

The Best Job Seeking Tips Ever!

By: Andrew Hudson of the Denver Jobs Examiner (June, 2009)

Looking for a job is hard to do, but there are things you can learn to become a more skilled and productive job seeker.

I've spent a lot of time researching successful job seeking strategies. I've met with human resource experts and professional recruiters who have shared with me the inside tips that put job seekers into interview piles. I've spent a lot of time teaching and sharing these strategies with job seekers and over the next three months, I'll be sharing with you the best job seeking tips and strategies ever!

These jobs tips will be about searching for a job, resumes and cover letters, networking, job-seeker branding, interviews, negotiating a salary and many, many more.

Today's job seeking tips are about the practical things to consider when you are searching for a job.

YOU HAVE A JOB: CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER FOR YOURSELF! One of the most difficult things about being unemployed is that the life you were used to is completely disrupted; your work routines and daily habits and even your work 'social life' is gone. It can be a scary time but most successful job seekers develop new 'job-seeking routines' and divide their time throughout the day into specific areas that include a.) Internet job search b.) employer research c.) networking and cold-calling d.) creating and sending out resumes and cover letters. These routines are tied to specific goals that help you to develop a sense of accomplishment and progress in your job search. By establishing goals, you will feel a sense of accomplishment each and every day and you will see yourself becoming a more skilled job seeker!

Here are some job-seeking goal examples:

- 3 prospects per-day
- 4 phone calls each morning
- 10 resumes sent out each week
- 4 informational interviews per-week
- 3 interviews per-month

AVOID JOB-SEEKER BURNOUT - GET OUT FROM IN FRONT OF THE COMPUTER! If it's noon and you find yourself in your pajamas sitting in front of the computer, you are on a slow, excruciating and depressing path to job-seeker burnout. Yes, the Internet is a valuable resource for looking for a job, but it's not the ONLY thing you should be concentrating on. Spend your time at job-seeking events, setting up informational interviews, calling your networks, attending professional development events, joining job-seeker support groups.

CREATE A PLAN! Who's your target market? Do you have your sales collateral ready (resume/cover letter/portfolio)? Are you prepared to 'sell' yourself?

PRACTICE ANSWERING THE QUESTION, "WILL YOU PLEASE TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF?" It is the first impression that you will leave with someone who is considering you for a job. Whether at a networking event or an interview, you need to be prepared to have a confident, short and compelling answer that highlights your experience and expertise, your personality and your differentiators.

SEEK MOTIVATION! Remember a time in your life that you set a goal or faced a challenge or obstacle? What was it that motivated you or inspired you not to give up, even when a situation seemed hopeless? A mentor? Faith? A book? Music? An historical figure? Family? Friends? Turn back to that experience and tap into the thing that motivated and inspired you!

KEEP INFORMED! Read the business section of local newspapers regularly and keep in touch with changes in your industry and in businesses for which you are interested in working.

BE PERSISTENT! Don't just send in a resume and hope for someone to call you back. Even if you're responding to a classified ad that doesn't give a contact name, do some research and find a warm body to call and talk to. Be resourceful -- search the company's web site and ask your colleagues/peers if they know anyone at the company. Show your interest and conduct a quick follow-up a week or two after submitting your resume.

CONSIDER STARTING YOUR OWN BUSINESS! There are plenty of websites and government agencies that have information on building a business plan, financial resources for low-interest loans, and other helpful tips. Start with realistic goals and talk with others about the challenges and the rewards of owning your own business.

USE FREE JOB-SEEKING RESOURCES! Use the job-hunting resources available to you from local governments. Every state has a workforce development agency which provides numerous job search resources. These include books and brochures, career fairs, free computer access to build your resume and professional career counselors that are available to help you with your job search, your resume, your strategies, etc. They assist ALL citizens whether you are an executive, or whether you are a first-time job seeker.

DON'T BE PUT OFF BY EXOTIC JOB REQUIREMENTS! Usually they represent the perspective employer's ideal candidate. Believe me, these people are few and far between. If the job sounds like something you could do, give it a shot. You may prove to be what they really want!

USE THE WEB FOR MORE THAN JUST LOOKING AT JOB LISTINGS! Many organizations will list jobs on their websites that you won't see anywhere else. Their websites also offer tons of information for your networking strategies. Who is on their board of directors? Who are the top officers? You'd be surprised how many times you find people you know that serve in these capacities.

CREATE CASE STUDIES! These are short narratives about a particular project, situation or event in your career that show off your management skills, your problem-solving abilities, your creativity, how you

rose to the occasion when challenged, your follow through in beginning and completing a project, etc. It's one thing to list your skills on a resume; it's another to actually show how you utilized those skills.

NEVER QUIT LOOKING! Even after you have a job, keep your eye on the market. You'll pick up trends and lists of skills you may want to gain or build on. It will make you a better staff member where you are and position you much more competitively if you decide to move on.

GET AT LEAST CONVERSATIONAL WITH BASIC COMPUTER PROGRAMS! You don't have to be an expert in web design or publishing programs but if you can open them and do basic work it may give you a leg up.

CREATE A JOB SEEKING JOURNAL! Use it to jot notes and to make lists. Pull it out when you have a brainstorm about a new job-seeking strategy or when you think of a new 'power word' or 'power phrase' for your resume. Write down companies you hear about that seem interesting or websites you might want to explore later.

DON'T BE ALL-CONSUMED WITH YOUR JOB SEARCH! Find some balance; take a walk in the park or a hike in the mountains, listen to your favorite CD or go see a movie, hang out with a friend, eat an ice cream cone, volunteer with children or at a senior home... do something to release the pressure. Clearing your head really does help. It gives you clarity and focus and helps you to organize your thoughts and strategies before you jump back into your job search.

REMAIN OPTIMISTIC AND ENERGIZED! There will be times when you are a finalist and then you don't get the job. There will be times when you send out a dozen resumes and don't hear a word. As devastating as this may seem, just keep thinking about the next day, the next job interview, keep your head up and do what you can to not let it impact your self confidence.