

CREATE & IMPLEMENT A WINNING JOB SEARCH PLAN

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SECTION ONE

CONDUCTING AN EFFECTIVE JOB SEARCH

Today's job market is highly competitive. There are often more qualified applicants than available jobs. Just think about the dot.com downturn and the huge number of IT professionals all competing for the same position... How do you get an edge? Or even get in the door for an interview? With your new resume package, you are off to a great start and heads above many of your competing applicants. But is a powerful resume package enough to land you the job of your dreams? Not even close! Your new resume package will attract employers' attention and get you in the interview door. The rest is up to you. This e-Book was designed to assist you in formulating a winning job search plan that, along with your new resume package, will land you the job you have been looking for!

CAPITALIZE ON YOUR JOB MARKET NICHE

Before you begin to send resumes and search for a new position, it's important to take stock of where you've been and where you'd like to go. Sometimes making a career change gives you the opportunity to "get yourself on the right track"—especially if you've felt a little sidetracked by your last job selection.

One important area to consider is your niche. What are the parts of your current or past positions that you've been the most successful with, or enjoyed the most? Is there a specific job component that you could focus on for future job searches?

Once you feel confident about the direction you're headed, it's time to take advantage of the special niche job you might be able to fill. Think about it. Your education and previous job titles might scream "Accountant." But there's more to your expertise than just crunching numbers. Perhaps you've got particular experience dealing with SEC filings. Or, maybe you possess large budget project management experience? These are skills you want to capitalize on and emphasize during the interview process.

WHAT EMPLOYERS WANT TO HEAR

That's the key to a good job search—helping the employer see you as someone who can positively contribute to the company. That means you may need to adjust your resume to highlight a different niche, depending on the company and position for which you're applying. Having more than one version of a resume is not just common—it's necessary. It will arm you with several versions that will open doors to a variety of job opportunities.

Before you hit the interview trail, conduct a self-analysis. Make a very accurate list of all of the skills you have acquired. Add to your list the achievements you've accomplished. For every skill or experience, identify (in as quantifiable terms as possible) your accomplishments. This will give you a definitive advantage during the question round of any interview.

You may find it beneficial to complete a Functional Skills Inventory. If you take 30 minutes to complete this inventory analysis accurately, you will know exactly what your strengths and weaknesses are; and be able to benefit from that knowledge during the interview process. ***We have included a Functional Skills Inventory at the end of this e-Book for your use and convenience.***

YOUR JOB SEARCH PLAN

1. *Determine the job you want*

The very first thing you need to do is determine the exact thing you want to do in your job. If you really have no idea, first make a list of the things you like to do and the skills or abilities you feel are a definite strength for you.

If you already have an idea -- you have a background in marketing, but just aren't sure what area of marketing you wish to concentrate in -- then your next step is investigating various job titles in your areas of interest.

2. ***Determine where you want to live***

Are you open to relocating, or do you have a very specific geographic location in mind? If you have a specific location in mind, then your next step is identifying the companies that have offices/plants/locations in those areas. Probably the best way to identify these companies is through local chambers of commerce or other business directories.

If you are open to relocating, then you can move on to the next step.

3. ***Determine the best companies for you***

You need to make some decisions about the types of companies that fit your needs, style, and personality. Examine such issues as the size of the company, corporate culture, management style, employee empowerment, and other issues of importance to you.

4. ***Determine your search strategy:***

- Job/Career Fairs: many college and universities sponsor fairs, many local or regional communities sponsor fairs, and some industries have their own fairs. Go to as many as makes sense. This is also an excellent way to meet new people in your Industry and strengthen your network.
- Networking: one of the still-hidden gems of job-hunting and one of the keys to a successful job search. Talk to colleagues, previous employers and business acquaintances. Chances are – it may open a few interview doors for you.
- Direct mail campaign: the traditional method still works, where you identify a number of companies and specific hiring managers and send them a dynamic cover letter and superior resume in hope of obtaining some interviews. Don't underestimate this method. We are all aware of how many great jobs are never advertised.

- Internet job sites: one of the most talked about areas of recruiting and one that can work for you...just don't put all your efforts here and ignore other job-hunting methods. You must conduct a versatile job search to be successful.
- Company Websites: many employers now post all sorts of employment and job listings on their Websites, so if you have some specific companies in mind, you should definitely take advantage of it.
- Job postings, classified ads: such a small percentage of jobs are ever advertised -- as few as 5% of all jobs -- that your chance of success in landing the job of your dreams from this method are only slightly better than your chances of winning the lottery.

JOB HUNTING ON THE INTERNET

- *Expectations.* Job-hunting on the Internet is not some magic elixir that will guarantee that you find a job. For most job seekers, you should spend no more than about 20% of your time and effort looking for a job online, though job seekers in the technology/computer industry might be wise to spend up to 50% of your time looking for a job online.
- *Strategy.*
 - o General Job sites: there are a number of job sites that cater to all job-seekers. These sites have job listings -- and most allow resume postings - - for just about all job levels and industries. Some of these include Monster.com, Employment911.com, HotJobs.com, FlipDog.com, CareerShop.com, and others.
 - o College graduate job sites: there are a number of job sites whose main focus is specifically for college students, so the jobs tend to be more entry-level. Most of these sites have job listings and allow resume postings.
 - o Industry-specific job sites: just about every industry now has at least one job site, if not more. These sites have the advantage of job openings for your specific industry. Most of these sites have job listings and allow resume postings.

- o Company sites: more and more, employers are using their company Websites to list job openings and recruit job-seekers. If you have a list of specific companies in mind, we suggest you go directly to their Websites.
- o Resume Blasting Services: This is an option to consider if you want your resume to work for you around the clock. Blasting services will submit your resume into several online job sites. Your resume is then searchable by interested employers, based on keywords, industry, position title, etc.

SECTION TWO

TAILORING YOUR RESUME FOR EACH EMPLOYER

CUSTOMIZING YOUR RESUME

No matter how complete or versatile your resume is - there is a good chance it will not be sufficient for every job you apply for. However, customizing your resume to suit a specific job you are applying for is a straight forward process and you really only need to change a few things to make the transition successful.

- Compare the prerequisites of the job posting with your resume. Make sure that the necessary keywords and duties are present.
- You can also adjust the wording within your resume Objective to match the position, as long as the information remains factual. This may include changing the position title you are seeking or stressing a different set of experiences or skill sets to catch an employer's attention.
- You may also want to adjust titles and headings on the resume to match the position for which you're applying

TIPS:

- Remember to be honest and factual with the information presented within your resume.
- Recheck the formatting of the resume if you have made changes to ensure it looks perfect before sending.

CUSTOMIZING YOUR COVER LETTER

Cover Letter (.DOC file) - When sending a resume via fax or regular mail, a cover letter should always be included. We have designed your new cover letter in a manner that allows you to easily customize it for each position you are applying for.

- Print the cover letter on the same paper used for the resume.

- Whenever possible, quote the official title of the position you are applying for, and any job or competition numbers the employer has provided.
- DO NOT INCLUDE A COVER LETTER when you are posting your resume on a general Internet job site. Most employers do not view this favorably and of course, you cannot adequately cover all positions in a single letter.
- If you are sending your resume via email, you should still include a brief email version of your cover letter as the MAIN BODY OF THE EMAIL. It annoys employers to receive a BLANK email with a cover letter and resume attached. Cut and paste your cover letter into the body of the email and attach the resume, as permitted.

TIPS:

- Use keywords that are critical to the job for which you're applying
- Include specific achievements as they relate to the job you are applying for
- Whenever possible, make sure to use a person's name, not just a title on the cover letter and envelope
- Look at the bracketed areas to make sure that the information listed is most relevant to the job that you are applying for.
- Recheck the formatting once you have made changes to ensure it looks perfect before sending.

CUSTOMIZING YOUR THANK YOU LETTER

Thank You Letter (.DOC file) - A short thank you or follow-up letter is a great way to keep you in the forefront of an employers mind, following an interview.

- Print the thank you letter on the same paper used for the resume.
- Whenever possible, quote the official title of the position you were interviewed for, and any job or competition numbers the employer has provided.

- Address it directly to the person who conducted your interview. If you are sending your resume via email, you can still send a brief email version of your thank you letter.

TIPS:

- Highlight the important points from the interview-what you can offer the company
- Include clear solutions you have for employer issues
- Make sure to use a person's name, not just a title on the thank you letter and envelope
- Look at the bracketed areas to make sure that the information listed is most relevant to the job you are applying for
- Attach your reference sheet IF the employer asked you to submit references following your interview
- Recheck the formatting once you have made changes to ensure it looks perfect before sending.

DEAR SIR OR MADAM (OR OTHER) - Which to use and when

Get this small detail wrong, and you can be certain that your resume will end up in the circular file. Here are some tips for getting it right:

TIPS:

- If you have a contact at the company, use the name formally. Even if you know the person casually, or s/he happens to be a friend of a friend - always use Ms. or Mr.
- If you are addressing your resume package to a female, always stay on the side of caution and use the term Ms. as opposed to Miss or Mrs.
- Should you come across a posting and the reply contact is Jean Smith, chances are it could be a male or female contact. If you are able, find out which. If you cannot find the information, simply use "Dear Jean Smith."
- When only a company name and address is provided, with no contact or department reference, the safest opening is always "To Whom It May Concern:"

- When only a company and department head is provided, but no direct contact name (this happens a lot!), include the department head information in the address portion of the cover letter and use a generic opening such as the following example:

ABC Widget Company
Human Resources Department
555 Any Street
Coryville, ST 90224
Attention: Senior IT Hiring Manager

Dear Sir or Madam:

SECTION THREE

SUBMITTING YOUR RESUME

WHAT TO SEND IN YOUR INITIAL APPLICATION

- Send only your resume and a cover letter. If the employer specifically asked for supporting documents (such as portfolio or references) to be submitted WITH your resume, then you should also include these. If the employer did not request additional documents, respect their wishes and do not inundate them with a ton of documents. Do not include them. Instead, mention in your cover letter that the supporting documents are available.
- Make sure your contact information is current and is located at the top of each document.

HOW TO SEND YOUR RESUME ELECTRONICALLY

Word document (.DOC file) - Used for printing and mailing to employers (with your new cover letter), taking with you to interviews, faxing resumes or sending as an email attachment, when the employer has specified that an attachment is permitted.

Also, if the employer accepts Rich Format emails, you can actually include the contents of your Word doc resume as PART of the email body. To do this, open your resume in Word, under Edit, Select ALL. Copy and paste it into your email. You must, however, make sure your email is set to Rich Format. This is a very popular method and makes for a very effective email-sent resume, without sending an attachment.

Text Resume (.TXT file) - The TXT file should be used to cut and paste into emails when the employer specified PLAIN TEXT only or asks for no attachments. In recent history, large employers ask for TXT versions because they actually scan them into a readable resume database. The TXT file you received is plain text; it can be scanned by employers who scan resumes into a central database.

Since different online submission forms use different widths, character limits and text box sizes - you may have to manually adjust the formatting of your resume once you paste it into any online submission form.

HOW / WHEN TO INCLUDE AND DISTRIBUTE REFERENCES

Employers always assume that you have references and will ask for them, without fail, when they are ready - usually at the stage when they are seriously considering hiring you. In today's market, it is not necessary to list references on your resume. It appears "amateur" and is unnecessary-especially for senior level or managerial positions.

However, when a potential employer asks for references, have a reference sheet ready! Reference sheets should be straightforward and include a minimum of 2 professional references. Be sure to print your reference sheet on the same paper as your resume, and use the same letterhead for a professional and consistent appearance.

Personal references: Employers are not interested in personal references. Employers are specifically looking for unbiased references that can account for your professional ability and integrity (unless of course your personal reference also happens to be the CEO of a highly respected company)

TIPS:

- Always make sure you receive permission from the reference before submitting their contact information.
- Always alert your references that they will be receiving a call from a prospective employer, following a productive interview.
- Only use references that know you well, and are very familiar with and confident in your professional abilities. You never want a reference hedging on answers during a reference check by a potential employer.

WHEN YOU SHOULD (AND SHOULD NEVER) INCLUDE SALARY REQUIREMENTS

Unless the potential employer has explicitly stated (within a job posting or advertisement or told you personally) that salary range is a requirement of application NEVER list

salary requests on your resume or within a cover letter. It is the surest and quickest way to knock you out of the running for any position. Salary should only be discussed during the interview process.

If an employer DOES ask for salary requirements with your application, list the information on the cover letter only - not on the resume. Within your cover letter, include a brief statement, generally second paragraph from the bottom of the letter. Be brief and to the point and always list a salary range, so you don't appear unwilling to negotiate or price yourself out of a job.

As an example:

Given my direct experience and industry expertise, salary range is \$85,000-\$100,000 per annum; depending on benefits offered and is negotiable based on the scope of the position.

The above statement reiterates confidence in your ability to do the job; exhibits your willingness to be flexible for the right opportunity; and offers some leeway and negotiation in case your salary range is not inline with the employers' budget. The mention of "depending on benefits" tells the employer that you are looking for a secure and long-term position. Given the cost of employee acquisition and training, this is good news to most employers.

BRIEF GUIDE TO PRINTERS AND PAPERS (and YES! it really DOES matter)

The truth is... a potential employer or recruiter will establish their first impression of you long before they meet you in person - from your resume and the materials it is printed on. That's why it's so important to have a coordinated package - a unique, consistent, unified look that will help you make a favorable first impression and project a high degree of professionalism.

Using quality paper and printer for your resume will increase your chances of getting noticed by a potential employer. A professionally written resume printed on quality bond paper and printed on a good quality inkjet or laser printer speaks volumes about you!

TIPS:

- Use high quality white or off-white paper. Never use brightly colored paper.
- When you purchase your resume paper, make sure you buy enough so that you do not run out of stock and have to mismatch paper products.
- Purchase at least 16lb. bond paper to print your resume and letters on. 20 lb. or 24 lb. stock is recommended.
- Always use the same paper for cover letters, thank you letters, reference sheets and supporting documents that will be attached to your resume. If possible, use matching envelopes for the ultimate professional look and presentation.
- Always use "BEST" settings when printing. To change the mode of printing, do the following:
 1. With your resume open in MS Word, click on FILE and then PRINT.
 2. A small box will pop up with your printer configurations and option. Click on the button marked PROPERTIES.
 3. Choose the tab marked PAPER QUALITY.
 4. Choose BEST and click OK to save these settings.
 5. Print your resume

SECTION FOUR

PROACTIVE POST INTERVIEW FOLLOW-UP

Keep Meticulous Notes and have a Follow-up Plan – One of the biggest employer complaints is that employee's don't follow through. If you can't follow through during the job seeking process, why would any employer expect you to follow through as an employee? If you say you'll do something—do it! Take notes for every contact you make, every letter you send. Start a Job Search Log (***we have included a Job Search Log at the end of this e-Book that you can print out and use***).

Whatever you do, don't make promises you can't keep. Contacts are like gold. It's best to under-promise and over-deliver than to fail to follow through. Better yet, promise big—and deliver!

YOU SURVIVED THE INTERVIEW – NOW WHAT?

Remember that your work is not done once you finish the interview. You can't sit back and wait for the job offer, so consider these key rules and strategies for following-up your job interviews.



DO'S

- Ask at the end of the interview when the employer expects to make the hiring decision.
- Be proactive and consider follow-up a strategic part of your job search process. Follow-up can give you just the edge you need to get the job offer over others who interviewed for the position.
- Do send a thank you -- even if you are sure the job is not for you.

- In your thank you letter, show appreciation for the employer's interest in you and remind the employer about why you are the perfect person for the position.
- Obtain the correct titles and names of all the people who interviewed you.
- Write individual thank you notes or letters to each person who interviewed you -- within two business days. Each letter can be essentially the same, but try to vary each a bit in case recipients compare notes.
- Do alert your references -- if you have not done so already -- that they may be getting a phone call from the employer.
- Continue to interview and attempt to find other opportunities.
- Be patient. The hiring process often takes longer than the employer expects.
- Continue following-up, especially if the employer asks you to. Remember the adage about the squeaky wheel getting the oil. Just don't go overboard and annoy or bother the employer.
- Do use other job offers as leverage in your follow-up -- to get the offer you really want.

X DO NOT'S

- Do not worry so much about hand-written versus typed thank you letters, but do not make a mistake by sending it through the wrong medium; make sure you know the best method of reaching the employer, whether by regular mail, email, or fax.
- Never send a letter without double and triple checking spelling and grammar.
- Do not stop job-hunting, even if you feel confident that you will get a job offer.
- Never place too much importance on one job or one interview; there will be other opportunities for you.
- Don't burn any bridges if you do not get a job offer. And do try and turn the situation into a positive by bringing the interviewer(s) into your network, possibly even asking them for referrals to other contacts.

USING (NOT ABUSING) THE CONVENIENCE OF EMAIL

Email is a wonder of modern day life. It allows us to instantly communicate with anyone, anywhere, at any time of the day or night. For an employer or human resources manager, it can also be a nightmare.

When you should email an employer:

- To submit your resume and cover letter
- To follow up with the employer to confirm your resume was received
- To confirm an interview time and date
- To send a brief thank you letter following an interview
- To RESPOND to an employers email

TIPS:

- Always respect a potential employers time. Keep emails as brief as possible
- Use a very CLEAR subject line so the recipient immediately knows which position your email is regarding
- Only send attachments if they are requested or approved by the recipient. Most HR departments have a stringent policy of deleting anything with an attachment
- If an employer contacts you via email with questions, or is requesting additional information... gather everything you need to send, write a thoughtful and succinct reply and send it all back in ONE email. The only exception to this rule would be if the employer requested files that are too large to send in one email. In this case, be very SURE to add the following in the subject line of your emails (Part 1 of 3), (Part 2 of 3), and (Part 3 of 3).

SECTION FIVE

LONG TERM NETWORKING – THE SMART PROFESSIONAL’S PATH TO CAREER SUCCESS

- **FACT: LARGE AND PROFITABLE EMPLOYERS HIRE OFTEN:** Just because you didn't get the job the first time, it is important to keep in touch with large, profitable and desirable employers. They do hire often and chances are if you are tenacious, you will be successful in securing the position you are hoping for.
- **FACT: EMPLOYERS OFTEN HAVE MORE THAN ONE NICHE AREA FOR TALENTED PROFESSIONALS:** Large companies and especially companies in high growth mode often have similar positions available. Remember: it may not be the job you were hoping for but getting one foot in the door gives you the opportunity to move up in the company from within.
- **FACT: LARGE AND PROFITABLE EMPLOYERS ARE WELL CONNECTED:** Leave a lasting impression on employers. It does happen that an employer will refer a previous applicant to a colleague. You may not be right for the offered position but the employer may just be impressed enough with you to offer a referral.
- **FACT: SLOW AND STEADY WINS THE RACE:** Most job seekers start out fast and furious and when they do not succeed initially they either give up or “settle” for a lesser job. If you stick with it, maintain contact with employers and continue to hone your interview skills – you will be successful in landing your dream job.

FINAL REMINDERS:

- You MUST be proactive if you plan to be successful in your job search. Employers -- in *any* kind of labor market -- are not going to be banging down your door looking for you. You need to follow-up all your contact with employers -- either by phone or by mail, depending on the circumstances.

- Take a few minutes BEFORE submitting each resume to ensure you have tailored it to the offered position. Change key words and job titles to better reflect your abilities and skills as they relate to the vacancy.
- Follow up letters, emails and phone calls really are important! You would be surprised at how few job-seekers send thank you letters to potential employers. Remember, your goal is differentiating yourself from the other job seekers and this small gesture can really pay off for you. Not everybody is at ease making phone calls, but you NEED to do so if you really want the job. If you say you are going to contact an employer (and in your job search letters you should do so) then you must follow-up and actually make the phone call!
- It is a TWO WAY STREET – You may need the job but never lose sight of the fact that the employer NEEDS your skill set, otherwise he would not be taking time from his busy schedule to interview you. Use that to your advantage and showcase your skills, abilities and successes at every opportunity.

*From the Staff and Management at
Employment & Resume Services...*

We wish you every success in your job search!

JOB SEARCH – INTERVIEW LOG

COMPANY NAME:	CONTACT:
POSITION APPLIED FOR:	DATE APPLIED:
INTERVIEW DATE/TIME:	DATE TO FOLLOW-UP:
POSITION REQUIREMENTS: • • • • • •	MY QUALIFICATIONS: • • • • • •

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:



COMPANY NAME:	CONTACT:
POSITION APPLIED FOR:	DATE APPLIED:
INTERVIEW DATE/TIME:	DATE TO FOLLOW-UP:
POSITION REQUIREMENTS: • • • • • •	MY QUALIFICATIONS: • • • • • •

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

FUNCTIONAL TRANSFERABLE SKILLS INVENTORY

RATE EACH BELOW THAT APPLIES TO YOU

1 BEING N/A

2 BEING LEAST DEGREE OF COMPETENCY OR LEAST USED

6 BEING HIGHEST DEGREE OF COMPETENCY OR USED ON A REGULAR BASIS

Verbal Communication	1	2	3	4	5	6
Perform and entertain before groups						
Speak well in public appearances						
Confront and express opinions without offending						
Interview people to obtain information						
Handle complaints ___in person ___over phone						
Present ideas effectively in speeches or lecture						
Persuade/influence others to a certain point of view						
Sell ideas, products or services						
Written Communication						
Write technical language, reports, manuals						
Write poetry, fiction, plays						
Write grant proposals						
Prepare and write logically written reports						
Write copy for sales and advertising						
Edit and proofread written material						
Prepare revisions of written material						
Utilize all forms of technology for writing						
Write case studies and treatment plans						
Demonstrate expertise in grammar and style						
Train/Consult						
Teach, advise, coach, empower						
Conduct needs assessments						
Use a variety of media for presentation						
Develop educational curriculum and materials						
Create and administer evaluation plan						
Facilitate a group						
Explain difficult ideas, complex topics						
Assess learning styles and respond accordingly						
Consult and recommend solutions						
Write well organized and documented reports						
Analyze						
Study data or behavior for meaning and solutions						

Analyze quantitative, physical and/or scientific data						
Write analysis of study and research						
Compare and evaluate information						
Systematize information and results						
Apply curiosity						
Investigate clues						
Formulate insightful and relevant questions						
Use technology for statistical analysis						
Research						
Identify appropriate information sources						
Search written, oral and technological information						
Interview primary sources						
Hypothesize and test for results						
Compile numerical and statistical data						
Classify and sort information into categories						
Gather information from a number of sources						
Patiently search for hard-to-find information						
Utilize electronic search methods						
Plan and Organize						
Identify and organize tasks or information						
Coordinate people, activities and details						
Develop a plan and set objectives						
Set up and keep time schedules						
Anticipate problems and respond with solutions						
Develop realistic goals and actions to attain them						
Create guidelines for implementing an action						
Create efficient systems						
Follow through, insure completion of a task						
Interpersonal Relations						
Process human interactions, understand others						
Encourage, empower, advocate for people						
Adjust plans for the unexpected						
Facilitate conflict management						
Communicate well with diverse groups						
Listen carefully to communication						
Leadership						
Envision the future and lead change						
Establish policy						
Set goals and determine courses of action						
Motivate/inspire others to achieve common goals						
Create innovative solutions to complex problems						

Communicate well with all levels of the organization						
Develop and mentor talent						
Negotiate terms and conditions						
Take risks, make hard decisions, be decisive						
Encourage the use of technology at all levels						
Management						
Manage personnel, projects and time						
Foster a sense of ownership in employees						
Delegate responsibility and review performance						
Increase productivity and efficiency to achieve goals						
Develop and facilitate Work Teams						
Provide training for development of staff						
Adjust plans/procedures for the unexpected						
Facilitate conflict management						
Communicate well with diverse groups						
Utilize technology to facilitate management						
Financial						
Calculate, perform mathematical computations						
Work with precision with numerical data						
Keep accurate and complete financial records						
Perform accounting functions and procedures						
Compile data and apply statistical analysis						
Create computer generated charts for presentation						
Use computer software for records and analysis						
Forecast, estimate expenses and income						
Appraise and analyze costs						
Create and justify organization's budget to others						
Create and Innovate						
Visualize concepts and results						
Visualize strategies and solutions						
Brainstorm and make use of group synergy						
Communicate with metaphors						
Invent products through experimentation						