

4 SECRETS FOR A SUCCESSFUL JOB SEARCH

SECRET 1

Know where to look for jobs

Not only is it not your father's job search anymore. It's not even your slightly older sister's.

While employers still use headhunters to vet candidates, especially for senior positions, increasingly they are relying on resume scanning software and online "assessment" tests to do an initial sort of the wheat from the chaff.

And rather than posting an opening on a general jobs site, which can bring in too many you-must-be-joking candidates, companies are using jobs sites or parts of jobs sites that are specific to their industry, said Mark Bartz, cofounder of resume and job-search consulting firm Executive Careers Inc. They're also beefing up their corporate sites so potential hires with a specific interest in a company may submit resumes.

Increasingly, too, job seekers may submit resumes for a type of job rather than a specific job opening, said Ginny Gomez, vice president of product management of Peopleclick, a recruiting software and consulting firm.

When a job does open up, HR will electronically sort through the resumes looking for key words to find attractive candidates, Bartz said. ([See Secret 2 on how to make your resume stand out.](#))

When you do use a corporate site to submit your resume, you may be asked a series of questions designed to give the employer some sense of whether your personality is a good fit for the type of job you're seeking and to test your advertised skills.

"(The questions) are an ever-growing component to a company's recruiting strategy and knowing this, candidates should know that by not completing an assessment, they are removing themselves from consideration," Gomez said.

SECRET 2

Ensure a company wants to talk to you

Tailor your resume so that it highlights high up your experience relevant to the job or type of job in question. Make it easy on the person reading it to figure out why they should consider you, said Phil Carpenter, vice president of marketing at SimplyHired.com, a jobs search engine.

One way to do that is to "stress results, not activities," said Amy Hoover, executive vice president of TalentZoo, a recruiter specializing in communications jobs.

Your goal is to get the person who eventually reads your resume (and cover letter) to ask, "How did you do that?" said Mark Bartz, cofounder of resume and job-search consulting firm Executive Careers Inc.

What will set you apart from your competition is to give an answer that not only speaks to your education, training and experience, but also to soft skills that you possess but that can't be easily taught, such as intuition, discernment, creativity and resourcefulness. "That's the X factor that gets you the job," he said.

But the only way you'll ever be asked the question is if your resume makes it through the early lines of defense, which may very well be resume scanning software, which looks for key words or

phrases specific to the nature of the job you'd like and the industry it's in.

Bartz recommends branding yourself on your resume and cover letter - for example, as "a product marketing manager with expertise in product branding, market research and team-building." Then pick out from your past work experience 12 to 20 key words or phrases that amplify each of those areas of expertise. For instance, for market research, you might have worked on projects involving "demographic analysis" or a "product lifecycle."

SECRET 3

Demonstrate that you want the job

Saying that you want a position and showing it are two different things.

What will distinguish you from other candidates is, for starters, a cover letter that lets the recipient know you've actually spent time thinking about the company's business and the role you could play in it if you're hired, said Phil Carpenter, vice president of marketing at SimplyHired.com, a jobs search engine.

Beyond that, before or after an interview, put something together to show the company how you think it might market its product better or improve its service, said Amy Hoover, executive vice president of TalentZoo, a recruiter specializing in communications jobs. "It will set you apart from the competition."

In an interview, highlight the successful projects you worked on in which you had the most fun because your passion will come through, and that is a trait companies want to see, said Mark Bartz, cofounder of resume and job-search consulting firm Executive Careers Inc.

SECRET 4

Stick to the tried-and-true

There are some things about a successful job search that remain timeless:

- Having a firm understanding of the nature of the job you're applying for, the company where you'd like to work and the industry the company is in are all critical, said Ginny Gomez, vice president of product management of Peopleclick, a recruiting software and consulting firm.
- There's nothing like having an "in" at a company as opposed to just going through HR channels. If you don't know someone personally at a company, you might find a connection through one of the business-focused networking sites such as LinkedIn and NetShare, said Mark Bartz, cofounder of resume and job-search consulting firm Executive Careers Inc. ([Read about how LinkedIn works here.](#))
- Once you do get an interview, give the interviewer something to remember you by, such as a sample of a successful project you worked on, said Phil Carpenter, vice president of marketing at SimplyHired.com, a jobs search engine.
- Courtesy is as an asset. "A proper handshake and thank-you-for-your-time goes a long way," said Amy Hoover, executive vice president of TalentZoo, a recruiting firm specializing in communications jobs. And be sure to email a thank-you note within 24 hours after an interview.

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