

15 STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL JOB SEARCH

In my sometimes role of a corporate recruiter or executive search consultant, I am often asked by candidates on tips for fast tracking the job search. To answer the most often asked questions, this is a step by step instruction for landing a job.



1. Very important! Treat your job search as if it were a full time job.

- Dedicate at least 5 hours to your job search Monday to Friday. Finding a job takes as much effort as having and keeping a job. Be structured in your job search; set a schedule during core business hours particularly if you are going to be networking by telephone such as 8am – 2pm or 9am – 3pm which includes an hour for lunch and the occasional coffee break. Do not become distracted by playing Solitaire or surfing You Tube, or Face Book. You would not do this during your normal working hours, so treat this job hunt effort seriously. You are now working for yourself, you are now Me Inc.!

2. Where to Begin?

- Begin by either writing a new resume, or updating your old resume so you have this ready to go the minute you begin applying for jobs on-line, or through networking when someone asks you mail in your resume. There are many great professional looking templates for writing resumes on Microsoft Office templates <http://office.microsoft.com/en-ca/results.aspx?qu=resume+templates>
- There are basically two types of resumes; a chronological format where everything is grouped under each employer in chronological order, or a functional resume where all skills, experience and accomplishments are grouped together with a list of employers and dates at the end. Most recruiters and executive search consultants that I know, prefer the chronological format with bullet points under each employer listing position, showing your responsibilities and accomplishments for each company.
- Your resume should be fairly generic but you can customize your job application by a covering letter or email, that lists your skills and experience specific to the key words in the job posting to which you are applying.

3. When Your Resume is Completed

- Once your resume is completed, you probably need to get yourself a business card, with you name, title of occupation, address, phone and email contacts so if you meet someone at a function, who may be helpful to your job search, you are able to exchange contact information.



4. Start Your Job Search

- Now, you are ready to begin your job search. Depending upon the economic state of your town, city or region, you may have to look outside of your normal occupation and transfer your skills and experience to another career. For example; if you are a realtor and the housing market is now depressed, you could list your learnings from real estate and transfer these to other potential opportunities such as sales and marketing, mortgage brokering, contracts administrator. Be creative and do not devalue your skills and experience.



5. Where to Look

- Many jobs are filled through networking and personal contacts
- Others are filled through:
 - Executive Search Firms and Placement Agencies
 - Newspaper ads and professional journals.
 - Company websites
 - Career Fairs
 - Electronic job boards eg: Monster Board and many boards are occupation specific such as finance, I.T. construction, oil and gas, or H.R. jobs.
 - Social and professional networking sites.

6. Networking and Personal Contacts

- Make a list of everyone you know and phone them to ask if they know of any companies that are hiring in your particular field or ask them if they have any contacts in a particular company. There is something about a personal referral that very often opens the doors to opportunities that are not advertised and by mentioning someone's name often gets you past the administrative gatekeepers who are paid to block and screen calls.
- Before you call, prepare your telephone script ahead of time, so you are direct, precise and business like. Be clear on the specific reasons for requesting an informational interview, such as;
 - Feedback on whether your qualifications are competitive and credible
 - Obtaining recommendations for other training or education you would need
 - Obtaining advice as to where in the industry you would fit, so you can narrow your job search.
 - Also to learn, what their particular company is looking for in addition to technical skills.
- If you are considering changing occupations or professions, you could ask for an information interview for example; *“Hello, I am Joe Smith, and your name was given to me by Fred Brown. I am seriously thinking about entering into a sales and marketing career and wondered if you had 20 minutes to meet with me, as I have a few questions concerning the attributes that a company like yours would look in a candidate when hiring and what specific training or experience would such a candidate need in this field.”*
- Do not be discouraged if a request for an information interview is turned down because if it is a recruiter you are speaking to, they probably receive lots of requests for such meetings, and they just do not have the time. Just be gracious and move on.
- Try to attend low cost or free professional functions which are target rich with the type of people you need to meet. Take plenty of business cards with you.

7. Executive Search Firms and Placement Agencies

- Most search firms and placement agencies now have websites advertising their jobs, so you may apply on line. Quite often these same firms can be conducting a “blind search” where they are conducting a confidential search on behalf of an employer who wants to remain anonymous for reasons such as a new project, or a replacement for someone who still works there. It is always a good idea to phone the search firm and build a relationship with the consultant who works in your particular field of expertise. These consultants are often more amenable to meeting with prospective candidates than corporate recruiters and possess current market intelligence on what is happening in your industry. They can often present you to an employer, even though they may not have a search formalized for this employer, because they are familiar with a particular employer and can anticipate their hiring needs.



8. Newspaper Ads and Professional Journals

- Many companies still prefer to hire through the newspaper ads in printed media, so it is a good idea to keep your eye on the careers sections of such newspaper and also magazines that are pertinent to your profession or occupation.

9. Company Websites

- Research and make a list of all the companies which typically hires such candidates like yourself. If they do not have any vacancies listed on their site, try to avoid phoning the H.R. department or Recruiter, as they will likely not take your call because they are busy. Instead, try to find the name or even ask for the manager of the particular department which hires skills like yours and once you reach them on the telephone, give them a sound bite review of your major skills and experience and ask if they have plans for hiring in the near future. They may ask you for your resume which in turn they will send to the Recruiters or H.R. department but because this is an internal referral from a manager, you then become noticed and will likely take priority in future hiring.

10. Career Fairs

- Great opportunity to meet Recruiters in person.
- Prepare ahead of time by preregistering, and obtaining a list of companies who will be exhibiting. Research those companies that are of particular interest so you appear knowledgeable when speaking to its recruiters.
- Dress appropriately.
- Take lots of copies of your resume and ask for feedback.
- Do not waste time with companies who do not employ people in your field, be specific in your targets.
- Be sure to obtain the Recruiters' business cards and ask them for next steps if they are interested in you. Take responsibility for phoning them and ask them when it would be best to call them.

11. Electronic Job Boards

- Google all the job boards that you can find that are relevant to your occupation or profession and post your resume. You should not have to pay to do this. Sometimes if a job board requires candidates to pay a fee to view a job posting, try Googling the key words from this posting because the odds are it is showing up for free on another site.
- Whenever you are applying for jobs on line, be sure to write a brief covering letter which includes all the key words containing on the job posting requirements. Remember, these massive job boards and employer job sites have applicant management systems which often ranks resumes by keywords, so the more key words you have in your application, the higher you will rank on their candidate preference list.
- Set up alerts wherever possible for these job boards.
- Ensure you submit your resume to these sites general resume data base as recruiters continually mine these sites for suitable candidates.

12. Social and Professional Networking Sites

- The social networking sites such as Facebook, or My Space are not a good forum to market your skills. Try Linked In at www.linkedin.com which is a really good business networking site for both people looking for jobs and companies are now utilizing this site for posting their jobs.

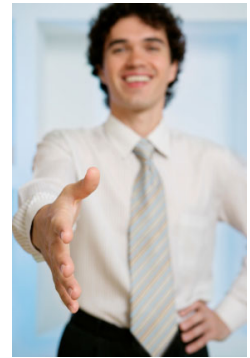
13. Be Administratively Organized

- Keep recruiters business cards in a file (you can get a 3 ring binder with plastic business card holders). Write on each card where and when you met the recruiter.
- File all copies of job postings that you applied for in a sequence such as alphabetical order by company name, in case a company recruiter suddenly phones you and you can quickly retrieve that posting. If a recruiter phones you and you do not remember the job you applied for, then it immediately gives the impression that you are not seriously interested in that job.
- Keep a phone log of who you talked to and date of call with any comments, so you can follow-up with calls after a suitable time.

14. Tips on Dealing with Recruiters

Build a positive relationship by:

- Ensuring your home and cell phone has voice messaging or call waiting capability. Recruiters dislike having to keep calling back because candidates do not have a voice mail activated on their cells phones.
- Ensure your own voice mail sounds professional which also includes a cell phone number, or alternate number where you can be reached.
- When phoning recruiters; leave short clear messages with your phone number
- Keep your application and job posting handy in case of a call (see above).
- Don't be afraid to make follow-up calls



15. Finally Stay Positive and Persistent

- You may receive many rejections but persistence will pay off. Good Luck!