

Don't Sabotage Your Job Search

By Cindy Kraft, Certified Career Management Coach

In today's competitive job market, it is imperative that a job search candidate be FLEXIBLE, COMPELLING, and VALUABLE. If you consider that an estimated 20 million résumés fly through cyberspace and the traditional mail system daily, how are you distinguishing yourself from the pack? Job seekers who rely solely on traditional job search methods tend to stay unemployed longer than job seekers using more creative and riskier job search methodologies.

There are many ways job seekers sabotage their search efforts. As humans and creatures of habit, we tend to get in our comfort zone and stay there. The biggest mistake for all of us is to keep doing the same thing we've been doing - even when we keep getting the same results - NONE!

If you are not getting the kinds of interviews and job offers you feel you should be getting, perhaps one of these common mistakes is the culprit.

1. Lack of a clear, and realistic, career focus.

This is a two-fold problem. Either a job seeker is desperate and "will take anything" and responds to any job whether he is a fit or not. Or a job seeker doesn't know what he wants to do and, using a vague me-centered objective, expects that a company can figure out where he's a fit.

A clear career goal that focuses on the value a job seeker brings to an organization is critical to job search success. Which leads us to Mistake #2.

2. Failure to identify and quantify marketable skills.

A clear career goal alone is not enough. An employer looks at a job seeker's "documented track record" in relation to his bottom line.

The question a job seeker needs to answer is "How have my contributions positively impacted my employer?" Delineating and quantifying those accomplishments, versus a chronology of your responsibilities, will position you in front of the competition.

3. Inadequate marketing documents. (Résumé, cover letter, application, follow up letters)

Approximately 80% of job applicants are screened out at the paper stage. Job seekers who fail to understand the power and importance of compelling marketing documents significantly reduce the chances of making it through the initial screen and therefore, increase the time they remain unemployed.

It is not unusual for a job seeker to have 20 to 40 interviews before getting "the" job. In order to get interviews, your marketing documents have to sell you as a valuable commodity. If you aren't getting interviews, perhaps it is time to take a fresh look at your paper impression.

4. Poor references.

How much thought have you put into choosing and prepping your references? More than 90% of prospective employers do reference checks. Inadequate and vague responses from your references can kill your job opportunity, so choose your references wisely and prep them on what you feel is most important to the prospective position and/or the company.

5. Flunking the interview.

When you open your mouth, does your foot jump in? A whopping 90% of interviewees can't answer even the most basic interview questions with confidence.

Common sense tells us that if you want to win the job, you need to ace the interview. Winning the offer requires thorough research, preparation, and practice - practice - practice.

###

Cindy Kraft is a certified career management coach. She can be reached by phone at 813-655-0658, via email at cindy@career-management-coach.com, or through her website at www.career-management-coach.com.

All rights reserved. ©