Keys to a Successful Job Search

1. Think of it as your job

Approach the task of finding a job as if it were a job unto itself be looking while you're still employed). Give it 100 percent of your effort and commitment.

2. Get yourself geared up.

Whether you do it in your home office or card table and folding chair in the corner of your bedroom or kitchen, set up a job hunt headquarters. The race in today's job market favors skilled candidates who are ready to step in and make an immediate contribution, without having to go through a lengthy training period. Familiarize yourself with the critical skills required for the types of jobs you are applying for.


Be as objective as you can about your own marketability you're competing in a very tight market.

4. Think small when you're targeting companies.

Job opportunities are still plentiful, but the principle source of these jobs is no longer major corporations but companies that employ fewer than 100 people. Adjust your job search strategy accordingly.

5. Create a winning resume by stressing skills and accomplishments.

Make sure that your resume does more than simply list your previous jobs and responsibilities. Stress skills, accomplishments, and attributes that are likely to interest employers in your target areas. Focus on outcomes.

6. Keep your game plan versatile when it comes to uncovering job leads.

You can uncover job leads in a variety of ways - through networking, by reading the classifieds in several different publications, working with recruiters, or directly approaching companies that you identify as potential employers. Be prepared to explore every avenue that could produce a lead.


Make it a daily goal to call, write, or meet at least three people you haven't yet contacted that may be able (now or two months from now) to tell you about a job lead or introduce you to someone who could do the same.

8. Read the right stuff.

Submerge yourself in information relating to the fields you've targeted or the companies for which you would like to work. Read the key trade publications in your field and stay current on trends and issues that professionals in your field deal with on a day-to-day basis.

When you're pursuing a job lead, don't think to yourself, "What can I do to get this company interested in me?" Instead, ask the following question, "What do I know or what am I able to do that can help this company be more successful?"

10. Keep your sunny side up.

Difficult as it may be sometimes, fight the tendency to get bogged down in a "woe-is-me" syndrome. Things that can help: Exercise daily (exercise does wonders for relieving stress and depression). Look to friends and family for support. Set aside at least one day a week when you don't even think about your job search.

11. Keep up appearance.

Regardless of what you may be doing in connection with your job search - meeting networking contacts, doing research in the library, or going on interviews - do your best to look your best. Whenever you leave your house or apartment, ask yourself, "Do I look like the kind of person I would hire?"

12. Be specific (and-up-front) with the people you're asking for help.

You will almost always get more from the people you approach for help if you (1) come to them with specific requests; (2) know ahead of time that they're capable of fulfilling that request; and (3) always show gratitude.

13. Look into temping.

Working on temporary assignments does more than give you a way to earn money while you're searching for a full-time job. It can help you develop new skills and get a taste for different types of companies and work environments. It may also lead to full-time work.

14. Do your homework before you go on interview.

Be prepared to spend at least a day finding out whatever you can about the company that's interviewing you. Be ready to talk about what the company does and connect your skills, qualifications, and attributes to the job requirements and the challenges the company is facing.

15. Respect the little things that can make a big difference at a job interview.

Arrive a few minutes early, be impeccably groomed, dress appropriately, handle yourself professionally and courteously in the reception room, and make a confident, poised entrance into the interviewer's office.

16. Show enthusiasm - and sell yourself!

Let the best of you shine through in your interviews. Listen actively. Make eye contacts. And avoid the all-too-common pitfall of giving canned, insincere answers to questions.

17. Make the best deal possible.

When you get a job offer, look carefully at the specifics of the offer and - without playing hardball and thus jeopardizing the offer - see if the company will improve on the less appealing aspects of the offer. Remember, it never hurts to ask.