



Your Job Search Action Plan

Below is an action plan to provide you with a structure and steps for your job search. We encourage you to **make this plan your own**: add tasks if necessary, set target dates and monitor your progress to keep yourself on track. Print it out and keep it somewhere visible.

A job search can be a full-time job, and if you approach it as such, you will see results faster than if you try to fit it in around everything else in your life. We recommend blocking specific time for these activities, and putting in place an accountability system (a buddy, a coach, a reward system) that will keep you on track.

Commit to yourself and your career right now:

I will spend _____ hours a day/week on my job search.

These are the specific days/times that I will set aside to work on job search activities (and I won't schedule anything else in that time, or allow myself to get distracted):

I will hold myself accountable to do this by:

| Action Step | Target Date | Completed |
|---|-------------|-----------|
| Target Direction | | |
| Clarify your target job(s) or career path. While you want to be focused in your efforts, sometimes identifying more than one possible path will open up options. Only pursue 1 or 2 at a time. | | |
| Clarify your desired industries or fields to work in. | | |
| Set up Google Alerts for your industry / field choices so you receive current news relating to or affecting potential employers. | | |
| Job Search Materials | | |
| Collect data for your résumé. In addition to job titles, companies, dates and responsibilities, also think about your specific accomplishments and achievements at each job (and quantify if possible). Include awards received, accolades, etc. Also write down any job-specific training, courses, certifications, etc. | | |
| Identify your strengths, skills, and talents. Think about where you shine in your work. What comes easily to you? What are you known for? | | |
| Craft a "branding statement" to include at the top of your résumé. What do you bring to the table that is unique to you and makes you a great candidate and employee? Focus on the value you bring to an employer, the problems you solve for them or benefits you bring, and make it grab someone's attention. | | |
| Create a draft résumé. | | |
| Proofread, proofread, and proofread again. Get feedback from trusted sources on how you could improve the résumé and/or the | | |

| Action Step | Target Date | Completed |
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| "brand" it conveys about you. | | |
| Finalize your résumé. This will become your "foundation" résumé that you will tweak for specific opportunities, but that you're happy with as it is. | | |
| Contact your references to confirm they are willing to give you a positive reference, and to remind them of the great work you did. Verify names, titles, company information and contact details for your references. | | |
| Finalize your reference list and format it to match your résumé. A list of 3-4 references is sufficient; make sure <u>at least</u> two are professional references, and <u>at least</u> one was your direct manager. | | |
| Develop your "elevator speech" for use in formal and informal discussions and networking. It should be short, interesting, memorable. | | |
| Develop cover letters, thank you letters, and other marketing correspondence as needed. | | |
| Search Strategies | | |
| Research potential employers. Think about the industry/field you want to be in, organizations that hire people for the jobs you want, and companies that are likely to have the environment and culture you will thrive in. | | |
| Create a target list of about 10 companies to focus on. You can always adjust the target list later as you learn more about the companies and opportunities. | | |
| Set up Google Alerts, LinkedIn alerts, and "follow" your target employers so you stay current on news and events affecting them. | | |
| Determine your most effective job search strategy. Based on your target job and experience, will responding to published openings be most effective? Networking and meeting with people based on personal connections? Working with recruiters? Attending job fairs? A combination of the above? Think about the time you will spend on each, and which is likely to yield the best results. | | |
| Identify networking groups, professional associations, events, conferences, or other places where you are likely to meet people who will be able to assist you or who will know about job openings in your field. Put these on your calendar and make a point to attend. | | |
| Brush up on effective networking techniques and practice your elevator speech. | | |
| Explore the usefulness of LinkedIn and other online networks for your job search. | | |
| Create a list of networking contacts, and develop an ongoing contact plan to develop those relationships and stay "top of mind" with your network. (A good approach is often a combination of phone calls, emails, coffee/lunch dates, and providing them with | | |

| Action Step | Target Date | Completed |
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| something of value such as leads, contacts, interesting articles, etc.) | | |
| Continue to search for appropriate job openings. | Ongoing | |
| Continue to develop your network, maintain contacts and develop relationships. | Ongoing | |
| Applying and Interviewing | | |
| Research your target companies using LinkedIn, the internet and your network. | | |
| Tailor your résumé (and cover letter if applicable) for each application, including keywords from the job description/ad and key messages from your research. | | |
| Review effective interviewing techniques and preparation strategies. | | |
| Prepare some great examples of how you solve problems and handle situations. Use the CAR format: Circumstance / Action(s) / Result to be able to describe in 2 minutes the challenge you faced, the actions you took to solve it, and the positive result. Review these before interviews. | | |
| Practice responses to common interview questions, and prepare a list of questions of your own. Think about anything you're a little nervous the interviewer will ask, and prepare your response ahead of time. | | |
| Think about the 3 main messages you want to get across in your interview. If your interviewer learned nothing else about you, what 3 things do you want them to know about you that make you great candidate for the job? | | |
| Always be positive and avoid negative comments about previous employers. Practice turning a potentially negative situation into something positive to say. | | |
| Schedule a mock interview with someone you trust to give you honest feedback and who has hired people before. | | |
| Prepare thank-you letters that can be tailored to each person your interviewed with and sent out within 24 hours of the interview. | | |
| Review negotiation techniques and understand when and how the "money talk" should occur. Remember that the job is not yours until you receive a written job offer. | | |
| New Position | | |
| Congratulations! Make a specific plan to integrate into your new position and move up the learning curve quickly. You will have 4-6 months in the new role to make a good impression and get your "brand" across, so make those first weeks and months count! | | |
| Make a plan for ongoing career management. | | |

If you have questions or need some help, call us at 303-325-5765.