

Here is an excerpt from the workbook 48 Days to the Work You Love on the Job Search Process:

JOB SEARCH PROCESS

This phase of the process is an intensive but short and focused process (if you are investing 35 hours/week.) And don't think that you can't complete this process while you are working. You can. Most people in a job search today are currently employed. Everything but the interviews themselves can be done without interfering with a normal work day. You simply need to see it as a short burst of intensive energy to lead you to the future you want.

Getting Prepared

Identify 30-40 target companies. Do you want a place with 20- 85 employees? A profit or nonprofit organization? A manufacturing or service company? A new company or an old established one? Do you want to travel or be home every evening? An organization in health, retail, finances, entertaining, printing, etc. Use the (Your City) BUSINESS DIRECTORY, the Chamber of Commerce directory, an industry guide (readily available at your local library for media, manufacturing, non-profits, etc.) to help you create this target list. (Most libraries will have both local and national search tools for selecting companies based on your search criteria.) You are in the driver's seat to choose the companies you would like to work with. You don't have to wait until they advertise a position or you heard someone say they are hiring. Those usual methods typically put you up against 70-80 people for most any desirable position, whereas in this method you may have 2-3 competitors. You must recognize that when you see an ad for a particular position, you have already lost your best opportunity for that position. Also, this is the method for finding the 87% of the jobs that are never advertised. In a rapidly changing workplace, everyone is looking for good people. Be proactive in your search.

The Three Critical Steps of the Job Search

1. Send a letter of introduction to each company. (Send no more than 15 at a time so you can do the appropriate follow up.) The letter of introduction is just to build name recognition. (See the sample Introduction Letter that follows this section.)

2. Send cover letter and résumé -- one week after letter of introduction. Address cover letter to a specific person. You can get this name from the Business Directory or call the company if you need to. Receptionists are wonderful about giving useful information if you ask nicely. Don't bother sending to Personnel Dept., or Human Resources, or To Whom It May Concern. Target a person who has the ability to make a hiring decision. That's normally going to be the Sales Manager, the VP of Operations, the President, the Office Manager, etc.

3. Phone call to follow up. Very important. My experience is that only about 1-2% of job-hunters do this. It is very easy to bring your name to the top of the list if you just do a follow up call. Don't be afraid of being persistent! Call 4-5 days after sending résumé. In the phone call say, "This is Bill Smith. I'm following up on a recent letter and résumé. I know what your company does and really think I could add to your success. When can we get together and talk?" You'll be surprised how frequently people will say, "Why don't you come by tomorrow at 2:00?"

Keep in mind that if you just send cover letters and résumés (Step #2), you need to send out 254 to have a statistical chance of getting a job offer. If you combine that with a phone call, the number drops to 1 out of 15, a dramatic difference. Add to that an introduction letter and the results will amaze you. This is a SELLING process. We use a 3- time repetitive process because of understanding marketing principles. If you are selling recliners, having someone see or hear about them 3 times will increase their response. In this process you are selling a product, and that product is YOU! Just commit to the process and a time line.

This process, if followed precisely, does get results. A gentleman who sent out over 1000 résumés over a 14 month period with no job offers was able to get 5 interviews with 3 offers in a 45-day period using this method. Another client who had gone 6 months with no interviews received 4 offers in 10 days with this system. A recent college graduate with no real work experience received 6 job offers in a 10 day period using this process. Remember, no one is going to come looking for you. You must do an active, aggressive search. It's not uncommon for very competent professionals to resist the aggressive nature of an effective job search. They tend to assume that their credentials and great work history will speak for itself and that pushing for contacts and interviews is somehow less than "professional." Unfortunately, we are in a marketing environment. No longer is it true that if you "build a better mousetrap, people will beat a path to your door." It requires a clear plan of "selling" to find success in any arena. Finding a great job is no exception!

IMPORTANT NOTE: Again, don't think that I am ignoring the possibilities with the Internet. Yes, I know you can get the emails of 10,000 Human Resource Directors and have your wonderful resume in their mailbox this afternoon. However, I also know that 9,999 of them will resent your intrusion. And we know now that 75% of the companies that have hired from the Internet have had a bad experience. We are seeing a swing back to the traditional face-to face process for effective hiring. A professional, printed copy of your resume in a real envelope is still the most respected method of first contact.

An irony in low unemployment times is that you may tend to think that if a company advertises a position, you are probably the only person who responded, and they will call on Monday and ask you to start work on Tuesday. That is absolutely false. Even in low unemployment, they will receive 70-80 responses. That tells us that although most people are working, there are still many of those same people who are in the job market. They know there are many new opportunities, so they are looking as well.

DEALING WITH JOB SEARCH DISCOURAGEMENT

You wouldn't be human if you didn't feel discouragement while you are unemployed. We attach too much of our worth and self-esteem to our jobs and consequently, when we are "in between opportunities," it's natural to feel anxious at times. But you do have the daily choices: you can either convince yourself you are looking into an empty future, or you can believe that a better opportunity awaits you. I frequently tell clients that the distance between terror and exhilaration, between hope and hopelessness is often a fine line. Remember that frustration in or even losing a job may simply be God's prod to go on to a higher level of success. Here are 10 tips on how to cope after a job loss:

- Find selective places to talk honestly about your feelings.
- Increase your knowledge about the job-search process.
- Define what you can control and what you cannot control.
- Live each day fully. Take a fresh look at the success you have in areas other than work.
- Do something for someone else. Volunteer time to worthy causes or organizations.

- Build your own support system. Ask for help. Don't hide out in the library all day and never let your neighbors know you are looking.
- Do something creative. Joanne and I sometimes work on big jig-saw puzzles. You'll find energy for the search if you give yourself creative breaks.
- Maintain exercise and good nutrition.
- Maintain hope and optimism. Set achievable daily and weekly goals. Do physical projects where you can see the results immediately.
- Look for the larger meaning in this transition process.

Everything prior to the INTERVIEW is preliminary. No one will hire you from a résumé, nor do you want them to. Résumés and the active job search lead to INTERVIEWS. INTERVIEWS get you the job.

Time spent on a good job search is time invested in your future. Don't view it casually. A week spent researching a couple of key companies so that you are more knowledgeable in the interview could mean a difference of thousands of dollars in your income in the next two to three years alone.

The average job in America now lasts 3.2 years. The average American worker will therefore have 14 to 16 different jobs in his/her working lifetime. Learn how to do this process well. You will have to do it again. Knowing this process will serve you well in the inevitable future changes. Recognize that you must take responsibility for the success of the process. No one can do it for you—not the government, the state, the church, or any agency. All of these are attempts to avoid your own responsibility. Be prepared to deal with rejection and then continue being persistent, confident that real success is just a few more contacts away!

For many of you, the Job Search Strategy section will be the most important piece of information in this entire workbook. If you understand and follow this procedure, you can dramatically transform your results, bypassing other applicants with more degrees, credentials and experience!

EXAMPLE OF AN INTRODUCTION LETTER

Mr. David C. Milton
BMI International, Inc.
7300 Franklin Road
Brentwood, TN 37027

(The headings below are not to be included on your letter, but show you the issues to be addressed)

Introduction: Current Situation/Goals

Dear Mr. Milton:

After more than 14 years as a sales professional in the medical field, I am exploring new opportunities where my sales abilities may continue to be utilized. Positions commensurate with my past experience and career goals would be:

Manager of Training and Staff Development
Manager of Human Resource Development
Director of Sales and Marketing

What's Special About Me

My record is one of solid accomplishments and increasing levels of responsibility. The training programs I have developed have been adopted as a model for our company's 23 nationwide locations. My sales goals have been exceeded by an average of 34% in the last five years.

Next Step

I will forward my résumé to you in the next few days to allow you to explore how my qualifications may match growth opportunities in your company.

Sincerely,

Jason L. Smith

Notice this requires nothing of the recipient. It simply tells him/her what is going to happen next. And it plants the seed so your name begins to become familiar. We are in a culture where repetition sells, and in this process you want at least three exposures to create "Top of Mind" positioning.

EXAMPLE OF A GOOD COVER LETTER

Kevin A. Smith
3736 Mitchell Drive
Ft. Collins, Colorado 76809

November 30, 2002

Mr. William Fowler
Vice President of Sales
The Dixon Company
199 Commerce Way
Boulder, Colorado 76821

Dear Mr. Fowler:

With this letter, I wish to express my strong interest in working with The Dixon Company as a regional sales manager. After seven years in sales management and customer service, I believe I would bring several areas of competence to The Dixon Company. Accordingly, a complete résumé detailing my professional background is enclosed for your review and consideration.

In my current position, it is my responsibility to recruit, motivate and train my staff to ensure that high quality and desired goals are obtained. In addition, I oversee the business development of all new products with bottom-line accountability for established profit goals. It is also my responsibility to maintain the integrity of the account base through sound credit decisions.

In this assignment, I opened a branch in a new market and doubled the account base in six months, reaching 150% of the expected growth and 200% of the profit goal. I accomplished this by leading the staff in effectively cross-selling our product line and providing exceptional customer service.

This is just one example of how The Dixon Company may benefit by our mutual alliance. I would very much like to speak with you about the sales management opportunities and ways that you can utilize my expertise. Please expect my call on Wednesday, December 7th, to arrange a convenient time to discuss that and more. I look forward to speaking with you then about opportunities in the Southwestern or Midwestern U.S.

Sincerely,

Kevin A. Smith
kas
Enclosure

(You'll notice it does not say, "I look forward to hearing from you" or "Please call me at your earliest convenience;" you must stay in the driver's seat.)

EXAMPLE OF A FOLLOW-UP LETTER

Charles S. Miller
2503 Concord Lane
Lakeland, Florida 27064
(863) 453-7786

James R. Johnson
Executive Director
YMCA
Orlando, Florida 26459

Dear Mr. Johnson:

Thank you for the opportunity to interview for the Youth Development Coordinator position. I appreciate your consideration and interest in me.

As we discussed this afternoon, my experience and educational experience have prepared me well for this position. I have enjoyed the similar work I have been privileged to do both in my current position and through my church involvement.

I want to reiterate my strong interest in working with you and the Orlando YMCA. Please keep in mind my personal attraction to this work that goes beyond just my academic credentials. I trust this gives me an added component as an appropriate candidate.

Again, thank you for considering me for this opportunity to build positive characteristics in the lives of young people and the chance to serve our community. As we discussed, I will call you Thursday morning to check the status of your decision.

Sincerely,

Charles S. Miller

(Notice the strong "selling" language still being presented. Don't be afraid to tell them you want the position and that you think you are the best candidate. If you aren't convinced of that, it will be difficult for the interviewer to believe it.)