

50 PROVEN SOLUTIONS FROM A
CERTIFIED CAREER COACH & COUNSELOR

Job Winning Tips, Tactics, & Techniques

THE ULTIMATE
GUIDE
TO JOB SEARCH SUCCESS

50

Career-Changing

Strategies
&
Resources

A VITA CAREER MANAGEMENT

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YOUR JOB TARGET

Most people don't want to be without a job for long. And, they certainly want job search success. The question then is what is job search success? It can mean different things to different people, but the bottom line is getting a job. Whether they love the job might not be so important – it depends upon the circumstance.

Job search success comes in all different shapes and sizes; however, there is definitely a common denominator. It takes work. Regardless of how you define your success, there are ways to meet your goals.

We have put 50 job search tips together that can be used to achieve your goals. These are ways to increase your chances of finding a job – proven methods that will help you realize success.

If you're without a job right now, you know it can be a stressful time in your life. However, with proper planning and preparation, you can land a job fairly quickly. It doesn't matter what field you're in, there are universal traits you can develop which will make you look attractive to prospective employers.

In addition, you'll benefit from making the whole process easier on yourself. Of course, you want to find a job as soon as possible, but you will want to avoid stressing yourself out or feeling forced into making rash decisions about your career future just because you're desperate to land a job.

By taking action and making effort, the only way to go is up. If at all possible, you will want to hold out for a job that you'll enjoy for a long time to come. Keep some of these simple strategies in mind for your search:

1. Do Your Homework

When you're searching for a job, you will want to be organized and prepared. Have a very specific job target in mind before starting your job search. Know whether or not you currently have the proper skill set to apply.

- ✓ If you don't have the skills, find a program where you can get specialized training to develop them. If you do have the required skills, fine tune your resume to highlight the specific skills you have that pertain to the job you want.
- ✓ In addition, do research on the company where you're applying. Potential employers will be impressed with your knowledge of the company and see how serious you are about getting the job.

2. Know What You're Looking For

Rather than just searching for a random job, do some heavy thinking about your talents as well as your future goals.

- ✓ What interests you? What of job do you feel you would enjoy? What do you excel at and what inspires you?
- ✓ You don't want to waste your own time or prospective employers' time by sending a resume to a company for which you are not qualified to work or not interested in doing the work.

3. Take A Career Assessment

You can find many assessment tools online. Some are free but for the most comprehensive career assessments, you will probably end up paying a nominal fee. An assessment will give you some insights into your personality, temperament, interests, and skills and abilities then match you with potential careers.

4. Develop Your Strategy

What is your plan? Do you intend to stay in the same field, or are you planning on a career change? If so, when you're ready, how are you going to proceed? Are you planning on working in a full-time position while you gain expertise? Or, are you planning on getting your foot in the door and working in a lower-level position? You'll have to weigh the pros and cons of each option and others before making a move.

- ✓ If you are currently unemployed, right now your job search is your job. Take the hours you spent at work and dedicate those to tailoring your resume, fine tuning your cover letter, researching companies, building your network, and following up on leads.
- ✓ If you normally worked a 40 hour week, you should dedicate the same amount of time to your job search. Get into a routine and keep it because truly your future does depend on it.

5. Take Action

Be mindful that treating your job search like a part-time job or hobby almost guarantees it will take even longer to land a job.

- ✓ Were you good at project management in your most recent position? If so consider looking at your job search as if it were a project that you manage. What that means to you is that you should set measurable goals, create a plan, and track your progress.
- ✓ Take the same approach that you would at work by using all of the tools and resources available to you and holding yourself accountable through all phases of the project.

6. Evaluate Your Performance Regularly

Evaluate your performance and record all of your accomplishments. Your plan should always include your goals, top priorities, and actions. Revise your plan as necessary to make the most of your search.

- ✓ What that means is that if your plan for the week was to attend 5 networking meetings and make 25 cold calls but you only made 10, ask yourself what happened.
- ✓ Were your original goals too high? Did you get sidetracked? Revise your plan to ensure you achieve your targeted results.

7. Identify And Tackle Your Fears

Is there anything holding you back from truly going for your ideal job? If so, identify any causes and eliminate them.

- ✓ Is there anything that are you afraid of? What is in the way of you and your aspirations? If you want to be a supervisor but have a fear of public speaking, before you start searching for jobs as a supervisor, work on your public speaking skills. That way when it comes time for you to get up and talk to a group you'll be able to do it with confidence.

8. Your Aspirations Take Time

Note that it may take time for you to find your ideal job. More than likely your ideal job

isn't an entry-level position at a local restaurant, but perhaps you'll want to be a chef and own a restaurant someday.

- ✓ Before you start down this path, know that in order to make your goal a reality, it will take time, research, guidance, money, and a ton of effort. Remember after all, no restaurant opened overnight!
- ✓ What can you do today to get started on your goal? You can begin your research, locate a mentor, start a savings account, create a plan, or do many other simple tasks that will help you build momentum.

9. Be Dedicated And Consistent

It is easy to give up hope, especially if you've been in the market for a job for a while. But remember that the people who are dedicated are the ones who succeed. If you've got time off, work on developing new skills - this will pay off in the long run, even if you don't see immediate results for your efforts.

HIDDEN JOB MARKET/NETWORKING

Did you know that more than 70% of all jobs are never advertised? It's pretty easy then to jump to the conclusion that most common approaches to job search just don't work.

To be sure you are successful, use more than one search method to maximize your success. These suggestions might make finding your next job just a bit easier:

10. Network

Connect with people in your desired field. Develop a profile online at social networking websites such as LinkedIn and Facebook. Take advantage of the Internet as it is a powerful asset. You can develop your online identity which will help you become attractive to employers. Many people use these sites to connect with family and friends, but they're also great networking places to find employment as well!

- ✓ The idea behind social networks is to cultivate a relationship. That means that you'll engage with others and show your value. It does NOT mean you should desperately ask for a job.
- ✓ This tactic might not work overnight, but these sites have incredible word of mouth possibilities, so be diligent and keep networking so your contacts know that you're available for work!

11. Volunteer Your Services

You're probably thinking: why should you offer services for free when you don't even have a job? Aren't you supposed to be making money and finding a job that uses your skills and talents? Yes, but volunteering can actually work in your favor and set you apart from your competition.

- ✓ For example, if you are talented grant writer looking to get your foot in the door of an organization, why not offer your services on a project? You build a connection and if they're happy with your work, you may be hired when they have an available opening.
- ✓ The most important thing to remember is you have to be an excellent volunteer. You want them to see what an asset you would be as a paid employee.

12. Write To Employers

Compose a letter and send it to businesses that you're seriously interested in. Your letter should highlight how your contributions will improve business for the company and show what you'll bring to the table.

- ✓ If you can be persuasive and convince them that they're better off with you than without you, then you've won the battle. Be sure the letter is well written, grammatically correct, and confident.
- ✓ Your goal is to show why they need you as an employee, and not to beg for a job. There's a big difference, and can be very easy to cross that line, so use your best judgment.

13. Use An Old Fashioned Approach

Get dressed in your best interview clothes and hit the pavement. In this generation of faxes and emails, your resume can easily get lost in the shuffle because everyone else is doing the same thing – it's simple to send an email.

- ✓ Introduce yourself, shake hands, and present your well-prepared resume portfolio. Remember, building a relationship with someone is an important part of standing above the crowd. It also allows a manager to put a face to a resume rather than just pick a resume up off of the pile.

- ✓ It may take a bit of footwork and perseverance, but this could be the best way to make an impression when applying for a coveted job.

14. Consider Direct Mail

Tap into the power of direct mail by locating 5 – 10 companies of interest.

- ✓ Write a letter to your personal network and ask if they know anyone who works at any of the companies on your list.
- ✓ If a member of your personal network does indeed know someone on your list, send him your resume and ask that he forward to his contact. You could also ask for permission to send it yourself. In your letter, you would introduce yourself as a friend of Stan Smith, etc.

15. Prove Your Value

Write a special report or a booklet that discusses information that is relevant to your industry and send it out/give it away. Everybody loves to receive new information and this allows you to demonstrate your expertise. Simply convert the booklet into a PDF and distribute it electronically. You can advertise it to newsgroups and perhaps prospective hiring managers will see it.

16. Enlist A Recruiter

You could enlist the help of a recruiter. Before you begin, there are some things that you will want to know about recruiters. They are usually looking for individuals with a great track record. And they are looking for individuals who are planning on staying in a role similar to the one they held previously.

- ✓ Generally, recruiters are looking for people who are already employed, are happy, and excel in their current role. Meaning if you're looking for a career change recruiters are not usually interested in working with you.

- ✓ You may find a recruiter willing to work with you if you have a great resume, a successful background, and you can sell yourself.

17. Cold Calls

Make telephone calls to prospective employers and develop relationships. If you are comfortable making cold calls, this might be the best way to conduct your job search.

- ✓ Target all companies that would consider your skill set beneficial and ask about any new openings. You can follow up by sending or e-mailing your resume.
- ✓ Cold calling is not for everyone - if it's not for you, keep that search method off your list.
- ✓ Maybe networking and contacting recruiters is more your speed. Use whatever search methods you think will work best for you and your personality.

18. Manage Your List

Be sure to do a good job of managing your contact list. Record all employers and recruiters with which you make direct/indirect contact.

- ✓ Your list should include the company name, contact's name, his/her email address, phone number, and position title. In addition, your list should have a field that allows you to note the last time you talked and/or contacted each contact.
- ✓ You'll be able to better manage your time between contacts as you don't want to make the mistake of contacting someone repeatedly. Follow-up with your contacts once a week or at the very least every 7 business days.

19. Ask For Referrals

Always remember to ask members of your personal network for referrals. If members of your network are not able to provide you with helpful information for your job search, ask for the names of at least two people who could be of help to you. Contact your referrals immediately.

MAKE A GREAT IMPRESSION

How to Market Yourself When You're Looking for a Job

Looking for a job is tough feat in any field and can be even harder in a down economy. However, good marketing can set you apart from other candidates. You just need to know how to properly promote yourself.

You could have a better skill set and more knowledge than other candidates in your field, but, if they are able to market themselves better than you, they may have a better shot at the job.

When you market yourself, there are specific things you can do to make yourself more attractive to a prospective employer.

20. Fine Tune Your Resume

A well-written resume is vital. It is all that stands between you and an interview. It's a simple piece of paper that showcases your accomplishments and if written properly, demonstrates how meet the needs of the employer.

- ✓ Tailor your resume to highlight experience that aligns with the specific job for which you're applying. Your resume should highlight your accomplishments rather than your duties.
- ✓ Be sure to keep it simple and on topic. Your chance to impress employers is during your interview, but your resume must show that you have the skills to back it up. You can also include keywords within your resume that pertain to your future job's description if you actually have the experience.

21. Dress For Success

Pay close attention to what you wear so that you make a great first impression. It says a lot about you and increases your chances of landing the job.

22. Be Prepared To Nail The Interview

At the interview, smile, stay relaxed, but be sure to show your enthusiasm and interest in the job. You'll want to appear knowledgeable about the job and your particular field.

23. Research Yourself

You will want to check your own Internet sources. Google yourself and do check to find out what public information appears on the net about you. If there is something you might not want potential employers to see, see about having it removed.

24. Come Prepared To Share Innovation And Ideas

Prior to the interview, practice.

- ✓ You want to be able to think on your feet and present new ideas. You can do this on your own or with a friend. Then, you'll be ready for the opportunity to share your ideas at the interview.
- ✓ This will show that you're willing to go the extra mile and can think creatively.

25. Be Able To Tell Prospective Employers What Sets You Apart

Be ready to describe what sets you apart from your competition. You can really sell yourself to the employer.

- ✓ A big key to landing the job you desire is having the right attitude along with the proper training.
- ✓ During your interviews, stay on topic and align your answers with the job for which you're applying. Be polite and professional, and you'll go far.

26. Diversify And Evolve

Continue to grow, develop, and strengthen the skills you have. And add new ones as well.

You never know when your new skills will come in handy. And employers will benefit from hiring well-rounded employees.

- ✓ An example would be, if you're interviewing for a sales job. Your employer might like the fact that you have skills in marketing and advertising.
- ✓ Your broad background could position you above your competitors.

27. Volunteer Your Skills

Volunteering is of great way for you to gain expertise while you're still working. Let's say you are an administrative assistant looking to become a supervisor. You've recently gotten a supervisory certification online and have learned about effective leadership, people management, time management, HR, and assignment delegation. You really don't have any experience and chances are employers will be looking for seasoned supervisors.

- ✓ Seek out volunteer opportunities where you can hone your new skills-you will be giving back to your community, learning, and building new relationships all at the same time.
- ✓ Standout. Be sure that you are seen as someone who will go the extra mile.

INTERVIEWS

When you interview it is not only about the employer finding the perfect applicant, it is also about you finding the perfect fit.

28. Research

You will want to research the salary for your position, using a resource such as such as

Salary.com, SalaryExpert.com, or PayScale.com. Do some research on the art of negotiation so that you don't end up at your walkaway point or pricing yourself out of the market.

29. Know When To Answer The Phone

Since you've only got one chance to make good impression, you don't want to blow it! It's not a good idea to answer the phone, if you see an unfamiliar name or number, if you're busy, or if there is a lot of noise or activity in the background.

- ✓ When you answer the phone, you should be focused and ready to answer all questions without any interruption. Let the call go to voicemail and call back at a more opportune time.
- ✓ Have your resume ready as well as a description of the job so you can answer all questions appropriately.

30. Craft And Hone Your Interviewing Skills

Be sure to be knowledgeable about the job you're interviewing for, and go in with the right attitude. Stay calm, be friendly, and maintain a relaxed demeanor. Dress well for the occasion.

31. Share Your Ideas With Your Perspective Employers

You'll truly stand out if you share your ideas in addition to answering your interviewer's questions.

In some leadership roles, you might be asked to develop a 30, 60, or 90-day plan.

Be prepared to go into detail about how you will implement changes that will contribute to the future success of the company in your new role.

32. Put Some Thought Into It And Offer Your Unique Perspective

Do you have an idea how to streamline a process, create a training program, or gain greater profits? This could go a long way in illustrating your ability to think creatively.

It will also show that you've done your research on the company where you're interviewing.

33. Attend Job Fairs And Make The Most Of Them

Job fairs are definitely filled with activity and noisy to say the least. However, they are still a great way to land a job. Prior to the event do some research and find out which companies are participating.

- ✓ Gather some information about the companies of interest to you and in line with your job target. Find out about their company history, products and services they provide, and their upcoming initiatives. You'll definitely have edge over the other job fair attendees.
- ✓ Bring plenty of resumes with you. Dress for the occasion. Be prepared for on-the-spot interviews. Make a list of the companies where you left your resume so you can check back in a couple of days.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

34. Hone Your Craft And Refine Your Skill Set

What do you do well and at what level do you perform? What do you do that qualifies you as an expert? Hone your craft and become an expert. Then, be sure to be able to speak about and clearly articulate all of your talents.

35. Do Some Research And Don't Underrate Your Talent

Have a clear sense of what you are worth and your salary range. You should have a good idea what you are willing to accept and when to walk away. It is vital for you know and value your skill set as this will help you better assess the situation when it comes time to negotiate.

36. Stay In The Loop Especially If You Are Unemployed

You certainly don't want to lose touch with relevant happenings in your industry. Study up on your industry; know about emerging trends and new technologies being used in your field. Research the Internet, newspapers, other media, and talk to people in the know.

- ✓ It would not look good to an employer if you were not current on breakthrough trends and best practices within the industry.
- ✓ Ensure you know your stuff even if you are not expected to be an expert, at the very least have a solid understanding of the topic and be able to speak intelligently on key issues.

RESOURCES

With so many people looking for a job today, it can be challenging. Thinking a bit differently than other job hunters might be all that you need to get that position ahead of the rest. Stand out from your competition with these unique tips, and be the one who lands the job! If you're looking to find a job locally, here are some helpful tips to help make your search more successful.

37. Local Job Centers

You might find some great resources right at your local job center. Local job centers have greater access to vacancies and from a broad range of employers. Most job centers do a good job of updating their listings, however chances are there are more applicants than job listings. Still, it is worth looking into.

38. Community Papers

You will want your job search to include review of community newspapers, national newspapers, newsletters/newspapers written by nonprofit organizations, and local newspapers.

39. Visit Your Library

Your local library is a fantastic resource for you to use during your job search. Ask your librarian or some help in finding all print materials related to your job search. Your librarian may be able to give you some great tips on how best to go about your particular job search and how to use all of the library's tools and resources to the fullest extent.

40. Business Journals And Trade Magazines

Local business journals and trade magazines are an excellent source. For example let's say you're searching for a job in sales.

- ✓ Ask your librarian and to help you find business journals and trade magazines related to sales that you can review. The business journals are a great place for you to gather information about up-and-coming companies, companies making great gains, and companies who are promoting their leaders.
- ✓ You are especially interested in companies related to your job target as well as their competitors service providers, or clients. You will be able to build a list of company names and you can start doing some research to find contact names for networking purposes.

41. Think Beyond Your Usual Borders

Try turning the tables by going beyond your usual comfort level. Think about placing your own ad telling prospective employers that you're available to work for them. Don't forget to highlight your strengths and demonstrate how you will excel in the position.

42. You're In Control

Remember, you want prospective employers to call you - not to skim your ad thinking, "There's another desperate individual begging for work."

WORDS OF WISDOM

In an ever-changing economy, many people are out there job hunting. They're applying for every open position they can find, and of course increasing the competition for available jobs. It is truly important that you stand above the crowd. You have to prove to the employer that hiring you would be adding a valuable asset to their company.

43. Don't Burn Bridges

If you were lucky enough to get an interview, don't set the appointment if you have no intention of going. Simply thank the employer for their consideration, but let them know that you are no longer interested interviewing for the position.

- ✓ Remember, just not showing up is not professional. If you did cancel the appointment, ask yourself why.
- ✓ What held you back?
- ✓ Were you resistant or afraid of something? If so, you will want to dig deeper and find out what's going on.

44. Question The Wisdom Of Others

Some career coaches/consultants suggest that you send a high-impact cover letter and only part of your resume [in an unsealed envelope] to a prospective employer in the hopes of generating a call for the second half of your resume. Use this approach with caution, as you run the risk of wasting an opportunity for an interview because there is a chance your resume could be ignored by an employer.

45. Make An Impression

In relation to the above, you will also want to ask yourself what impression you give to an employer. Meaning would an employer you believe you are capable of taking

on the company' most critical projects and complex matters if you are not capable of putting your resume in an envelope and sealing it properly?

46. Learn From A Role Model

Do you know of someone who is already doing what you aspire to do? Do you know of any role models, mentors, or coaches that you can learn from? Study what others who have had success have done. Seek them out and ask them questions if you have the opportunity. Since you already know what you want, you just need to figure out exactly how to get it.

47. Break It Down Into More Manageable Steps

While you've got your eye on the prize, remember not to do too much all at once. And don't attempt to do too much too fast. Break down your aspirations into smaller steps or mini-goals.

48. Plan Ahead

Think and plan ahead. Develop monthly job search goals. Address the need to make changes and put contingencies into place well into the future.

49. Think Long-Term

Don't get discouraged and remember that it is common for job searches be extended these days. Know that your job search could take longer than usual. Set some incremental goals and monitor your progress.

50. Follow Your Plan

Put a simplified plan in place. Attack each mini-goal with your full attention. Chip away slowly but surely and you'll realize your goals.

CONCLUSION

There is no better feeling or greater gratification than finally finding a job – especially one you love. Accept that it will take some hard work, but know that the results will be absolutely incredible. Use these guidelines and step way outside of what you consider comfortable. Take consistent action and succeed!