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Job search should be balanced, organized

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QUILL TOOLBOX

Career

*Need career advice?
Contact Carla:*

She spent 20 years in newsrooms, including the last several as recruiter and trainer. She offers individuals services such as resume critiques, job search strategies, individual and executive coaching, and management training. To contact her, e-mail Coaching@inspirehigher.net

Job search should be balanced, organized

You're out of a job and overwhelmed by the job search process. Don't worry, there's hope.

The feelings of being pressured to find a job and being overwhelmed with the job search can be shared by veterans and newcomers alike. Veterans may be wondering what they can possibly do after spending a career in journalism, while newcomers are hunting for their first big break.

A balanced and organized approach to the job search is key to your success. Here are some tips to guide you:

Put work life in perspective

If you have been laid off or fired or feel that it's time to look for a new position, keeping your work life in perspective is key. Don't draw your identity from your work life alone, which is especially important to remember when you've been laid off or fired. You are much more than what you do to earn money.

Figure out what you want

Write down what you love to do and what you can do without. Create a life priorities list that explores what you need and what you want; there is a difference.

Once you know better what you want for your life, you can compare job opportunities to see if they are a good match

for how you want to live. With that information in mind, craft your ideal job and move forward with your search.

Your resumé is your sales representative

Your resumé speaks for you when you cannot be there. Be sure that it reflects what you've accomplished, what skills and abilities you have and, most importantly, how you can help an organization achieve its goals. Make sure everything is accurate and error-free. Remember, your resumé reflects you.

Organize your job search

Finding the right position takes time. A part-time job search takes 10 to 15 hours a week, with full-time taking up to 35 hours. An organized job search means that everything is ready: a resume, a list of approved references and a cover letter that can be reworked for each job.

If you're out of work, invest in business cards so you have something to give people when you're out and about at business and social settings. Also, create a weekly plan of what you want to accomplish.

Your network is platinum

Most jobs are not advertised, so you'll need to contact people you know to help you identify opportunities. Start with former bosses or co-workers who have moved on to other positions. Build onto that initial list with others you know through work, play or blood lines.

Make use of your free time

This is your opportunity to volunteer for organizations you find interesting or that provide valuable services. For example, if you volunteer at the museum or zoo, you'll be able to enjoy yourself, expand your network and hear about job opportunities first.

Conduct interviews

Informational interviews are a great strategy that takes the pressure off you and the employer. They allow you to gather information about potential career avenues, what the work is like typically and what experience the best candidates have.

Seek support

You don't have to be a lone wolf in the job search effort. Meet with another person or small group to keep each other encouraged, especially during frustrating times, and to exchange job search tips.

Remember your manners

Take time to write a personal note that thanks a person for their time or significant job tips. You will stand out from the crowd.

Attitude is everything

Move as quickly as possible from disappointment, despair, denial and anger to the attitude that opportunities abound and that you have something to offer. No one wants to be around someone with a bad attitude, so smile and be happy. ♦

Commentary by

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