

Spring Clean Your Job Search



Spring is here!

Time to pack up those sweaters, clean the windows, weed those flower beds...
and overhaul your job search!

Like your wardrobe, home or garden, your search for the perfect position will
yield better results if you give it a good cleaning every once in a while.



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1

Re-Evaluate Your Career Goals

“It’s time to clean house!” Now is the time to take a good look at what you have around you and determine what stays and what goes. Isn’t that the point of spring cleaning?

Well, this includes other areas of your life too! Like career goals. This is the perfect time to re-evaluate where you are – and where you want to be:

- Start by defining your long-term goals; this will help you define your career “vision.” Write your career “vision” down on paper and then use it to anchor your decisions moving forward. Leave no room for ambiguity or interpretation.
- Define your vision and be concise. Give yourself a measurable target with clear deadlines that allow you to monitor your progress.
- Develop a plan for achieving your vision. Break your long-term goals or “vision” into smaller, short-term goals that allow you to: Prioritize your goals, Present your goals by writing them down, be Positive, be Precise, measure by Performance, and be Practical. These six Ps are now your “action plan” toward long-term career success.



2.

Expand and Update Your Networks

“Rome wasn’t built in a day!”

Neither are extensive professional networks.

Building and expanding your professional networks takes time, commitment and the right attitude. But it’s worth the effort. Often, finding that perfect opportunity is as much about whom you know as what you know.

Use these tips to make better connections, faster:

Focus your efforts. Don’t attempt to attend every job fair, send out bulk emails or plaster your resume all over the Internet. You will be much more effective if you establish connections with carefully targeted individuals. Select the best organizations, social media sites and events for your particular career goals. Then, identify the people who are most likely to benefit your job search and focus your attention on those individuals.

Get outside your comfort zone. Meeting new people is tough sometimes – but it can be the fastest path to the job you want. So get involved in at least one high-profile professional or community organization. Look for groups with whom you share a common background, trait or career goal. Commit to attending regular meetings and participating fully, even if it pushes you outside your comfort zone.





Go social. Social media makes it easy to keep in touch with valuable business contacts, so you'll be top-of-mind when something opens up. Sites like LinkedIn also allow you to ask for introductions and recommendations when appropriate, further expanding your network and "putting your best foot forward" online.

Leverage your alumni network.

Alumni love to find ways to give back to the college that helped them succeed, and, therefore, have a vested interest in helping you succeed. Attend recruiting and networking events; meet with a counselor to discuss your career goals and be put in touch with alumni who can make introductions; use LinkedIn's Classmates feature to connect with classmates who share your career interests.



3.

Clean Up Social Media Profiles

Social media tools are all about connecting. They can do a lot of work for you so you don't have to spend as much of your day job searching online. But for social media tools/profiles to be effective, you need to know – and control – what's online about you.

Search yourself. Googling yourself will show you what an employer can find out about you with just a click of the mouse. If you unexpectedly see your name associated with sites you don't frequent, it might mean that someone is using your identity online. Tip: if your name is not too common (sorry, John Smith), you can set up a Google alert for your name. It will email you when Google finds your name on a site.

Control your online image. Whether or not you're aware of it, you're creating a personal brand when you use social media. Your activity online will reflect what you want others to know; what you value. If you're going to use social media profiles for networking or job searching, be careful of your choices.





Think of others. Before posting or tweeting your thoughts on a TV show, or posing for a picture that a friend may upload, ask yourself: how might this be interpreted by a person who is more conservative than you – namely, a potential employer?

Customize your privacy options. Check out your site's settings, configuration and privacy sections to see how you can limit who can see the various aspects of your personal information. Social networking sites continually add new features to their sites, such as controlling search results. So if you haven't adjusted your settings for awhile, it may be time to revisit them.



4.

Polish Up That Resume

According to Money magazine, your resume needs to say more about you than an interview. Let the results of your work stand out on a resume, rather than the work itself.

Improve your lead-off. Make sure you grab the reader's attention quickly. Instead of leading off with a "career objective" statement, use the premium space at the top of your resume to list accomplishments and facts that are tailored to the job you want.

Show your future employer what's in it for him. The facts and accomplishments at the top of your resume should demonstrate how your value translates into his specific needs. Create a compelling summary using the most relevant and impressive qualifications from throughout your career. Write in active voice to build a power-packed, bulleted list that puts your best foot forward.





Incorporate relevant keywords. Keywords are specific words or phrases used to describe your experience. They put your skills into focus for a recruiter and help him determine, at a glance, whether or not your skills match those needed for an available job. Identify which keywords make sense for your resume, and then incorporate them into the summary, job description and/or professional qualifications sections of your resume.

Quantify your accomplishments. Use numbers to back up your claims (e.g., “increased sales by 25%,” “decreased customer wait times by three minutes,” etc.). Whenever possible, quantify the results you delivered or find other concrete ways to describe what you have achieved – beyond merely completing assigned job tasks.



5.

Register with a Staffing Agency



If you've been job searching for a while (with little success), or if you're getting bites (but from the wrong jobs), consider working with a staffing agency.

Think of a staffing agency as your advocate! They represent you when looking for jobs on your behalf. Here's what you need to know:

You have nothing to lose! Most staffing or employment agencies have **NO fees** that you are personally responsible for. Fees are paid by the clients.

Choose the right kind of agency. Research staffing firms in your area to learn about the types of candidates they place. Some services specialize in placing one type of candidate (e.g., administrative, IT, accounting, light industrial, engineering), some specialize in an industry (e.g., healthcare, food & beverage, legal) and some serve a combination of both. The key is to register with a service that specializes in placing people like you.

A good agency will call you and set up an interview to talk about your skills, your goals, and the job you are applying for. During the interview, your recruiter will act as your personal career counselor, helping you clarify your goals, polish your resume and strengthen your interview skills.





A staffing agency will help you broaden your job search horizons and develop new connections.

With each new interview and assignment, you'll meet new people – one of whom may lead you to that perfect new job.

A strong relationship will yield better results. By explaining what kinds of jobs you're interested in, or what employers you'd like to work for, there's a better chance that you'll get what you want. So be honest, open and direct with your recruiter.



Spring cleaning is all about cleaning out the old to let in the new – so why not give it a try? You have nothing to lose – and a lot to gain!

