

SHARPENING THE AXE

"If I had eight hours to chop down a tree I would spend six hours sharpening my axe."
-Abraham Lincoln-



THE ULTIMATE GUIDE FOR
JOB SEARCH PREPARATION

JON DAVIDSON AND JAY HOFMEISTER

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Introduction

Having worked for several years on the front lines of the employment business as executive recruiters and later as owners of a professional placement firm, we are fortunate to have had the opportunity to look behind the curtain to fully understand what makes employers tick in the ever-expanding Information Age. Many of the people we've worked with over the years overlooked the critical phase of pre-job search preparation. Instead of considering the realities of what can and cannot be done in regards to salary, relocation, etc. there is typically a shoot first, ask questions later type of mentality which invariably comes back to haunt the candidate down the road.

This guide, which serves as Part I of IV of our Career Empowerment Series, focuses on the critical phase of job search preparation. Highlights include:

- ✓ **Setting goals that put you ahead of the competition**
- ✓ **Is changing careers an option for you?**
- ✓ **Staying positive in the face of job market challenges**
- ✓ **Creating a resume that generates interviews**
- ✓ **Give yourself a communication makeover**

Regardless of industry or expertise, the proven lessons in this guide are ones you can take with you throughout the rest of your career. We invite you to visit www.theresumebay.com for more free career tools including interviews with industry-leaders on career, jobs, and overall common sense advice.

Thank you for your trust,

Jon Davidson
Co-Founder

Jay Hofmeister
Co-Founder

Chapter I - The Importance of Sharpening the Axe

Abraham Lincoln famously said, “If I had eight hours to chop down a tree, I would spend six hours sharpening my axe.” As I am sure you would agree, this attentiveness to being prepared holds true in many areas. Athletes prepare by not only conditioning their bodies but also watching hours of game film each week on the competition, eating properly, getting enough rest, and learning the playbook. A firefighter has an extensive list of preparation to follow such as equipment maintenance, training for potentially life-threatening situations, and maintaining their fitness at a level that allows them to be able to function with 60 pounds of gear on their back. The preparation you do prior to a job search isn’t much different. If searching for a job were simple, everyone would be happily employed and the right candidates would all be hired for the perfect positions but, as you know, that is not the case.

Searching for new employment is a full-time job in itself and, as with any position, the better prepared you are, the more successful you will be. As recruiters, many candidates new to working with us would ask, “What is there to prepare for? All I need to do is post my resume on the Internet. I fill out their form, they create a resume for me, and it is posted for the companies to see. Moreover, I can apply for 50 positions before lunchtime. How much preparation is needed for that?” This statement is accurate in that by using the Internet and the available job sites, a job seeker can post their information for all employers to see, who have a subscription to Monster.com, and they can apply for many positions in a short period. However, a few questions need to be asked:

- ? How is a potential employer going to recognize you among the millions of other job seekers on the Internet?
- ? As you are able to apply for several positions within a short time frame, so is everyone else. How many submissions do you think a company receives in a day?

- ? If your information is easily available for every employer to see at any time, what do you think that does to the value of your candidacy?
- ? Are you applying for different types of positions? If so, does the resume you have posted on the Internet specifically cater to each opening?
- ? Are you aware of how most employers are now finding candidates?

The answers to these questions and more will be addressed in the following chapters, giving you an enormous advantage over the thousands of other people currently competing for those new jobs.

Each day, the job markets' roots grow deeper into the Information Age. As a result, the already rapid pace at which events occur will continue to increase thereby making it mandatory for job seekers to act and react quickly in order to achieve their objective. Your preparedness will allow you functionality that is far more efficient in this brave new world while other will be lost at sea.

The R.E.S.U.M.E.B.A.Y. Way to Prepare for the Job Interview

- ✓ **R**e-affirm your Goals
- ✓ **E**stablish strong psychological footing
- ✓ **S**tay positive
- ✓ **U**nderstand realities and limitations
- ✓ **M**anufacture a winning resume
- ✓ **E**rase unprofessional communications
- ✓ **B**logs and social networks
- ✓ **A**pppearance and Body Language
- ✓ **Y**our support system

Chapter II – Reaffirm Your Goals

Before you begin the journey toward your new and improved career you first must know where you are going. What are your goals in this job search? Yes, I know to get a job but that isn't enough to legitimize that as a goal. The most time-honored and proven approach to goal setting is the S.M.A.R.T. method. S.M.A.R.T. is an acronym for **Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time-bounded.**

Specific – Distill each goal down to its essence to foster absolute clarity of direction. Failure to do so will inevitably result in a misdirected focus and eventually, another job search. Set a date for which you plan to return to work. To what positions will you be applying? How many interviews will you have per week and where?

Measurable – You must be able to measure your levels of achievement in obtaining your goals. How many new contacts did you meet daily, weekly and monthly? How many phone calls are you making each day? How many contacts are you making at networking events? How many resumes do you send to warm contacts and leads? By making your goals measurable, it becomes easier to adjust your approach, if needed, when the stark numbers are staring back at you.

Attainable - A well-laid goal inspires you reach further than to what you are accustomed, requiring you to operate outside of your comfort zone. That being said, it is also critical that your goal is attainable. Do you have the skills needed for the position for which you apply? If you are accustomed to working as an Accounting Manager, a position as a nuclear scientist is likely unattainable.

Realistic - Very often, people will make decisions based on assumptions without having the actual knowledge of a situation that can only be achieved through hands-on experience. When setting goals for your search campaign, be sure to educate

yourself on the industry and position in which you are interested. This has been made exponentially easier through the advent of social networking sites, which we discuss in Chapter VII. Ask peers and/or previous supervisors for their insights. If they don't know, the chances are good they know someone else who can help.

Time-Bounded – For a goal to be considered legitimate it must be bound by a schedule or have a time constraint. When will your goals be completed? If there is no finish line, how will you know when you have reached the race's end? Set a time frame that causes you to hustle. Remember, this is only a short-term pain for long-term gain.

Chapter III – Establish Psychological Footing

Between writing resumes, making phone calls, and interviewing for positions, the importance of a job seeker being in a positive mental state can get lost in the shuffle. Let's face it. Losing a job can knock the wind out the best of them but the ones who achieve success are those who get back up and in a fragile mental state getting up can be a lot harder than it needs to be.

1. Don't take it personally

A layoff is a business decision and not an indictment on you as a person or as a worker. After you have poured your heart and soul into a job it is hard not to take a layoff to heart. The truth is that your former supervisor is judged by their boss on how much revenue their department is earning. The easiest way to cut costs is through a reduction in headcount.

Immediately after being laid-off take a few days to gather your thoughts, relax, get some things done around the house if you are up to it, have a beer or two but after no more than 72 hours, finish nursing your wounds and get ready to take inspired action in search for your next career opportunity. Just do it!

2. Get Off Your Butt

One of the most important things that you can do for yourself is to stay active. Now that you have a little more free time it is a perfect opportunity to start a fitness regimen. It can be challenging, while holding down a job, to add a good fitness regimen into their lives. Typically after work, many people go home, make dinner, watch TV, or go onto the computer and go to sleep. At this point, you don't have that luxury. By implementing and maintaining a regular exercise regimen, you will not only lose a few pounds, but your face will start to gain more coloration and shine and your energy level will increase immensely. Regular exercise lowers blood pressure and promotes increased circulation, resulting in an improvement of your overall spirits. As you continue to lose weight and become healthier, your self-esteem improves along with confidence level. It is more

noticeable than you think. Now don't get me wrong here I am not suggesting that you have to go out and become a double-triathlete; however, if you do that's fantastic. Even just a simple walk around the block once a day is better than doing nothing. Employers look for the appearance of being healthy. When healthcare costs are doubling almost every five years employers are the ones that will foot the bill. It is best to be fit and trim when interviewing.

3. No TV – Stay positive

Sitting on the couch watching Judge Judy isn't going to help boost your spirits. In fact, it is going to have the opposite effect. Nothing against Judge Judy here but I think she would agree that TV is a brain drain that has the potential to inspire you to the lowest forms of negativity. When watching the news, you will rarely find stories that are uplifting and positive in regards to unemployment statistics, the job rate, job loss rate and the overall economy. The media broadcasts focus on what will get the most viewers and more viewers equals greater sponsorship dollars. Are you more interested in watching the car simply drive down the highway or are you more interested in looking at the horrendous accident?

With only a slight amount of added energy focused on being positive through talking with others in the job market, networking with positive people or other people looking for work you will find a more hopeful and positive picture of how things really are and can be.

Another avenue to consider is counseling. We realize that a stigma remains in our society regarding mental health and it might not be easy for you to embrace, but there are several professionals who specialize in helping people with career challenges. If you are comfortable enough, ask friends or family members for a referral, but the phonebook or Internet will also do. If you aren't happy with your initial therapist, don't use that to make the statement that all shrinks are quacks. It can take a while sometimes to find the person who is right for you.

Chapter IV – Stay Positive

One of the biggest challenges throughout a job search is to keep a positive, upbeat attitude. A job search that is completed effectively is typically littered with rejection. As much as we would like to hit the mark every time, it isn't realistic to expect only great results. To us, the more rejection one experiences simply indicates they are that much closer to success. Success rarely arrives without failure. Understandably, it feels somewhat counterintuitive to do something that brings so much disappointment however keep in mind that all you need is one job offer and you win. Think about the movie industry for a second. The majority of movies released during the course of a year are, for the most part, horrible. In fact, 80% of the movies released by the studios lose money. The other 20% however earns the movie studios enough to make it a very profitable business. Just as in that example, your job search will have more rejection than to which you are accustomed. Just remember, when you finally get the payoff, it will be worth it.

Create a new routine – Create a new routine focused around your job search that ensures you are taking consistent, daily, action towards developing new contacts with companies and peers. Nothing will bring you down like a day or two on the couch.

Lose the losers – It is time to take stock and clean house. Avoid, at least for the time being, all the negative thinkers in your sphere of influence. Just as enthusiasm is infectious so is negativity. Do not fall into the woe is me mentality. It is time to move ahead.

No News Personalities – While it is important to stay abreast of international and domestic events, be careful not to fall into the trap of negativity news. Many of the news outlets, in order to drum up revenue, support controversial figures with very polarizing viewpoints. While they can be entertaining, if you are on the other side of their vitriol, it can be downright angering and deflating. Know your current events, but avoid the entertainers.

Be Nice to You

Do your very best not to be too hard on yourself. A layoff isn't personal. If you don't treat yourself well, then why should anyone else? Sometimes it feels impossible to shake the doldrums but a method I have used before, and you might not like it, is the "Fake it 'til you make it" approach. Unbelievably, it works. Decide what type of person it is that you want to be. In your mind's eye, how does that person behave? Once you have a solid, method-actor styled, Robert DeNiro dossier on your character (just kidding... sort of), become that character. You will find that after a few weeks, when you take a step back to survey yourself, you will be much closer to being the person you have pretended to be. The type of character you choose is up to you. Just make sure they have a positive outlook and are able to let negativity easily roll-off their back.

Quick Tip

It is easy to be negative, but it takes a strong character to remain positive in the face of challenging circumstances. Be strong. Avoid complaining and whining. Get your aggression out at the gym or go for a run or hike, but keep that inner-baby hidden away. Tough times don't last...tough people do.

Chapter V – Understanding Realities and Limitations

What role does career play in my life?

Being laid-off has some obvious challenges, but consider the great opportunity you have been afforded. You now have the chance to gain a new perspective on your career and to decide whether the path you are on is where you want to be. For some, a job is just a way to earn enough money to pay the bills and for others it is way to express themselves, their views about the world, and for others it is both. Many people go through their careers miserable, and never stop to ask themselves what they want to do? Consider it a gift that you are able to sit down at this point in your life and do some serious career soul-searching. Once you come to determine the place that career holds in your life, aside from helping to increase your focus while searching, you will also be more settled and in a more contented state.

Do I pursue a new career?

This is a great potential opportunity to switch gears and pursue a new career path. Before jumping in, here are a few questions you must answer to ensure the decision is a sound one:

1. Do you have any direct or relatable experience?

Some people are under the impression that because they don't have experience in a certain area that they will never be considered for certain types of positions. This however isn't true. As recruiters, we had placed more candidates in positions that

didn't necessarily have the exact or best qualifications but the employers liked how they fit into the company's culture. So don't be discouraged due to a lack of experience. Focus on your passion for the work and at what points in your previous experience was your work similar or relatable to other skills you have.

What are the motivating factors for contemplating a complete career switch? Make sure you know enough about the industry and it isn't based on an image you have created or based on one other person's opinion. Do your research to make sure you are making the right choice.

The final consideration to make is regarding salary. Understand that should you decide to take a position in a new field and lack experience, you will be considered an entry-level candidate/employee and compensated accordingly.

2. What is my lowest acceptable salary?

Many times, out of desperation, job seekers will begin to consider positions that pay significantly less than their previous one. An entry-level salary for college graduates with minimal to no experience ranges anywhere from \$35,000 to \$65,000, depending on the region and specialized nature of the work. Sit down with your spouse or partner and figure out what is the least acceptable compensation you can accept. Carefully review the numbers, leaving no stone unturned, to gain total clarity on your rock-bottom compensation requirement. While a company might not pay you the salary to which you are accustomed they may, for example, have an excellent benefits program, offer a vacation plan or a profit sharing plan that makes accepting a decrease in salary more sensible. Schedule a meeting with your financial advisor to better strategize finances during this time. If you do not have a financial advisor, we strongly recommend locating one, ideally through a friend's or business colleague's referral. A strong financial professional can provide guidance on the best ways for you to survive financially, greatly reducing the stress of worrying about how to afford the necessities without incurring any future tax burdens. A sound financial advisor can help you to determine whether you have access to your annuities, bonds, CDs, life insurance cash value, stocks, mutual funds, 401(k), equity in your

home and obtaining a line of credit, etc. This might afford you the opportunity to temporarily work at a reduced salary.

3. Am I able to travel for a position and, if so, how much?

We have talked with many talented people who were part of an economic lay off with their organization. After a month or two had passed without finding work, desperation set in understandably, causing many of the professionals to alter their parameters in regards to travel, stating they would travel 100% if needed. Typically, things would go well for a few months but eventually being away from home would start to take its toll on the individual and their family. There's no doubt as to the stress that much travel can create, however, it's something that should have been considered and dealt with before embarking on the job search. While the desperation might not have been there in the first couple of months, it is critical to think ahead and consider the stresses that might ensue.

If you are willing to do this type of travel, but only for a short period, search for short-term temporary contract positions.

Relocation

It's one thing to be *willing* to relocate. It's another thing to be *able* to relocate. Consider these:

1. What is the real estate market like in your region?
2. Is your house ready for sale?
3. Have you ever resided outside of the area?
4. Where is your spouse's family located?
5. Are your children at an age where their friends matter?
6. If you are willing to rent an apartment for the short-term until you can sell your home how much can you afford.
7. How long are you willing to remain in that type of living situation?

8. Are your relocation requirements in line with today's market?

Factoid

Companies that buy houses as part of a relocation package are rare. Normally they don't offer a relocation package if the new employee is less than 50 miles from the company's location.

Be sure to address all concerns with your family before pursuing positions that require relocation. Too many times candidates wait until it looks like things are getting serious to include the family into the decision-making process. If the family is dead-set against relocating and you have to tell the company you cannot relocate, you will seem unprofessional, as you should have known that ahead of time.

In addition, if the company pays for the relocation and months later you decide you don't like it and wish to return to your original region, that company is not going to be very happy. Sometimes companies build in a disclaimer to a job offer stating that if an employee leaves within one year, the relocation monies paid out are going to be 100% reimbursed.

9. Why not take a position and leave if I don't like it?

Accepting a position and leaving prematurely, regardless of reasoning, has strong potential to burn a bridge with an employer. Some might say, "What's the big deal? I was only there for a short time. They'll find someone else. Plus, I'll never deal with that business again anyway." This viewpoint is shortsighted.

More often than not, individuals will work at more than one company throughout their career. Companies like to hire people who have similar industry experience. With this in mind, the odds are good that somewhere down the road, you'll find yourself working with a former employer or their associate. Leaving a position abruptly might not seem to be a huge deal; it may very well come to haunt you later in your career.

Preparation is the ultimate display of respect to an employer. Operating with foresight and professionalism will ultimately earn you a reputation as a consummate professional, gaining you much-needed friends who can help now, and in the future.

Chapter V – Manufacturing a winning resume

The purpose of a resume is to attract enough attention from potential employers so they are inspired to meet with you in person. In part two of our four volume series, we will go into more detail on the resume and specific ideas on the best way to utilize the document to present yourself, but here we will provide you with the basics to get you up and running. A resume is an advertisement for you. In most cases it only takes five seconds for an employer to recognize the value you can potentially provide to their organization. Any longer than that your resume will likely end up in the “Thank you for your interest but we aren’t interested...” category. The resume must have, at the very least, these basic components.

Extra, Extra Read All About It

Whereas the resume that which everyone seems to have become accustomed begins with an “Objective” section, today’s resume needs to have a “Headline” take its place. Think about it for a moment. Isn’t the objective inherent in the document itself? Your objective is to have an employer read your resume and become inspired enough to set up an interview. By placing a headline at the top of your resume, you are making it abundantly clear to anyone who reads it, in this case someone in human resources or the hiring manager, what type of person you are and what value you bring to the table.

Guidelines for the Headlines

The headline must cater to the position for which you apply. For example, if you are applying for a position as a design engineer that requires experience in AutoCAD 3-D, your headline should say AutoCAD 3-D design engineer. (***)Disclaimer - This is being explained under the assumption that you actually have this experience. Obviously, if you don’t have that experience in your background, it would be misleading to use that as your headline.) Put the shoe on the other foot for a moment. Say you are the

employer, and you're looking for a design engineer with AutoCAD 3-D background and you're going through resumes. You see a resume that has a headline, in easy-to-read boldface that says AutoCAD 3-D design engineer. Would you read that resume? We would.

Value Table

Underneath the headline create a basic 3x3 table and in each field, enter the areas in which you provided an employer the most value. These “value statements” are more than standard claims of being a hard-worker and a quick-learner. Proving that you're a hard worker by stating “Implemented employee accountability program that led to a 40% increase in productivity” is a more powerful statement and will quickly communicate, to a potential employer, that you can earn or save him or her money.

Style

Make sure that the font you use for the resume is legible, professional, and conservative. However, it is important to avoid using the typical fonts such as Times New Roman, and Arial to name a few. Fonts like those that Trebuchet MS, Calibri, and Cambria will work well in that they are easy to read and professional but a little different from the standard, commonly viewed fonts, giving the resume a more modern and interesting appeal. If you are using Open Office.org, which is a free open-source version of Word, there are also plenty of fonts on there to choose from as well. Expand the margins between 0.2 and 0.4” to take up more of the page. It is a subtle adjustment however; it fills the page a little more, creating the feeling of a more robust resume.

Your Audience Determines Style

As with any presentation in business, the arts, or your personal life, it is mandatory that you understand your audience so you can cater your presentation properly. As an example, when applying for a position with a major financial firm in New York City, the use of bright neon colors and/or artistic fonts will most likely not be as well received, as it might be if you were applying for a position with the circus. If you aren't sure what the company's culture is like then do some research. You might not find this

information emblazoned on the Internet so it will require a little more detective work by calling a company's human resources department or talking with a friend or previous colleague who works there.

Who is receiving the resume...the hiring manager? Human resources? A computer? Each audience will normally require emphasis on different areas of value; therefore, understanding in whose hands the resume will initially end up is paramount to successfully breaking through for an interview. More often than not, the flow of a resume's journey begins with the computer. After successful screening, it will go to an actual person in the human resources department and, if the resume makes a good impression, it will make its way to the desk of the hiring manager for review.

Computer Screening

Keywords – Be sure to include keywords from the job posting in your resume where applicable.

Text or .doc, not .pdf – Scanning software has a harder time noticing .pdf files so the resume should be in .doc format or .txt if being used for Internet submission.

Human Resources

Appealing layout and design – With a clean yet creative layout, your resume will surely catch their eye amongst the hundreds of other resumes.

Easy to read – Do not talk over their heads. They are human resources experts and not necessarily proficient in the discipline for which the job calls.

Contains the “Hot Buttons” found in the original job posting for which you applied. Because they aren't typically experts in that certain area, they will many times use the “Hot Buttons” provided by the hiring manager as a main search credential. Because of this, it is a good idea to have more than one version of your resume, each one catering itself to a particular position.

Experience – If the company doing the hiring manufactures rubber tires, the likelihood that they are interested in someone out of the horse-breeding industry is low. If your last position was

delivering pizzas, and you're applying for a job as a janitor, pull back the pizza-delivery skills and emphasize a time in your past where you had direct or related janitorial experience.

Job History – Avoid looking like a job hopper. If you have had more than one position in five years, but leaving the position(s) is legitimate, tell them by stating, “Company closed,” “department eliminated,” corporate downsized”, etc.

Hiring Manager

How can you be valuable to them? – Where have you made strong contributions with previous employers? Create a 3x3 table just underneath your headline. In each space should be a statement conveying your value, ideally in a measured numerical way. For example, (* Initiated ABC program – led to 25% scrap reduction).

Experiences working in a similar position or industry – If you have industry background add it at the top with the metrics. If you don't have any experience, make sure to emphasize the areas that have some relatable characteristics. If your strongest industry experience was obtained two positions ago, be sure to emphasize that experience and have a good reason as to why you left.

Needs to see the pertinent information quickly – Lose the objective and replace it with a headline stating what value you bring and directly underneath, add the 4 to 8 value statements in a bullet-style format within a table.

Industry-related supervisory references – Having these will almost guarantee you an interview.

Style (More so in some industries such as retail, design, etc.) – Avoid the templates and use a little creativity to make your resume stand out. If you are uncomfortable with MS Word,

consider investing in a resume-writing professional who stands behind their work.

Entry-level Resumes

Often times, entry-level job seekers will list their previous experience, and it isn't related to the job for which they apply. You might be wondering, "How the hell am I supposed to list relatable experience if I don't have any?" This is a good point but it just means you will have to be a little more creative, especially in a job market where there is a lot of competition amongst people right out of college.

Co-Operatives and/or Internships

I hope that you listened to the advisor and picked up an internship related to the field in which you are interested. If you didn't, call your advisor now and get started. Even though you are finished with school and want to start earning a good salary, the graduates with the co-ops and/or internships have the leg up, especially in an economy where there are many unemployed from which to choose. For the time being, it is imperative to emphasize your studies. What did your courses teach that relates to the position for which you apply? What was your role in senior or other special projects? Do you have a GPA over 3.0? If so, list it. Did you graduate on the Dean's list at any point? Companies who interview you know they're getting an entry-level candidate so don't fret about lacking experience on your resume. At the same time, stating that you worked flipping burgers for two years isn't going to attract most employers *unless* you worked full-time flipping burgers to pay for your school. Stating that on a resume will demonstrate your work ethic to an employer, more than another graduate who had his or her college completely taken care of. When printing your resume use a good stock paper and have it printed by a professional laser printer, as opposed to an ink jet printer as they tend to bleed, giving the resume a blurry, almost out-of-focus appearance.

Chapter VI - Eliminate Unprofessional Communications

Unless you have been living in a cave for the last ten years, you understand that E-Mail is the main method of which members of the workforce communicate. Typically, email is reserved for short messages with medium importance whereas the phone is still the preferred way to discuss meatier subjects that require more than a few sentence fragments. Knowing this, here are some tips on what to do and what to avoid when using these mediums of communicating:

- **Mature** – Act professional when sending email. Keep responses formal and devoid of anything you deem would be funny. You might be hilarious to some but to others you are not serious enough to work at their company.
- **Profane email addresses** – If your email address is hotchick69@aol.com, create a new one that contains your name jdavidson12@aol.com. I think you get the point.
- **No kids** – While I have no doubt that your child is the smartest, best looking, and most behaved in the history of the world, please keep them off the voice mail while searching for employment. Not everyone is amused and it is another way to show a lack of seriousness.
- **Dedicate a phone to your search** – Use your current cell phone or pick up a prepay phone that you can strictly dedicate to your search. This way it is always with you and you can cater the voice mail to potential employers who

call. Make sure that if someone leaves a message that you get back with him or her immediately.

- **No music** – We know how much you love Ice Cube but just for a little while, don't let him be the phone ring people hear when they call your phone. Change it to a standard, boring old ring. You can change it back later if you are still stuck in the 90's.

Quick tips for Your Communication Makeover

- *Only talk with a prospective employer on a mobile phone in an area having good reception.*
- *Find an environment where you are able to speak openly about any job-related questions.*
- *Avoid background noise. The sound of Lollapalooza in the background won't sit well with an employer.*
- *Don't drive under the influence of a mobile phone. Answering questions while trying to drive is hazardous. Ask them if they mind holding on while you park the car.*
- *If an employer contacts you but you are unable to speak at that moment, get their phone number and a time they would prefer you call back.*
- *Please don't have any religious sayings or words of wisdom on your email signature that could be misinterpreted.*
- *Smile and be enthusiastic. Your voice has to make up for the lack of body language most of us use when talking with others.*

Chapter VII – Blogs and social networking

What is social networking?

Social networking falls under the umbrella of Web 2.0, which, for lack of a technical definition, is a new term for multimedia. In the world of Web 2.0, the exchange of information is no longer limited to text but now includes link exchanges, videos, and audio presentations, all within the confines of a few social networking websites, the sole purpose of which is to allow this open and free communication, effectively taking place in real time. Millions upon billions upon trillions of bits of information are shared between users everyday within the blink of an eye all in real time, linking up the world, even job seekers and employers. It is a new means of communications that, at least right now, isn't the end all be all, however if used correctly, it can be a great secret weapon when looking for work.

Before social networking, it could have taken a lifetime to build up a list of contacts that today you can obtain in a couple of months.

Linked-In

By working methodically and with intent, you can avoid an information tidal wave. Linked-In is a site that can help you do this.

Step One – Go to www.linkedin.com and create a free account. If you are interested in having advanced features such as InMail and job posting capability there is a fee, but you can get a lot from this site without paying a dime. The more information you enter into your new profile, your chances greatly increase that someone will

recognize you and/or your expertise and want to “link-up” with you.

Step Two - When you are prompted to upload a photo, attach a picture of what you will be wearing in your interview. This can very well be the first impression you make to an employer. While a photo of you is preferred, a logo or symbol that makes sense to use in its place that is okay. Just make sure to upload some photo there, as people without images on their profile will go unnoticed.

Step Three - Join as many associations, groups and organizations that interest you and will enhance your networking reach to contacts within your industry. This can potentially lead to a job interview or a connection with a great thinker within your industry. If you are a tax accountant, for example, and were recently downsized, you can perform a search at LinkedIn.com for groups that are related to tax accountants in Minnesota, if that is where your destination preference is located. At the same time, you can join employment groups that specialize in a particular area.

Step Four - Search for past colleagues, bosses, and old friends and invite them to link. You will then be able to view their connections and request invites to meet with ones with whom you would like to interact. Also, make sure that when you meet with anyone in-person or over the phone, ask if you can link to his or her Linked In account. All E-mail signatures should have your linkedin.com address added to them with a request to link-up with them.

Facebook

A wildly popular social media site that you probably have heard of is Facebook. Facebook is simple to sign up for and to start using right away. While used more often to socialize with friends and family, there are plenty of businesses who use the site as they feel it gives subscribers a more complete picture of who they are.

Facebook allows you to control what other people see when viewing your page so if something were to be posted and you didn't want your next potential employer to see it, such as family photos or pictures from your vacation, it can be hidden.

When filling out your profile on Facebook with the intent of attracting employers, we strongly encourage you to refrain from

voicing any political opinions or any information that could be interpreted as controversial. Keep everything focused on positive, friendly interactions. Make sure to upload a picture of your face up there. After all, it is called Facebook.

When posting your status, refrain from obscenities, declarations of excessive alcohol or drug use and making negative statements about your job search, current or former employers, ex-spouse, etc. Finding the answers to your more in-depth questions about Facebook is relatively simple by using the 'Help' menu, and there will be answers for you there or Google your question and the chances are you will find others with the same challenges.

A cool feature of Facebook is that everyone can create his or her own unique group about anything of interest. If you are a stamp collector, you can start a stamp-collecting group. If you are a New England Patriots fan, you can start a group about them. Within the constraints of decency, the sky is the limit. Try creating a group that revolves around your job search.

As with Linked-In, send a Facebook invite to people through e-mail who you know and before you know it, your network will start rapidly growing. We cannot stress enough how important it is to keep your Facebook page free from any potentially controversial information that would sour a hiring manager from interviewing and ultimately hiring you.

Twitter

Twitter.com is a site that allows users to share ideas, thoughts, and observations within a 140-character limit, called a Tweet. It has grown from a simple communication tool to a relevant marketing and search medium that provides real time updates from companies and regular Joes around the world. The object in Twitter is to follow users who add value to you in whatever way that is, in this case for your job search, and to have other users follow you because you provide them value in some way.

Followers

If you are an engineer who specializes in designing Tupperware, you might want to post information on current injection molding techniques. You do not want to come off desperately as an

aggressive job seeker baiting for a new job. In fact, if you are too overt in your agenda, it is a turnoff and people aren't looking to follow others who are solely focused on their own stuff. People also won't follow you if you are too forward or abrasive and do not provide users value, which is what the goal is on Twitter.

Friends

The users you decide to follow are called "Friends." You can technically follow anyone but keep in mind that when you follow someone, from that point on, you receive all of their tweets. If you choose to follow 2,000 people that means you will receive all of their tweets in real time. It is ultimately your decision what role Twitter plays for you, but in our opinion 2,000 friends in real time is one-step above junk mail. Search for people in your industry on Twitter by using the Twitter Search site. Be bold and reach out to people who interest you. Use these new contacts as potential resources into companies that might need your skill set or simply as allow them to provide you good information.

Add Value

The value that you provide to people on Twitter is going to determine the quantity and quality of followers you have. Tweeting that you are the greatest baker on the planet isn't going to provide much value however, if you tweet a great recipe idea for sourdough bread, more people will become attracted and follow you. So even though you are looking for a job, it doesn't mean that the thrust of your Twitter account is to tell people that you're looking for a job. Create enough value in a fashion that relates to your line of work so other people in your industry will opt to follow you. Keep your network focused around the core of whatever value it is you are trying to add. If you are looking to find a job in architecture, it's a good idea to create a Twitter account and persona that is attractive to people within the architectural industry.

General Guidelines

Keep your updates 120 characters or less. By leaving 20 or more characters available, other people who like what you, have to say

will “Re-Tweet” or RT the message. If somebody in your network RT’s one of your messages, the people in their network will also see it, and so on and so on. You could have your Tweet read by millions of people within minutes.

Creating a Blog

Along with having a resume for your job search, it is highly advisable that you create a blog. A blog is similar to a webpage and for no cost whatsoever, you can create an environment that communicates any type of information that you like. You can have a blog that discusses sports, one that discusses culinary cuisine or one that you place family photos and news. In the case of a job search, it will be wise to create a blog that emphasizes the highlights throughout your career. Be careful not to post anything political, religious or any ideological viewpoint that might be viewed by some as controversial.

Creating a blog takes a little bit of time, but it is not extremely difficult. If you search Google with the words “creating a blog” or “how to create a blog,” you will find an enormous amount of resources that will help you. WordPress.com, squidoo.com, and blogger.com are just a few of the places you can go to start that process.

A Blog is Searchable

Having your career information on a blog makes it searchable from any of the major search engines, gaining you far more visibility than anything that you would get from an Internet job site. The best part is that you can communicate your value in a far more effective and comprehensive way than a simple resume.

Your blog may contain:

- Your resume
- Letters of recommendation
- Video of presentations
- Patents/Copyrights
- Photos of you with respected members of the community and/or industry

Another great feature of the career blog is that after you're finished with the job search, the blog can serve as your personal business profile page. This way, future customers

and vendors, when they do a search, will most likely have your page come up first. Make sure you remove your resume though. You don't want employers to think you are keeping your information posted in an effort to look for another job.

Chapter 7 – Appearance and Body Language

When on an interview, it is of the utmost importance that you dress impeccably, regardless for what position you apply. As most of you know, first impressions last a lifetime and as we have seen in our years in recruiting, employers know within 30 seconds as to whether or not a candidate has any chance of being hired. Not dressing appropriately shows a blatant lack of respect for the employer and the position.

The Do's and Don'ts of Interview Dress

MEN	WOMEN
✓ Professionally pressed suit	✓ Classic suit or pant suit
✓ White laundered shirt	✓ Apply makeup sparingly
✓ Belt or suspenders	✓ Closed-toe pumps
✓ Dark mid-calf socks	✓ No flashy jewelry
✓ Only jewelry – watch and ring	✓ Easy on the accessories
✓ Clean fingernails	✓ Mild perfume
✓ Red tie	✓ Manicured nails
✓ Shoe color matches the belt	✓ Purse or briefcase, not both
BOTH	
✓ Bring a nice pen full of ink	✓ No bracelets
✓ Going to an interview in your work clothes leaves a terrible	

impression with an employer. Find a place to change before your arrival.

Chapter 8 – Your Support Network

References

References are an invaluable source to use throughout your job search. Certainly, they can provide positive reinforcement to potential employers touting your value, but they can also be an excellent source for leads to other people and/or potential opportunities. Upon initiating your job search, personally contact all of the people you have listed as a reference to let them know potential employers will soon be calling. This ensures they are ready for the calls and the contact information you have for them is still accurate. It can be extremely frustrating for an employer if they aren't able to get a hold of a reference. Moreover, it allows time for another candidate to materialize, possibly knocking you out of contention.

Reach Out

Just as important of a reason to contact your references however, is to find out whether or not they can help. Some might be uncomfortable with this idea however, especially in challenging economic times; you will be surprised at how many people are willing to help others. Take a chance. The worst someone can say is no. A valuable reference might be aware of which companies are hiring and/or potential opportunities available within their organization.

Make sure that your reference can discuss your employment openly and is not limited by company policy to only give the dates you worked and the job title you held. Many more companies

have adopted this policy so it is important that you check. At the same time, make sure that the reference that has the freedom to speak openly is actually a good reference. In the past, we have worked with clients who considered their references positive and it was typically accurate. Nevertheless, on enough occasions to mention, we had references say things they believed were helpful to the candidate when in fact they would have been detrimental to their candidacy. One excellent benefit among many of having a talented recruiter on your side is their ability to call and investigate a reference on your behalf and determine their fitness as a reference. Should the reference unknowingly provide a poor reference, the recruiter can inform the reference and suggest different verbiage. To be sure, this isn't putting words in a reference's mouth, simply instructing them on how to be the best reference they can be.

A good reference to provide a potential employer should be from someone who has supervised you in a previous role but if that isn't available, a peer or colleague might do. This, however, won't be considered as powerful of a testament to your candidacy.

Consistency

Interviewers are trained to look for inconsistencies in candidate answers. Make sure that if you were terminated for a reason that you say that instead of the increasingly popular answer, "I was laid off." The term "laid-off" has become used by job seekers who were actually fired when it, in fact, means that you lost your position due to economic downturn, job was eliminated, or the business is closing or relocating.

If you were terminated, then what do you do? You don't want to hedge on unfavorable factors on your employment history, however you must tell the truth. With an explanation of termination, you can provide letters of recommendation from your references as well as having the references share those references on their Linked-In profiles. If they are too busy to write that letter or make that post, suggest that you write it and send it to them for approval. If they take too long to respond after that, find another reference as a good reference needs to have the ability to respond to a potential employer within 24 hours.

Letters of Recommendation

Having a strong letter of recommendation from a previous supervisor or other respected member of the community is a powerful tool that can be effective in building credibility...fast! Don't be afraid to ask a customer, vendor, or supplier for a letter recommendation. The worst they can say is no.

A strong letter of recommendation will contain:

- Statements conveying how you added value to the organization
- Examples of how you've worked well in a team environment
- Your ability to meet deadlines and complete projects under budget
- Examples of your creativity
- Endorsement of your communication skills

Chapter IX – We're here for you

We hope that this book provides you, not only the knowledge to get out into the market and kick some butt, but a peace of mind that is a rare commodity when navigating through career change. If at any time you are feeling lost and don't know which way to turn, visit www.theresumebay.com and click on the Resume Resources tab. There you will find the latest *free* tools to get your career back on track.