

The #1 Job Search Mistake To Avoid: Not Preparing Your Mind!

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By Sarah Breinig

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For your job search to be successful, you need to start with the right frame of mind and attitude. If this is not handled right away, everything you do will show lack of confidence, fear and desperation – & poor results.

Mental preparation is probably your most important task as you proceed in your job search. This not only needs to be worked on right from the start, but also on an ongoing basis.

A healthy mindset is your best asset for the daunting task ahead. Here are some points to help you prepare mentally:

1. Maintain positive self-esteem. You must believe in yourself and your abilities. You have special skills and talents that are valuable. Talk and think positively about yourself. Projecting this is the only way prospective employers will believe in you. If you are not convinced yourself, you will not be able to convince anyone else. Your confidence and self-belief are two important personality traits that any employer looks for, and they cannot be faked, only instilled. Master them, and you'll be way ahead of the game.
2. Develop and maintain a positive attitude. Being negative about your current job situation makes a dramatic impact on how you project yourself to the outside world – and you are seldom unaware how terribly negative you really are. This is expressed in your body language, your tone of voice, your physical attributes, and your verbal communications – i.e. everything that you project. Prospective employers are especially attuned to pick up on this. Project a genuine, positive, well-balanced attitude to everyone you come across during your job search. Treat everyone with warmth and courtesy. Surround yourself with positive people and keep away from those who bring you down.
3. Don't act desperate. You may be currently unemployed or you may simply hate your current job immensely and want out or you may be seeking your first job. All these conditions have a propensity to project you as being desperate! Watch out for this. You have to ensure that you don't let anyone see you sweat. Maintain a confident 'calmness' and make sure you don't swing too far and appear

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indifferent.

4. Don't be a victim. It's easy to blame yourself and others for your situation – DON'T! Don't speak badly of your current employer or job. Let go of regrets about the past. Remove any bitterness you may have because this will leak into all of your communication – and you won't even be aware of it. Eliminate this bad practice and you'll be rewarded with positive outcomes – not only in your job search – but also in every other aspect of living.

5. Don't take rejection personally. It's inevitable that you will not get job offers for positions that you've applied for or where you've had your 5th interview and it seemed a done deal. The position may have already been filled – or a person with a better matched skill set was selected. Consider a 'no' as one step closer to your ideal job. Transform a rejection to motivate you. If you wear your rejection on your

sleeves – it will manifest itself in your character and behavior and will certainly hinder your job search progress.

6. Make Time For Yourself & De-Stress. Recharge your batteries and clear your mind. Read a good book or getaway for the weekend. Get some exercise to give you more energy – and improve your health and mind. Take classes or seminars on a topic you are interested in. Recharging your batteries will result in benefits not only during your job search – but also for the longer term on a personal level.

7. Stay Motivated & Optimistic. Job searching is challenging and it's easy to slack off and get de-motivated when things are tough. Staying motivated requires determination and conscious effort. Start each day on a upbeat tempo by doing something that puts in a good mood. Listen to your favorite music, enjoy a good cup of coffee, or go for a morning walk or jog. Then have a schedule that you stick to. A schedule will help you from being bored or feeling lost. However, remember not to make busy work. A schedule will also help you focus and be more productive.

8. Be persistent, take action. Don't wait for things to happen – make them happen! Take charge and accept responsibility for your job search. You are the key driver in your job search. Do not rely on family, friends, colleagues to find you a job. This is a passive waiting game. Your job search will end sooner if you are proactive.

9. Enjoy & learn from the process. This is a time for exploring new opportunities and further self-development. Reassess yourself, your goals, your core desires... Enrich yourself with new contacts and new friendships. Investigate different areas of interests which may lead you along paths you never imagined.

Sarah Breinig is an Independent Recruiter and Job Search Coach. She is the 'webmistress' of <http://www.best-online-job-search-tools.com> where you'll find information, resources, tools & strategies to EMPOWER your job search.

Build Your Rolodex of Networking Contacts

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By Linda Matias

How important is networking in your job search? Take a look at the astonishing numbers surrounding how job hunters ultimately become gainfully employed.

14% of job hunters get jobs through newspaper classifieds.

13% of job hunters get jobs through employment agencies.

5% of job hunters get jobs through career services on college campuses.

NEARLY 64% OF JOB HUNTERS GET JOBS THROUGH NETWORKING!

Does this mean that you should concentrate only on networking and neglect all other resources available to you? The answer is NO. An effective job campaign is well-rounded and does not rely on any one method to achieve results. The numbers are provided as a guide for you to recognize how much time should be spent on each activity. Most job hunters limit their job search to looking through classified ads. That is a big mistake. As you can see, the bulk of job search activity should be spent networking.

Most job hunters purposely neglect networking because they feel it can be uncomfortable and believe it takes too much effort—and they are right. A job search can have its uncomfortable moments—especially when you are unprepared—and looking for a job is in itself a full-time job. The process could be less intimidating if you (1) are committed, (2) get organized, and (3) start your search with an action plan. To make networking work for you, let's take a look at your options and how to prepare your contacts to help you.

Make a list of all the people you know and split the list into three distinct areas:

1. Business Contacts

These are individuals who know your industry. They have contacts of their own and they can make phone calls on your behalf. Their main function is to help you gain employment in your chosen field.

2. Support System

Identify those individuals on your contact list who would not necessarily be able to help you land a job, but who are capable of helping you in your job search in another capacity: as a sounding board.

3. Don't Waste Your Time

Differentiate between who can help you and who can't. Don't spend energy on the contacts who mean well but are not in a position to help you. A good networking contact is one who has the resources to help you and is willing to share them.

Preparing Your Business Contacts

Once a contact agrees to help you in your job search, it is important that you properly prepare him.

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Your contact must be armed with information concerning your immediate and long-term goals and a copy of your résumé (on quality paper).

Example: "Hey John, if you hear of a job opening in the IT field, keep me in mind" is just not enough. Educate your contact on what specific job titles, companies, and locations you are considering. Be as specific as you can. When your contact agrees to help you, DON'T stop there. Ask them a follow-up question. An example would be, "Thanks, John, for agreeing to show my résumé around. I really appreciate it. Can I ask you a question? In the circles that you run in, who might you think would be able to help me?"

Guiding your contact into thinking of potential opportunities can get the ball rolling. Empty promises will not get you results. Educated "yeses" will.

Preparing Your Support Network

Carefully choose the individuals who are going to help you through emotionally. Creating a team of unsupportive players will undoubtedly make your job search that much more difficult. Let your supporters know how it is that they can help you. If you don't want unsolicited advice, let them know. Prepare them to be the motivators you need.

Example: "John, thanks for agreeing to be part of my support system. I wanted to share with you my feelings regarding the job search process and how I see you fitting in. At times I may just need to ramble and vent and I just need a friendly shoulder to lean on. I will not be necessarily looking for answers, but rather a sympathetic ear. Do you think you will be able to help me out on this?"

Make a conscious choice as to whom you are going to confide in. Make sure that they have the following characteristics: supportive, non-judgmental, positive, a motivator, a sense of humor, and reliable.

Realize You Are Job Hunting ALL of the Time ... whether you realize it or not. Companies have job openings constantly and your contacts often are aware of these opportunities. When you freely discuss your negative work habits, two things are likely to occur: your contacts will know of a "hidden" opportunity and will not feel comfortable referring you, and when you are actively looking for employment, you will be surprised at how many of your contacts will not return your phone calls.

Happy networking!

Career Coach Inc. is run by Linda Matias and Bryan Cadicamo where their objective is twofold: to coach professionals during the interview process and those who are in a career transition and are looking to reawaken or discover their life's passion. To learn more visit

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