



How to Get Hired at an SFMade Sewn Goods & Apparel Company

You can get a job at an SFMade sewn goods & apparel company! These tips are designed to help you when you're applying for a company that makes clothing, bags, or other sewn products in San Francisco.

Land an Interview:

1 In addition to any technical skills you have, you should highlight the following qualities in your resume and cover letter—give examples from your past work experience

You know how to **get along with others**.

- Say: *Worked with a team to plan the Annual event.*

You can **take feedback in a constructive way**—you're willing to learn and take direction.

- Say: *With feedback from my supervisor, I was able to hone my skills in leather cutting and finishing.*

You always **remember (or write down) production details**.

- Say: *I followed detailed production SOPs and helped to update them.*

You can **work collaboratively** on other people's pieces.

- Say: *When one person starts a piece, I can finish it.*

You have a **sense of ownership** of the end product.

- For example: *It's my responsibility to make sure we produce a high quality product, even if I didn't make each part of it.*

You **see the big picture**—your work on one small piece helps to create a great final product.

- Say: *I was proud to see the shirts we created and think about my part.*

You can be **flexible within your job function**—you're open to many different roles as needed.

- Say: *I enjoyed getting cross trained so that I could take on different roles as needed.*



2 Before the Interview:

You might have to:

- Take a test/practical assessment—sew on a machine or by hand or do another production task
- Show a sample—ask if you should bring one with you

You should:

- Look at their website—check out the products they make and pick one you like to talk about at the interview
- Practice talking about your skills

A FEW IMPORTANT CONCEPTS

Keep these ideas in mind throughout the job application process:

Quality Control – Sewn Goods & Apparel businesses want each finished piece to be of the highest quality. Every employee is part of making that happen.

Production Speed – They also want products to be produced at a reasonable, efficient speed so that the business can thrive.

It's not all about fashion – The people who design the product are more closely aligned with the idea of “fashion,” everyone else is more like a craftsman.

Sewing is a craft – You can take pride in being part of a group of skilled artisans.

Your ideas matter—The more you can speak up with ideas about how to make processes more efficient or improve the product, the more valuable you will be to your employer.

3 So You've Done Sewing Before...

It's possible to transition to industrial sewing but you have to understand that it's different.

- It helps if you've worked a non sewing job in a warehouse or other industrial/manufacturing setting
- You will be cranking away on a much faster and more powerful sewing machine, repeating the same things over and over again.

If you previously worked at a large sewing factory:

- You'll have to know how to make the product from start to finish, not just one step of the process
- You may have to do repair.

4 About Sewn Goods and Apparel Jobs

Sewing Machines!

You should be comfortable doing these things on a sewing machine on your own:

- Changing the bobbin
- Changing the needle
- If you can fix/trouble shoot a sewing machine, that's a plus

Not Your Mother's Sewing Jobs

These are NOT classic sewing factory jobs—they are:

- Long term
- Year round
- Paid by the hour
- Potentially flexible about schedule

Other Positions (Besides Sewer)

- Cutter
- Pattern Maker
- Design
- Front Office
- Production Lead/Manager: ordering and receiving the materials (sourcing), managing sewers
- Packaging/Shipping
- Quality Control

To find SFMade job opportunities visit the job board at: www.sfmade.org

You can apply for the jobs at the website. If you're working with an organization, be sure to put their name and the name of the person you're working with in the “Who referred you to the SFMade Job Board?” field.



How to Get Hired at an SFMAde Company



SFMAde manufacturers are homegrown and local—
and they're looking for local talent.

They care about what they do—
they're here because they love the city and
the products they make.

Most SFMAde companies were started recently—
getting a job at a growing company could give you
the opportunity to learn new skills and advance in a
manufacturing career.

YOU CAN GET A JOB AT AN SFMADE COMPANY! HERE'S HOW:

Land an
Interview:

1 Read the job description carefully and take your time to make sure you follow all instructions:

To make sure you stand out, **ask yourself the following questions before hitting "send"**:

- Do they want a cover letter? Do they give specific instructions on how to apply?
- Do they want something included besides a resume, like references?
- Do they ask you to format your resume or cover letter in a special way?

2 Change your resume to fit the job description:

- **Highlight your experience that relates** to the job requirements—bold it or put it at the top.
- **Echo the job description** in your resume—use the same words to show that you're a great fit for the job.
- **Include all relevant experience**, even if it was informal or a long time ago. For example, if the job is for a furniture manufacturer you might want to include that you've helped your uncle to reupholster a sofa.

3 Show your resume to someone else:

- **Only someone else's eyes will catch mistakes and typos** that you've missed.
- If you started with a resume template, watch out for pre-populated sections and **make sure that everything on the resume is true specifically for you.**



Before the Interview:

1 Do some research:

- Google the company and **read their website thoroughly**.
- **Be ready to explain in your own words:** what the company does, how they do it, and why they do it. What makes them unique and special? Since they care about what they do, they'll be happy that you put in the effort to understand.

2 Come up with questions:

- **Prepare 2-3 questions to ask at the end of the interview**—not about the job itself but about the company and the bigger picture. For example, asking “What is the biggest challenge your company faces?” shows you're interested in the success of the company and ready to contribute to it.

3 Be ready to talk about gaps in your resume:

- **Whatever the reason you have gaps between jobs, be prepared with an explanation** that emphasizes how you used your time and developed your skills. Whether you were a volunteer, are re-entering with new skills or experience, or ran a small side business while job searching —relevant experience, official or not, matters.
- **Keep it positive** and focus on how you are always working on your personal development.

During the Interview:

1 Get yourself excited about the product:

- **Try to connect to the product they make on a personal level.** Maybe tell a story about your life that relates to the product.
- Even if you weren't super interested in their product before you found out about this job opening **it's the enthusiasm that matters most!**

2 Be ready to talk about your (transferrable) skills:

- SFMade employers are unique—**they don't expect you to have worked at a business exactly like theirs before.** If you worked in another country your skills transfer too!
- Explain why **your skills and experience from past jobs (and life in general) will make you good at this job.** Try to be specific.
- **Some skills transfer from one job to another,** even when the work itself is different. For example the skill of scheduling patient appointments in a doctor's office—speaking on the phone, completing accurate data entry, managing multiple tasks—could transfer to a Shipping and Receiving position.

3 Connect to the production process:

- All SFMade companies make something—so show your interviewer that you're interested in **how their product gets manufactured.**
- If you have any hobbies that involve making or fixing things, let them know—it can be fixing a car or baking cakes—in general **anything hands-on will be impressive.**

4 Don't bad-mouth your previous employer:

- No interviewer wants to imagine you doing the same after you leave their company.

After the Interview:

Follow-up with a Thank You:

- At a minimum, you should **send a short email thanking the employer** for the opportunity to meet them and learn more about their company. If you really want the position, let them know.
- If you want to set yourself apart **send a physical thank you card in the mail** with a stamp and envelope—hardly anyone does that anymore and since SFMade companies make physical things they will appreciate it even more.