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Organize Your Job Search

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Summary:

The job search process involves a lot of planning and attention to detail, so it�s no wonder that many people quickly feel overwhelmed and even a bit out of control. The best way to avoid this is to organize your job search so that you have a clear strategy outline and a structured schedule to keep you moving forward.

Keywords:

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Article Body:

The job search process involves a lot of planning and attention to detail, so it�s no wonder that many people quickly feel overwhelmed and even a bit out of control. The best way to avoid this is to organize your job search so that you have a clear strategy outline and a structured schedule to keep you moving forward.

<b>Outline your strategy</b>

Start by creating an outline of your job search strategy. List the tactics you intend to use, and the amount of time you will devote to each tactic. A typical list might include the following:

� Network with contacts

� Search online job sites

� Search newspaper ads

Some employment experts say that less than 20% of all jobs are found through the newspaper or online, with the other 80% found through networking. Knowing this, decide how much time you are going to devote to your job search, then allocate that time accordingly.

<b>Define the steps</b>

Next, for each tactic create a list of the steps involved. Here is what this might look like for the �Network with contacts� tactic:

� Call the contact

� Ask to meet for 30 minutes to get their feedback and suggestions on your resume as well as your job search strategy

� Confirm the date, time and location of the appointment

� Meet with contact, taking notes on the conversation and collecting one or two referrals to other contacts you might meet with

� Follow up meeting with a thank you note

� Check back with contact after one to two months if you are still searching for a job

Once you have the steps listed, you will have created a checklist for yourself to help make sure you complete each step along the way.

<b>Create a schedule</b>

Now create a schedule of daily activities so that you are doing something with your search each day. A basic schedule might look like this:

Morning

- Call two contacts to set up networking appointments

- Write questions to ask during each appointment

- Prepare resume packet for each appointment made

- Prepare and send resumes for job found online or in the newspaper

Afternoon

- Attend networking appointment (if previously scheduled)

- Write thank you note following appointment

- Check one or two online job sites

Weekend

- Prepare for new week

- Check online job listings

<b>Track each activity</b>

For each tactic, track all of your activity. You can use computer software or a plain notebook with blank pages. The idea is to keep notes on each day�s actions, checking them against your master checklist for the tactic.

Let�s use an example. You want to make a networking appointment with Suzy Smith, so start with a blank page and put her name at the top, along with relevant contact information. Each time you do one of the steps defined as part of networking (make the phone call, prepare a resume packet, go to the appointment, etc.), mark it down on Suzy�s page. Note the date, time, action taken, and any notes you may have.

Tracking your activity creates two benefits. First, when you have multiple activities happening at the same time it is very easy to get confused or lose track of steps that still need to be taken. Using your tracking log, it is easy to see at a glance where you are at with each activity and what next step is coming up. The second benefit is that it keeps you focused and active in your job search. It is easy to procrastinate and postpone looking for a job, but if you have to note daily activities in a tracking log you will feel more motivated to get moving and take action.

<b>Action items</b>

Finally, keep a separate list of �action items� that need attention right away. If, for example, a contact tells you about an open position at a colleague�s company and suggests you call about it, this goes on your action item list to be handled within 24 to 48 hours. This list is a great way to deal with emergent issues and opportunities, while still staying organized and keeping up with your regular schedule.