you have related to your own name, the more that the negative search results will be pushed down the page.

Highlight positive sentiment

If you decide to make your own website, make sure you have an about page and you talk about yourself personally and highlight positive things that you've been a part of. Remember, it's likely that in time your website will be the first result for your name so anything that you put there will immediately be seen by people who search for your name on a search engine.

I wouldn't suggest that you disclose information about your time in prison, but instead you should highlight positive things that you've done in the community and with organizations. If you don't have any of these highlights available, you may want to consider volunteering.

Focus on credibility

Probably one of the biggest things that you can do with any website is focus on credibility. For instance, if you have a product or service that's been purchased a few times, ask your customers for testimonials and make sure to make it clear that people like what they purchased. In addition to that, it also makes sense to highlight any associations that you are a part of or have worked with. Lastly, showcasing your education, training, and years of experience is going to be instrumental in being able to sell your product or service. If people perceive you as being an expert in the industry, you'll be much more likely to win business.

Contact info should be easy to find

Regardless of the type of website that you decide to make, it's always a good idea to make the contact area very easy to find for your website visitors. It doesn't matter if you're trying to establish a personal brand, selling a service, selling a product, or anything else. Contact information needs to be found easily and can make the difference between your business failing or succeeding.

Another thing that helps a lot is to have a live chat feature if it's appropriate. I don't think you need to have this for a personal branding website, but if you have any type of product or service, it makes perfect sense.

Make your website pretty without spending a bunch

The biggest hurdle that most people have when they create a website is that they don't want to spend a lot of money. In fact, if you try to hire a web designer and utilize their services, it's likely to cost you hundreds if not thousands of dollars to get a website that you'd like. Instead of doing that, here is what I recommend:

- 1) Learn Wordpress with [these tutorials](#) (Free trial at [Lynda.com](#))
- 2) Buy a Wordpress theme at [Themeforest](#) (\$30-\$50)
- 3) Buy hosting for your website [using this guide](#) (\$3.95/month)

Total cost: Under \$100 and you'll have your own website in no time.

The reason why I recommend using a theme at Themeforest is because it will give you a great foundation to start with. If you try to create a website from scratch, you're going to have to sketch everything out and figure out how the website should look. If you use a platform like Themeforest, you'll be able to do a live preview.

By looking at a live preview of the theme, you can gain an understanding of exactly what your website will look like before you ever even purchase the theme itself. This way, you can buy a theme for cheap and it is already prebuilt to what you need. It reduces the cost that you'll have with developers and is much easier than doing everything yourself. In fact, JobsForFelonsHub.com was built using a theme called "marketing expert" and you'd never realize it.

Closing thoughts

In closing, I want to thank you for reading through this guide. While I don't know every single person's circumstances, I know that you got this guide because you need help and I'm hopeful that it's allowed you to open up your mind and understand that there are still ways to get employed even, with a felony on your record.

At times in this guide it may seem like I'm trying to steer you towards being your own consultant and taking the path of an entrepreneur, but I'm doing that because I sincerely feel like it's the best path that you can take. If you work for other companies, you're going to find that a minimum wage job isn't enough to cover the bills and you'll struggle for a very long time.

I personally feel like it makes the most sense to become a consultant and work for yourself moving forward. You'll never have to answer to anybody about your criminal record and the sooner you get started, the better off you'll be in the future.

It takes time, hard work, persistence, and patience to succeed. But if you are able to commit yourself and really focus on this, I'm sure that you can do it, I feel like anybody can.

The road less traveled is your new path

Due to your previous mistakes, you need to understand that the traditional career path of working at various companies and working your way up the corporate ladder to get a senior level position may not be realistic for you. But again, that doesn't mean that having a good job or career is impossible. You just need to be creative and think of other paths that you can to earn a living.

As unfortunate as your situation may seem, I think that it's a blessing in disguise. I worked in Corporate America for over 10 years and continually wanted to take the leap into entrepreneurship, but was too nervous to do so.

The good news about you is that there are very few alternatives and your back is against the wall. You basically need to make this work or you are going to have to deal with some pretty dire circumstances and when people are pressured to make things work the most, that's when they tend to do their best.

You can do it

Forget about your past failures and any mistakes that you've made in the past. Moving forward, the only thing that matters is what you do from here on out. I don't care if you've had a lot of disappointment in your life, or if you let a lot of people down, now's the time to redeem yourself and if you really focus on what I've told you to do in this guide, you'll be successful.

It's not going to happen overnight, it may not happen as quickly as you like, but realize if you take this path and get the training you need you'll be able to succeed.

Whenever you begin to doubt yourself and wonder if you can make this work, just remember that you've already survived going to prison and that's one thing that some of the strongest willed people in the world would have a really difficult time with.

If you can get through that, you can get through anything.

Start small, grow big

Everything that we are examining in this guide starts with baby steps. Whether you want to work for someone else, work for yourself, create a product, or create a service, you're going to have to start small and grow over time.

It's okay to start small, it's okay to work for minuscule wages at first, and it's okay to swallow your pride as long as you understand that putting in the hours now will end up leading to more success in the future.

Be patient and don't get frustrated early on as there will be a lot of bumps in the road when you first start out. If you decide to train yourself and begin consulting, there are going to be numerous times when you spend hours trying to figure out a problem that should only take you minutes.

This is okay, it's part of the learning process and as you continue to work you're going to develop your skills were you'll be quicker and better than other people. It's an uphill battle, but once you reach the top of that hill you'll be able to command a very respectable hourly wage and it will provide you with a living for yourself and your family if you have one.

Don't be a jerk

One thing I want to mention as a closing point is when you have those difficult times and your frustrated, take a deep breath and don't act like a jerk towards anybody. You've already been through so much and you don't need any more enemies.

If you go to a job interview, it goes terribly, and the interviewer insults you, thank them for the time and walk away. If you get a client and they are incredibly rude to you and tell you that you can't do your job, thank them for the time and walk away. If you try to create a product or service and a lot of people tell you that it's a terrible idea and it won't work, thank them for the time and walk away.

You're going to have to have some thick skin while you go through this transition as you're going to make a lot of mistakes. Truth be told, I still make mistakes every single day and when someone calls me out on it, I just take it as a learning opportunity and move along. It doesn't make you less of a person for walking away from a bad situation, it makes you better person because you'll learn and not make the same mistake again.

Ignore the haters

The thing that you are going to discover while you go down this path is that there are to be many people who test you every single day.

Some of them will really care about you and will question some of the things that you're doing and want to make sure that you are on the right path (these are the people who truly care about you).

Some people will question what you're doing because they're jealous of what you're trying to accomplish or they don't believe in you.

Don't let the second group of people influence you and in any way. This consultant thing and running your own business isn't rocket science. There are plenty of entrepreneurs out there who didn't even graduate high school and that goes as a testament to say that what really matters is a person is driven to succeed and willing to learn as they go along.

If there's someone out there who is not supportive of you or says that what you're doing isn't realistic, just try to distance yourself and stay on the right path. Yes, you have a criminal conviction on your record, but this isn't the end for you and you still have a lot of great things to accomplish.

Join our community

Many times while you go through your journey you're going to have many issues that slow you down or have potential to stop you in your tracks. At times like this, it's best to have a community of like-minded and friendly people behind you that want to make sure that you succeed. This is especially important if you don't have anybody that your close with who is very supportive and you're doing this all by yourself.

The good news is, we thought of that and have already created community for you.

If you want to get involved and connect with other people who are in a similar situation, I highly recommend that you join our [Facebook community](#).

We offer this community completely free and aspire to grow it to tens of thousands of people who are all supportive of each other in an effort to make this entire community a better place.

All that you need is a Facebook account and email address to get started, so [sign up today](#).