

How you organize and manage your job search is essential to your success. With a competitive job market in education, it is important that your search is organized, methodical and purposeful. Securing that coveted job does not happen in a casual way. There are considerations that you can control and manage. Here are suggestions on how you can manage your job search that will contribute to your success.

It's your job search; what works best for you?

- First and foremost, this is your own personal job search. Take it personally. Obviously, no one should be more focused on this than you and your choices of tools and resources are critical to your success.
- There are countless resources of guides, templates, tools, and approaches for you to consider in organizing your job search. But, whatever you decide to use to conduct your search process must effectively propel and support you in getting a job in a timely fashion.
- An effective job search:
 - Organizes your efforts so that you can track progress (or not) towards a decision;
 - Motivates you to add to and document your efforts;
 - Holds you accountable and honest in moving forward and making progress towards your appropriate job opportunities.
- Select or create a system for your search. Find the tools that work best for you. It may be as simple as a word document or excel spreadsheet that you tailor for your own personal search
- Successful job searches are the results of a focused, organized game plan.

Are your documents all lined up?

- Is everything in order for your search if you found a desirable job posting today?
- Does your ammunition include the ideal resume that serves your interest as a promising professional candidate?
- Do you have a list of professional references with whom you have equipped with your resume and a sense of what's on your radar screen?
- Ask a professional in the field or ideally, a Human Resources professional, who reviews resumes as part of their job, to critique your resume.
- It's inevitable that you will be asked for samples of your work. It could be the development of a lesson plan, a research project, a published article, a business plan that you have implemented, or a solid representation of your best practices. It takes time to review so getting them aligned now will have you fully prepared and confident with that request to showcase your best stuff.

Who else is holding you accountable?

- Lofty goals always involve other people.
- Find an accountability partner. Identify someone in your professional life who can hold you accountable to this important endeavor. This should not be a casual selection for you. This person must know what a serious job search requires and then keep you in check with a productive campaign in securing a job within a reasonable period of time. You may consider a fellow job seeker for this role as you can both hold each other accountable.
- Together, map out your career goal and establish your job mile markers along the way to that destination that will help keep you on track.
- Check in with this person on a regular basis. Commit to a pre-scheduled series of accountability meetings and be prepared to demonstrate your productivity in advancing your job search.

Are you utilizing all possible outlets for opportunities?

- Are you searching on your own or are you utilizing all possible contacts including professional and personal colleagues, friends, neighbors and their employers, and the USC Career Center? The USC Career Center can offer you a comprehensive range of job sources, resources, search tools, support and services.
- Are you leveraging the opportunities afforded by social media such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, discussion groups, and other sources? Check it out; you may be surprised of the web-based avenues of opportunities it can offer.
- Networking is necessary but your activity must be purposeful. Your networking opportunity must have an intended specific goal in mind such as introductory referrals to appropriate points of contacts, exploration of possible industry employers in the area, suggestions for professional membership with networking opportunities and other pre-determined outcomes. Otherwise; your efforts were nothing more than just another excuse for sipping a cup of coffee.

Are you activity or results oriented?

- In the current job market, you can't afford to be an opportunist by simply waiting for opportunity to knock on your door. You must be an opportunity seeker and purposefully create your opportunities. It's the difference between being an active job seeker versus a passive job seeker. Be Active!
- Successful job searches are the result of a focused game plan that keeps you hungry with a forward moving appetite. Orient your thinking on results.
- Job searches aren't successful because of ultimately, only two reasons: either you are not doing the right things or you are not doing enough of the right things. Constantly re-evaluate and re-assess your efforts.

Do you have the right attitude?

- Your most important advantage is a positive attitude. Employers and networking contacts can sense a negative attitude.
- Despite the woeful headlines about the job market, you must maintain a "can do, beat the odds" attitude during this unnerving process, and believe that your efforts will be rewarded. Ultimately, it will be your persistence and positive mental attitude that will drive you in a successful search. Channel your frustration into positive action steps!

Could it be me?

- Have you had your share of interviews but no offers? Let's face it; seriously, it could be you.
- Many recruiters point out that, despite all that you know, it does come down to how well you present yourself in that time-limited interview opportunity.
- How do you come across? How's your energy and enthusiasm? Are your responses monotone and dry or do you have personality in your responses? Are you too stiff or overwhelmingly animated? Is your eye contact engaging? Is your initial and closing handshake firm or limp? Are you happy but just forgot to notify your face?
- You don't believe that that's just not you? Sometimes you just have to step up and out of your comfort zone and do what it takes. You don't have to be someone else. You just have to be the best you that you can present in those defining moments. If what you're doing is too comfortable, it's probably not good enough.
- Take a serious look in the mirror or, better yet, ask someone who you professionally respect for their honest assessment of how you come across. Consider asking someone to conduct a mock interview so they can critique your interviewing skills. Videotaping a mock interview can also provide you with a great way to see how you may be perceived by an interviewer.