

How to Jump-Start a Flagging Job-Search

Continuing an unproductive job search can be depressing. Many people become immobilized, fearing that their next effort will meet with negative results. It's easy to lose faith in yourself. People say:

"I've sent out 150 resumes and it hasn't produced anything!"

"Why apply? Chances are there's an internal candidate who will get the job anyway."

"I never see jobs listed for someone with my _____." (Fill in the blank: experience, major, skills.)

Sound familiar? Then it is time to re-strategize! Using the same old approach is going to produce the same results. You need to try a fresh approach. Some suggestions:

Target your resumes and cover letters. A scattergun approach—sending the identical resume and cover letter to lots of employers – rarely produces a positive result. Before you send or hand out one more resume, answer these questions.

- Does your resume effectively reflect the skills, experience and/or educational background this specific position requires? If you have not separated your "related experience" from your "additional experience," the answer is probably NO!
- Have you done your research? You need to know about the company and its products or services or you won't be able to say why you want to work for them.
- Are you targeting your cover letter to this specific position? Your cover letter is your opportunity to sell the employer on why you are the best candidate for this job.
- Are you addressing the letter to an individual? "To whom it may concern" letters are much less likely to be read than those directed to an individual!

Don't rely on the want ads! The vast number of jobs available at any given time never make it into the want ads. How do you tap that "hidden job market?" You probably know the answer: networking! If you haven't used or developed your network, now is the time to start. Some places to begin:

- Alumni from your college or university—Get contact information for people in your area of interest from your college career center or alumni office. **Try Career Connections!**
- A professional association for your field—Most cities have chapters of professional groups. Check to see if there is one in your field in your area. **One place to learn of professional organizations is to find the appropriate field here (<http://www.lvc.edu/career-services/majors/default.html>) and click on Links to see a listing of relevant groups.**
- People in the field—Are there workshops, seminars, or presentations that match your career interests?
- Contact organizations where you would love to work—Let them know that, although they may not have a position available at this time, you would like to be considered for future openings. Tell the company why you are interested in them and what skills you have to offer.
- Volunteer—Find an agency or group, which needs people with your talents and interests, and get involved. You may meet some people (or people who know people) who can be helpful in your job search.
- Consider taking a less than perfect job that positions you for a better one—Internal candidates often have an edge.
- Re-contact special employers—Did you get a rejection from an employer for a job for which you absolutely knew you were qualified? Did you get a rejection from an employer for a job for which you absolutely knew you were qualified? Send them a (targeted!) letter along with your new (targeted!) resume. Let them know you are still very interested in working for the company.

Use the Career Services office—Career Services offers plenty of online resources (<http://www.lvc.edu/career-services/students.aspx>) to get you started. Staff are more than happy to meet with you for individualized help – just call or email for an appointment! (717-867-6560; careerservices@lvc.edu).

Make use of resources on the web—Check out NACE's resources at <http://www.jobweb.com/Resources>. You will find helpful information on every aspect of the job search from writing your resume through interviewing.

Even in a dreadful economy, employers still need good people with good skills. You must work at positioning yourself to be in the right place at the right time when the right job becomes available. Your opportunity is out there.

Job Web article by Sally Kearsley
<http://www.jobweb.com/studentarticles.aspx?id=130>

