



10 Job Search Must Have's

Job searching is an entrepreneurial endeavor. Like anything else, you are setting up a business. The product and service is you, and your clients are the people that know, like, and trust you. They are the ones who are going to buy and/or invest in you-- by hiring you. As with any entrepreneurial endeavor, you need a business plan with specific goals, measurable milestones, and actions that move you toward your ultimate goal.

For the recent college grad, this is especially important because laying down a solid foundation, finding value in everyone you meet, and being open-minded to all possibilities (regardless of whether or not they are exactly in line with your ultimate career goal) is crucial to making moves in the business world. Years ago, your resume, cover letter, recommendations, and interview were your most important tools for selling yourself; today, it is the internet and the many technological resources that exist:

- Skype
- Web conferencing
- Social media tools: facebook, twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, personal website/blog
- And many others

These tools are vital in self-promoting and networking in the digital age. It is also extremely important to understand the power of face-to-face networking. This isn't just networking events; it includes informal events such as your graduation party, social gatherings, and interactions with family and friends. The truth is, everybody knows somebody who can add value to your network, whether the impact is immediate or long-term.

The more focused and specific you are in articulating your career goals and your current assets, the more easily people can grasp your desires and offer fitting opportunities. If you don't specifically know what you want to do just yet, read online classifieds in the fields you're

interested in. The qualifications and job descriptions can help you gauge what specific skills and vocational goals you want to work toward.

Below is a brief overview of 10 Must Have's for job searching:

1. **Business Plan:** The most important thing in creating this is setting both long-term and short-term goals, and then working backwards to identify which skills and assets you need to meet each. You want to create a succinct action plan with tasks and break down measurable milestones over a weekly, monthly, quarterly, and yearly time frame.
2. **Professional Website:** Include a bio, professional photo/headshot, viewable and downloadable PDF resume, and samples of your work (if applicable). It is important that your website clearly and concisely state the service you offer.
3. **Networking:** Not enough can be said about the importance of networking! One way to start is by creating a *professional* LinkedIn page and obtaining recommendations from professors, faculty, previous employers, etc. Also important is to create a "hit list"-- no, not for sniping, but for making valuable career connections. Write down the names of everyone in all of your social circles (work, friends, family, academics, etc.) who either has or knows someone who has something that is valuable towards moving your career forward. Ask for either an introduction or advice about the common interest that you share. People won't work with people that they don't like and trust, so establishing relationships is investing in a future opportunity.
4. **Resumes:** Yes, you still need one. A resume should clearly state objective, education, training, experience, and skills. Remember that less is more, and that concise, result-oriented statements under your "Experience" section are more interesting than generic job responsibilities and tasks.
5. **Cover Letter:** A good cover letter is short, succinct, and to the point. The first paragraph needs to state why you are reaching out and how you learned of this position (a referral, web posting, LinkedIn, etc.). Second paragraph: state in a few sentences why they should meet you. What value do you add? Think of yourself as a solution to their problem, and tell them how this is so. The closing paragraph should indicate an action step. "Looking forward to hearing from you" is not action; "I am available to meet next week and will call you on Monday to set up a mutually convenient time" is.
6. **Social Media:** Clean up your Facebook profile. LOL-- no, seriously. Remove the inflammatory political and religious rants, pictures of you playing beer pong, all bathroom mirror selfies. Employers and interested parties DO check this! If it comes down to two candidates for a position, this could be the deal breaker, or deal maker. A wonderful side benefit of this is your overall more pleasant web presence in both a professional and personal context.
7. **Professional E-Mail:** No more sexyg1r1888@aol.com. Your email should clearly, simply, and professionally identify you, i.e. johnsmith@gmail.com or pocahontas.smith@yahoo.com.

8. **Phone Calls:** Yes, social media and communication is great, but picking up the phone and communicating with people directly is the fast track to establishing a powerful connection that will make you more memorable and personally connected.
9. **Applicable Jobs:** Don't waste your time and energy, wasting the time and energy of an employer who isn't looking for someone with your traits and skills (or lack thereof). Only apply to jobs for which you are a viable candidate.
10. **Positivity:** Be persistent and tenacious, stay focused, think outside the box, and know that the (properly) squeaky wheel always gets the grease.

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