

# Career Headlines

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## **What It Is Like to Work for a Small Company**

Small businesses hire more people than big businesses. Surprised by that statistic? According to the U.S. Department of Labor, over two-thirds (67%) of new jobs created between 2009 and 2011, during the recession, came from small businesses.

If you're job shopping, it makes sense to look at small businesses as potential sources of a position. It's important, though, to understand the differences between working for a large company and a small one. These are things you need to be able to do when you work for a small company:

**Think like an entrepreneur.** You'll need to be able to see the big picture at all times. Focusing on your part of the work isn't enough. You must be able to understand how your tasks mesh with every other's employee's and commit to doing what's best for the company.

**Be a self-starter.** In a small company, fewer supervisors are available to remind you what has to be done, when it's due, and how to make it happen. To be successful in a small company, you need to be a self-starter who can work and think on your own without requiring someone else to keep you motivated.

**Get along.** In any work situation, you must be able to work and get along with others; but in a small company, this is even more important. If you have an idea to get across or disagree on the direction of a project, you can't let your reactions or comments destroy the working relationship. You should possess excellent listening skills and an upbeat personality. When you're working with the same tight-knit group every day, a negative attitude can easily affect the entire team.

**Show a willingness to do it all.** At a small company, a few people do everything. If your computer is down, you find a way to fix it. If a co-worker can't meet a deadline, you're expected to stay late and help. If the company is facing a problem, you're expected to contribute to the solution.

**Focus on customer service.** Every client counts for a small business. You'll need strong interpersonal skills to provide great service and ensure customer satisfaction. A small company is not place for the person who gets irritated easily by other people.

Working for a small business offers many rewards, including freedom to make some of your own decisions, a chance to assume important responsibilities, the opportunity to gain outstanding experience in many areas and an atmosphere that may be hard to find elsewhere.

How does working for a small company fit with your career goals and personality?

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