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10 Tips for a Winning Work from Home Job Search

By Kim Green-Spangler

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Do you feel like you are losing the struggle to balance work and family? Have you decided that the one hour round trip commute in rush hour traffic, the choking exhaust fumes, and the testy drivers with their salutes are WAY overrated? If so, perhaps you're considering joining the ranks of the ever increasing work from home elecommuters. Why has telecommuting become so popular? For one, it provides parents with much more flexibility than conventional employment. Parents can stay home and still work when a child is home sick, are able to be home waiting when children return from school, and can be available for many of the conferences, plays, games, and events that many parents are forced to miss because of demanding work schedules.

So how does one prepare for a work from home job search? The answer is – with great care and even more patience. "It takes much longer to secure a work from home position than a traditional job" says Pat W. a home-based working Mom of 3, who works as a Medical Transcriptionist. "It took me 14 months to find my current job, but it was well worth the wait. Now I am 100% sure of how they (the kids) are being taken care of, since I am now the one taking care of them. We're all much happier."

Pat is right. It takes the average person looking for a telecommuting position a good year before they find a position that suits their needs; and that's typical in a good economy. But having a resume geared towards your work from home employment search is a sure fire way of positioning yourself ahead of the competition. Here are 10 tips to make your telecommuting job search more successful.

1. Make sure that you provide all of the documents that your job ad calls for. Provide your resume and cover letter and make sure that you abide by all submission instructions. Use snail mail, fax, e-mail, or phone calls only when asked to. If one of the above submission options are not listed, then it is safe to assume that your prospective employer will not look upon your ad-libbing kindly.
2. Have a resume all ready to be sent in .txt format. Many employers have databases set up to receive scanned resumes and .txt format is the format that makes it easiest for the employer. I know that it's not as pretty as your regular formatted one, but having it ready to go when it is requested will make things much easier for you, and will help keep your resume out of the rejected pile.

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3. If you have multiple interests in multiple fields, do not try to list them all on one resume. The result could make you look like the proverbial "jack of all trades and master of none." Use multiple resumes that are tailored to the specific fields and detail the experience that you have.

4. Write a short descriptive objective. The objective is what compels your prospective employer to continue reading. If it does not match what he or she is looking for, or is so vague that they do not know what you are looking for, your resume will probably make it to the shredder. The rule of thumb is that an objective should be ten words or less.

5. Write a resume that highlights any equipment, software, or services that you currently have that make you "work from home ready". If it comes down to you, and another person who still needs to set

up a home office, then guess what, the job is probably yours.

6. If you are looking at local companies and are receptive to part-time telecommuting, list this on your resume too. Many companies that may be reluctant to exclusive telecommuting may jump at the chance to give it a try on a part-time basis.

7. If you are already a telecommuter and can show how your company benefited from the work from home experience, include it in your resume. It may help outline some advantages that your prospective employer has not yet considered.

8. Localize your job search. Many job searchers overlook their own towns and instead focus on the internet for work from home opportunities. While the internet offers an incredible number of job prospects, just think of how many people are seeing the same jobs you are. Compare that to the number of people that will see your local paper, or that will contact the businesses in your phone book. There's no comparison. Local business owners may also be more open to local telecommuters because they can interview you in person, can have you come into the office on occasion, and can train you one-on-one. So don't be afraid to approach a local business, it could be a smashing success.

9. Let word of mouth work for you. Tell everyone that you know that you are looking for a work from home position. It could result in a great job for you. If a friend works in an office and knows that there is an impossible deadline looming, he or she may be able to convince the boss to farm the surplus work out to you. "That's what happened to me", says Janet, a Graphic Designer. A friend called her on a Thursday and told her that they needed help meeting a deadline. Janet was working for the company by 9 AM the next day, despite the fact that the company was 200 miles away. She did such great work that she still works for them two years later as a telecommuter.

10. Approach current employers. While work from home positions are in hot demand, the truth is that most of them come about as a result of current employers trying to make room in their offices, reducing overhead, or accommodating an employee who needs a more flexible schedule or who needs to relocate. If you think that your present employer may be receptive to you working from home, why not start your search with someone already aware of what you can do.

Remember that the average work from home position brings in five to ten times as many applicants as

the traditional job. Anything that you can do to highlight your knowledge, skills, or abilities, coupled with specific examples of how you can benefit the employer will help position yourself in the front of the pack. Don't let the competition scare you off, the opportunity to reduce the amount of stress in your life, and improve the quality of your family life are well worth the possibility of a longer job search. Besides, look at what you'll save on clothing. Pajamas and sweats are a lot cheaper than office attire - and a whole lot more comfortable.

Kim Green-Spangler is a home-based freelance writer. She also runs a successful copywriting, ghostwriting, and resume writing business - www.justwrite4u.com

Ten Tips for Creating a Winning Proposal - Part 2

By Cavyl Stewart

Ten Tips for Creating a Winning Proposal - Part 2 by Cavyl Stewart

Part 1 of this series described five critical components for creating a winning proposal. In some instances, these components are all a prospective client needs to make a determination and award the job. Be sure to carefully review the request for proposal to determine the amount of information you need to include in your proposal. Remember, each proposal is unique.

Here are five more tips to keep in mind when preparing a winning proposal.

Tip #6 - Properly Estimate Job Costs

Selecting the right price for the proposed work is a delicate balancing act. Pricing the job too low could cause you to lose money on the job. Also, a bid that's too low might be perceived by the client as unrealistic and cause you to lose the bid. Take time to properly consider the amount of time and materials involved in completing the tasks you have outlined and price the job accordingly.

Tip #7 - Add Meat as Necessary

Proposal requirements vary greatly. If you're putting together a proposal for a major corporation or a government job, you'll probably need extensive documentation. Examples of additional information that might be required include sub-contractor agreements, non-disclosure forms, contingency plans, change order procedures, risk analysis data, benchmark results and more. If the request for proposal asks for it, be sure you include it.

Tip #8 - Don't Reveal Too Much!

When submitting your proposed solution to the prospective client's problem, you must not reveal too much information. You need to satisfactorily explain your approach while at the same time keeping some information to yourself. Sound confusing? How about this: If you tell the client exactly how to solve the problem, the client might decide to implement your solution without your assistance! You'll lose out on the bid, not because your approach was inadequate, but because you explained it so well the client did not need an outside company to implement it.

Tip #9 - Proper Presentation

Once you've gathered all the important components for your proposal, take time to ensure it is properly presented. Put together a Table of Contents and check that all copies of all documents are proofread, smudge-free and in the correct order. Finally, insert the proposal into a suitable binder. Give the finished document a final review; it's your last chance to correct any mistakes. Submit the proposal according to the instructions provided and make sure it is delivered before the submission deadline. If possible, deliver the proposal in person. You never know who you'll encounter on the receiving end!

Tip #10 - Investigate the Winning Bid

If your company is not awarded the bid, try to learn more about the company that did submit the winning proposal. Put on your investigator hat. Find out the price submitted with the winning bid and the approach that was proposed. Research the company itself. Use whatever you discover as a learning tool for the next time. The information just might help your company put together the next winning proposal.

And there you have it - ten tips for submitting a winning proposal. Good Luck!



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