

Job Hunting Tips

by Ken Wagner

Advancing your career can be a lot of hard work. But with the right preparation, the transition can be a lot easier. Use the following tips as an outline for your next career move.

1. Have a plan. Determine your short-term and long-term goals. What do you want to accomplish and why?

2. Do not hesitate. It doesn't matter how talented you are in your profession, the interview and selection process takes at least a month.

Write down all of the relevant professional contacts you have made. Contact former coworkers, managers, members of professional organizations, recruiters, and academic placement offices.

Collect your references. They should include former managers, clients—anyone who knows the quality of your work. Make sure to have their current titles, addresses, and phone numbers. Do not assume anyone will be a good reference for you. Call each one and ask.

3. Consider advancement with your present employer. Most jobs will undergo significant changes, usually after the first year. Make your professional goals clear to your supervisor. Define what advancement means to you and what you expect from the company.

Continue your education. College, graduate school, seminars, and technical courses will help to advance your career and broaden your background. It will also keep you informed of the latest technology.

4. It is time to move on. Whether your position is in jeopardy, your career has plateaued, or you just need a change, the following will help you make the transition:

Ask yourself the following questions:

1. What types of companies are of greatest interest to you and why?
2. What type of position is of interest to you and why?

3. Do you have geographical preferences? Have you researched these areas for cost of living, quality of life, and future employability? Have you reviewed the *Places Rated Almanac*?

Strategies for making a change:

A. Get local newspapers regularly; attend job fairs; keep track of personal and professional contacts; use employment agencies; use the Internet; keep all your sources informed of where you are and what you are doing; avoid duplication of effort.

B. Design a strong, well-organized resume, cover letter, and thank you note. This will make a lasting impression.

C. Interview, company, and salary preparation are the key to a smooth interview and job offer process. Find as much information as you can on the company you are interviewing with. Try the local library. If unsuccessful, try and talk to someone who is more familiar with the company. A recruiter usually knows a lot about a client. The better prepared you are, the better you will do.

Summary

The more thought you have given to your career goals, the more likely you are to attain them. The average person makes between five and ten job changes in their career. How you go about making these changes will have a significant impact on your career and quality of life. Advancing your career is a lot of work. So, the more planning and effort you put into the process, the better the result. **M**

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