

The basic principles of job hunting don't change in challenging times, but the amount of time and targeted effort that needs to be put into the job search to be successful, do increase dramatically.

FINDING A JOB IS A FULL TIME JOB

It's a bit of a cliché, but the best way to really focus on finding a new job is to treat the job-search like a job in itself. Invest as much time, energy, and commitment to finding a new job as you would in a job. The more things you can do today to find a new job will result in more job opportunities coming your way.

HAVE A JOB HUNTING PLAN

In a tough economic climate of your best tools in gaining employment is developing a job-search plan. Create weekly and daily job-hunting goals for yourself. Make it a goal to accomplish several things each day, such as tracking down job leads, applying for jobs, making new network contacts and following up job leads.

- Set your alarm each morning. Don't make a habit of sleeping in or getting stuck in front of day time TV. Try to put a structure to your day and keep distraction to a minimum.
- Stay organized. Create a space in your house for your job search that is near the computer and the phone.
- Check your phone messages and email regularly. Immediately follow up with employers.
- Create a job search worksheet to keep track of which jobs you apply for at which companies, with a copy of the CV and Cover letter you sent to them. Leave a space to make notes on your follow ups.
- Job searching can be lonely and depressing. Keep in touch with other people who are also job searching (even if not in your field) to create a "support group".
- If you only job search in your house you will begin to get cabin fever. Pick a secondary place to job search like the library.
- Continue to develop your skills while job searching. Consider work experience, job shadowing or volunteering in order to develop your professional and technical skills.
- Don't rely on one job hunting technique – look at the advice given in the range of job hunting Handout Sheets available from the DIT Career Development Centre
- Incorporate time into your day to spend time with people you enjoy. Take your mind off your job search and reconnect with other important things in your life. Keep healthy and active.

KEEP POSITIVE

- Positive thinking and a belief in yourself and in your abilities is a major factor in successful job hunting. The transition from college to work is considerable. When you

graduate at first it is like being on holiday.....all the pressures and deadlines of exams, assignments and dissertations are gone. When searching for jobs, there is nothing more certain than being faced with rejection many times, therefore self-confidence is key to success.

- Self-confidence can improve your self-image, can help you to deal with rejection, can help you with your coping skills and helps you to market your abilities and skills to others. Avoid listening to negative media - bad news is often sensationalised to increase ratings and the more you watch / listen to these programmes, the more your confidence will be affected.
- Surround yourself with positive people who can keep you motivated. Learn from others who have had success in attaining employment are happy in their jobs. When you come up against rejection, politely contact the organisation to understand their reasons for not selecting you. Finding out why you have not been successful in your application for a job, can be very useful piece of information that will help you with future applications.

WAY TO MAINTAIN A POSITIVE ATTITUDE

- Keep focused and don't procrastinate
- Organise your time and activities - establish a routine
- Make a schedule for your day and week ahead
- Set short and long-term actions and goals
- Develop ways of keeping healthy and fit, plus build your social life and contacts
- Collect evidence of your achievements, successes, awards, certificates
- In a weak job market, employers that are hiring have a much greater selection of prospective candidates and will quickly eliminate any job-seekers who appear too negative.

FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL

In order to achieve the results you want i.e. a job in your chosen field, it's important to stop stressing about the factors you can't control — and instead channel that time, mental energy and creativity into what you can control and influence — namely your career path, your mind set, your networking activities, and the strength of your employability. Could you take more accountability for your job search by getting out, building relationships, networking and treating your job search like a full time job rather than passively waiting for job sites and recruiters to bring you your next opportunity? By taking responsibility for how you think and how you act, you'll be far more successful in your career and far happier as an individual.

BE AWARE OF YOUR SKILL SET

Instead of worrying about the competition and the state of the job market, focus on figuring out what value you bring to potential employers in your sector. Each of us possesses literally

hundreds of different skills, but many people have difficulty recognising and identifying them. Having an appreciation for the type of skills you have and like to use will help you target employment areas where you could get the opportunity to utilise the skills you enjoy. In addition, realising the range of skills you have will enable you to perform different work or professional roles from those which are directly related to your educational background, allowing you to be flexible and adaptable as your career goals and the economy require. If you see job areas of interest to you, but feel you don't have the skills required, remember that we all have the potential to learn and develop new skills. Without doubt, companies today face unprecedented challenges and now, more than ever, they want to ensure that they have the appropriate staff and skill set that will equip them to deal with ongoing change into the future.

KEEP LEARNING

Even after you gain your qualification it is important that you keep investing in yourself and your own career development. After all, continued learning beyond your qualification is vital in order to become a well-rounded person (and employee). There are numerous options available to ensure that you keep your skills and knowledge up to date and leading edge, through enrolling in courses / self-learning, or taking on new responsibilities through voluntary work / work experience.

EMPLOYER VIEWS

A group of employers, when asked for one piece of advice on job hunting in tough times, mentioned:

- Network
- Excel in what you're doing right now
- Put together the best CV you can
- Make a job search plan
- Know and leverage your strengths and accomplishments
- Update your skills
- Remain flexible
- Be persistent
- Market and differentiate yourself
- Consider working for yourself
- Adjust your mind-set, fight fear and take action!