

10 Secrets to Successful Job Hunting

A successful job hunt is based on many factors. There will be some of us who will bring it down to solid credibility and then, there are some who claim it is all due to luck.

For the uninitiated into the journey of a job hunt, the path may be paved with obstacles. Here is a common scenario: You send out tons of resumes and for weeks, you hear from no one. It is both unnerving and frustrating. You wonder what went wrong.

Perhaps, it is time to take a look at the secrets to a successful job hunt.

1. Looking in all the right places

First of all, you need to be looking in the right places. The most popular sources would be the trusty newspapers and the numerous internet job portals. However, do take note of other sources available and my advice is where possible, cast a wider net!

A good way to start could be by networking. By using your current list of contacts, find out and learn of potential employers as well as jobs which may be of interest to you. Share a copy of your latest resume with your network and ask for ideas as to where you might turn to instead of outright asking for a job. Keep a record of your networking activities so that when needed, you may refer back to them for more information.

Ask around with your family and friends. An uncle in the family could know of someone who might know someone with an available position. You could also directly contact potential employers. However, an important rule to remember is to not stress or pressure anyone into looking for a job for you!

Check and register with your school job portals or career centres. There may be career counselors on hand to help with a job placement for you. Usually, some companies may have already registered their vacancies with schools.

Another great way would be via recruitment firms. They are one of your best bets as they have a wider reach and can usually provide with better job contacts. You may have a higher chance of scoring jobs as sometimes; you may be contacted and offered more than two opportunities! Plus, recruitment companies help to “screen” through jobs for you, leaving you with more time for other stuff! Do conduct a proper search as some recruitment firms do take a percentage of your salary though most will just bill the clients directly.

Recruitment firms also offer temporary and contract opportunities which you may take up while on the look out for permanent roles. This is a good way of killing two birds with one stone!

2. Knowing what you want

It is important to know what you want. In this way, you are able to stay focused during your search. You will need to know and be sure of the specific industries or sectors that you are interested in. It would be difficult to convince your recruiter that you are the right candidate for the position if you do not know what you want!

3. Look the part

If you are a fresh graduate, you might want to go for a mini-makeover to update your look to suit the corporate world. Unless you are working in the creative industry, companies would usually request that employees look and dress appropriately. For example, no pierced body parts, wild and colorful hairstyles and torn, baggy and tattered outfits for work! Do invest in quality garments that will take you through the first few years of your career.

better work, better life

4. Be different

Dare to be different as this will immediately set you apart from the rest of the similarly qualified candidates. When I say be different, it does NOT mean dressing or behaving quirky! It just means that you have to sit down and ask yourself, "What are my specific strengths? What are the skills and characteristics that I have which I am sure no other candidate would possess?" For example, you could be well-versed in Microsoft Office skills or have a flair for creativity. Sell your best skills, not your past job.

5. Research

Do a thorough research about your potential employers, the industry, as well as possible career prospects for the positions you are interested in. This will allow you to have a better understanding and speak intelligently should you be selected for an interview. You will also be able to better manage your expectations when requesting for your remuneration.

6. Performing right at interviews

You secured yourself an interview! Now what? Do not jeopardize it and pay attention to the following:

- Take note of small details like name pronunciation, job titles of interviewers and the date and time of the interview
- Research and understand the company profile, culture and history
- Always switch off your cell phone before any interview
- Read the latest news about the company and the world
- Bring along extra copies of resume. Make sure your resumes are kept short, preferably to two pages and are spell-proof.
- Create a positive first impression. Dress and speak well
- Maintain eye contact with your interviewer
- Offer selling points that other candidates do not have
- Offer a firm handshake at the end of the interview and thank the interviewer

7. After the interview

Writing a follow-up letter to the interviewer may not be necessary at times but then again, it shows the interviewer that you are serious and sincere about the position. This also gives you an edge over other candidates who may be passive. Your letter should be kept short. Provide a brief introduction and mention either your initial resume submission or a previous conversation regarding the position. It should include a few key points that make you qualify for the position. Close the letter with your contact information. It is a good idea to send a follow-up letter if you have not heard from the company within 1-2 weeks after your resume submission or contact.

8. Staying positive

Sometimes, after trying so hard at job hunting, you do not hear anything from the interviewers. It can be a discouraging period. However, it is crucial to stay positive! Positivity keeps one motivated. With motivation, you will continue to send out resumes and look forward to favourable replies.

9. Self evaluation

While staying positive, it may be a good time to perform a self-evaluation. Perhaps your resume still needs polishing or perhaps, you should watch your body language during interviews. Sit down with a close family member or friend and get them to tell you your little idiosyncrasies which might be working against you at interviews.

10. Never stop

Remember, no one "owes" you a job. It's up to you to "win" a job by showing a potential employer you have the right attitude and skill. So, go get it!

Going on a job hunt?

Here are some tips on the secrets to a successful job hunt.

- Statistically, we have seen a gradual decline in unemployment rate, and ideally, it should continue this way. With the country's initiative to help in building a stronger, more productive and flexible workforce so as to attract more foreign investments, this will lead to the creation of more jobs for the country and in turn, result in a better job market.
- In saying so, job seekers should always prep themselves for an unpredictable and buoyant job market by keeping an open and positive mind as well as adapting to changes. Sticking to the traditional way of working may cause employees to miss out on opportunities to advance their career.
- To differentiate you from other job seekers, candidates must constantly update themselves with the necessary skills or knowledge within their industry and job scope.
- Having said that, the individual's attitude is equally, or in many cases much more important in making one stand out from another.
- The secret to a successful job hunt: Be confident, positive and sincere.