

What Works in a Job Search – Moving Forward

Whether you have lost a job by a lay off or a firing, there are effective actions you can take to enhance the search for a new job or position. Anyone losing a job knows the shock and anger experienced, an important next step is a move to action.

“It’s because of the hard things we go through in life that we grow, learn, become stronger, develop character, endurance, and resilience. We don’t grow much when things are going smooth, and easy and we’re not challenged. Those times may be relaxing or enjoyable in some ways, however, we don’t develop much in those circumstances.

The same is true in a job search. It’s not a set of circumstances that anyone wants to be thrown into. It’s very uncomfortable, stressful, and awkward for most people. However, it can be a time of great personal and professional development if viewed as the opportunity for growth that it is.

When most people are in a job, and things are going well, they don’t put time and energy into things that may make them more successful in the future. They don’t learn how to reach out to other professionals effectively, how to articulate their career objectives and the value they bring. They don’t spend time building a professional network, or developing and communicating transferable skills.”

Harry Urschel via Careerrocketeer.com

~It is normal to feel vulnerable and hurt after losing a job. Grieving a job loss is also a normal response. There are things you can do to regain control and maintain spirits. First and foremost is taking care of yourself by reaching out to family and friends for support. Setting and committing to job search goals will help sustain a positive attitude to move forward.

~What you can do

Job Loss, Job Search Guidelines Checklist:

- Write about what upsets you.
- Do what revitalizes you.
- Enjoy pleasant moments each day.
- Choose to have it happen.
- Avoid "If only..."
- Find the unexpected opportunity.
- What calls to you?
- Form a small support group.
- Encourage, coach, and help each other.
- Bolster your self-esteem, make a list of what you do well.
- Add personal testimonials to your resume (or reference sheet).
- When are you at your best?
- What is easy to do?
- What do you do well?
- Find value in what you are going through.
- Develop empathy for employers.
- What is an ideal employee like?
- Give up false modesty.
- Practice describing your strengths.
- Be ready for the resiliency question.
- Read articles and books about highly resilient people.
- Make finding a job your job.

- Be persistent.
- Stay balanced, expect to be hired while being emotionally prepared to be turned down.
- Be open to unexpected opportunities.
- Use your imagination, be playful, be bold.

<http://www.resiliencycenter.com/articles/jobloss.shtml>

~Getting started

A good place to begin your job search is with a resume review. If you have a resume, the most recent employment should be added along with dates and addresses for the employer. Make notes about the skills and responsibilities for the job which can be incorporated into the current resume.

If you do not have a resume, create a work history listing jobs/positions, dates, and addresses for each employer. Again, make notes about each job/position and the skills and responsibilities which were required for the job/position.

~And Now What?

It's important to think about a job/position for which you are a good fit. This means a job/position you have current skills to offer an employer. Every employer looks for candidates who can be hired and begin the job/position with little or no training.

Employers have specific requirements for jobs/positions. Ads in newspaper job postings and online job postings will have these requirements listed. Some postings will be general, but most are specific about job/position requirements.

Job seekers need to spend time reading and understanding if there is a match for their current skills and the specified requirements. There may be jobs/positions for which a job seeker has transferable skills. Transferable skills are ones that closely match requirements but have been developed in a job/position in another field. Often computer skills are necessary and job seekers need to up-date those skills.

~Next?

Assistance for job seekers is available for your move to action. North Hills Community Outreach offers help for unemployed and underemployed people. For further information, contact Harriet Gibbs, 412.487.6316, option 2, extension 3217 .

More help with coping with job loss:

http://www.helpguide.org/life/unemployment_job_loss_stress_coping_tips.htm

What Works in a Job Search – Job Requirements

Job Postings and Applications

Online job boards such as snagajob.com have postings for retail positions. Reading the posted requirements is necessary for job seekers. Take a look at one example here for a Customer Service Representative at a gas/convenience store. This company has clearly stated what will be expected if applying for this job/position.

<i>Position Summary</i>	<i>To exceed customer needs and expectations by providing efficient, accurate and pleasant checkout service and shopping assistance.</i>
<i>Job Responsibilities</i>	<i>Ring up customer's orders by scanning product or keying price into register according to established company policies and procedures. Finalize sales and collect payments by totaling order and accepting tender from customer. Alertly watch customers at pumps to help prevent drive-offs, unsafe misuse of gasoline containers or placement and pumping multiple cars within the same transaction (Double Pumping). Provide product and services that are competitively priced, meet the requirements of internal and external customers at all times and abide by the Company's Statement of Values. Maintain cleanliness of equipment, counter area, floor, restrooms, exterior pump area, etc. to ensure safety and sanitation regulations are met. Know and follow all state and local laws regarding cigarette sales. Know and follow all coupon handling procedures. Assist in Kitchen area as needed. Assist other store Team Members in maintaining security in the store. Block and straighten shelves as needed. Assist with light stocking duties and inform management of any out of stock items. Replace misplaced items to the proper location. Little or no financial or budgetary responsibility</i>
<i>Education and Training Required</i>	<i>High school diploma or equivalent</i>
<i>Experience Required</i>	<i>0 to 6 months</i>
<i>Experience Desired</i>	<i>Convenience store experience/Retail experience</i>
<i>Age Requirement</i>	<i>At least 16 years of age</i>
<i>Competencies Required</i>	<i>Adaptability Customer Focused Gets Things Done Interpersonal Skills Problem Solving Respect for Self and Others</i>
<i>Work Environment</i>	<i>Aware of surroundings in a high traffic warehouse environment Cooler Extreme Outdoor temperatures Freezer Inclement weather (hot/cold, snowy, rainy)</i>
<i>Physical requirements</i>	<i>Bending Carrying Up to 25 pounds Climbing Data Entry Filing Grasping Hearing (auditory) Lifting Up to 25 pounds Matching</i>

Operating Equipment
Pulling
Pushing
Reading
Reaching
Repetitive Motion
Sight or Peripheral Vision
Sorting
Standing
Telephone Usage
Twisting
Typing
Communication (verbal)
Unloading
Walking
Weighing
Writing

Equipment Used

Adding Machine
Dolly
Fountain Machines
Floor Blower
Fuel Pumps
Hose
Ice Coffee Machine
Ice Machine
Bag in box machine
Microwave
Motorola Hand Held Gun (Receiving)
Power Washer
Registers
Smoothie Machine
Stand-up Lotto Machine
Teazzer
Texlon Ordering Machine
Vacuum
Watchguard Detergent Dispenser
Car Wash Equipment
Coffee Brewer
Coffee Grinder
Creamer Machine
Calculator
Printer
Telephone

Job seekers will have to make an application to be considered for this job. Quite often, applications have to be done online or at a kiosk (computer station) in the store. A few places require the completion of a paper application. Applications must be filled out completely and correctly or the application will not be considered. In fact, with ATS (applicant tracking systems) being used by most companies, only perfectly completed applications will be processed. Making applications are time consuming and one way to speed this along is to have a work history with information that can be used to fill out applications.

North Hills Community Outreach offers help for unemployed and underemployed people. For assistance in making job applications and other help, contact Harriet Gibbs, 412.487.6316, option 2, extension 3217.

Deborah, Job Coach

What Works in a Job Search – Job Related Skills

Whether you are searching for a job/position like the one you had most recently, or expanding your search to a new kind of work, job related skills will be a defining factor in your search success.

Skills are generally classified into one of three categories - Personal Skills, Transferable Skills, or Work Related Skills. Listed below are definitions and examples of the three skill types.

Personal Skills

Personal skills are similar to personality traits. These skills describe what you are like as a person and how you would naturally do things. They manifest themselves while you are carrying out the tasks of your workday. Examples of personal skills include punctuality, honesty, reliability and dependability. An interviewer or hiring manager is likely to place a lot of weight on these skills when deciding to hire and will be looking for such traits to emerge during the interview.

Transferable Skills

Transferable skills are those skills which can be easily taken with you (or transferred) from one environment to another. Most people are unaware they have developed useful transferable skills through interests, hobbies and work. Examples of transferable skills include effective communication, problem solving and organizing. They are your greatest asset because employers value their portability.

Work Skills

Work skills relate specifically to certain types of jobs or job fields. These skills are easily recognizable; however, because they are so specific they are difficult to transfer from job to job. Examples of work skills include the ability to operate a specific machine, knowledge of specific computer programs, and acquiring an AZ driver's license. Work skills are particularly important when seeking new work or advancement in the same field. Lack of such skills may disqualify you for an entry level position in your chosen career since without the related work skills, you must prove that you have other skills that you can easily transfer to master the job.

Sharpening or up-dating work skills will be most important in a new job/position search.

PA CareerLink® Pittsburgh/Allegheny County is a resource for job skills development. Computer skills classes are available for no fee through local libraries and North Hills Community Outreach. Participating in classes is a great way to improve skills and show an employer wise use of time while unemployed.

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<http://www.careerlinkpittsburgh.com/>

Deborah, Job Coach

What Works in a Job Search – Volunteering

There are important reasons for giving your time in volunteer work.

- 1. It is needed and it is fulfilling*
- 2. It allows you to gain valuable experience during your employment search*
- 3. Learn skills*
- 4. Build friendships and stay active*
- 5. Network with other professionals*

<http://youremploymentsolution.blogspot.com/2010/09/why-you-must-volunteer-while-unemployed.html>

“If you’re considering a new career, volunteering can help you get experience in your area of interest and meet people in the field. Even if you’re not planning on changing careers, volunteering gives you the opportunity to practice important skills used in the workplace, such as teamwork, communication, problem solving, project planning, task management, and organization. You might feel more comfortable stretching your wings at work once you’ve honed these skills in a volunteer position first.”

http://www.helpguide.org/life/volunteer_opportunities_benefits_volunteering.htm

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What Works in a Job Search –Organizing for Your Search

Tips to Get Going

During the difficult job market, it's important to effectively manage your job search - and your career. Taking the time to get organized can make the difference in a successful job securement.

One suggestion is to create a file folder and notebook to track job leads. Everything you do should be kept in these tools from ads clipped from local newspaper to copies of online ads printed from a computer.

Setting aside time each day for your job search is vital. Depending on your commitments for your family, select at least one hour each day for an uninterrupted search. More time will be needed to apply to jobs online and in-person. The job at-hand is to find a job and this means finding enough time to do the search.

The following is an example of a job lead follow-up log sheet that job-seekers should consider using to keep track of all job leads -- and your follow-up attempts and results.

http://www.quintcareers.com/job_lead_follow-up_log.html

Job Lead Follow-Up Log	
Company Name:	
Hiring Manager Name:	
Phone/E-mail:	
Position Applied for:	
Date Applied:	
Position Requirements:	
Date of First Follow-Up:	
Follow-Up Notes/Results:	
Date of Next Follow-Up:	
Follow-Up Notes/Results:	

Alison Doyle, About.com Guide has many tips for job search management including online tools such as:

- jibberjobber.com
- become.com
- google tools through google account/gmail
- my.indeed.com
- Microsoft outlook address book and calendar

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