

## 22 Common Sense Notions About Job Hunting

1. Buy a copy of *Directory of Executive Recruiters* (\$45); Kennedy Publications, Templeton Road, Fitzwilliam, NH 03447 (800) 531-0007. Also for the library: *In Search of the Perfect Job* (about \$15.00); Robertson-Lowstuter, 104 Wilmot Road Ste 500, Deerfield IL 60015 (708) 940-4400. At least read John Lucht's *Rights of Passage at \$100,000+*.

2. Research your achievements carefully, *before* writing your resume. Write out, in elaborate detail, what made your buttons pop in each job you've held for the past 10-15 years; those stories contain the seeds for your bullets. List bullets in order of importance (to *you*) and make them not more than 3-5 lines each. Quantify the quantifiable, but don't drown in detail. A resume is a marketing tool, not an exhaustive autobiography, and it should whet the reader's appetite to meet the achiever who wrote it (*you*, not just any "resume mill" writer). Two pages is the norm, but if you're a legitimate 3-pager, brimming with dynamite stuff to crow about, so be it.

3. The resume should look – and *feel* – “successful.” If need be, get a graphics whiz to help with layout, type styles, etc. Have it commercially printed on high quality off-white or neutral shade of gray bond, the best you can find. Like elegant tableware, it should be simple (no fancy computer tricks) but rich in appearance and texture. Letter stationery needn't match, but should be of equally high quality, printed professionally.

4. Let your resume do the heavy selling, not the cover letter. Cover letters to search firms should say “Hi! Here I am!” — not explain *why*. Provide your current earnings (or range or package objective) so a consultant has a reasonable estimate of your “dimensions.”

5. Prepare resume and other mailings only at night. Try not to waste normal working hours doing clerical stuff. (If you can afford to hire a reliable clerk to do this for you, you'll be dollars ahead if it speeds up the process.)

6. Track whom you've mailed and when. Re-mail search firms periodically. Mail individual consultants in the same office and each office of multiple-office firms. Remember, even “name” retainer search firms (and *all* contingent firms) are loosely confederated *individual commission* practices, no matter what centralized research departments, collegial brochure descriptions, etc., would have you infer.

7. Set up secure (kids-proof) telephone communications at home, including a dedicated line if necessary. Call waiting is a must! Install a top-quality answering machine (that does *not* cut the caller off after 30 seconds!) you can access from remote locations. Develop a highly polished, business-like, but *warm* outgoing message. Never, *never* turn the machine off, even when you're at home. Put the machine number on your resume, and call it frequently, even if it's just to check its operation.

8. Set yourself up for “wins” every day. You can't find a job every day, so forget making *that* the objective. However, you can meet new people daily, so dedicate yourself to getting around and mixing like you've never done before.

**Learn to relax and enjoy networking**, and trust good methods to yield positive outcomes. (Consider that top pro athletes work tirelessly on their mechanics, not their scores; they know that high quality techniques eventually produce winning results.)

9. Networking is simply becoming known, and favorably regarded, in as many “circles of influence” as possible. Make a list of *everyone* you know who's connected to the business world. Ultimately, that includes your dentist and barber, *your* banker (the Big Cheese where you have your savings/checking account), your realtor and plumber, your kids' high school teachers/coaches, your spouse's friends and *their* spouses, even people you never cared much for. Do *not* stop with those most friendly to you; in fact, start with the ones most influentially placed (those who know the most people: your city's mayor, the town manager, even that irritatingly self-important president of your country club).

10. Beware of ego coming between you and your objective; **the biggest blocks to effective networking are self-pity and a “thin skin.”** Don't be too puffed up about yourself to seek or accept the help of people who can do things for you, such as introduce you to their colleagues and folks on their holiday card lists. Conversely, don't feel diminished just because you're looking for a job; you're just having what's become a *routine* career experience. (Indeed, this may turn out to be one of the most enriching personal episodes in your life. Many successful people find it — in retrospect, perhaps — a profound reminder of life's “grand scale” and gain a much truer perspective of their rightful place in the universe.)

11. Position a mirror so you can see yourself when you're on the telephone. Now, *smile!* That smile gets into your voice and reveals your unshakable optimism about yourself and the eventual success of your search.

12. Make the other guy's day by being so “up” and calmly assured of your worth that he'll talk about running into you when he gets home that night. People may balk at providing you access to their friends if you come across as a Sad Sack; they may react entirely differently, however, if they believe their relationship with you actually *enhances* their image and reputation!

13. **Never let contacts assume you're asking them to find you a job.** Press, as hard as you dare, for lists of their pals, associates, etc. (Don't let others circulate resumes for you; you're raising *your* profile, not theirs.) Get in to *see* people; phone impressions fade quickly, like a politician's promise. Charm *everyone* you meet, including toll booth collectors; it's great practice and a delightful way to live!

14. There's a huge difference between *fatigue* and *despair*. Sure, you'll get worn-out running around to meet people; as much fun as it can be, it takes energy. But it works, and you'll encounter folks who will react so wonderfully they'll replenish your spirit, even when you feel really beaten down by the process.

15. Do *not* let networking contacts freeload on you, and do *not* buy them courtesy lunches as a "thank you" for their time. Believe it — knowing you benefits *them*, too!

16. If you promised to be in and out in 15-20 minutes for an interview or personal visit, *you* keep track of the time. Some folks don't know how to wrap it up for you, but will resent an overly long visit after you've gone. On the other hand, don't let anyone tie you up for hours showing off the new doohickey in the shop; if they don't have contacts to share (or a job for you helping run the business) there's no profit for you spending endless hours just admiring their toys. Besides, you're *busy*!

17. Keep the door ajar with all you meet so you can "tickle" them periodically about your continuing efforts: "Is it OK if I drop by in a few weeks, perhaps by phone, to update you on my search? I'll give you feedback about the help I've had from people you're introducing me to." (Anyone who says no to that is probably a strikeout already, so move on, and *don't* take the experience personally!)

18. Keep a daily diary of all phone and face-to-face contacts you make. Keep superb records about who introduced you to whom. Collect business cards; they give you all the data you need, including correct titles, name spellings, etc. An alpha loose-leaf binder with a page for every contact is a great tool. Drop people *standardized* notes (they save time) thanking them for their interest and help; it's mannerly and a legitimate device to get a few more minutes of valuable attention.

19. Plan, *plan*, *plan* — such as Monday at the library; Tuesday on the phone making contacts, scheduling visits, etc.; Wednesday and Thursday in other folks' offices; Friday making up next Tuesday's calling schedule; etc.

20. Take advantage of the tips and support you can get from association with *upbeat* peers in the same boat. Being with *optimistic* people in similar circumstances is energizing, will sustain your self-confidence, and keep you ever mindful that your situation is *hardly* unique.

21. Don't distance yourself from the home forces, *your primary support group and rooting section*. Keep your spouse and at least the older kids fully attuned to your strategies. They have a big stake in what's going on and may be very antsy about their welfare. Let 'em help, too. If they know the plan they may have some terrific ideas, and domestic relations are less likely to become frazzled.

22. **GO ON LIVING!** Keep your social and recreational lives as normal as possible. (Just delay the two-month cruise in

Greece; you can always negotiate time off for the well-deserved "breather" in your landing contract). §

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