

# Searching for the Right Job

By Sandi Vidal, executive director of Christian HELP/Central Florida Employment

**T**he days of, "Hi, how are you doing? When can you start?" are long gone for employers and job seekers. These days it's all about navigating online job boards and applications, sending all of your information out into cyber space and crossing your fingers in hopes for any type of response.

It has been said that searching for a job is a job in itself. There is no doubt in my mind on the truth of that statement. The key to a successful job search is to have a plan and to work that plan. Any good plan or project starts with getting organized. Start by taking a career survey, unless you are absolutely sure you know what you want to do. After you have completed the survey, do a self-assessment and write down a list of things you are passionate about, skills you have and tasks you never want to do if you can avoid them. My example of this would be: I love to connect people with jobs. I have great computer skills. I never want to do payroll again, because I am not detail oriented. Payroll does not go on my resume.

Once you know what kind of jobs to apply for, the next step is researching companies and openings. There are search engines designed specifically for job listing such as CFEC.org, Indeed.com and CareerBuilder.com. LinkedIn is also a must for all professional job seekers. Not only does this social networking site give you a great way to put your resume "out there" (even if you have a job), it also gives you the ability to get recommendations, join groups, research companies and network.

Targeting your search and your resume is crucial to seeing results. Take the job description and highlight all of the words that are applicable to your skills and experience. Make sure those words appear in your resume. Let the employer know how the skills were used. The skills should appear either in your summary or in your previous employment sections.

This should go without saying, but experience tells me to say it: keep your communication professional. You need a professional email address and answering machine message. More companies are using email and phone interviews to screen people in and out. Be prepared by keeping your resume with you at all times. Ask recruiters if you can set a time to call them back if you are not at a place you can talk.


Every contact matters, from your resume to phone calls to networking. Be professional and courteous to all of the staff you come in contact with; Human Resources and the receptionist eat lunch together. Don't make your bad behavior the topic.

Research the company before your interview. Have a list of questions to ask the employer about the hours, company culture, typical day, teams, etc. Never end by saying the interviewer has answered all of your questions. Be prepared to talk in stories. This is a great way to give examples of the work you have done and how you would fit in to their work environment. Ask for the job or for the next steps.

Last but not least, say, "Thank you." Write a letter or send an email. This is a great chance to highlight your conversation and add in anything you want to share but didn't get an opportunity to. Many people skip this step and I believe it sets you apart when you take the time to follow up.



To feel as happy as they are when you're looking for a new job, you have to be looking for your next job in the right places.

Getting a job is not easy. But you have to set the goal, work the plan and in the end you will see positive results. 

*Sandi Vidal is the executive director of Christian HELP/Central Florida Employment Council. She has over 15 years of Human Resources experience including hiring for fortune 500 companies. Sandi has a passion for public speaking and helping to connect people with jobs.*

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