

Surviving the Job Search

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January 6, 2009 - With the recession looming and employers dropping tens of thousands of jobs from their payrolls, job seekers in today's corporate world face stiffer employment standards and tougher hiring techniques. Companies of all sizes now are single-minded about productivity and bottom line performance.

Competition for jobs will increase as management seeks and hires only those persons who appear to have the most potential for helping to boost the company's profits.

Although it may sound cold blooded, employees currently on the payroll in many organizations will stay only as long as they produce.

Because of increased competition and higher hiring standards, it has become more important than ever for a job applicant to convince the interviewer that he or she is the best person they can find for the specific job.

- Modesty has no place in a competitive employment interview
- Even though you may be the strong silent type, you have to learn to explain how wonderful you are without sounding like a braggart

Following are some tried and true tips for coming out on top in today's rigorous job market:

- Prepare a detailed resume, but do not give it to anyone unless asked. It is far better to "talk" your capabilities and accomplishments to a prospective employer
- Finding a job has nothing to do with possession of a vast array of "Contacts." You do not need to know someone or have an introduction to talk to a potential employer. Just call the hiring manager you have identified and ask for an interview.
- Compile a list of your achievements, large and small. Then select the most relevant ones to emphasize in the interview
- Make your conversation "Results and Accomplishments" oriented, rather than general and fuzzy
- Relax in the interview and be yourself, not who you think the world wants you to be. Playing a role usually backfires

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- Getting a job is a matter of numbers. If you go on 50 interviews, you have a better chance of landing a good job than if you only go on two or three
- Practice job interviewing by going out and doing it rather than rehearsing in front of a mirror. You can learn best in the interviewing situation, and also by the rejection process that goes with it
- Remember you are selling a product: "Yourself", so you need to be somewhat presumptuous. Use the telephone to contact employers and set up interviews. Most letters go in the "round file."
- Consider job hunting a full-time job. If you are unemployed, you should put in eight- to 10-hour days looking for work, at least five days a week.
- Do not wait for someone to call you with a job offer. Make follow-up calls. "Ask for the order."
- Remember, the employer is always right. Interviewers are buying something their companies want, so do not try to sell them something else. Hiring managers can expect at least six equivalently qualified persons for every job that is open.
- You are more likely to win a new job because the new employer likes you, rather than because he or she thinks you are competent
- Do not waste valuable time asking about vacations, holidays or benefits. You are not interviewing the company. They are interviewing you, and will provide information on compensation later in the interviewing process.
- Know how to get to the interview. If you are late for the appointment, even for a good reason, it may be held against you. Do not risk it!
- Do not criticize your former employers, no matter what you think of them. No one wants to hire a complainer
- Smile! This is simple advice, but happy people get jobs because employers want pleasant people working for them.

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Information And Insights On Whether The Job Is A Good Fit

Among the key points to consider are:

Do You Like The People?

This is the single most important criterion. The people should be those with whom you would enjoy working, and the work environment one that you feel confident of fitting into.

Can You Do The Job?

- If you can do the job routinely and automatically, reject it no matter what the salary
- By taking something too easy, you are not advancing yourself or working up to your potential
- You will not normally be offered a job that is far beyond your capabilities.

Do You Like The Position?

- **Accepting a job that you may not like in hopes of working into something better later on is risky, because you will not perform your best at something you do not like**
- **The position should be:**
 - **Challenging**
 - **Interesting**
 - **Offer potential for advancement**
 - **Be something you want to work at for several years**

Is The Entire Package Satisfactory, Including Salary And All Benefits?

- If the offer does not meet your needs, negotiate. Once an employer chooses you, the other candidates pale in comparison.
- If accepting a lower salary or reduced benefits seems likely to become a source of discontent, it will be reflected in your job performance and attitude toward others in the company.

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If It Is Necessary To Relocate, Will You Fit Into The New Community?

- Often considered are the size of the community, its location and the level of sophistication
- You and your spouse's attitude toward the community is critical
- If you are open-minded and have realistic expectations, you probably can find happiness most anywhere
- If you harbor strong preconceptions about geographical identities, i.e., big city versus small town, or one region's extreme merits or faults, a relocation is more difficult
- Living near extended family is essential for many people.

Does Business Travel Pose A Problem?

- You need to determine if travel, and how much travel, you and your family can live with
- A one- or two-day trip every other month is one thing; a six-month assignment in a foreign country is entirely another
- You need to have an up-front understanding about business travel with your spouse and children
- If frequent or extended periods of travel are involved, the position may or may not be worth the possible sacrifices in your particular circumstance

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