

What does it REALLY take to get a job?

As a career advisor I often work with frustrated job seekers that “can’t seem to get a job no matter how much time and effort they put into their job search.” The first step I take in trying to help them is to find out what they’ve actually been doing to find a job. The biggest issue I see over and over again is that even the most diligent job seekers spend most of their time looking for employment on the Internet. Frequently 80 percent or more of their time is being spent searching the Internet for job openings and applying online for jobs. Unfortunately, this only leaves 20 percent of their time to spend on targeting employers and networking. If you are using this approach you may be sabotaging your efforts.

Want to get a job in the least amount of time possible? These are the two main things you should do. First, you need to target employers. Second, you need to network your way to the person doing the hiring.

Targeting Employers

In the current economy, employers are facing a dilemma. They are being inundated with resumes from hundreds of applicants for each job they post. They have to separate which applicants want the job they are offering from those that just want any job they can get. Thus, as a job seeker you need to be able to convince the employer that you truly want to work for them, and that you are not just looking for a job to tide you over until you can land the job you really want. One of the best ways to accomplish this is by targeting the employer.

In order to do this, you need to be able to answer the following questions: What kind of job do you want? And what types of companies have those jobs? You also need to be clear on how far you are realistically willing or able to commute for work, and what skills and experience you have to offer the employer. Once you have those answers, you will be ready to begin an effective job search.

Targeting an employer means choosing specific employers that have the types of jobs you want and focusing on getting employment with their companies. Start by researching companies that have the types of jobs you are looking for. Check out their websites for more information about them. Search online to find out if they are in the news, maybe that company is going through a re-organization, or were just bought by another company. Learn all that you can about the employer. Doing this makes it easier for you to ensure that your cover letter and resume will not only reflect your qualifications for the position, but show that you have an actual interest in working with that specific employer. Finding a list of employers to target can be done by using a simple internet search such as “dentist AND Valencia AND CA.” You could also just pick up the local Yellow Pages at your local library and look under the correct employer categories.

But after you identify a list of employers that have the types of job you’re looking for, is when the work really begins. Your next step in an effective job search is to figure out how to contact the actual person who is doing the hiring.

Networking for Employment

Professional networking is NOT asking someone to help you get a job. Instead, professional networking for employment is connecting with someone to find out about the company they work for, or to inquire if they know someone who works for the company you are targeting. Your objective is to somehow make a firsthand or secondhand connection to the person doing the hiring for the position you want.

First, who is in your primary network? Nearly everyone you know may be part of your primary network. Friends, family members, co-workers (past and present), people you know from the gym or church, vendors that provide you services (doctors, dentists, teachers, bankers, etc.), classmates and neighbors. However, your network also includes people you may not currently know but that may be connected to you through those that you do. When looking for work you really need to know your network, let it be known that you are looking for a specific type of work, and reach out to anyone who can connect you to someone within the companies you are targeting.

A job search that lasts for a long time can wear you down. Even in good economic times, finding the right job can take several months. Some people are at a loss as to what to do when their job search strategy is failing. No matter how positive an attitude you started with, maintaining an upbeat attitude can be a job in itself! It is frustrating plugging away at something that does not appear to be moving forward. Rejection can really deflate your ego which can make you appear defeated during the job interview. Maintaining a positive attitude will translate into self-confidence which is an absolute necessity in the search process.

If you are unemployed- and need to find work as soon as possible, the Santa Clarita WorkSource Center is here to assist you. Work Center staff can teach you how to conduct an effective job search and show you how to network like a professional. Our goal is to help job seekers to find work and employers to find the right employees to fill their needs.

Keri Aaver is the Interim Director of the Santa Clarita WorkSource Center at College of the Canyons. Her column reflects her own views and not necessarily those of The Signal. For more information about the Santa Clarita WorkSource Center services and workshops, call (661) 799-9675 or visit www.scworksource.com.