

## EFFECTIVE JOB SEARCH TIPS

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The following tips will help you to develop an effective job search strategy.

### PREPARE:

- **Mindset:** Do not let your views on why you are losing (or lost) your job negatively affect your ability to effectively interview for future jobs. Try to remain positive and “future focused”.
- **Narrow Your Focus:** Be strategic. Narrow your focus so you only consider and prepare for the jobs you really want. Gather knowledge and information about the area(s) of focus. Develop a plan and give more time to it each day. Allow for changes; change variables as necessary that may impact employers. In other words, choose where you are going and commit to a plan or strategy that will help you to succeed.
- **Know Your Strengths:** Know what you are **really** good at and leverage your strengths.
- **Your Next Leader:** If you were given a chance to select your next Leader, whom would you pick? Define your next Leader. Use categories like personality, values, skills, experiences, and Leadership style.
- **Time for Job Search:** Allocate enough time for an effective job search. Several factors can influence your success in a job search (e.g., sluggish economy, length of time since you’d been in the job market, your work experiences, your job-related skills, willingness to relocate, etc.).
- **Research (do your homework):** Use job boards such as Monster.com and Career Builders.com to see what kinds of industries are hiring. But networking is the most successful job searching method, so use most of your time to connect with people who may be able to help you in your search to find the right job for you.
- **Gathering Research:** Gather research about the Company (external search) or department (internal search) and the interviewer. Make any connections with them as needed. Look for: specifics about the Company or department; about the Leader and interviewer; specifics about the open position. Talk to former Employees, current Employees, Customers, and suppliers. Read the website. Look at professional journals; visit the Chamber of Commerce. Contact professional associations. Use your time while you are job hunting to your best advantage.
- **Great Resume:** Develop a great resume. Write the resume to get you an interview; be strategic and clearly state your targeted position. Ask respected persons to review it for content and style. Choose a good font; be sure to put your name and contact information at the top. Use bullets; use action verbs for your accomplishments. Use good paper; avoid jargon; avoid references to salary. Use the dictionary; have it proofread. Use no more than two (2) pages.
- **Great Cover Letter:** Use individual’s name and address it to them. Great cover letters are customized, clear, concise, and connecting. Try to find a real connection with the person you are addressing in your cover letter.

- **Interview Prep:** Learn about the Company (or department) and the interviewer. Prepare answers to possible questions; prepare some questions for the interviewer. Prepare follow-up notes. Confirm date, time, location, etc. Arrive at least 10-15 minutes early.
- **Prepare Your Answers:** Anticipate questions such as **“Can you tell me a little bit about yourself?”** Explain any gaps in your employment history; reasons why you left your last employer; things you do well, and a few you do not do so well; career goals; anything unusual on your resume; what is really important to you.
- **Prepare Your Questions:** Ask about the Company (or department); it shows genuine interest. It’s unusual not to have any questions about a potential employer. Ask about opportunities to grow; about the Leader; about what is the most important thing they want to know about you. Listen carefully to any advice they may give and accept any instructions.

## PRACTICE

- **Networking:** Get to know the right people. Build relationships. Start sowing seeds of concern for others and building strong, long lasting relationships with them. It’s about what you can give or bring to the table; it’s not about your needs. It’s about asking for advice and seeking suggestions to help you improve your own efforts to find work. Networking is the most effective job search tool you can use.
- **The Two-Minute Drill (“Tell me about yourself”):** In two (2) minutes, explain concisely your past, present, and future employment journey. (If written, this might be several short paragraphs that tell about your relevant work and education history.) Break it down to about 90 seconds of personal and work history (where you were reared, education, family values, etc.) followed by about 30 seconds focused on your future goals. Write it down and practice it in your car, at home, in the mirror, etc.

## PERFORM

- **Pace Yourself:** Job searching is a marathon race; pace yourself.
- **Be Impressive:** First impressions are key; make the most of every impression.
- **Phone Interviews:** Before the call, know what you will say and how you will say it. It may help to place a mirror in front of your phone and smile while you talk. Express your interest in being included in the next step of the interview process. Keep notes of the conversation. Remember your answers to the most-asked questions. Keep your answering machine message appropriate, upbeat, friendly, and positive. Teach older children how to take a message if they will be answering your home phone in your absence.
- **Dress the Part:** Clothes should be appropriate for the position sought. They should be clean, ironed, and conservative. Hair should be clean, cut, colored, and styled appropriately. Practice and use your best smile in the interview.

- **During the Interview:** Use eye contact and smile. Show enthusiasm in your gestures; keep body posture erect; show you are interested by your body language. Answer questions honestly and positively.
- **Storytelling:** Learn how to give a specific example that shows how you implemented a specific value in your prior job or Company.
- **Be Honest:** Honesty is one of the most valued attributes to an employer. You might explain flaws in your work history with words like ***“early in my career, I . . .”, and then I learned to . . .***. Finish with a positive gain from the experience.
- **Salary History:** Don't give out this information unless you have met the interviewer and he/she asks for it. Leave room for negotiation later if they like you and want to hire you. Give a broad range that is acceptable to you. You can ask: ***“Do you have a salary range for this position”?***
- **References with Clout:** Prepare a list of several references to be used later in the interview process. Never put them on your resume. Use the references you think will make a difference with this employer.
- **Ask for the Job:** At the end of the interview, express your interest and ask for the job. You may be one of the few who end the interview that way. In some cases, you may have either volunteered there or have worked there part-time prior to this position being opened.
- **Be Persistent but not a Pest:** Ask: ***“What is the next step in the interview or hiring process”?*** Follow up with thank you notes, references, interest notes, phone calls, etc. Ask for a business card at the interview and mail thank you notes the day of the interview, on the way home.
- **References:** Develop a list of your best qualities/skills you wish to market. Select references who will testify to the necessary qualities/skills for the job you want. Ask the interviewer how he/she would prefer to see your references, then send them, but not before the interviewer asks for them.
- **Self-Evaluation:** After the interview, evaluate your preparation, performance, and potential impact. Be open to correction as you review your performance on that interview.
- **Job Offers:** Carefully consider every job offer in light of the Leader, Company, Culture, industry, and geography involved. Know what is negotiable: sometimes salary, pay rate, time off with or without pay, and/or working conditions. Negotiate before you take the job, or you may lose your leverage in decisions that affect you. Ask for a review period while you talk with family members. Know what your skills are worth in the job market.
- **Cleaning up Mistakes:** Seek forgiveness for your mistakes, accept the consequences, and move on.
- **Do Your Best:** Commit to doing the best job you can and stay open to refining your job skills.