

Job Search Strategies: Reach Beyond the Obvious



JODY MICHAEL ASSOCIATES

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The process of finding a new job can be overwhelming. It takes time, energy and focus—resources that most people don't have in abundance. Job hunting can also be psychologically taxing and usually requires some degree of discipline and organization. In my experience, nothing will undermine a job search more quickly than a negative attitude. With this in mind, I've developed a list of the top ten strategies for finding a job.

1. Make small career appointments with yourself

You may be thinking that you'll wait until the weekend to work on your career because that's when you have large chunks of time available. However, that's the recipe for burnout because you will then lose your rest and rejuvenation time.

It's more effective to schedule smaller periods of time—60 to 90 minutes each—during both the week and weekend. This will decrease your feeling of being overwhelmed and help avoid burnout. In return, it will increase your productivity and personal accountability because you will be far more likely to do it when it's less daunting.

2. Maintain positivity

A successful job hunt looks like this: no, no, no, no, no, no...yes! You will likely be inundated with rejections or a series of silences during your search. Being resilient and maintaining a positive perspective is critical to your progress.

If you start to engage in negative self-talk or focus on the economic state of the country, you will derail yourself energetically and

behaviorally. You'll get off course. You'll be less productive. You'll have a higher probability of increased rumination and anxiety. You will become depressed. None of this is helpful during the job search process. By keeping your focus on what you want rather than what's wrong, you will maintain momentum and reach your goal sooner.

3. Use the Internet relationally

Very few jobs are found using the blind resume submission process or by posting your resume online. Most jobs are still found through personal contacts and connections. However, you can leverage your personal and professional relationships strategically by using the Internet relationally.

For example, LinkedIn® is an outstanding website for professionally connecting with others. Think of it as six degrees of separation for job hunting purposes. It allows you to leverage your contacts to find targeted companies and individuals that can help you to: 1) land an interview, 2) get more information about an industry or company, and 3) secure an informational interview.



All About Us

Jody Michael Associates

We are a Chicago-based coaching and consulting company passionate about facilitating individual, team and organizational change.

We apply cutting-edge, theoretical and practical coaching approaches to help individuals, teams and organizations bring about significant personal and professional transformation.

In fact, over 93% of our new clients are directly referred to us by satisfied, existing clients. We have taken great pride in maintaining this metric for over fourteen years. Simply put, your success guarantees ours.



4. Stop asking for a job

Instead, start asking for an informational interview. It's one of the most powerful but overlooked strategies in landing a job. It's counterintuitive, but it works. Both parties feel better because one side doesn't have to ask for a job and the other side doesn't have to deliver a job. In the meantime, you both make a contact and there's no obligation. It's a win-win.

The objective is to schedule a 15 to 20 minute interview. Stay firm with that time length unless the other person offers to go longer. During the interview, ask powerful questions about an industry, job, company or strategy, as well as their own personal and professional experiences.

If you are someone they come to like—someone who respects their time and asks great questions—there are often opportunities to stay in touch or follow up, as well as offers of contacts, introductions, strategies, industry insight, interview leads and, at times, even a job.

Most importantly, at the end of an informational interview, send a handwritten thank you card and, if you really want to make an impression, include a \$5 Starbucks® card to thank them for their time.

5. Know yourself

You need to know yourself—your strengths, your transferable skills, what you can offer in the marketplace—and you need to be able to deliver it in a polished, congruent way. This can be the difference between getting an interview and getting a job.

6. Do the research

It's not enough to know yourself; you also need to know the company with which you are interviewing. Spend time doing the research so that you don't ask questions that you would have been able to answer by doing a little investigation. By being informed, it demonstrates to your interviewer that you are interested and proactive.

Prepare a few great questions to ask. Given that many interviews begin or end with some variation of, "What do you know about our company?" or "What questions do you have about our company?," you will be well-prepared to make a favorable impression and leave the interview on a very strong note.

Individual offerings:

- Career coaching
- Executive coaching
- Life coaching
- Trader coaching
- Workshops

Corporate offerings:

- Executive coaching
- Leadership development
- Team building and team coaching
- Consulting: Accountability and Culture
- Workshops, training and development

Jody Michael Bio

Jody Michael, BCC, MCC, LCSW, is founder and president of Jody Michael Associates, a coaching consultancy that works one-on-one with individuals, teams and organizations to reach their goals.

She brings to her coaching practice over fifteen years of corporate leadership in the finance industry, successful entrepreneurial ventures, teaching credentials, an MA and PhD studies from the University of Chicago, and more than twelve years of practice applying clinical psychology principles to work-life, career and business building issues.

To schedule an in-person office visit or an out-of-town phone consultation with Jody Michael, please call 773-275-5566.

How a Coach Can Help You

Whether your career is not quite where you'd like it to be, you're a small business owner in search of new ideas, or you're an executive reaching for the next rung, a coach can prove instrumental in helping you identify, develop strategies for and achieve your goals. Please refer to "Client Case Studies" ([jodymichael.com/Individual/Case Studies](http://jodymichael.com/Individual/Case%20Studies)) and read a few examples of how JMA coaches have helped their clients overcome obstacles and succeed.

7. Know exactly what you want

For both the individual seeking a job and the colleague or friend trying to help them, nothing is more frustrating than when the job seeker doesn't know the exact job they want to target.

People often waste years ruminating about and questioning their right career fit, when a good career coach can take that energy and focus it on the right processes and questions and help them find the answer much more quickly.

The average adult will spend approximately 60 percent of their waking hours devoted to work-related activities over a 45 to 50 year period.¹ Given this, the real issue is not finding a new job, but finding the right job—a job that you love, a job that lines up with your talents, abilities and your core driver. That's an investment that will return dividends for a lifetime! Further, a recent Gallup Employee Engagement Index indicated that 71% of those polled did not feel engaged in their work. If you can relate to this, then you're not in the right job.

8. Write well or have someone write for you

Don't send generic cover letters. A personalized, well-written cover letter that pinpoints how your skills match the requirements of that specific job is worth its weight in gold.

9. Remember—it's a numbers game

Manage your expectations. Finding a new job can take much more time than you would like, but statistics show that you can speed up the numbers game and decrease the time it takes to land a job by using many methods simultaneously, including:

- Internet resources
- Personal contacts
- Classified ads
- Employers
- Alumni career centers
- Message boards
- Community agencies
- Professional associations
- Recruiters/headhunters
- Employment placement agencies²

10. Just do it

It's almost inevitable that feelings of avoidance, fatigue, negativity and procrastination will set in and seduce you to miss a career appointment that you schedule with yourself. Don't allow excuses or thoughts like, "I don't feel like it" or "I'll do it tomorrow" to sabotage your progress. Do it anyway.

¹How to Find the Work You Love. Boldt, Laurence G. New York: Penguin, 1996.

²Occupational Outlook Handbook. 2010–2011 Ed. Lanham: Bernan, 2010.

