

Job search tips

If you can, spend a week or two preparing for and planning your search...

Create a resume or update your old one. This should always be your first step, and even if you're not fully committed to leaving your current position, as a proactive step it can be a good exercise in feeling like you are making progress.

Fine tune your digital profile – update your LinkedIn profile keeping in mind that it is often your digital “first impression.” Make sure that it is up-to-date, and is key-word rich relating to the type of role that you are searching for.

Develop an “exit statement” that clearly and concisely defines your reasons for leaving (wanting to leave) your last (current) employer.

Spend some time assessing things like location (will you relocate?), company size, companies that you might like to work for, roles you are qualified for, your compensation requirements and how you might be willing to structure a package (e.g. risk versus reward, pay for performance, etc.). What else is important to you?

Write all of these things down so you can revisit and refine them as you progress in your search.

Realistically assess your skills and competencies. What are your six strongest skills? What differentiates you from others in the role you will be seeking? How does your communications and management style fit with the role you will be seeking?

A targeted search is almost always more effective than a general search. So identify your target companies – who would you like to work for? Learn as much as you can about each company – where are they and where do they want to go. Think through your experience and skill sets and specifically how those “assets” would contribute to the company’s goals if you were hired.

Schedule a regular perusal of each target company’s job postings. Not all positions are always posted on a company's job board, but companies often post positions that they have not put out to search.

But . . . one of the most common things that we hear is that a candidate has applied for (e.g.) 100 jobs via company websites and has received a single response. And again, not all positions are posted on a company’s website.

So . . .

Identify people in your network that are somehow associated with your target companies and contact them to learn about the target company and to communicate your interest. Ask them if they can introduce you to company leadership or ownership.

If your search is not targeting a specific company or companies, then . . .

Sit down and make a list of everyone you know. Especially good are contacts with broad reach, e.g. media contacts, agencies and consultants.

Call them - let them know what you're doing and ask them for advice. Ask them who they know at companies or in industries that you've targeted. Don't expect a great deal of their time, but don't hang up without getting the names of at least 2-3 people in their network that are not already in your own. Then call and repeat. Again and again. Get e-mail addresses from each contact, and send them a quick "thank you" with your complete contact information. Don't send your resume unless they ask for it. Ask them who they know at companies or in industries that you've targeted.

Contact executive recruiters who work in the "space" that you want to be in.

Contrary to popular belief, there is no disadvantage to contacting several recruiters, although be sure to ask them about how your information will be handled (it should only be submitted to companies with your approval).

Don't know any recruiters? Call the HR department of one of your target companies and ask who they work with. Who knows, you may earn an unplanned interview (be prepared for it!).