



## CREATING A KILLER JOB SEARCH PLAN



*Wondering how to find the job of your dreams? “Creating a killer job search plan” will give you the secrets of success. This article shows you the steps necessary to go about creating a job search plan, how to best spend your job searching time, how to effectively set up a job search network and how to approach the influential people necessary to land you a great job!*

*By Jim Cipriani Jr\**

After completing my 4th year at Canisius College in Buffalo, NY, where I spent all my free time sleeping, drinking beer and chasing women, I knocked on the door of the career placement department two weeks prior to graduation and asked for the job I felt I rightfully deserved. After all I had paid my dues, hadn't I? “What have you been doing to prepare for your job,” the career advisor asked? “Going to school ...uh...bartending and....uh...studying real hard,” I replied. “Is that good enough?”

After getting laughed out of the career placement department, I graduated and continued my illustrious career as a bartender. Friends and family asked what I was doing to find a job. “Looking in the paper,” I said. “Sending out resumes and talking to lots of influential people at the bar.” The line my father gave me every day when he came home from work and found me on the couch “resting” before another grueling shift slinging beers was “did that guy come knocking on the door to *give* you your job today Jimmie?”

If you are treating your job search like I was then, and like most job seekers are today, you know very little about creating a job search plan. What is not surprising, I am sure, is if you have a plan, your chances for success are much higher than if you simply wing it. Whether you are employed or unemployed it is important to have a plan if you are contemplating a move. If you are unemployed and the bills are piling up, or if your parents are threatening to throw you off the couch and out of their house, your search may need to be more urgent. In any case a well designed and executed job search plan will help ensure you make the right move in a timely manner.

In creating a job search plan, the first thing to do is to carve job search time where you can concentrate on the task of getting in front of employers. Similar to exercising at the gym, if you leave it until you have extra time, it won't get done. Whether it's exercising or finding a job the “I don't have time” excuse is lame! My response to this is “you always have the time, you simply chose to do something else instead.”

If you are *unemployed* your job search should be your full time job. If you are *underemployed* or unhappy at work and want to make a change you need to decide how much time you can spend on your job search. Either way schedule job search time and work your job search plan in a disciplined and uninterrupted manner. The more time you spend the better your results.

What you do with your job search time is paramount to your success. So how do you go about creating a job search plan and how best should you spend your time? The first thing to do is to physically draw up your plan. Imagine a piece of paper or a spreadsheet with a column down the left hand side listing all of



the things you are going to do to find a job, and a row across the top listing all of the things you will check off as you complete them.

The column down the left side is your laundry list of things you need to do to find your job. This column will contain your go-to list of places and people to contact in search of your job. For instance, you will be searching internet sites for job postings. Under the heading Internet sites you will include Monster Board, Career Builder, Hot Jobs, etc... For each internet site you will list multiple jobs that you are applying to that appear on that site.

The row across the top of your job search plan will include what you did to make yourself visible to the people you contacted to obtain your job and the people you contacted to go after your job. In the middle of your spreadsheet you will have the dates you took action. Where there are blanks you need to fill them in. Sounds easy.

For example, your job search plan spreadsheet would like this, in part:

<u>Internet Sites</u>	<u>Resume Sent</u>	<u>1<sup>st</sup> Follow Up Phone call</u>
Monster Board		
Sr Accountant	January 3rd	January 7th
Ernst & Young		
Career Builder		
Ass't Controller		
Davis Mfg	January 5 <sup>th</sup>	January 9 <sup>th</sup>

Now let's get into the important part of creating a job search plan. Besides searching the internet sites and newspaper, what else can be done to find a job? And besides sending a resume, what can be done to make you visible to the decision maker(s)?

A well published fact is that seventy percent of people land a job through someone they know. They use their network. Many jobs are landed before they ever get advertised because people love to hire people who come recommended. So how do you build your network? The easiest and best place to begin is with your friends and family. Who do you know who has a job at a good company? Ask that person to hand deliver your resume to a decision maker at that company. Ask him or her to check the internal job postings listed in the cafeterias and on the company intranets. What influential friends do you know? Call them up and ask them to meet you for coffee. Seek their advice and ask them where you should look for a job... that's what networking is all about.

After exhausting your friends and family, look to find what user groups and tip clubs are happening in your field and around your town. Most every field of expertise has a group of peers that meet regularly. Tap into these resources. What is your college alumni association doing to help you get connected? Successful businessmen are actively recruited to participate in alumni associations and they all know people who hire... guaranteed.



Your college career placement department may also be of help. They certainly have connections at employers. By the way, if any of you contact the Canisius College Career Placement Department tell them I am doing just fine! Who at your alma- matter runs the internship department? They too will have connections to hiring influences.

What about recruitment and placement companies or head-hunters? I may be biased because I run a recruitment company, but a reputable recruiter who specializes in your area of expertise is guaranteed to know lots of people who can help you. The problem with most is that they are not paid by the job seeker, and therefore don't have big incentives to give you access to their contacts unless they have an immediate opening for you. But most will provide you with leads if they understand that what comes around goes around. If you have a good track record in a particular field and apply to 2 or 3 reputable firms, you are sure to get some activity in today's job market.

This article may help: [HOW TO SELECT AN EXECUTIVE SEARCH OR PLACEMENT FIRM](#) (Jerry Hellebusch, President, [Morgan Hunter Executive Recruitment, Kansas City, MO](#))

You should consider targeting the top employers in your chosen geography. Most of us know who the top employers are in our area, and have visited their web sites to see if they have any openings, but what I am suggesting is creating a comprehensive list of 20 to 30 target employers and making it a point to get in front of the hiring influences at each. It can be a highly effective technique and has worked for me personally. First you must create a list of top employers and then approach them like a tenacious sales person would. You should know who some of these employers are, and they aren't hard to find. Ask your networking group who is doing the most hiring. Notice who is advertising regularly in the want ads. Complete the list by reading your city's business trade journal. Every major city has one. In Buffalo it is named Business First. In our city Business First publishes a "Book of Lists" a list of top companies in the area in all major categories. These business journals are an invaluable resource and can be accessed for free in your local library.

How do you approach these target companies if they are not advertising for a job that you are qualified for? The first thing you must do is to call the main switchboard and find out the person's name and title who is responsible for hiring. Typically you will be given a person's name in Human Resources. That is a good starting place. However, before you get off the phone with the switchboard operator make sure she gives you the name of the "head" of Human Resources department. Too often they will refer you to a HR recruiter. You always want to start at the top. And before she hangs up on you, you ask for the person's name who is in charge of the department you want to work in. Make sure you get the proper spelling and titles.

With the contact information of the hiring influences in hand, your mission is to make them aware of your candidacy and your interest in a job at their company. To do this you must ensure that they hear from you multiple times in more than one way, in order for them to take notice, and distinguish your candidacy from the mass of people they hear from, you want to be just enough of a nuisance for them to pay attention to you but not to piss them off.

The following items will be listed across the top row of your job search plan. These are the items you will need to complete in order for your plan to be successful:



Sent resume to HR, Sent resume to Hiring Manger, Followed up via phone 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> time (if necessary) to both HR and Hiring manager. Your strategy is to get noticed and to make sure the head of both HR and the department you want to work for knows who you are and why they should consider you for employment. To do this you must make yourself visible written and verbally.

First, send your target employers a resume. It is imperative you send it to both the HR and Hiring Manger within the department. The manager in the hiring department will most likely send it to the HR department. When multiple people are aware of your candidacy they begin to notice you. My suggestion is to send the resume via the US Postal Service with a professional cover letter. Note: if you are answering a want ad and they give you an email address to reply to, send it to that address. I suggest you also send it via USPS. These days executives are inundated with emails and get very little “snail mail”. Your goal is to be different from the crowd and to get yourself noticed. This technique will work.

Is simply sending a resume enough? No. In order to get noticed you must follow up via phone. My suggestion is to follow up more than once. It is important not to become a nuisance, so use your judgment. My suggestion is to follow up 5 days after you submit your resume and follow up again one week later. If you still haven't received a reply, follow up one week after that.

The bartender's recipe for success in creating a killer job search plan is one part design and three parts execution.

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