

CHAPTER 36

UNDERSTANDING THE JOB SEARCH PROCESS

Finding a new job is no easy task. It requires one to successfully carryout a series of actions that require multiple skills with finesse and all directed toward marketing yourself as the best candidate for the job. In this chapter, an overview of the job search process is presented which identifies the sequence of steps and actions leading to successfully finding a new job.

To be successful you must know the skills required at each step in the job search process and since you will not know what opportunities will finally result in a job, you more than likely will find yourself taking actions in all steps of the process simultaneously. Your ultimate goal of accepting a new job offer is dependent upon you knowing what the optimum actions are for each step, and how to quickly advance the opportunity to the next step in the process.

JOB SEARCH ACTIONS LEADING TO SUCCESS

In this chapter, an overview of the job search process is presented and the key actions are identified. Along with the overview of the process, time-proven and helpful motivational tips are discussed to help you overcome the very difficult and demoralizing reactions you may experience from getting rejected. In the chapters following this one, the detailed actions and tips for making your job search more successful at each step in the process are greatly expanded upon.

A general overview of the job search process is shown in Figure 36-1. The process starts with you making the decision to look for a new job. Once you have decided to look for a new job, the recommended first step is to take a self-inventory.

Self-Inventory. A self-inventory is identifying your job skills and interests. It is very important for you to know what your strengths and weaknesses are.

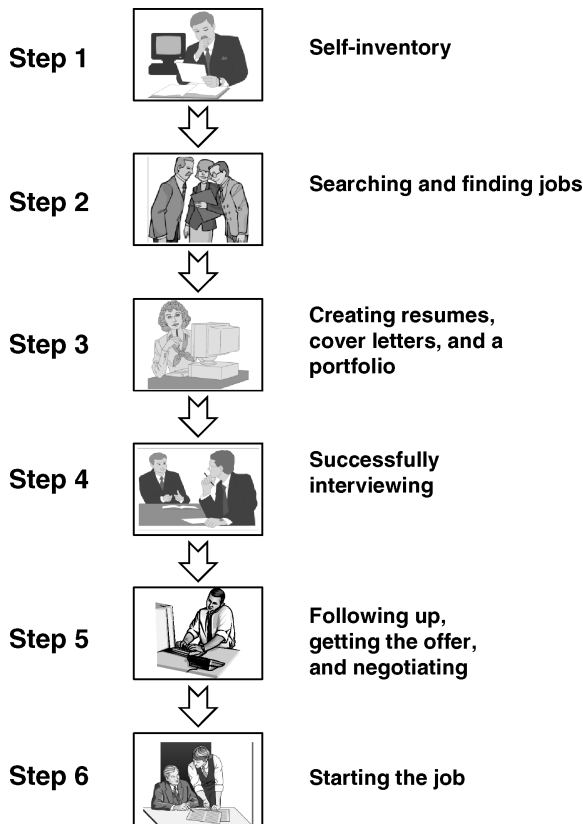


FIGURE 36-1 The job search process.

Make an inventory of your abilities, interests, and significant past accomplishments. This inventory will make the job search easier.

When you are done, you will have identified those skills that you consider your strengths and significant past accomplishments you can discuss during an interview. This list becomes the starting point from which you will generate your resume. Details on how to do a self-assessment is given in Chapter 37.

Searching and Finding Jobs. In this step you will search for job leads. Where do the leads come from? Everywhere! Get busy and start looking. To find job opportunities you will be using your networking skills, Internet search skills, and social skills. In Chapter 38 the details of how to find jobs are presented, and tips so you can even find multiple job opportunities.

Creating Resumes, Cover Letters, and Portfolios. Writing a generic resume is not the best approach. Closely reading the job ad and tailoring your resume, cover letter, and portfolio to the skills identified in the job ad is the best approach. Tips are discussed on how to best do this in Chapters 39–42.

Interviewing. Your biggest challenge once you have identified a potential job opportunity is how to get an interview. How do you best submit your resume so that you get selected for an interview? If you are called for an interview, what is the best way to prepare? Most people are very frightened and anxious about interviewing. They feel very uncomfortable about how they should act during the interview and what is best to discuss and what they should not say. Interviewing tips and proven techniques for impressing people during the interview are presented in Chapter 43.

Following Up, Getting the Offer, and Negotiating. Sometimes an offer does not come immediately after the interview. You may be left hanging and not know what to do next. Should you call or just wait? If you get an offer but it is not acceptable should you reject it or try negotiating? What is fair in negotiations? These issues are addressed in Chapter 44 with guidelines and tips for you to follow to resolve the situation in your favor.

Starting the Job. Leaving the old company on a good note and handling all the challenges associated with quitting one job and starting the next can be very difficult. In Chapter 45, tips are provided on how to write a resignation letter, making the relocation easier, and what to do the first days on the job to make a good first impression.

YOUR NEW JOB IS FINDING A JOB

Once you start looking for a new job whether you have been laid off or still employed, your new job becomes finding a job. You are working for your own company at this time. This is a very important mindset to have, especially if you have been laid off. If you are unemployed, you may be feeling lost and not sure what you should be doing next. If you follow the job search process described, and have the mindset that your new job is to find a job, you now have a purpose to your actions and a strategic plan to accomplish your goal. This combination of purpose and mindset is what you need to be successful and you should find your feelings of being lost and without purpose greatly diminished.

► **Career Tip.** Your job is to get a job.

WHAT ARE THE ODDS FOR FINDING A JOB

One of the most common questions asked is what are the odds for finding a job? Data provided by Drake Beam Morin, Inc. indicates on the average that it takes 10 resumes submitted before you obtain an interview. Again on average, it takes about three interviews to receive an offer. And most people would like to have at least two offers before they make a final decision and accept one. If you work the numbers backward, this means the average person has about six

interviews. To get the six interviews the person needs to submit about 60 resumes.

There are several immediate conclusions you can draw from the odds. One is that it is a game of numbers and if you submit enough resumes, you will find a job. Second, you can expect a lot of NOs, or rejection letters. Finally, to cut the odds down, you need to better qualify the leads and determine if it is worth submitting a resume. Your resumes need to be specifically tailored to the ad to improve your chances and to conduct a successful interview. This is so critical, but worth the effort. Now let me show you how you can successfully handle all the NOs.

EASILY OVERCOMING ALL THE NOs AND REJECTION LETTERS

Since getting NOs is all part of the process, expect to get them. All people interviewing get rejection letters and NOs. It is all part of the process. So don't take the NOs and rejection letters personally. Just accept them and move on. Some people thank the people for saying no. Why? Because it means they are one step closer to a job. When I was laid off I kept the rejection postcards and pinned them up over my desk at home for motivation. As the number of rejection postcards grew, my hopes increased since I knew it was a numbers game and my chances of finding a new job were significantly increasing.

At our networking placement center the people would make a sport out of it and share how many rejection notes they had received which meant the closer they were to finding a new job.

► **Career Tip.** Look at your rejection notices as one step closer to a job.

When you receive your first couple of NOs, be prepared for the shock. For most people it takes the wind out of their sails and they are temporarily stopped dead in their tracks. When I received my first NOs, I was totally devastated. I could not believe that people would not hire me. Didn't they know I was the best engineer and candidate? Be prepared for this reaction and realize it is all a numbers game and do not take it personally; just move on. I recommend you go out and get the first NOs as quickly as possible and get them out of the way. Realize you have to move on and keep the job search going. It is all part of the game. You don't have time to sit and be upset about your rejection; it is on to the next opportunity.

► **Career Tip.** Go out and get your first NOs right away and get them over with.

In the ideal case, it would be nice to know why you were rejected, but this rarely happens. However, if you feel comfortable and on good enough terms

with the people you interviewed with, you might ask them for some feedback on what you can improve. A simple email asking them to let you know what you could improve may yield valuable insight into what to change for the next opportunity.

► **Career Tip.** If possible, ask for feedback on improvement areas.

EARN \$1,000 A DAY SEARCHING FOR A NEW JOB

For some people the thought of earning money really motivates them to action during the job search process. Would you like to earn \$1,000 a day while doing a job search? Well, you can. Think of it this way. When, and note, I said “when” and not “if” your job search ends in success, you will be receiving a new salary. Let’s say, for example, your job pays you \$60,000 dollars. If you are an average person and had to send out 60 resumes, then you earned approximately \$1,000 per resume submittal.

$$\$60,000 \text{ Salary} / 60 \text{ resumes} = \$1,000 \text{ per resume submittal}$$

If you consider on the average it takes six interviews to get a job, then for each interview you earn \$10,000.

$$\$60,000 \text{ Salary} / 6 \text{ interviews} = \$10,000 \text{ per interview}$$

When you think of it this way for each interview, it can really be motivating. So I tell people to get out tomorrow and earn \$1,000, send out a resume. I would come home after a day at the placement center and brag to my wife that I made another \$3,000 today; I sent out three resumes. Others at the center would also announce it was a \$10,000 day for them; they had an interview. If money motivates you, then think about how much you are earning each time you send out a resume or have an interview. Having a positive attitude during the job search process is one critical aspect to successfully finding a new job. Which gets us to our next point—it’s all about attitude.

IT'S ALL ABOUT ATTITUDE

One of the critical components to conducting a successful job search is having a positive and upbeat attitude all the while you are searching. Your attitude comes out in your writing, networking, and interviewing. If you have a poor attitude and walk around with a chip on your shoulder about being laid off, or talk yourself into believing you have nothing to offer, then you are headed for failure. This comes out in your lack of energy to network and find jobs. It comes out in your unappealing resume and your body language during the

interview. This poor attitude manifests itself in subtle ways to hurt your chances.

However if, on the other hand, you firmly believe you have great skills to offer a new employer and enjoy meeting and talking with people about your worth, then you are going to be more successful and sooner. Your positive attitude will manifest itself in your networking, resume writing, and interviewing. One of the best things you can do during this process is to remember to smile. Your smile indicates how you are doing and sends a big message to the people around you that things are good.

► **Career Tip.** If you think you can, you will be successful.

SUMMARY

Finding a new job is no easy task. It requires one to successfully carry out a series of actions that require multiple skills with finesse and all directed toward marketing yourself as the best candidate for the job. To be successful you must know the skills required at each step in the job search process, and be capable of taking actions in all steps of the process simultaneously. Your ultimate goal of accepting a new job offer is dependent upon you knowing what the optimum actions are for each step and how to quickly advance the opportunity to the next step in the process.

The major steps in the job search process are completing a self-inventory to identify your job skills and interests, searching and finding jobs, creating resumes, cover letters and portfolios, interviewing, following up, getting the offer, negotiating, and starting the job. Expect to receive NOs and remember for each no you receive, you are one step closer to finding a job. Go out and earn yourself an \$1,000 today.

Have you identified any career actions you want to take as a result of reading this chapter? If so, please make sure to capture these ideas before you forget by recording them in the notes section at the back of the book.

ASSIGNMENTS AND DISCUSSION TOPICS

- 1 Why is attitude so important?
- 2 How can you increase the odds in your favor?