

# **Additional Considerations**



**Hunting for a job where a  
bicycle is your primary  
transportation**

**by Brian Bigelow**

## ~ Introduction ~

This book will be a bit different than most of the job hunting books that are available. It has been written by someone that doesn't have a drivers license and understands that it changes a few things when someone is seeking employment. In 2005 I lost my driving privileges as a result of being caught driving without insurance. This has made my job hunts much more difficult than they would have been otherwise if I had been able to drive a car. Of course the downturn of the economy in 2007-2008 didn't help me at all either, it made it even harder to be successful at finding employment. When you rely on a bicycle as transportation it definitely doesn't mean that you can't or won't be able to find a job, it just means you have to effectively pre-plan how you are getting to an interview on time. You'll also have to prepare yourself for how you will be answering specific questions when they come up as they invariably do.

At the end of the book I've included a copy of my actual resume which I will be referring to elsewhere. As you will be able to see I've had to hunt for a job many times in the last few years and I've never let it get me down. I've had to become much more determined and work much harder than most people to be successful at finding a job. While this book is mostly directed at someone that uses a bicycle as a primary form of transportation there are quite a few tips that will help anyone to become more effective. My desire is to help as many people as I possibly can to get the jobs that they want in any job market.

## ~ Your Bicycle ~

My primary transportation happens to be a bicycle (the picture on the cover is of my present bicycle) which can cause some problems in and of itself. Among the things that can be problems for you are snow, slush, puddles and rain. A blazing hot summer sun can be an issue also as the last thing you want to have happen when showing up to an interview is being extremely sweaty and breathing really hard because the road to the interview happens to mostly be uphill. It also takes longer to get around than it would take in a car, sometimes quite a bit longer.

It is because of my showing up to an interview for an appointment setter position just after a snowstorm occurred is why I put fenders on my bicycle very shortly after. When I got to the interview I was wet up to my chest and my shoes were covered with slush. As I remember it took about two days for my shoes to completely dry out. Oh, I did get the job which I didn't do very well at as it turns out that I'm really not a very good appointment setter. My belief is that he hired me because I really showed I wanted the job by getting soaked and not rescheduling the meeting.

For me, because of this episode I consider fenders to be an absolute necessity when using a bicycle as a primary means of transportation. This is especially true when you are using your bicycle to get to an interview. You need to keep your clothes as clean as possible so that you will be as presentable when you meet an interviewer. More than once I made sure that I didn't let an interviewer see my

back because of a splash from having hit a puddle on my way to an interview. Also I consider headlights and taillights to be necessary as they will help keep you safe when riding at night. The last thing you want is to be hit by a car on the way to an interview because they couldn't see you riding down the road.

I've also used a flashlight in one of the holders that are designed to attach to the handlebars. Flashlights are not as a rule very bright so I recommend this only if you cannot afford a bicycle headlight. As a rule, most headlights work very well on rechargeable batteries which I highly recommend as they will save you a lot of money, when I used alkaline batteries in a headlight I went through about one set per week. Helmets are also a good idea but since they can mess up your hair pretty severely you need to bring a comb with you.

I'll also state that having a rear rack is also a great idea, I have a Axiom which happens to be an extremely heavy duty rack that will support about 130 pounds (about 60 kg). It will hold everything I could possibly need for an interview including my blazer and a resume portfolio. If at all possible do not scrimp on the rack that you purchase, the cheap ones will break at a bad time I have found as a rule. Another thing I did a couple of years ago is buy and install solid inner tubes which have a blessing. They are kind of expensive until you realize you never have to buy inner tubes again. While on your way to the interview site you will probably want to attach your blazer to the rack as it can get hot riding. Make sure you bring a couple of store bags so that you can protect your blazer and your resume portfolio.

## ~ Learning Your Focus ~

This job market is definitely different than the way it used to be. It used to be one where you could be a jack of all trades and a master of none. That has changed and now to some extent you now have to be at least somewhat specialized. When you are setting up or editing your online profiles, resumes, cover letters with a definite target in mind. I remember starting my 2008 job hunt with submittals for every opening I could find. It wasn't successful because I wasn't focused on a primary job that I wanted to get. Also it wasn't focused on filling specific employer needs. After about a month I realized the mistake that I was making and readjusted my search accordingly so that I would be filling a need.

My Grandfather had a statement that he would make: "Find a need and fill it." This definitely applies now in this job market and was his answer on what you needed to do to ensure you could find a job. Where this applied I felt in 1983 when I first hit the job market was to simply try to look at what an employer needed and do my best to match that. It has been pretty successful I'll admit. One day I decided to become a house framer and bought all of the tools which I brought when asking for the job. After a little research I found out that having tools was a big plus. Taking up house framing was over all good, it's made it much easier for me to remodel my house now. It's saved me a lot of money in fact.

If I made such a career change these day it would be much more difficult (and I made a lot of career jumps in the past). Employers can and frequently do searches on

the backgrounds of prospective employees. What are they going to find? Are they going to find what pertains to the job that you are applying for? This is why you need to go through everything for your last two or three jobs. You need to be able to explain differences and in particular what applies to the position you are applying for. No matter what your primary optimal career choice is you need to focus on what an employer is looking for. To tell you the truth any employer is looking for what they need specifically, not everything that you could possibly offer. So because of this you need to set up your online profiles, resumes and cover letters with that thought in mind. By its very nature the job market has changed to a more specialized one. It's definitely become harder to change careers. You really have to think a bit more about because of the internet.

## ~What to offer ~

You need to take some time, go through everything that you've in previous positions and write down the various tasks you've done. Part of what you write down becomes the basis for your present or future job hunts. Also of course you need to research the various prospective employers. What are they looking for? Where does your list match up? This is what you now offer future employers. Where all of this really came together for me was in the 2008 job hunt. While I had been doing it partially for several years, it didn't really click in my head. Making a spreadsheet to help define my job hunt success is what kicked it into high gear. It's what caused me to change my direction. Looking over my previous experience one job stood out over any other. For three years I had worked at a truck stop, from November 2002 to November 2005. When I started I was basically a janitor, later on I took on inventory duties and even later I was promoted to cashier. To this day I'm the only janitorial employee that was ever promoted to cashier. Being promoted to cashier was a real feather in my cap and frankly looks great on a resume or an application. This is one of the bullet points on my resume presently.

*Note: Promotions make great bullet points on your job entries. They are accomplishments that should be noted.*

Beyond my promotion I took a closer look at the truck stop job. My list was a bit like this:

1. Talking to customers
2. Cash handling
3. Paperwork

4. Store cleaning
5. Stock
6. etc.

Next, I went through quite a few help wanted ads. I wanted to know where the most available jobs were at the time. It didn't take long to begin noticing the various customer service positions available. Reading through the job descriptions I kept looking at my list. It didn't take long for #1. Talking to customers to stand out from the others. Taking a look at the rest of my list most of it didn't apply to most jobs. At least it wasn't anything that normally applies to customer service positions. Long story short it lead me further into customer service as a career choice. I was able to focus on those positions whenever I came across them on the various job boards. Also I was able to focus on what an employer is looking for during the application process. I didn't quite have it all together though as I was still not getting a job. I still had a ways to go as every interview I was either getting turned down, or worse not hearing anything. During a job hunt not hearing anything really doesn't make you feel good I can state from personal experience.



## ~ Body Language ~

One morning I was watching one of morning TV shows and they happened to have body language as one of the subjects of the show. Since I had an interview later that day and one the day before it really resonated with me. They were talking in particular about how you appear when you are sitting in a chair. Well, this really sunk in as I thought about the previous days interview. I sat down on a chair in our bedroom in front of the mirror and observed myself. It took about two seconds for me to realize that I had been slouching slightly. This was making for a bad image in the interviewers mind regarding me. This is something that I had to immediately change for me to be successful at getting a job. How you walk into a room, how you sit on the offered chair will greatly affect whether you get the job or not. Also, where do you place your hands? Are they on your knees during an interview?

Your hands need to be where they are seen, preferably on your knees though you can hold a copy of your resume in them. They also need to be held still, this used to be a real problem for me. I've normally been very nervous and I constantly moved my hands as I've also had a tendency to keep bouncing my knee. Letting your knee bounce, your hands move during an interview will detract otherwise. My understanding is that it is perceived on a subconscious level that you aren't paying attention. It just about drove me nuts at first but I finally did learn to hold my hands and knees steady at least during an interview. This increased my interview success rate by about half in and of itself. My earlier discovery

about my customer service career helped me to prepare much better which also increased my success rate and definitely helped me to get interviews to begin with. Another thing that really helped me out was interviewing myself in front of a mirror. I was able to see myself from the point of view of an interviewer. This even included how my body language appeared. As I recall I even made some voice recordings of myself so that I could actually hear myself from the interviewers point of view.

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