

Search

Job Openings and Companies



Insider Advice for Job Searching

Searching for a new job can be one of the most challenging, yet potentially rewarding, endeavors you undertake. The challenge is to maintain the commit-

ment, patience, and perseverance that a job search requires. The reward is finding a job that is a perfect fit for your personal and professional needs. For a successful job search, it is important to be prepared, focused, and organized. An important tool for achieving this goal is a Job Search Plan that clearly defines, tracks, and measures the progress of your search. Use a notebook or personal organizer to create your own personal plan.

Necessary Steps for a Successful Job Search

Define your Career Objective

Identify the type of job you are looking for and what skills and abilities you are looking to use. Having a clear objective will help keep you focused on finding the right job.

Develop a Positioning Statement

Develop a concise statement, 30 seconds or less, outlining what you can bring to your new career. This should include your skills, capabilities, and key accomplishments; and can be similar to the summary statement of your resume. Memorize your positioning statement so you can quickly and succinctly state your qualifications to a prospective employer.

Create a List of Target Companies

Determine the type of company you would prefer to work for. Consider the type of work, size, location, and corporate culture. Sources of information include area business guides, chambers of commerce, articles on local companies or industries, and company web sites. You should identify at least 30-50 companies for your initial job search effort.

Establish and Measure Goals

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Set aggressive daily, weekly, and monthly goals for yourself and track your progress. One goal might be to contact three hiring managers each week, another might be to send out 20 resumes each week. Keeping a log of your job search activity will

give you clues on how to improve your job searching abilities. If you are using the Contact Manager, a log of your job search activity will be kept automatically.

How Do You Know Which Job is Right for You?

Deciding if a position is right for you will be one of the most important decisions you make during your job search process. You need to determine if the position meets your personal and professional needs. What do you like to do? ■

Set daily and weekly goals for yourself and monitor your plan to ensure your goals are being achieved.

What kind of work environment do you enjoy? What level of salary are you looking for? How many hours a week are you willing to devote to your career? Each job will represent a balance between a variety of potentially opposing factors. You have to determine the right balance between your professional and personal life.

One tool that can help you define the right career is Career Planner. Follow the steps in Career Planner to create a Personal Profile. By completing this self-assessment exercise, you can view a list of careers and job titles that fit your personal and professional needs. Also, for more information, refer to the Career Planning section of Expert Advice.

Essential Job Search Tools

The following list represents the essential tools every job seeker needs for a successful job search.

Resume: An updated and professionally written resume. Be prepared to tailor your resume to the requirements of each job opportunity.

Cover Letter: A persuasive cover letter. Start with a persuasive cover letter that you can modify for each employer.

References: A list of personal and professional references. Contact potential references and obtain their permission to include them on your reference list.

Samples: Examples of your work. If appropriate for the type of job you are seeking, gather examples of your best work to bring to the interview.

Research: Research you gathered about the company. Bring research so that you can refer to these materials during the interview to generate questions and topics of discussion.

How to Manage Your Job Search

Think of your job search as a job. It is important to spend the time doing the research, tracking down leads, and pursuing opportunities. Each day review your Job Search Plan. Analyze your progress and determine if you need to adjust your plan. Set daily and weekly goals for yourself and monitor your plan to ensure your goals are being achieved.

The Best Sources for Finding Your Next Job

Networking

Studies have shown that the majority of all jobs are filled before they are published in newspapers, listed on corporate Web sites, or posted at career web sites. The best way to locate these jobs is through networking. Your network includes friends, family, industry contacts, and members of professional, community, or volunteer organizations to which you belong. Try to contact at least one or two people per day, either to make initial contact or to follow up on a previous conversation. Give your resume to family, friends, former colleagues, and industry contacts. Stay in touch with each person at least once every two weeks to see if they need additional resumes or information. This repeated contact should ensure that if they do come across a job opportunity that meets your needs, they will think of you first.

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Direct Contact

You have done research and identified 30 to 50 companies you would like to work for. Call each company directly to determine who the hiring manager would be for the type of position you are seeking. Once you have identified that person attempt to make personal contact.

Explain why you would like to work for the organization, and describe how your skills and abilities can help the company achieve its goals. If there is a position open, ask for an interview. If there is no position available, ask for an informational interview to learn more about the company and its business. If you meet the hiring manager in person, and the meeting goes well, when a position opens in your field, you will have an excellent chance of being on the list of candidates for the job.

Staffing Agencies and Search Firms

These organizations — including Search Firms, Recruiting Agencies, Private Employment Agencies, and Temporary Employment Agencies — work with job seekers to fill open positions. Ask members of your network to recommend search firms, recruiters, or private employment agencies that have the ability to provide quality job leads. Another way to locate staffing agencies and search firms is through the Internet or your local yellow pages.

Advertisements

Employment ads can be found through the Internet on company Web pages, local and national job sites, and career-related Web sites; or in newspapers, trade magazines, and some government publications. Your local library will have a variety of these resources available. When you find a job that meets your search criteria, keep a record of the company name, job title, required qualifications, and contact information. If you found the job on the Internet, include the web page address so you can locate the listing again. The Contact Manager allows you to store this data easily. Remember to tailor your resume and cover letter to the requirements of the position before replying to the advertisement.

School Placement Offices

Your school should have a placement office with a variety of resources available to assist you in your job search. These should include tools for assessing what career is right for you, resume and cover letter advice, job listings, and job placement services.

Job Fairs

You can find announcements for job fairs in newspapers, magazines, or through the Internet.

Note the location, date, time, and companies that will be present at the fair. Research each company beforehand to learn what job openings they have in your career area. Visit booths for the companies you are interested in first, while you are still energetic and enthusiastic. Prepare and practice a 30-second introduction that describes your best qualifications quickly and succinctly. Finally, bring plenty of resumes, dress professionally, and wear comfortable shoes.

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Resume Databases

You can use Resume Caster to post your resume to most major career web site and resume databases. Potential employers and recruiters use resume databases to find candidates, so it's a good idea to have your resume listed on as many of these sites as possible. You can also use the Internet to post your resume on local or industry specific job banks.

Stay Focused and Productive

Job searching can take a lot of time and energy. You need to stay positive, focused, and productive. Do not become discouraged if your search doesn't produce immediate results. Remember, you are not the only person looking for work. It may be helpful to contact a local support group for people seeking employment, to hear how others are dealing with the problems and frustrations of a job search. Members of these groups might also become valuable networking contacts in the future.