




# Interviewing and Fact Gathering for Exempt and Non-Exempt Verbs



## Pro Tip #1

### IT'S ALL ABOUT THE VERBS!!

-  Seek more information on the verbs listed in pink below (try to understand the context)
-  What do employees do, step-by-step, when “handling” a complaint?
-  Be forensic

Reviews  
Prepares  
Creates  
Maintains  
Calculates  
Manages  
Handling  
Directing  
Oversees  
Supports  
Leads  
Conducts  
Determines  
Performs  
Plans  
Coordinates

Listen for the verbs used in the job description and that your clients use to describe the job duties. Listed here are verbs that you'll typically see in a job description. Notice that the verbs themselves do not have any meaning and do not tell you anything about the job duties. Without more, you will never know what an employee who “leads” does. Seek more information about the duties involved in “coordinating.” **DIG DEEPER.**

When the job description or your client states that employees in the position “handle customer complaints,” what does that actually mean? Does it mean they log calls into a database, or do they actually make decisions as to how to resolve those issues? What kind of authority do they have? Do they handle customer complaints by applying predetermined solutions from a database, or can they resolve unique issues without standard solutions? What types of complaints can they resolve on their own versus being required to escalate to someone else?

Be forensic here – and not just accept the empty verbs. The answers to these questions can be the difference between a non-exempt or exempt job. Prepare for the interview by highlighting and thinking about all of the empty verbs used in the job description.



## Pro Tip #2

# WATCH FOR NON-EXEMPT VERBS!



Administers  
Schedules  
Coordinates  
Follows  
Handling  
Processing  
Checking  
Entering  
Maintaining  
Inputs  
Supports

**COMPARED  
TO:**



Determining  
Supervising  
Analyzing  
Negotiating  
Directing  
Manages  
Develops  
Creating  
Researching  
Ensuring  
Inspecting

If someone “coordinates” versus “directs,” “schedules” versus “creates.” If someone “supports” versus “supervises,” “follows” versus “manages,” “processes” versus “analyzes.” If the job description or client contact uses the verbs in the left column when describing the job, be suspicious and ask questions.



## Pro Tip #3

# DON'T STOP DIGGING!

**Don't assume that the term “manages” indicates an exempt task. Ask questions.**

*In one interview, I uncovered that a job description stating that an employee who “managed a budget” – according to a job description – was actually just entering data from expense reports and invoices into a spreadsheet that subtracted costs from budget. Oops! So, not exempt.*

*Although “managing a budget” sounds exempt, I was suspicious based on the job title, the relatively low salary level, and other duties listed in the job description. I kept digging until I uncovered the actual tasks that the employee performed to “manage the budget.”*

**This is how to develop an expert ability to be suspicious, ask questions, and uncover the difference.**

Ask the client contact to walk you through, task-by-task, what employees do in performing their duties. If that proves difficult, ask more general questions.

- Manages a budget**
- Coordinates office activities**
- Oversees vendor contracts**
- Leads project teams**
- Plans annual marketing calendar**
- Maintains inventory**

### Breaking Down the Verb

suggestions on how to dig deeper

What is the process for “managing a budget?” Do they oversee a team? Do they create the budget? Do they approve?

“When you say “manages,” walk me through, step-by-step, each task that entails.”

If that's difficult,

“Take me through a typical day.”