

Looking For a Job: Get Organized and Get Hired!



Organizing your job search is especially important in this economy. There are more people than ever looking for work which means greater competition for each available position. While you may be the most qualified applicant, credentials alone won't get you hired if you aren't organized in your job search. Here are some tips for maximizing your chances of finding the best possible job during your search:

Start With Your Expectations

Even in tough times, a job search doesn't have to be about taking absolutely ANYTHING that comes along. You have certain job skills, and the goal of your job search is to find a position that will allow you to make use of your talents. Start by asking yourself not only what you are qualified to do, but what you enjoy doing. Rather than thinking just in terms of those positions you have held in the past, try to see the bigger picture. You might have been responsible for putting together the annual company meeting and summer picnic every year (and really enjoyed that part of your job, even though you were officially in the marketing department). There would be nothing wrong with considering work in the event planning industry. Make a list of your strengths, your skills, your favorite work activities and keep this list in front of you as you consider possible job opportunities. You never know when a perfect match will come along, under a different professional title than you were expecting.

Look At Your Options

Modern job-searching isn't like the old days when you sat down at the kitchen table with the "help wanted" ads. These days, the internet is a job-seeker's best friend. While your local paper is still a great way starting point, don't forget about all the online job boards out there. There are several online websites that can turn up dozens of specialty listing services for your particular industry. You can also make use of web-based headhunters and placement firms. These helpful professionals will work on your behalf to get you hired in an appropriate position (for a small fee of course). It's a great service to consider if you work in a niche market or are having trouble connecting with companies on your own.



Get Your Paperwork in Order

Job-hunting is a very paper-intensive process, so try to have a filing system in place from the very beginning. Rather than a series of hanging folders, try an expandable accordion organizer with divided sections or a set of pressboard files with built-in mounting clips. With that system in place, your papers can go with you to each interview and orientation session. Early in your search, you probably want to set up sections for general categories of information:

- resume (have a couple versions that focus on your most relevant areas of expertise if you will be applying for different types of positions)
- letters of reference (keep multiple copies of each)
- documentation of any awards, certifications, degrees (copies -- you don't want to give out your originals)
- job postings (keep a printout or copy of the job description on each position for which you are applying)
- other supporting documentation (copies of press clippings, mention in the company newsletter, etc.)

Once you have narrowed your search down to a few hot prospects, you may want to set up a file for copies of all correspondence related to that position. If you have crossed a company off of your list, simply re-purpose that file for the next job listing.

While conducting a well organized job search and simply having organizing skills can't guarantee that you will be hired by the first company with whom you interview, you will be better prepared and make a more favorable first impression. Just remember that any boss is going to value an organized employee!

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