

VirtualJobCoach

Your Personal Job-Search Assistant

10 Steps to a Successful Job Search

An intense guide to Job Search



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Index

STEP 1 - PLANNING	3
STEP 2 – STARTING THE RESUME	4
STEP 2 – RESUME WRITING CONTINUED	5
STEP 3 – OTHER DOCUMENTS	6
STEP 4 – POSTING THE RESUME	7
STEP 5 – NETWORKING	8
STEP 6 – MARKETING STORIES	9
STEP 7 – ORGANIZATION	10
STEP 8 – TARGET COMPANY LIST	11
STEP 9 – NETWORKING MEETINGS	12
STEP 10 – DIGITAL BRAND	13
WRAPPING IT UP	14

10 Steps to a Successful Job Search

Step 1 - Planning

This is the time to start a plan, do not run round in circles shooting out resumes to every company you have ever heard of like some crazy paper shredder on steroids. To use the old saw, ***failing to plan is planning to fail***. Make sure you know what your target job is. Create a financial plan. Make sure you have signed up for unemployment if appropriate. Organize an office space at home where you can block yourself away from other distractions.

Please consider that as you build your marketing tools and create your plans you will need to set targets along the way.

Ensure that the targets you set are achievable and realistic.

Remember that finding a new job is a full time job.

Tasks

Financial Plan Completed?

Contacted Unemployment?

Set achievable targets

Establish your support group

10 Steps to a Successful Job Search

Step 2 – Starting the Resume

Having created the plan now is the time to start building your marketing materials. Start with sketching out a resume (for help visit www.virtualjobcoach.com). Decide on the type of resume; is this a chronological or functional resume? How hard do you want to make the recruiters life? Make the summary section at the top easy to read and compelling. There is no reason to explain your life history, keep it simple, and make it easy to say **YES** to you.

As you begin your resume creation remember that this is a business document and not a social networking tool that you are sharing with friends.

Get an email address that is professional from Gmail, Hotmail, Yahoo, etc.

Tasks

- What are your goals?
- Type of Resume?
- Consider your skills/strengths
- Write down accomplishments
- Get a professional email address

10 Steps to a Successful Job Search

Step 2 – Resume Writing Continued

We remain in resume building mode, writing a great resume takes time and you will need to revise and review a number of times before you get it right.

Check the spelling, check that grammar what you wrote, and most of all get at least one or two other people to check it out as well.

Remember this is a **sales** document, designed to sell you.

Work with [VirtualJobCoach](#) to come up with a clean and clear layout.

Tasks

Does your *Summary* sell you?

Are your *Strengths* compelling?

Is there enough white space?

Are the industry keywords there?

10 Steps to a Successful Job Search

Step 3 – Other Documents

While you are working on this also think about the other components of your marketing strategy, these include your cover letters, letters to recruiters and networking profiles.

50% of recruiters say they don't read Cover letters but unfortunately we don't know which one is which when we are applying for a position. A good strong, individual cover letter is important and should be part of your arsenal of marketing tools.

Sometimes a short bio/profile is appropriate for group network meetings rather than a full blown resume. This should also contain your goals, etc.

Tasks

Cover letter to Recruiters built?

Cover letter for employers built?

Networking profile built?

Step 4 – Posting the Resume

The fifth day sees us straining at the reins, anxious to be out there smashing down doors and leaping tall buildings. Our first decision today is to think about where we might want to post our resume.

There are many thousands of web sites where you register and post your information, there are some where you have to pay and there are some where you need to create a **Bio** and then send your resume along when someone expresses an interest.

Choose the site that best matches your interest. Register with recruiters who specialize in your area of expertise. Now take a short break and spend some time with family and friends, you have worked hard for a full week and developed the marketing kit that is going to make you successful.

Tasks

Find the best web sites

Create a Bio

Take a short break

10 Steps to a Successful Job Search

Step 5 – Networking

Sitting back and waiting for prospective employers to come knocking at your door is probably not going to work. Now is the time for you to start thinking about networking and research.

Start by making a list of everyone you have worked with, think about members of groups that you know, this could be a social, religious or a professional organization. Everyone you know is a potential lead to a new position.

Future steps are going to involve some more marketing information you need to create but let us start with the networking list first.

Tasks

- List previous work colleagues
- List family and friends
- List social and other groups
- Add them to VirtualJobCoach

Step 6 – Marketing Stories

This is the step that requires you to build your marketing pitches. There are two components to this process. The first is “Why did you leave xxx?” What we are looking for here is a short, concise and accurate answer that does not raise red flags in the mind of any interviewer. If you have been let go as part of a reduction in workforce then let interviewer know, something like “As I am sure you are aware xxx have been reducing their workforce recently and unfortunately this has directly affected me.” If you were let go for other reasons then a simple, non confrontational explanation that does not in any way hint of blame or criticism is the best approach. The second pitch that we are discussing is the answer to the question “Tell me about yourself”. The underlying questions here are “Why should I hire you?” or “What value are you bringing to the table?” The goal is to provide a short, one and a half to two minute recitation of your career that highlights, remember the interviewer is looking to hear about your strengths, abilities and skills and how they will benefit the organization. They are not looking to know when you last had a vacation (unless it is pertinent to the position) but they do want to hear what you did at what job that is relevant to them.

Tasks

Why did you leave?

Tell me about yourself?

10 Steps to a Successful Job Search

Step 7 – Organization

We have covered a lot at this point and we are now ready to start talking to people about ourselves and opportunities that may exist in the market place. Previously we discussed getting together a list of all your contacts. Bring them together, old and new and put them into a contact system designed to help you network, something that provides you with calendars, to-do lists, reminders, etc. (www.virtualjobcoach.com is a great place to start). The average person knows around 200 people and that should be sufficient to get you started. It is often said that Networking is the key to finding a job and in my time as an Outplacement consultant I can confirm that to be true. Well over 90% of my clients find their next position through a friend of a friend, or an alumni group, or through another organization that they belong to. Remember that you are never approaching someone to ask for a job, you are always asking for advice, this is less threatening and the majority of people are more than happy to dispense advice for free. The next point to remember about networking is the most important question. “Who else should I be talking to?” this is the question that gets you to the next step.

Tasks

Create your list

Don't exclude anyone!

Step 8 – Target Company List

So far we have written a resume, developed our marketing pitches and constructed a networking list, moving forward we are now going to start building our target company lists and add some other items to the mix including cover letters and some general tips. The primary task for this step is to identify a list of organizations that you wish to target as potential employers. This is important at a number of levels, firstly it provides you with a focus, and you are not shooting resumes every which way, rather you are focused on networking your way into an organization and insuring that your pitch, resume and cover letter are targeted. We are also going to use this list as part of our networking activities.

Tasks

Search radius

Type of organization

Do I have contacts there?

10 Steps to a Successful Job Search

Step 9 – Networking Meetings

Time is rushing by and as we call or email our network contacts our primary goal is to set up meetings either in person or if that is not practical by phone. With our target company list we can now provide a focus to our contacts on the types of people we are trying to connect with. Often when we ask the question “who else should I be talking with?” you are met with a blank stare as your contact has not been prepared. With the target company list we can now provide this information in advance and have a better chance of success in getting that elusive next step. To summarize, This step is focused on setting up networking meetings and from now on we should allocate a portion of each day to setting up those meetings. Set a weekly goal as to the number of meeting you need to make in order to build out your network.

Tasks

Call contacts

Set up meetings

Use target company list

10 Steps to a Successful Job Search

Step 10 – Digital Brand

Let us now start stretching our wings and adding some additional tools to our arsenal. As part of reaching out to our contacts it is necessary for us to utilize as many tools as possible and LinkedIn dot com and Plaxo dot com are two well known and business focused web sites. Build out your profile and connect with ex-colleagues from previous employers. This works just as well if you are employed and looking for the next great opportunity, make sure that your digital profile is out there and up to date. Recruiters troll the networking sites looking for strong potential candidates and in my experience I have seen senior level appointments being made as a result of these profiles. Our final piece of marketing collateral is the cover letter. Many recruiters will tell you that they never read it and they are a waste of time, others will say that they are crucial to the decision as to inviting the candidate in for an interview. As we are unable to determine which recruiter is which from an advertisement it is better to err on the side of caution and prepare a strong letter that clearly lays out your qualifications for the position. The worst that can happen is that is ignored.

Tasks

- On-line Bio
- Digital network sites
- Cover letters

10 Steps to a Successful Job Search

Wrapping it up

1. Create a professional email address; barefootwrestler @ xxxxx dot com does not portray a great impression.
2. Set achievable targets and keep to them.
3. A resume is not a chapter in a book. Focus on information that is relevant to your future employer. They do not want a life story. Ensure that your industry key words are in the resume.
4. The cover letter should clearly lay out your qualifications for the position.
5. The “Why I am no longer with?” and “Tell me about yourself” pitches should be practiced and focused on delivering success. No criticism of previous employers.
6. A solid list of contacts to build your network is vital.
7. Create a list of target companies.
8. Build your digital profile (You own your brand, make it work for you)
9. Network, network and network.
10. Success is directly proportional to the amount of effort you invest.