

5 Steps to a Successful Career Search

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The following is just a short précis of the necessary steps to achieve job success. A good Career Development Plan will fill in the essential details to reach the goal of fulfilling our work potential.

STEP 1 | Be Prepared to Put in Effort

The first step for anyone embarking on a new career search is that it takes effort. There is no short cut, although there are many tools that can make the task easier and quicker. But the key is to remember there is a goal: fulfilling and rewarding work that could last a lifetime. What is it worth to put in effort now, that will pay dividends in the years ahead. We all know that the experts say we could change our careers 5 times during our working lives. Which number are you on now? If this is your first, the second will be easier if you get the process right this time. Now...read on for the next step.

STEP 2 | Get To Know Yourself

We may need to take some form of Aptitude Test, Interest Inventory, or Personality Test to determine our aptitudes and abilities. These are the tools referred to in Step 1. They make life much easier at this stage. Although they are no substitute for the effort required to fulfil the objective, they are a necessary part of the process.

We need to know our strengths and weaknesses, interest areas, likes and dislikes, work environment preferences, stress factors, personality traits, social factors (how we respond in any given work-situation), and many more areas that can be discovered in taking an aptitude or personality questionnaire. Getting to know ourselves is vital to take our unique personality and character, and match it up with suitable and appropriate work.

STEP 3 | Develop a Career Plan

Identify our next career steps. To start off, we need to review the studies from No.2. It is essential to know who we are, and what sort of job we're looking for. If we don't know where we're going, we'll end up somewhere else. Define the job objective clearly and concisely. Do we need further education or retraining? Where are we going to market ourselves? Will we need to relocate to attain the job of our choice? We need to prepare marketing tools (i.e. resume and basic cover letter); do we have a current resume that we can adapt to the job we're applying for that describes ALL of our experience and skills?

Don't forget that we are in control now. No more drifting into whatever comes along. This is what I want to do, and I'll move heaven and earth to get it! We need to write out a plan, mapping out logical steps leading from where we are now, to where we expect to be in 6 months - 1 year - 5 years...

Another very important thing to consider at this stage, is whether we are prepared for obstacles. Life does not consist of smooth, straight roads devoid of bumps or corners. Get mentally prepared for the long haul, even though we may get lucky and secure the perfect position early on in the campaign.

STEP 4 | Put Your Plans into Action

This requires self-discipline and organization. We are embarking upon a marketing campaign, to secure for ourselves a position which is going to allow us to achieve our fullest potential in the job market. The steps mentioned in No.3 need to be in place at this juncture.

Executing our plan now requires ACTION. We need to employ DRIVE - put a prod on ourselves to accomplish our goals. Set targets to be achieved in a certain time frame. Do whatever is necessary in order to achieve the goal

STEP 5 | Regularly Review Your Career Progress

This last step cannot be over-emphasized. We need to review all the steps we have taken and assess whether or not we are on course or off track. Sometimes revision is necessary to meet our needs and those of the job market.

Getting feedback from potential employers can assist us in this very important area. Listening to feedback helps us to sharpen our efforts and be ready for action. Does our resume impress a Human Resources Manager? Are our cover letters concise and to the point? Is our overall marketing strategy proving to be effective in securing interviews?

Lastly, are we making sufficient progress in our plans, or do we need more support? Sometimes it helps to talk these things over with a professional job counsellor, or even a friend. An objective point of view helps us to see things from a different perspective, and can encourage us to literally launch ourselves into more action with tremendous energy. NEVER be put off by apparent lack of success. Persistence is the key here. Keep going, and a rewarding and fulfilling career can be yours.