

Job Hunt Success

Target Your Job Search

Sending out several applications is key to finding a job, but you also need to be selective about the jobs to which you're applying.

If you're spending time applying for jobs you're not qualified for, you're wasting valuable time you could be devoting to a position that's a better fit. If you recognize where you're strengths lie and what transferable skills you possess, you'll see better results than if you apply to any posting you come across.

QUESTIONS TO EVALUATE YOUR SEARCH

Job Hunt Giving You a Headache?

For some people, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it" is a guiding principle. Looking for work is a time-consuming process that can move - or at least feel like its moving - at a snail's pace.

So how can you tell the difference between a regular, patience-trying job search and an unsuccessful one?

The first sign: No one's calling you for interviews. Not every résumé you send will result in an interview, but some of them should. Another clue is if you are getting called for interviews but you never get called back for a second round or receive an offer.

If you find your job hunt isn't giving you anything but a stress headache, ask yourself the following questions:

Is my résumé targeted?

Just because your applying for multiple jobs, don't assume the same résumé works for every position. Each job posting will stress different qualities over others, so rework each résumé to highlight the experience and skills that correspond to that particular employer. Your résumé will prove not only that you're qualified for the job but that you also have an attention to detail.

Am I networking?

Think about this: there is only one of you and there are thousands of job openings. The more people know you're looking for a job, the better your chances of finding one. You can never be sure who will know of an available position.

Do I know something about the companies I'm applying to?

"Tell me what you know about the company" or "Why would you fit in well here?" have become staple interview questions, so don't be caught off guard. Shrugging your shoulders and saying, "I don't know" isn't going to score you points. Look at the company's web site, read press releases or newspaper articles to see what's going on with your prospective future boss. In addition to preparing for the interview, you'll also learn whether or not the company and its culture are a right fit for you.

Has someone else looked over my resume and interview technique?

Feedback is critical to job hunting. Ask someone to read your cover letter and résumé and provide feedback. Your interview skills need the same attention. What you think you're saying isn't necessarily what others hear.

THE FIRST IMPRESSION IS THE LASTING IMPRESSION

Tips for a Successful Job Search

When completing an application or an interview:

- Always go alone! Never, ever take anyone with you.
- Turn off your pager and/or cell phone before you get out of your car.

- You never know who may happen to look out the window as you are walking in, so always be professional the entire time you are on their property.
- Show your positive attitude, even in the parking lot by having a smile on your face.

- Always dress one level above the what the job would require.
- Take several nice, clean copies of your résumé with you.
- Read the application carefully so you do not make any mistakes and need to scratch out answers.

- Have a list of references (both business and personal) available. Make sure you check with those individuals ahead of time to see if it is okay to use them as references.
- Show a confident "I know you will want to

hire me" attitude.

- Do not bad-mouth previous employers or co-workers.
- Within the next 24 hours, send a Thank You note! This is the best way to get the upper edge and make points.