

7 Steps to Job Search Success

Confessions of a Professional Job Changer



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Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to read 7 Steps to Job Search Success. You have taken one of THE most important steps towards finding the job you want through a system that I have personally used in my own career.

Just by reading this e-book, you are going to be WAY AHEAD of 99% of everyone else whom you might compete against in the job market.

What you are about to learn is a culmination of 30 years of experience in job changing, hiring, training and sales and marketing.

There is an expression...”the harder you work, the luckier you get”. In the case of a job search, this is definitely true.

By following the recommendations contained in this e-book, your chances of getting the job you want will dramatically improve.

The contents of this book were taken from the popular e-book ***The StreetSmart Job Changing System*** so if you want to learn even more ways to get the job you really want just go to www.JobChangingSystem.com/ for more information.

In addition, I always love to hear success stories! If this book or The StreetSmart Job Changing System© does help you attain your job search goals, please e-mail me and let me know. Your comments, ideas and suggestions are always welcome and will help me and your fellow job searchers improve their chances of success too.

I wish you the best of luck in your search.

Sincerely,

Jason Adams

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Step1 - How Many People Do You Know That Hate Their Job?

How many people do you know that hate their job, but have been doing it for YEARS? Do you know why? Because finding a better job is hard work. I hate to be the one to tell you this, but somebody has to. Finding the job you want “ain’t gonna be easy”.

People would actually rather stay where they are and be miserable than take the time to find something better. Too many people give up because “life” gets in the way and inertia slows.

These people will always have an excuse:

- *It’s just not the right time right now...*
- *My husband/wife is in the middle of a big project and...*
- *My son and daughter are in college now and...*
- *We just bought a new car and ...*
- *The job market just isn’t’ good right now and...*
- *I am a little nervous about the economy and...*
- *Yadda, yadda, yadda...*

I understand that life happens and that many of the reasons that people give for not changing jobs are valid, but I also know that just by changing a few things in your life, you can carve out the time needed to make your life better.

If you follow the 6 suggestions and ideas in this article, you will get where you want to go a lot faster. So let’s get started.

1 – First and foremost, get your personal life in order as best you can.

Before you start looking for a new job, be sure that your personal life is “in order” and prepared to accept what it takes to find a new job. You are going to need a lot of quality time and support at home in order to find the job you want.

Place your job campaign ahead of all other personal priorities. Make a commitment. This doesn’t mean ignore your family by any means, but it does mean that some things will need to be sacrificed. If you have a choice between working on your resume and going to you son’s concert, go to the concert. But if you have a choice of watching Monday Night Football or working on your cover letter, well...you get the picture!

2 - Set a target amount of time you will spend on your job search each week and stick to it.

As with so many other things in life, you get out of it as much as you put into it. I've seen books entitled, *20 Minutes to a Better Resume*, and so on. I'm sorry, but if you really want a great cover letter and resume, you have to spend a lot more than 20 minutes to make it right. Even a half hour to one hour a day is better than nothing.

3 - Begin gathering facts, figures and accomplishments about your career to date.

Dates of employment, job titles and responsibilities, salary progression, major achievements, special skills that make you unique, educational background, including any courses you've taken since college or high school. Be sure to include any training your company has provided or courses they have paid for. Get it all down on paper because you'll need it to write your resume, cover letter and on interviews.

4 - Create your own personal portfolio.

When advertising agencies are looking for new clients, they always show you their "portfolio". This usually includes copies of their finest work, achievements and the great results their campaigns achieved.

You also have a product to "sell" ...it's you! Consider that you are your own company. It's called...ME INC. As president of ME INC. you need to create a product that your prospects (in this case a potential employer) sees value in and is willing to "buy" (literally and figuratively).

A good portfolio will visually demonstrate and support your abilities during an interview. Anything that is not proprietary, confidential or property of previous employers should be kept in your portfolio. This works particularly well for artists, marketing personnel, architects, designers, etc.

Some of the things you might want to include could be catalogs, brochures, letters of success, anything you created – ads, PR, reports, patents, products, etc. Any successful "before and after" campaigns work particularly well.

5 - Create a list of companies that you think you'd like to work for.

Get the address, phone number and the name of the CEO/President if possible. You can get this information from the ads you cut out from the newspaper or from your local Chamber of Commerce (they usually have a list of member companies that might be helpful).

Many local business journals publish annual "LISTS" editions. These usually list the top 10-25 companies in different categories including the largest private and public companies, largest Advertising and Public Relations companies, largest non-profits, etc. Creating this list helps you focus your energies on a smaller group of target companies – a "rifle" approach versus a "shotgun" approach.

6 - Get organized and be ready for the months ahead with these final 6 suggestions

1. Get a personal/private cell phone if you can so you are not making phone calls from your work office. Make sure to take off all those cute greetings too. Get a home answering machine and again – change the message to be more professional.
2. Appearance counts! Make sure that you have the right clothes to go on interviews. This doesn't necessarily mean formal suits. Your wardrobe should match the industry you are in and the job that you seeking.
3. Try to find a quiet place in your home that you can devote to your job-hunting effort. A home office is ideal if you have one.
4. Change your e-mail address to something appropriate. Your SugarPie@hotmail.com address may have been cute while you were dating, but it doesn't make for a good first impression and certainly doesn't present the professional image you want to project.
5. Start thinking about who you will use for references. You'll need to find people you can trust. Start gathering their names, addresses, phone numbers and e-mail addresses now. Don't forget to call and let your references know that someone might be calling then in the near future.

6. An organized desk will be your best friend especially if you get an unexpected call from a hiring manager. You'll also need to set up a system of tracking who you send resumes to and what job you were applying for.

Remember, in the end, no one owes you a job. It truly is your responsibility to find a job. Sure, there are recruiters, friends, etc. but the bottom line is that you can't/shouldn't depend on anyone else to get you a job.

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Step 2- Job-Hunting? - The Best Story Always Wins

There's an old joke about two men hunting in the jungle. Suddenly, they come upon a man-eating tiger that has not eaten for days. The hunters both start running with the tiger in hot pursuit. As they are running, one hunter says to the other. "You know, we'll never be able to outrun this tiger." To which the other hunter replies, "I don't have to outrun the tiger; I only have to outrun you."

The point of the story is that, yes, there will be many other candidates in the stack of 500 cover letters and resumes that the hiring manager will receive for just one ad and many will have more experience and better qualifications than you. You just need to be sure that your cover letter and resume shows off your strengths and experience better than the other guy. And if you follow the ideas in this article, they will!

Job-hunting is like the sales profession. It always comes down to...*he who has the best "story" wins*. Unless your boss was either friends with the hiring manager, or the nephew of the owner, or had compromising photos of the President, he/she probably got into the position because they had a great "story" to tell.

I have better credentials yet they got the job. How did they do it? The answer is simple: They did their "homework" ahead of time. They put the time required into the job-hunting process. In addition all the pieces of their job-hunting process had the same CONSISTENT look, feel and style. Not only did their cover letter, resume, interview, thank you letters, and negotiating have the same style, it was the style the company was looking for. As a matter of fact, the hiring company felt damn lucky to land such a find as your boss!

What does it mean to have the "best story"?

Let me define "story". A great story essentially means that to the employer, you have "The Right Stuff". A great story evolves from a well thought out job-hunting system where all pieces of the "campaign" are closely aligned. It requires thought, logic, study and of course practice. It's a theme that continually shows up in anything and everything you write or say.

Developing a great story takes time and it takes thought. As agonizing as it can sometimes be, the process of gathering information for your cover letter

and resume will prove to be one of the most rewarding experiences in the job-changing process. It forces you to compile and summarize the most important facts and significant achievements of your career to date. It also helps you narrow down the focus of your current job search objective and develop your story.

During the all-important screening process (as written in a previous article) you have less than 30 seconds to convince the hiring manager that you have a great story. You do that by clearly showing the hiring manager:

- What you are looking for,
- Your major skills,
- Whether or not you can help solve their problems and
- Your greatest accomplishments

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Step 3- Five Easy Ways to Become a Job-Search “Commando”

According to current Department of Labor statistics, today’s college graduates will, on average, have 8 to 10 jobs and as many as 3 careers in their lifetime. In addition, in today’s job market with downsizing, rightsizing, layoffs, mergers and acquisitions, etc. your job skills and job-hunting skills need to be constantly updated and refined.

The job market is getting tougher and your competition is getting smarter. That’s why you need to gain every advantage you can. You need to become a Job-Search “Commando”. Commandos commonly use guerilla tactics to win. What I am about to share with you are tactics that have helped me find good jobs over the last 28 years.

Commando Tactic #1 - Problem solvers get jobs!

All companies have problems. Demonstrate that you can solve a company’s problems and the world will beat a path to your door.

What type of issues do companies have?

- Sales are down
- Expenses are up
- Market share is decreasing
- Layoffs are coming
- The company is in acquisition mode
- New departments/divisions are being formed
- Someone is retiring or going on leave
- The company is entering a new market
- A new product has been developed
- New ad campaigns are being discussed
- A department that was outsourced is now being brought in-house (ad agency, Public Relations)
- They are in need of new leadership
- Assignments/goals/objectives are not being met
- The competition is continuing to gain market share.

At this moment, dozens of companies in your surrounding area are in immediate need of someone like you to help solve their problems; you just need to find them. That leads us to broadcast letters.

Commando Tactic #2 - Broadcast letters uncover positions in the “hidden” job market.

A Broadcast or Marketing letter is an excellent way to uncover positions that have not been announced yet. Many people call this the hidden job market. Once you tap into the hidden job market, your chance of success increase dramatically.

Why? Because you are not competing with a “million” other people that answered the same ad. There are no other people because there was no ad!

Broadcast letters can help generate leads for you because companies always problems that need to be solved. As they say, **timing is everything** so if your letter arrives at the right time, you may find yourself with a job interview.

In addition to solving a problem (see list above) that the company currently has or will have in the near future, considering you might actually save them money.

How? If you are the right candidate to help solve a problem or address a specific issue, they will not have to pay a recruiter, or place any ads on Monster.com, or in dozens of newspapers. – Everyone wins!

Commando Tactic #3 – Answering blind ads lessens your competition.

Many people think that answering blind ads opens yourself up to the possibility that you might be sending your cover and resume to your current company. While there is that possibility, the ad hopefully gives you enough information to recognize it as your won company.

What most job hunters don’t realize it that blind ads will usually only get about 50% of the responses that a traditional ad would get. What that means is that you are competing with half the number of people you normally would. This essentially doubles your chances of having your resume and cover letter selected for a follow-up phone call.

Commando Tactic #4 - The best time to answer an ad?

Be the last resume received. I made it a habit of sending in my cover letter and resume 2 weeks after the ad ran. By then I knew I was not competing with 500 other resumes that were sent in right away. My information got more time because the hiring manager did not have to read 499 other resumes the same day.

Commando Tactic #5 – Answer ads twice

If you never hear from a company where you sent in your resume, send another cover letter and resume in about 2 months. Many times, the position was not filled because there was no qualified candidate or the company and candidate could not come to terms on a compensation package. This means they have to start from scratch. Your resume may arrive just at the right time and get a second look.

By following some of these Commando tactics, your chances of finding the job you want will increase dramatically.

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Step 4 - Cover Letter Versus Resume – Which Is More Important?

Some people say that the resume is THE most important part of the job changing process, while others say it's the cover letter and even others say it's the interview. The truth is that they are all right and wrong!

It's like asking ...what is more important in a car, the brake pedal, the gas pedal or the steering wheel. Obviously you need all three to get you from point A to point B.

The main purpose of a resume along with the accompanying cover letter is to get you the interview, pure and simple. The way to accomplish this is to show off your strengths and achievements and minimize your weaknesses (we all have them). Now is not the time to be modest - if you don't tell the hiring manager how good you are and what you can do for his company, no one else will.

Cover letters and resumes are both used to get you the interview; they just do it a little differently.

The cover letter serves many purposes. The cover letter:

- is the perfect place to expand upon your resume, add information you couldn't fit on the resume or to place more emphasis on a specific point or experience.
- directs the reader to your resume for more information.
- tells the reader how, where and when to contact you.
- explains why you are interested in their company and why they should be interested in speaking with you.
- suggests action...I'll call you...please call me, etc.
- lets you clearly state why this company is interesting and a good match for you and the potential employer.
- should concentrate on how your skills and abilities can benefit the employer both now and in the future.

In addition, a cover letter gives the reader more information about you such as your writing style and your "personality". It must be interesting enough, to entice the reader to read your resume.

The cover letter may say something like, “*as you’ll see in the attached resume, blah, blah, blah*” or “*in addition to the information listed on the attached resume, I have also done, blah, blah, blah.*”

A good resume:

- zeros in on those skills and abilities that you have that are most relevant and important to the job you are seeking.
- focuses on your achievements and accomplishments not just the responsibilities you had at each job.
- reveals the results of your achievements.
- should project your career as a series of progressive accomplishments.
- needs to be short on words and long on facts.
- is eye appealing and visually inviting.

But remember, your past accomplishments and achievements are relevant only as it relates to what you can do now for the hiring company. No matter how good you were at a previous company, to the hiring company, it’s all about what can you do for them.

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Step 5- Solve My Problem and You're Hired!

Resumes and cover letters that get acted upon are those that demonstrate the writer's potential to solve an employer's problem based on how similar problems in the past were solved by the applicant. Companies like resumes that demonstrate what you can do for them...that you are a problem-solver.

Put yourself in the shoes of the hiring manager/screener and you'll understand why a good cover letter and resume **MUST** make you stand out and therefore is so important. To make a point, let's make some "worst case" scenario assumptions about the hiring manager reading your cover letter and resume for the first time.

Assume that the person reading your resume and cover letter:
is doing so after having been in meetings all day,

- ate a big lunch
- is dealing with numerous personal problems
- is very tired
- is over worked and under paid
- and it's Friday afternoon at 3 PM
- leaving on vacation tomorrow

OK, maybe I'm being a little dramatic here, but you get the picture? In many instances, the hiring manager just wants to get through the giant stack of mail ASAP. If you assume all this, then you'll write your cover letter and resume so it is easy to read, impactful and commands a stronger presence than the other letters in the "to read" pile.

Keep these 5 points in mind when writing your cover letter and resume.

1. You want to make it as easy as possible for the hiring manager to get a sense of you in just a few seconds.
2. Your cover letter and resume have to be exciting, dynamic and be **EXACTLY** what the screener/hiring manager is look for.
3. You need an easy-to-read format that can be scanned quickly and easily, so be sure that your letter and message is clear, succinct and direct.

4. Your cover letter should have a lot of white space and use bullet points, with short effective phrases that are easy to read quickly.
5. The experience and accomplishments in your resume are only relevant to the hiring manager if he/she thinks it can address the issues and problems important to the company.

Good resumes and cover letters help you organize your career by presenting the achievements and events that YOU have selected to showcase the way YOU want.

In an interview, these documents serve as a pre-planned agenda because the hiring manager will obviously question you on what appears on them. In addition, they both serve as a leave behind and a “silent salesperson” that others will view after the interview.

If you have captured their attention after reading your information, you will get called for an interview. But remember, resumes don't get jobs, people do so you'll need to start preparing for your interview.

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Step 6 - Screening Job Applicants – What Really Goes On Behind Closed Doors?

The first goal of any hiring manager is not to find a candidate, but to ELIMINATE unqualified candidates. Most hiring managers reading your resume will take the pile of up to 500 letters they received and try to separate the definite “no's' (**Don't Call**) into one pile and the interesting resumes into the second pile (**Might Call**). They then go back and eliminate again until what they have is a manageable pile (5-10 max) of pre-qualified candidates (**To Call**).

Getting into the second pile (**Might Call**) is your first goal. The first cut may take you from a stack of 500 resumes to a smaller yet still intimidating stack of 20.

At 20 resumes, the reader will spend 2-3 minutes on each resume versus just a few seconds the first time through. The objective here for the hiring manager is to take the stack of 20 down to a more manageable 5-10 resumes mentioned above.

At 5-10 resumes, the reader will be spending some quality time reading what you have written. They may be highlighting and making notes about the things that interest them the most or closely align with what they are looking for.

A few more resumes will be eliminated during this round, but not necessarily put back into the **Don't Call** pile. These candidates go into the **Might Call** pile but will only be called only if the hiring manager cannot find enough qualified candidates from 4-8 resumes they have left. This is the **To Call** pile that you want to end up in.

The hiring manager begins to make some calls and do some initial phone interviews. From here a few more people may be eliminated for a variety of reasons. Some of the people may have already taken other positions or the hiring manager does not like the candidate enough to invite him or her in for a face-to-face interview.

The hiring manager will keep interviewing until they have invited 3-5 people in for a personal interview.

As the realistic numbers I've indicate above reveal, in order to be invited in for an interview, you'll need to have a resume and cover letter better than 495 other candidates. Notice I did not say you needed more education, better experience or more years on the job than the other people applying for the same job. You just need to have better paperwork..."you just need a better story." This will be the topic of my next article.

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Step 7- Job Interviews Are Predictable – So be Prepared

For the most part, 80% of what goes on in an interview is routine and predictable. There are hundreds of books out there on what to ask and what you'll be asked. In addition to the standard questions, you need to decide what questions you are most afraid the interviewer will ask you so you can prepare and practice answers to those questions now.

A common interview agenda that looks something like this:

1. Introduction
2. Walking to the interview room
3. Small talk
4. The interviewer may give you a brief description of the position/overview of the company (depends on the interviewer)
5. The interview then asks:
 - Tell me about yourself
 - Job highlights/work experience
 - Achievements
 - Strengths and weaknesses
 - Maybe education
 - Maybe outside interests – community service
6. The interviewer may ask you if you have any questions
7. The interviewer should let you know a little more about where they are in the interviewing process and advise you of what their next steps are.

Are you the best candidate?

Companies and hiring managers want to make sure you are the best candidate. Because of that there are certain things that they want from any candidate they hire. These are the things you need to be sensitive too and be prepared to emphasize. I have listed below just a few of the things they look for.

Companies want:

- Someone who will stay for a while
- Someone who can and wants to do the job
- A person who will compliment or lead the team
- Fast learner
- Appropriate skills for the job

- Can advance if required
- A good “soldier”
- Someone who will make the hiring manager and hence the company look good
- Someone who can and will help advance the company goals and objectives.

Hiring Managers want:

- Skills, abilities
- Personality, integrity, character
- What is NOT written on your resume?
- Communication and interpersonal skills
- Fit and finish
- Intelligence
- Self-confidence
- Initiative
- Leadership
- How you handle conflict and pressure
- Technical skills
- Industry contacts

Don't look at the interview as just reciting your resume, or to just answer questions that the interviewer will ask. Make no mistake, you must at least in the beginning, be on the selling side. The best way to sell yourself is to help the interviewer learn all the good things about you. Knowing ahead of time what companies and hiring managers are looking for will help you prepare.

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Conclusion

Since 1977 I have worked for 9 different companies ranging from a start-up venture with virtually no sales to a multi-billion dollar, multi-national company. During that time I have held 20+ different positions in both sales and marketing. In addition, I've interviewed and hired hundreds of people for a multitude of positions.

Now other job-changers like you can benefit from my 28 years of knowledge and experience in hiring and getting hired by some of the toughest screeners, hiring managers and recruiters in the country.

I hope this book has done three things for you. First, I hope you have picked up some information that will help you get the job you want faster and easier than before. Second, I hope it has inspired you that you can win at the “job changing game”. And lastly, I hope it has motivated you to learn more about how to find the right job.

Believe me, I know first hand how hard and frustrating a job search can be – been there, done that. My advice is simple...Hang in there. Follow the ideas in this book, stay focused and don't give up. There's a job out there with your name on it. You just have to prepare yourself to find it.

Jason Adams is President of Street Smart Sales and Marketing and author of the highly acclaimed book *The StreetSmart Job-Changing System*©. For more information visit www.JobChangingSystem.com/

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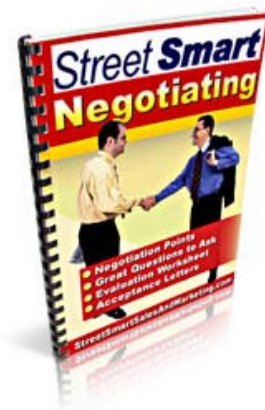
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