

4 work-at-home jobs to keep in mind

Customer service agent

- Preferred education: High school
- Essential skill: The gift of gab

When you dial a company's help line, the call typically goes to a mega call center somewhere. But increasingly, customer service calls also route to home-based agents, who answer questions, complete forms and log complaints through their computers. Hours are flexible and few firms require specific education or experience. Training (usually paid) is provided, and you will be expected to have phone and Internet service that meet minimum standards. Also expect to undergo a credit and background check. SYKES Home Powered by Alpine Access, Convergys and West Corporation rank among the major employers. All three are highly rated by the Better Business Bureau, usually hire agents as employees rather than contractors, and offer benefits such as paid vacation and medical insurance to full-time workers.

Tech support

- Pay: \$17-\$29/hour
- Preferred education: Associate or bachelor's degree
- Essential skill: Fluency in geek-speak

Computer nerds and A-V types can make solid salaries in tech support, where demand is high and hours flexible. Working out of home offices, such techs generally serve as the first point of contact for customers troubleshooting everything from laptops to televisions to MySQL servers. Some work directly for major brands and retailers, such as Apple and Best Buy. Apple's at-home workers are hired as employees, not contractors, and receive perks such as iMacs for business use and about \$600 a year in reimbursement for Internet service. But job seekers should also consider third-party support providers, including PlumChoice, which handles tech support for Fortune 500 companies.

Virtual assistant

- Preferred education: High school
- Essential skill: Ability to juggle calls and clients

A virtual assistant does everything a traditional assistant might do, from scheduling appointments and maintaining records to preparing memos and reports. Most VAs are contractors, not employees, and they operate out of their homes as independent businesses with multiple clients. Newcomers can market themselves to potential clients through local business groups, Facebook and Twitter, and the International Virtual Assistants Association jobs board. Zirtual, a Las Vegas-based company that provides virtual assistants for busy professionals nationwide, hires full-time and part-time assistants who must be able to work specific hours each weekday.

Online tutor

- Preferred education: Bachelor's degree
- Essential skill: Knowledge is power

A college degree, a computer and a bit of patience are all it takes to break into online tutoring, a field that can be both personally and financially rewarding. Sites such as Tutor.com match teachers and students in "online classrooms," where they use live chats to teach lessons and help with homework. And while Tutor.com only requires BAs from its applicants, other online opportunities exist for people with advanced degrees. GetEducated.com, for example, lists remote job postings at community colleges, libraries and online universities. Most of these teachers are hired and paid as part-time employees; Tutor.com and similar sites hire on a freelance basis only. But that doesn't mean teachers can't make a comfortable wage. On top of hourly earnings, Tutor.com pays bonuses for "exceptional work."

— Kiplinger

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY >>

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Computer Systems Analysts

Chicago, IL Apply by Mail

ZENSAR TECHNOLOGIES, INC. - has openings in Chicago, IL. All positions may be assigned to various, unanticipated sites throughout the US. Job Code: US240 Computer Systems Analyst (Scope/Support); req & impact analysis, release & testing. Job Code: US241 Computer Systems Analyst (Programmer); studies & solutions design + testing. Job Code: US242 Computer Systems Analyst (Solutions/Migration); release, analysis & support. Mail resume to: Zensar Technologies, Inc. Attn: Carmen Melchor, 2107 North First Street, Suite 100, San Jose, CA 95131. Include job code/s & full job title/s of interest + recruitment source in cover letter. EOE

Discover Products Inc. 5664201

Riverwoods, IL Apply Online

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Enterprise Account Engineer II

Chicago, IL Apply by Mail

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IM Consultant 2 (Mult. Pos.)

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Lead Analyst

Arlington Heights, IL Apply by Mail

HSBC BANK USA, N.A. - Lead Analyst; HSBC Bank USA, N.A., Arlington Heights, IL. Provide technical leadership and ongoing system support across the organization. Req's: BA in Comp Sci, Math, Stats, or rel & 5 yrs post-bacc, progressive work exp in a computing or info science environment. Alt: must have MA in Comp Sci, Math, Stats or rel and 3 yrs exp in a computing or info science environment. Qual exp must incl: Programming in SAS, SQL, Unix, & Data warehouse concepts; Design & coding meths w/in fin srvc industry; DB query writing skills; Design, dev & maintain highly complex DB & data marts incl Oracle & DB2; Dev, test & write complex appl programs, queries & profiles to spec including SAS, Unix & SQL; Exp in data validation & bus standards; & working w/ & overseeing offshore teams. Employer will accept any suitable combination of educ, training or exp. TO APPLY: Must reference "Job Code: 3005" to be considered. Apply by mail - Attention: Sarah Scibelli, HSBC Bank USA, N.A. 95 Washington Street, Atrium 1NW, Buffalo, NY 14203. EEO/AA/Minorities/Women/Disability/Veterans.

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Management Analysts 5549037

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Marketing Product Lead Analyst 5660750

Elk Grove Village, IL Apply by Mail

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Microsoft Dynamics AX Developers 5549037

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Oak Brook, IL Apply by Email

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Quality Engineer II

Chicago, IL Apply by Mail

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Quantitative Software Engineer 5662689

Chicago, IL christopher.dow@rossignolphoenix.com

ROSSIGNOL PHOENIX, LLC - Seeking Quantitative Software Engineer to work in Chicago, Illinois. Design, develop, and deploy machine learning and quantitative modeling software packages and architecture for use in financial trading strategies. Develop methods of optimizing and efficiently implementing software in support of trading strategies. Develop testing software to test current and future models and systems. Requires knowledge of Python and C++ and experience developing and deploying quantitative models and machine learning systems in context of trading or quantitative finance. Submit resumes to christopher.dow@rossignolphoenix.com or mail to Rossignol Phoenix, LLC, 1812 S. Federal Street, Unit 8, Chicago, Illinois 60616 c/o Christopher Dow, EOE.

Sales Engineer

Chicago, IL Apply by Mail

GOOGLE LLC - Interested candidates send resume to: Google LLC, PO Box 26184 San Francisco, CA 94126 Attn: V. Murphy Please reference job # below: Sales Engineer (Chicago, IL) Solve customer's business challenges using Google technologies. #1615.41718 Exp incl: enterprise archi dsgn highly scale solns for enterprises; Cloud comput; dev scalable arch using API mgmt & PaaS; Web & Mobile appl dev & integrate platform solns; end to end sys arch for Mobile & Internet of Things apps; dsgn & arch sw for scalable, distrib sys; & utilizing Cloud Compute, network, & storage solutions to arch solutions.

Climb that job ladder. Make your way to the top.

Who cares? What you leave off your resume may be just as important as what you include

Not everything needs to be included on your resume. Sure, that summer after your sophomore year in high school you spent painting Old Man Murphy's siding may have taught you a lot about character and commitment, but it probably doesn't belong on the current summation of your experiences. In case you're wondering what belongs and what doesn't belong on today's resume, here's a list of things to avoid:

Unnecessary text: What are the first sayings you should realize when you're putting together a new resume or revising the old one is that former formatting rules aren't really necessary. In fact, they were never necessary in the first place. There's no need to include "Email" before listing your email address or "Phone" before your number. If a company you want to work for needs to be told what those words with that funny, little circle-a symbol mean, you probably don't want to work there anyway.

Cliches: Any phrase like "hard-working," "punctual" or "responsible" is hopefully stating the obvious. We'll just assume that you don't coast through the day, that you don't show up for work 45 minutes late and that you don't spill coffee all over the floor at least once a week without ever cleaning it up. While it may seem like you're laying the groundwork for some of your bigger and more important traits, you're taking up valuable space with qualities that are a given. And besides, no one's going to admit being a lazy, chronically tardy, blame-shifter when they apply for a job. If you have enough examples of your experience, skills and achievements, you shouldn't need to boost your resume with unnecessary words.

Your personal info: There are people who like to include their marital status, age or religion — or obvious hints about them — on their resume or cover letter in the hopes that it may personalize their relationship with a potential interviewer or draw some attention to something about their lives that a hiring manager might consider a plus. Don't do it. Many HR professionals will tell you they get a little nervous when they see unsolicited personal information on resumes and applications because they feel like they will then have to resist the urge to use bias in a place they wouldn't even

consider using it in the first place.

Photos: In keeping with what's been stated above, don't include a photo of yourself on your resume. Unless you're applying for a specific position that advertises openings for candidates with the best smile, most freckles or best '80s hairstyle, there is no reason to include your photo on any job application or resume. Frankly, it's kind of creepy.

Irrelevant jobs: Unless there's a direct reason why a job more than 10 — OK, 15 — years makes you a good candidate for a particular position, there isn't much reason to mention it. And if you need to mention to fill some space, keep it simple. Don't use the same approach you use with your current or recent job. Simply state the job, the title, the location and the timespan and that's it. Think of your resume as a password. You're trying to gain access to a particular place. Just like logging into your email account, there's no need for extraneous letters and numbers. Use only what you need.

Warnings: Even subtle descriptions of something like your age aren't helpful. You may think that your letting a potential employer know you're over 50 will spare you from being turned down for a position down the road but it's not good practice. Aside from the obvious age-discrimination issues, your age is insignificant when companies — and the apps they use — sort through the initial pile of resumes. If you're nervous about letting people know that you're older than the average candidate, don't be. Your experience will state that in ways your age can't anyway, so get over it. Besides, if you're what the company is looking for, and they're honest about their goals, they won't care if you're 25 or 55.

References: You don't have much space so don't include names, titles and contact information for the people you assume will give you a glowing recommendation. In fact, don't bother with the standard line of "References available upon request" either. That's sort of a given. If a company's job ad indicates that they want a list of references when you first apply, that's one thing, but offering up the names of others when you haven't even made it beyond the first wave of filters is a waste of space and time.

MANAGEMENT >>

Manager, Analytics 5670366

Riverwoods, IL Apply Online

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MARKETING >>

Global Insights Director, Brand Equity 5663691

Chicago, IL Apply Online

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TELEMARKETING >>

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Downers Grove, IL mperga@midwestern.edu

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SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2020



Interview small talk can be tricky but that doesn't mean it isn't important.

Casual interview conversation may require a little planning

“So, how 'bout this weather?” If you've ever tried to make a quick connection at the beginning of a job interview, there's a good chance you've used the above ice-breaking statement that probably made you cringe as soon as the words left your mouth.

Despite our reluctance to embrace the tried-and-true opener, it does have its merit. You ask about the weather because it's a shared experience, something that both you and the interviewer are dealing with in real-time, whether it's a blizzard or a perfect day. Besides, what else are you supposed to talk about? Dish on the latest episode of “Below Deck” with someone who potentially despises Captain Lee? Brag about the Sox to a lifelong Cubs fan? Offer your opinions on Donald Trump?

Interview small talk can be tricky but that doesn't mean it isn't important. You're trying to find some commonality with your interviewer, a connection with the person who will have a direct hand in hiring you, moving you on to the next level or throwing you off the island. In some cases, you can do a little research beforehand and learn about your interviewer's interests. Or maybe you can find a nugget of information that straddles the line between that person's business role and pop culture that makes for good banter. In most cases, however, you'll be interviewing with an unknown entity, leaving you little knowledge of what that person likes or dislikes, so it's best to have an idea of what you might want to cover.

If you are trying to put together a list of things to talk about, keep in mind that it's just as important to consider things not to talk about. **With those parameters in mind, here's a list of some do's and don'ts concerning small talk during a job interview:**

• **Do talk about the obvious.** As mentioned above, people make fun of weather and sports-talk but it's low-hanging fruit when looking for a topic for conversation. If you have an amusing rain-related anecdote about your commute that morning, go ahead and share. It may lead to a brief, casual discussion about driving in the rain.

• **Don't talk about politics.** Even if you learn that your potential hiring manager is passionate about a political cause or candidate, it is best to keep those feelings to yourself. Unless it pertains directly to the job, any political leanings shouldn't be obvious to your interviewer.

• **Do mention something about the setting:** Mentioning the history of the building may score a few points. Or maybe you can bring up the company's obvious dedication to plants, given the small greenhouse in the lobby, or the selection of original works of art on its walls. If it's applicable, mention something pertaining to the decor of your interviewer's office. Whatever you decide, mentioning something about the physical location or office space within the building is almost equivalent to the friendly things people

might say about your home upon their first visit. Think about that neighbor who mentioned how much she loves your couch when she first stopped in to introduce herself, despite the fact that everyone else in your home hates the couch. Even the people who sold you that couch hate that couch. But your couch-appreciating neighbor? Friend for life.

• **Don't get too personal.** If you see a photo on your interviewer's desk of her and her family, don't mention the fact that you have two daughters as well, unless your interviewer brings it up. While it may be appropriate small talk in other scenarios, HR specialists tell me they find it a little off-putting when job candidates make assumptions based on photos in their office. An HR friend said she actually puts all her office photos away before she interviews candidates because job candidates often assumed her nieces were her daughters, and it just made for some awkward moments before the interview even started.

• **Do keep it short.** You need to realize when your interviewer has given a closed-ended answer, signaling that he wants to move on to the meat of the interview. If you find that you have something like marathon training in common, you can mention it and get a response, but then let it go. Keep in mind that your interviewer is there to find an appropriate candidate for the job, not a new training partner.

• **Don't lie.** Sometimes it's easy to get carried away when you're making small talk and say things that just aren't true. You may think you're making a connection by telling the obvious 49ers fan that you have season tickets but unless you're ready to cash in that chip if you get hired, it's best to stick with the truth. The same goes for trips and various experiences. If there's a photo of your interviewer climbing Mont Blanc — and you purposely take the inside seat on the train because you hate looking out the window when the tracks are elevated — resist the urge to say “Hey, I climbed Mont Blanc, too!”

• **Do talk about restaurants.** When I asked what subjects HR professionals enjoy chatting about before the real interview kicks in, many of them said they like talking about the restaurants that are near the office. People casually bring up a restaurant nearby or on the first floor of the building and the next thing you know, there's a quick conversation about what's good or not so good about the mentioned restaurant, and maybe an ensuing discussion about other restaurants or food in general. When an interviewer says something like “I'll check out that Ethiopian place you mentioned” when the interviewer's over, there's a good chance you've given them something to remember about you. And in this era of Instagrammed meals and Yelp reviews, restaurants seem to be displacing weather and sports teams as the pre-interview conversation of choice.

— Marco Buscaglia, *Careers*



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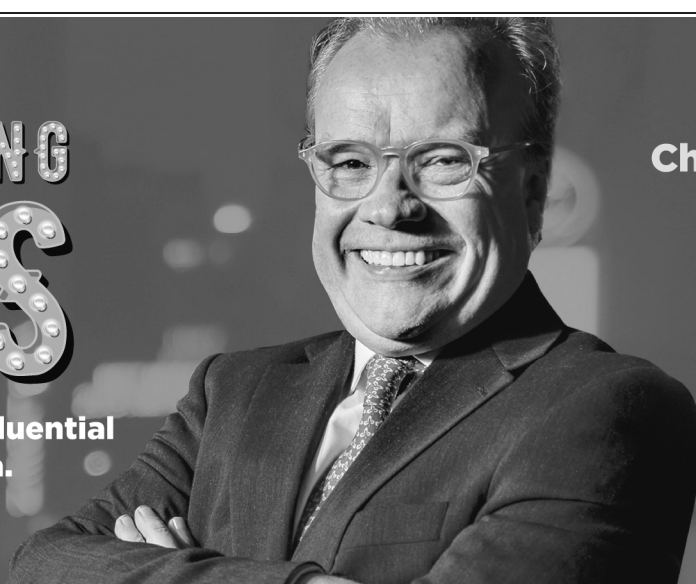


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