

Checklist: 10 Things You Must Know

So you think you're ready to begin your search for that job? Here are 10 things that you absolutely, positively must know and understand before you begin your search.

Your job search efforts must be well thought out and organized. Here is a list of items you will need to get started: A three ring job search notebook. This notebook will help you to keep track of the people in your network, copies of resumes, cover letters and follow-up letters and all other correspondence, a page for notes on each phone conversation with an employer and/or interview, and a calendar for recording important dates including: interviews, dates when you expect to hear back from employers, etc.

Finding a Job is a Job. Looking for a job should be a full-time job. If you're unemployed, you are not an active job-seeker if you are not working daily on job-hunting. You may not have much time if you are a student or currently employed but you should put as much time as you can into it. Plan your days using a calendar or day planner. Put job searching time on your daily to do list. You may have time early in the morning, or during lunch time to work on your resume or research an employer's website. The job will not find you.

You must have more than one resume. For some job-seekers, the idea of having more than one resume is not practical. It is hard enough pulling the one resume together! Even if the job does not require a resume it is good to attach one whenever possible. The "one-size-fits-all" resume is no longer as useful in today's job market. It can just be a matter of changing the "Summary of Qualifications" section of your resume to match the requirements of each job that you apply for. You may want to eliminate certain work experiences to be able to place more emphasis on other work experiences that directly addresses the job requirements. You may not have to change the entire resume. There is also the Functional, Chronological and the Combination

resume formats that are available as guides. Remember, your resume is the thing that attracts employers to you to invite you for an interview. You must be willing to do whatever is necessary to promote your skills and work experience to a potential employer.

☑ You job search activities must be focused

If you think the way to find a new job is to apply for as many jobs with as many employers as possible including jobs that you are not even minimally qualified for, you are sadly misinformed. You probably think that the more jobs you apply for the more likely you are to find a job. You are really just wasting your time and the employer's time because they have to take the time to screen out your resume from those who are actually qualified to do the job. Even if your focus is on just getting a job, any type of job, because you need the money, you still have to be able to do the job.

Use your time more wisely focusing on specific jobs with specific employers

rather than wasting your time and energy without a focus. Target a select group with a detailed job-search strategy.

☑ You can't wait for employers to contact you. When you know exactly what job you want it is tempting to send out only one resume or complete one application and then sit back and wait to be called for an interview. I have often heard job seekers say, "But that's the only job that I want". In reality, we may not get the job that we want on the first try. We cannot rely on one job search or even one job search method to come out in our favor. While you should not apply for jobs just for the sake of applying, you should apply for more than one job in your field of interest and qualifications.

☑ You must use a variety of job search methods. There are many jobs advertised through various methods but you should not presume that advertised job openings are the only available jobs. Some jobs are posted on each company's website. Some employers have an amazing amount of information on their sites,

including job openings, job application procedures, career paths, and much more. Whether it is a job ad in the newspaper, an online job posting, a staffing agency, a federal or non-profit employment assistance program, networking or the department of labor, using a combination of methods is essential for a successful job search.

- ☑ **You must develop a network.** Networking is the process of meeting people and building a relationship for future mutually beneficial exchanges. It does not mean that you have to know lots of people or lots of people in very high positions. Nor does it mean that you have to attend every social event in town in order to exchange business cards.

It means establishing relationships of mutual respect so that you can ask for support and comfortably ask for ideas, advice, and even referrals to those with hiring power.

Some newspapers have a listing of networking groups that meet through out the city. Consult with people in your field of interest or with a career counselor in your school or at the Department of Labor. How did others in the same or similar field find their jobs? It only takes one person to start your network because that person can introduce you to others, and your network will expand. Forming relationships with people who can help advance your career and assist you in finding your ideal job is one of the most effective and reliable methods used by successful job seekers.

- ☑ **Following up with employers is important.** Almost every job search effort requires follow-up. Your cover letter should state that you will follow up after a specified time period. If you are lucky enough to get an interview you should also ask when would be the ideal time to follow up with the interviewers. Some job seekers are reluctant to follow up for fear that they will be seen as a pest. There is a difference between checking on the status of your application or resume submission and bugging an employer about hiring you or by calling too often. Be sure that the follow

up is conducted professionally and that your focus is to get an update on your application or resume submission because of your interest in the position. Follow-ups can be conducted by phone or by email.

- ☑ **You are prepared for job interviews.** Practice, practice, practice. Impressing an employer with your skills and personality requires lots of practice. Enlist the help of friends or family to ask you a series of questions so that you can practice. Then ask them to rate your responses, body language and eye contact. The interview is probably the single most important step to obtain a job.

Remind yourself that they invited you based on your application or resume which means that you have most or all of the skills and qualifications that they are looking for. The interview is a chance for them to meet the person behind the resume. You have an opportunity to share success stories and accomplishments that were not on your resume.

But the interview is not just what you know about the job but also what you know about the employer. Be sure to research the employer before going to the interview. You should know the employers mission, goals, and products. You should be able to state how you would fit into the mission and goals of the employer or how you can contribute to their goals. If you have done your research you should have a few questions to ask about the position or about the company. Your questions should be genuine not questions to show how much you know or questions that are inappropriate like, “how much do I get paid,” or do I get paid sick days?” Not good.

Speaking of questions, give some thought before you answer the interviewer’s questions. Be polite and honest. The employer is especially interested in experience and training that shows you are the right person for the job.

There are several types of interview formats, from traditional interviews to panel interviews to behavioral interviews. If possible

ask what type of interview you can expect when you get called and then plan for it by practicing. Do your research!

☑ **You see the value in Entry Level Positions.** We all want that 'dream job' but in reality it may take a few jobs on the way to that "dream job". This sometimes causes job seekers to turn down that entry level position because it is beneath their pay scale, education or just plain beneath them! First let me say that, no job is beneath you if you really need a job. Overlooking these positions as you conduct your job searches can be a costly mistake. Entry level jobs offer an opportunity to get your foot in the door with the company that you may not otherwise have. And these jobs are usually in demand during slow economic times. There is nothing wrong with working your way up the chain to a better job in that same company. Employers will take notice of an excellent employee who happens to qualify for other positions within the company. Sometimes networking from the inside is more effective than networking from the outside.