

TIME AND STRESS MANAGEMENT

Being unemployed and looking for work can be extremely stressful. Looking for work *IS* work! Some stress is normal and there are things you can do to counteract it.

- 1. Treat your job search like a real job!** By looking at your job search as a job in itself, you are likely to schedule and accomplish more.
- 2. Get organized!** Use a date book, personal phonebook, files, folders, notebook etc.
- 3. Set a schedule.** Structure your time. Use a calendar to schedule your daily and weekly job search activities.
- 4. Prioritize your daily activities.** Make a list of important “To Do’s.” Track your completed activities. Mark off each item as you complete it so you can visualize your progress.
- 5. Schedule variety into your week.** Direct your job search in different areas and try new techniques. Attend workshops and informational meetings to add to your knowledge base.
- 6. Expect rejection and do not take it personally.** The job search can be full of rejection and disappointment. If you are truly working your job search, you will likely experience rejection many times.
- 7. Treat yourself right.** Eat a balanced diet and exercise. Poor nutrition and lack of mobility can increase feelings of stress and depression. Learn and utilize relaxation techniques.
- 8. Maintain important relationships.** Let family and friends know how you feel, but do not take your stress out on them. Be positive, and do not let others waste your time with negative talk.
- 9. Take time out for yourself.** Like any “job,” if you do not take time to do things for yourself, you will lose focus.
- 10. Use the resources available to you at your local Workforce Partnership office.** Speak with Career Coaches and Advisors; get assistance with your résumé; access the internet and use the resource library.

WHAT SKILLS!?

The first step to finding a good job is to know your interests, skills, and abilities. If you have been a homemaker, a student, a volunteer, or participated in hobbies or activities, you have skills that can transfer to a workplace environment, including both hard and soft skills. Hard skills are those that are easily observed and measured, such as reading and math skills, computer knowledge, and operation of machines. Soft skills are sometimes referred to as “employability skills” because they are skills that are needed not only to get through the application and interview processes, but to get the job, and *keep* it once you do get it.

Examples of Soft Skills:

- ✓ **Appearance and Hygiene:** Understand and maintain hygiene and dress codes. Be aware of your appearance. Practice good personal hygiene and grooming. Bathe, apply deodorant, brush your teeth, wear clean clothes, comb your hair, etc.
- ✓ **Attendance:** Coming to work *on* time, *every* time you are scheduled, giving notice for days off, and calling in sick only when absolutely necessary. Attendance is very important to employers. Managers create staffing schedules in order to best serve the needs of the business, and if employees do not come to work, it puts additional work onto other employees and supervisors.
- ✓ **Communication/Interpersonal Skills:** Maintain communication with supervisors, co-workers, and customers in a pleasant, professional manner. Express yourself clearly and completely. Practice eye contact and active listening. Be aware of your body language. Be polite and calm when accepting or expressing constructive criticism.
- ✓ **Team Work:** Work in cooperation with others to identify needs and accomplish goals. Maintaining great communication is a large part of teamwork. Remember the old adage, “There is no ‘I’ in TEAM.”
- ✓ **Initiative and Motivation:** Begin your tasks with energy and follow through without prompting or direction. Be responsible...finish what you start!
- ✓ **Responsibility:** Complete expected and required duties on time and right the first time. Be conscious of time constraints and plan accordingly. Be prepared to balance work and personal responsibilities in order to do your best.

Examples of Soft Skills continued:

- ✓ **Flexibility:** Be willing to fill in for absent employees and accept additional responsibilities as needed. Realize that ideas from others have value, even if you do not agree with them. Accept change...it is inevitable.
- ✓ **Problem Solving and Conflict Resolution:** Be open and willing to helping resolve differences in opinions and interests in a positive manner.

HOW DO I KNOW WHAT I'M GOOD AT?

There are many ways to discover your talents and abilities. Some of the best ways are:

- ✓ Take interest and skills assessments, such as Job Fit and Choices.
- ✓ Take inventory of your hard skills; test such abilities as reading, math, typing, and data entry.
- ✓ Use the resources available to you! Explore different opportunities through useful websites such as:
 - **Kansas JobLink:** Register with Kansas Job Service, access labor market information, search job listings, and much more.
www.kansasjoblink.com
 - **America's Career InfoNet:** Watch videos about specific occupations; use the skills check and employability profiler.
www.acinet.org/acinet
 - **Career One Stop:** Job resource site links together state employment offices from all over the United States.
www.careeronestop.org
 - **O*NET Online:** Find occupational information; match your skills to an occupation, and more.
www.onetcenter.org
- ✓ Speak with Workforce Partnership Career Coaches and Advisors. We can help!

EMPLOYER EXPECTATIONS

Employers expect certain things. They expect that their employees will have energy, drive and ambition; be personable, composed and articulate; maintain a positive attitude; follow hygiene and dress standards; and show interest in learning and leadership. These expectations can and should be applied to your job search efforts as well.

Every workplace has its *written* policies and procedures. However, there are also a number of *unwritten* expectations which employers assume do not need to be explained. These expectations are part of an unspoken code of conduct.

- Work comes first. Don't let home issues get in the way.
- Stay out of other peoples' problems.
- Do what you are asked to do, even if you don't want to.
- Always stay busy, or at least *look* busy.
- Work is work. Don't expect it to always be fun.

(Adapted from: Dr. Steve Parese, SBP Consulting, Inc., www.workinitout.com)

CONSIDER THE MARKET

This section is designed to help you tap into the job market, including the “hidden” job market. In order to do this, think about the hiring process from the employer’s point of view. It often looks like this:

1. A job comes open.
2. A person in a position to hire goes first to their internal network. They may hire or promote from within. They may encourage professional associates to apply and/or look at recently received resumes or applications. In large companies, the hiring authority can go to human resources to look for qualified applicants. Jobs are often filled at this point.
3. Large companies and government agencies usually post job openings and announce jobs through external networks, which could be professional groups, job service, job hotlines, job boards, etc. Some companies use a placement agency if they do not have a human resources department.
4. Employers usually place a want ad if they cannot fill a job through the above methods.

Your *job* as a job seeker is to get yourself, your resume and your job applications into the internal network of the employers you want to work for. You should still scour the want ads, check with placement agencies, and contact friends, relatives and professional associates. Always keep in mind an employer’s internal network, otherwise known as the Hidden Job Market, is where much of the hiring really happens.

NOTE: Even if a job opening appears in the want ads, those in the employer’s internal network often get hired. People in the employer’s internal network have the inside track on job openings. Also, many employers place want ads to satisfy legal requirements or to build up a pool of qualified applicants, yet still hire those in their internal network. This may be frustrating from the job seeker’s perspective, but it is often how things happen.

The Problem: Most job seekers spend their time checking and responding to want ads, yet employers hire the least number of people through want ads.

The Solution: Use a variety of methods to maximize your exposure in the job market.

EFFECTIVE JOB SEARCH METHODS

- 1. Network:** Talk to friends, relatives, school or church contacts, the teller at the bank counter; anyone who may know about job openings. Visit your local Workforce Partnership office to speak with Career Advisors and Coaches.
- 2. Work the Internet:** Search for openings on job boards for specific companies, occupations, and locales, as well as search sites like Monster.com and Hotjobs.com, and 'spidering' sites like Indeed.com.
- 3. Apply in Person:** Always put your best foot forward. The person you are speaking with may very well be reporting to the hiring manager; or they may *be* the hiring manager!
- 4. Register with Job Service and Employment Agencies:** Many companies will use these services to prescreen applicants.
- 5. Attend Job Fairs:** Employers who hold job fairs do so for a reason; they need employees.
- 6. Answer Help Wanted Ads:** Use daily and Sunday papers and 'cruise' the ads. Read each ad carefully and respond or apply in the requested manner.
- 7. Cold Calling:** 'Cold calling' can be done by phone or by sending a cover letter and resume directly to a company's human resources department. They may not have a *posted* opening, but you can still ask for an interview!

The best practice is to use a combination of several different methods rather than limiting yourself to just 1 or 2.

COMMON JOB SEARCH MISTAKES

Below are just a few of the mistakes job seekers make in their search for employment. Is there something you are doing in your search that needs an overhaul?

- **Underestimating the competitiveness of the job market.**
- **Planning my job search? What's that?**
- **Unrealistic expectations.**
- **Adopting the 'wait and see' attitude.**
- **Inability to see the employer's point of view.**
- **Presenting self, applications, résumés, etcetera in an ill prepared manner.**
- **Being inflexible.**
- **Looking for openings not opportunities.**
- **Follow up is poor or nonexistent.**
- **Relying on others to do the work for you.**

USEFUL JOB SEARCH WEBSITES

Kansas JobLink	<u>www.kansasjoblink.com</u>
Missouri Works	<u>www.greathires.org</u>
Kansas Civil Service	<u>www.da.ks.gov/ps/aaa/recruitment</u>
Indeed	<u>www.indeed.com</u>
The Job Spider	<u>www.jobspider.com</u>
Monster	<u>www.monster.com</u>
CareerBuilder	<u>www.careerbuilder.com</u>
Yahoo Hot Jobs	<u>www.hotjobs.yahoo.com</u>
Craig's List	<u>www.craigslist.org</u>
Snag-a-Job	<u>www.snagajob.com</u>
USA Jobs	<u>www.usajobs.opm.gov</u>
KC Jobs	<u>www.kcjobs.com</u>
The Leavenworth Times	<u>www.leavenworthtimes.com</u>
The Kansas City Star	<u>www.kansascity.com</u>
All Retail Jobs	<u>www.allretailjobs.com</u>

KEEPING TRACK OF YOUR JOB SEARCH INFORMATION

In any job search, it is important to keep your contacts organized. All of the following information is vital in planning and executing your search: names of companies and persons spoken to, dates of contact, applications and résumés submitted, interviews, follow up, and results. How and where you keep the information is up to you; as long as you *keep* it. Suggested methods are:

- 4x6 or 5x7 card file, with a separate card for each contact
- Loose-leaf or spiral notebook
- Calendar
- Spreadsheet or chart

The following is a guide to the type of information you need to track. Adapt it to fit your own style or needs.

- Date of contact
- Name of business; address, phone, email, and fax information
- Information source - internet site, newspaper, etc.
- Type of contact - in person, by phone, mailed/emailed/faxed résumé, completed application, etc.
- Name and title of contact person
- Follow up on application or résumé submittal - how, who, when, what
- Interview information - time, date, with whom, and how
- Follow up after the interview - how, who, when, what happened

Remember: the important thing is to be organized. Use whatever tracking method works best for you. Just use one!

REFERENCES

Dahlstrom, H. (2007). *The Job Hunting Handbook*. Holliston, MA:
Dahlstom & Company, Inc.

Gaither, D. (2007). *Webinar on 30 Common Job Search Mistakes*.
Job Search Training Systems, Inc.

Kansas Department of Commerce. *Job Search Workbook*. Topeka, KS:
Kansas Department of Commerce

Parese, S (Doctor). (2007). *Webinar on Unspoken Code of the Workplace*.
SBP Consulting, Inc



Programs funded through the Workforce Investment Board Inc. are equal opportunity programs with auxiliary aids and services available upon request to individuals with disabilities.