

Eight Tips to Expedite Your Job Search

With the current climate of unemployment, which had been at a 9 year high of 6.2% nationally, applicants are spending longer times in search of their next opportunity. Recently, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that 23.2% of the nation's unemployed (2.1 million people) spent 27 or more weeks conducting their job searches.

How can you save time between opportunities? You can look at 4 key factors for expediting search campaigns: focus, market viability, network, and presentation.

Focus is about knowing what and where your target is. When you know that, e.g., healthcare is where you want to be and, more specifically, a radiological technologist is the type of position that's for you, all you need to do search for opportunities at healthcare locations that employ those individuals.

- **Understand who you are.** If you don't know what your skills, abilities, values, interests, and personality attributes are, you have no basis for landing a job. Career testing, reflecting on past successes, evaluating your passions, and journaling thoughts and dreams are important processes to allow these realizations.
- **Ask for feedback.** You may be blind to your own gifts and strengths, as well as your areas of weakness. Find out from trusted friends, family members, co-workers, and colleagues what attributes they most see in you. As one professional career counselor once said, "If one person thinks you're a horse, it doesn't matter. However, if five people think you're a horse, you better buy a saddle!"

Market viability is where the rubber meets the road. You may be the most talented computer programmer in the world, but if the world doesn't want to pay for programmers, start looking at other options. What's hot and what's not? Your challenge is to find avenues that are hot and translate your skills/experiences in those directions.

- **Identify who's growing.** Job wanted ads in the newspapers only account for approximately 10% of all openings, so don't spend a great deal of time on reading all of the ads. However, try to notice the type of ads and who is posting the ads. You will often see 1-2 ads for school principal, but 12-15 ads per week for "radiological" positions. You will also see that some companies are placing 4 or more ads in the paper, which often indicates that they are in growth mode. Check them out for other opportunities.
- **Become a researcher.** One of the major advantages of the internet is information, especially on data trends. Check out www.iseeksolutions.org for a wealth of career information for the State of Minnesota. Also, don't forget about libraries, which have a variety of indexes, journals, magazines, newspapers, internet services, and helpful staff to assist you in finding what you need.

Networking is the vehicle which leads to 70% - 80% of all jobs in the U.S. It is quite often who you know, or whom others you know, know. You are likely quite isolated

from many opportunities, if you do not have a network or group of people to tap. You can start by asking your friends, family, colleagues, running partners, clergy, etc. some simple questions: “Do you know anyone who is involved in _____, because I’m wanting to get their advice?” and “Would it be possible to get their names/numbers/emails so that I can ask them some questions?”. This will build momentum for you.

- **Join a job transition group.** Most communities have groups available for networking or gaining job leads and skills. In May 2003, the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* published a list of over 50 job support groups (5/14/2003) in the metro Twin Cities area. Many of the groups are held at churches or at state government locations (Workforce Centers). Involvement is free, with some asking for voluntary donations. These groups allow for new ideas, sharing, support, and adding names to your network.
- **Establish a success team.** Nearly 15 years ago, Barbara Sher and Annie Gottlieb co-wrote a book titled “*Teamworks!*” which highlights a process of setting up groups of peers who are devoted to brainstorming ideas and supporting efforts for solving a problem or fulfilling a need. The concepts are needed even more these days for job searchers in need of support, feedback, and additional resources.

Presentation begins during the networking phase and carries you through the job offer. What are your key marketing points? What role are you pursuing? Why are you the best candidate for the position? How you describe yourself in relationship to getting the work done is paramount!

- **Flaunt your key marketing points.** These are the important skills, talents, experiences, professional interests, training opportunities you’ve established to this point. Knowing and writing these down allow you to concisely state your spiel or commercial, answer challenging interview questions, and constantly make people aware of your “value-added” ingredients.
- **Realize that nonverbals are more important than verbals.** How you look, smile, sit, stand, and make eye contact are crucial. Being positive, sounding confident and attending to the needs of the other party are going to determine whether you are getting contacts from your network and interviews from potential employers. Remember: it’s not just what you know, but are you someone others want to be around for 8+ hours of the day?

Using these eight tips will go a long way in quickly landing that new and special opportunity!

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