

## **7 Lessons From A Successful Job Search**

*US News & World Report - July 08, 2009* - For the past few months, I've been helping someone look for a job. By that I mean that I have been offering my advice by the bucket load to a receptive, if discriminating, job seeker who then had to do the actual work of finding employment.

Last week, this job search ended with some of the greatest words in the English dictionary: "We are pleased to extend to you an offer of employment."

Here are seven lessons from the hunt:

### **1) You Can Change Careers**

It's possible! And it's something many people who were laid off in this recession are considering, but the concept is much easier than the actual move. I'll tell you why: Changing careers right now will almost certainly require that you swallow your pride and start over again—lower income, maybe even an unpaid internship, work alongside much younger colleagues. If you are not capable of that kind of flexibility, then you may want to stay within your industry.

### **2) You Can Change Cities**

Even without a real job! Seriously. If you're not likely to find a new job where you are, and you are unencumbered by a mortgage, then try someplace new. To do this, unless you have major cash reserves, you will most likely need a little creative ingenuity and, again, flexibility. Considering paying a friend some extra cash to sleep on a couch. (That does, however, mean you'll be sleeping on a couch.)

You can use the local library as your home base. You should pack lightly, because you may have to move around a bit. Crucial tip: Stay focused. Just because someone is letting you stay on the couch doesn't mean you can spend the day watching TV. Get up in the morning, take a shower, be accommodating, dress for the day, and act as if you've got a job.

### **3) Useful Connections Can Be Brand-New**

Hearing that connections are the most effective route to a new job can make some people throw up their hands. They don't have great connections, their network is small, or they're not particularly talkative. Mostly, their anxiety rests in the fact that they don't believe their existing network is particularly useful. But effective connections can be brand spanking new.

Volunteering, interning, and chitchatting at the grocery store can all bring you in contact with new people who become part of your network. If you're searching for work in a new city, don't be distressed by your current anonymity. It can quickly be transformed.

## **7 Lessons From A Successful Job Search**

### **4) Ignore Some Things**

There's a good chance that your mother is calling regularly to check in on your search. Maybe some friends and extended family members as well. Your best friend may show you a critical eye when you explain why you didn't apply to a particular job.

Everyone has advice, and everyone has doubts about what you're doing. It's one thing to listen to them, and it's another to embrace what they're saying. It's your job search, your life. You know best about many parts of it. Take the advice you believe in, and leave the rest.

### **5) How You Look Matters**

If you think you're keeping it real, such as "This is how I look, take it or leave it", know that aesthetic authenticity prevails only in selected workplaces.

Most employers prize accommodation, consistency, and appropriateness. But more important than your clothes and your hairstyle is your expression. If you appear to be hostile, haughty, angry, and desperate, you could be dressed in Brooks Brothers and you still couldn't win 'em over.

How you look matters! Look open, friendly, energetic, and thoughtful. Consider your posture, your breathing and your smile.

Why is this so important?

Experts spend most of their time talking about dressing well for interviews, but your job search lasts months, not three hours in an afternoon. You may run into someone significant on a Saturday while you're running errands or at the gym on a Tuesday night. You may be dressed like a slob. But if the way you look is as bright-eyed, focused, and friendly as you'd be at an interview, you can hope the person won't even notice.

### **6) Do Something**

Long-term unemployment has a chokehold on this country. As of June 2009, 4.4 million active job seekers had been unemployed for 27 weeks or more. That doesn't even include the workers who had lost hope and stopped actively looking.

So, what happens when you're out of work for a long time? You lose skills, and you lose hope.

What's the solution? Activity. It doesn't have to be relevant to your career, but it has to give you part-time purpose and contact with other human beings.

## **7 Lessons From A Successful Job Search**

Ideally, it should give you something to put on your résumé or discuss in an interview. It should show prospective employers that you didn't take your unemployment laying down, recession or not, paycheck or not, you kept moving and doing.

Organize a church rummage sale, or suggest doing an unpaid internship for a nearby business or organization. Just take care that you don't let it take up so much of your time that you're not still looking for work.

### **7) Find A Way To Mitigate The Upset**

If you were laid off in this recession, chances are good that you didn't deserve it. And how, if you are human, can you not be angry to lose your job through no fault of your own?

The trick isn't to pretend otherwise. Rather, it's to find a way to live with the upset and still move forward.

Many companies do a poor job of laying off employees:

- They don't look them in the eyes
- They don't offer outplacement services
- They don't show appreciation for the work they've done

There's a lot of residual frustration there.

Do your best to put some boundaries on it. Promise yourself that you'll never treat your employees that way.

Then put your focus back on you.

**(End)**