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A Step-by-Step Strategy to Jump-Start Your New Career Search

First things first... looking for work takes time and effort. Start by getting focused and developing a plan. Make that first step. Keep a journal of your research notes, your thoughts and feelings, and your personal roadmap to career success. Commit to write down and record your answers to the questions in this document.

I promise it will facilitate your journey. **Stay Positive.** No matter what, do everything you can to stay positive. No one likes to hear from “Negative-Nellie” **Always Take the High Road.** If someone asks you about your job search – take the high road and say something like, “I’ve got some good opportunities I am working on and I am very hopeful.” *Most important - Be nice to yourself, every single day!*

Step #1 Make a Plan - Make a Commitment

What is your timeframe for landing a new opportunity? Be realistic about your expectations. Everything will take longer than you think. Be patient and stay focused on your goal. Don’t put too much pressure on yourself. Your timeframe will drive many of the steps. How many hours a week you are going to spend looking for work? Maintain a consistent activity level. Based on that number, make a weekly plan. Be as specific as possible.

Step #2 Take Inventory - Remind Yourself about You

What are your skills? Really think about this. Don’t sell yourself short. ♦ What are your values? What is most important to you personally and professionally? ♦ What are your barriers (things that have stopped you in the past)? ♦ What accomplishments are you most proud of? ♦ Where have you had the most success and why?

Step #3 Communicate - Clearly Articulate Who You Are and the Type of Work You Want

Create your message. Communicate clearly and concisely your unique professional identity. ♦ What makes you special? ♦ What type of work are you looking for? Tell people what you want. They cannot read your mind! People want to help. “Help them to help you.” ♦ What does career success look like for you? You are unique. What will work for someone else may not work for you. Do not compare yourself to others. Get as clear as possible about what success looks like for you. ♦ If, based on your inventory, you have more than one work option for what you want, set up multiple communication strategies based on each opportunity. Shift your message based on the audience.

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Step #4 Have an Updated Resume Ready to Go, and/or Bio and/or Curriculum Vitae

Think about what you want in the future, not just what you have done in the past. You must have a resume that reflects what you want. No excuses!

Step # 5 Design Your Target Campaign

Who are the people you are going to speak to? Compile a list. Think about colleagues, friends, people from professional associations and vendors you have worked with. Tell everyone you speak to exactly what you are looking for.

Step # 6 Get Out There!

Network – In Person. Where can you go to make professional contacts? Where are the industry people going? Look online or in your local newspaper for professional associations. Meetup.com is another good way to find local professional networking opportunities. Volunteer. Make it a point each day to step away from your computer, your office, your safety zone! Get out from behind your computer. It can turn into a 'black hole.'

Step #7 Social Media. Network Online and Search for Career Opportunities.

Maintain a presence and stay active on social media networking sites such as LinkedIn. Remember, however, that on the Internet every word is permanent. Be ultra professional in all of your communications and with any online profiles.

Step #8 Be Open and Flexible

You have your career ideas in play. With that said, be sure you are listening to what other people are saying to you. Be open to ideas and expertise from others. **Don't be a "yes, but" person, be a "yes, and" person.**

Step #9: What's Next?

Yes, you have to be thinking about what is next for you. What are the potential opportunities? What skills do you need to develop? Stay 'current' with the industry.

Step #10: It's All about You

Most of all, be certain you are living a full life. Career is obviously important, *and* it is not everything. ♦ What are you doing to have fun? ♦ Are you healthy? ♦ Are you in a good place with your significant other, family and friends? ♦ Are you really living your life based on what success looks like for you? If not, go to Step #1 and start all over again.

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