

## Job Hunt Advice

Finding a job in today's tough economy is not easy. The pearls of wisdom I am about to share apply to you, even if you already have a job. It does not matter whether you are recently laid off or gainfully employed and looking for a better job opportunity, inside or outside of your current work group, you will still need a solid game plan for finding what you seek. There is no one size fits all solution. There is no silver bullet or a magic formula. Regardless of your situation and what you seek, it will be a tough uphill battle. Why? Because it is a buyers market and the competition is fierce. Employers are in a position to be selective and picky and they are leveraging their bargaining position. They are looking to get more for less. They are going off shore and near shore to get the best deals. This is why you will have to make an extra effort to separate yourself from the competition. The way to compete is to be very aggressive, tenacious and enthusiastic.

**Determine Your Career Objective:** The first thing you need to do is to figure out what you want. This will require market research. You will need to look at the job boards and talk to people you know to get a good feel for what you are good at and what you have to offer a prospective employer. I have compiled a set of useful web links (see below) for job boards and career advice websites. So start by looking at job postings and gathering the ones that look right for you.

**Design Your Presentation:** Once you know what you want, you will have to tailor your presentation to match your career objective. You do this by picking certain key words from the job posting and putting these in your paperwork and your oral presentation.

BTW, your paperwork consists of a short cover letter that can be read in 90 seconds or less and a resume. The resume should start with a succinct career objective statement that is not too broad or too narrow in scope. Think in terms of an HR Recruiter. They get thousands of resumes a month. Many job sites allow key word searches, so they can pick out a subset of resumes that they eventually screen by hand. So when they read your resume with their job opportunities in mind, it has to be clear based on your paperwork that this is a good match.

The rest of your presentation consists of your verbal 30 second summary, 90 second summary and three minute summary. The 30 second summary is used when you talk to someone the first time and they ask you what you are looking for. The 90 second summary is used in a conversation where you have a little more time to embellish upon your background, your skill set and your accomplishments. Think in terms of results. How have you helped your employers not just stay in business but excel past the competition.

**Who to Call:** You have to network to find a job. You have to meet people and form relationships. You can send in resumes and post to job sites, but believe me, this is a long shot. The people finding the choice jobs nowadays have some kind of inside track. So please take the time to socialize and develop relationships. You have to talk to family, friends and neighbors because you just don't know where the connection to your ideal job may be made. I always recommend networking online through the vast BDPA network. This is a good time to consider engaging in volunteer assignments so you can get to know more people and they can see your work ethic first hand. Use the helpful links to develop a list of your ideal companies to visit. Send in your resume and follow-up.

**Interviewing Tips:** In preparation for an interview, you want to try extra hard to get an inside track. You need to talk to someone inside the company who can tell you about the culture, the work environment, the business area you will work in and something about the hiring manager's style. It may be difficult to find someone on the inside, so in lieu of a personal connection, go to the company's website and surf the internet to find out as much as can about the company, their business and what is important to them. Do your homework!

When you go on an interview you should dress a cut above the dress in the normal working environment. Men wear suits and women wear sharp business attire. Don't dress casual or business casual unless you are certain that this is what is expected. And please, make sure you are well groomed. This gets into

polishing your nails, smelling good, and looking good. You have to look like a million bucks! Be punctual. There is no reason to be late for a job interview. Your image is so important that you should get a second opinion. Don't hesitate to ask a friend how you look? A true friend will be honest with you and let you know where you need to improve. Let them hear your presentation and see you model your interview suit. And please, go over your paperwork with a fine tooth comb to eliminate all typos, spelling mistakes and grammatical errors. You only get one opportunity to make one first impression so make it count!

There are a few standard interview questions that you should be prepared to answer. Remember to leave every sentence on a high note and sounding good about yourself. Keep your responses brief (1-3 minutes) and to the point.

- Tell me a little bit about yourself.
- What are your short term and long term career objectives?
- Why did you leave your last job?
- Name 3 strengths and 3 weaknesses?
- What are you looking for?
- What are your salary requirements?
- Why should we hire you?
- How well do you work in a stressful work environment where requirements are constantly changing?

**References:** It is not just what you know but who you know. In this tight job market, relationships are the key. You will need references and entrées. You will need to compile a list of people who will speak up for you and let others know verbally and in writing how good you are. Compile your list and check it twice. Talk to your references and make sure that they are on board with giving you a stellar thumbs up. Your references can help you make connections too. Ask them if they know of anyone hiring someone like you. Anybody and everybody you talk to should be asked if they know of anyone or anyplace hiring. Ask them if they would be willing to introduce you to the hiring manager. Having good references who will go to bat for you is well worth the effort to establish and sustain relationships.

**How Hungry Are You?** As with any hunt, you have to be driven by an insatiable appetite for the prey. For a job hunt, you don't want to seem desperate or pushy, but you have to be able to instill a sense of urgency into the situation. A prospective employer has to know that they will have to make a hiring decision or you will have to look elsewhere. And this is where you need to do your homework and set your limits. How long can you remain unemployed? Set realistic target dates for finding work based on your financial situation. How low will you go in salary? Will you accept contract work or only full time employment? Are you willing to relocate? Will you work in a job that requires travel? These are all questions that you will be asked and must be willing to answer. Don't be surprised if over time you have to lower your sights in order to get off the unemployment line. This is not unusual. Many people start off looking for the ideal job at the ideal company making the ideal salary and end up taking something else. Sometimes the something else is better, but sometimes it is not. You have remain flexible and know how low you are willing to go.

**Contract Work:** I happen to prefer doing contract work while I am looking for a full time job. This work is hard to find too, but it offers many benefits. It is usually easier to find short term assignments and it is not uncommon to be retained by an employer if they like you. To find contract work, you want to find a staff augmentation consulting company that has a good reputation and work with them to find placement. A good consulting company will take the time to analyze your technical experience and help to identify the truly marketable components of your background. You will get immediate feedback from the marketplace when you look for contract work.

### **Power Words**

ambitious professional  
technological leadership  
deliver high-level solutions  
share a passion for innovation  
special insight

impact bottom line  
unique perspective  
large system migration  
desire for technical challenges  
flexible  
versatile  
significant contribution

### **Useful Links**

[BDPA Chicago Corporate Advisory Council \(CAC\) Career Websites](http://blacksgonegeek.org/CACCareerWebsites.aspx)  
[Milt's Tool Box: http://blacksgonegeek.org/ToolBox.aspx](http://blacksgonegeek.org/ToolBox.aspx)  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/BDPA-Chicago-Jobs/files/JobSeekerAdvice/JobSearchAdvice.doc>  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/BDPA-Jobs/files/JobSeekerAdvice/JobSearchAdvice.doc>  
[www.workplacediversity.com](http://www.workplacediversity.com)  
<http://www.allUSAcareers.com/>  
<http://www.internet.com/sections/careers.html>  
[http://www.computerworld.com/storyba/0,4125,NAV47\\_STO67699,00.html](http://www.computerworld.com/storyba/0,4125,NAV47_STO67699,00.html)  
<http://www.microsoft.com/careers/diversity.htm>  
<http://www.wetfeet.com/cb/schools/utaustin/toc.asp>  
<http://www.wetfeet.com/>

Just Tech Jobs <http://www.justtechjobs.com>  
Nationjobs.com <http://www.Nationjobs.com>  
latpro.com <http://www.latpro.com>  
monster.com <http://www.monster.com>  
hotjobs.com <http://www.hotjobs.com>  
headhunter.net <http://www.headhunter.net>  
nshmba.org <http://www.nshmba.org>  
hispandata.com <http://www.hispandata.com>  
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careerpath.com <http://www.careerpath.com>  
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brilliantpeople.com <http://www.brilliantpeople.com>  
redruiteronline.com <http://www.redruiteronline.com>  
firstinterview.net <http://www.firstinterview.net>  
careermart.com <http://www.careermart.com>  
topechelon.com <http://www.topechelon.com>  
saludos.com <http://www.saludos.com>  
MBAjob.com <http://www.MBAjob.com>  
careemosaic.com <http://www.careemosaic.com>  
bestrecruiters.com <http://www.bestrecruiters.com>  
interbiznet.com/eeri/ <http://www.interbiznet.com/eeri/>  
futurestep.com Korn & Ferry <http://www.futurestep.com>  
micontacto.com <http://www.micontacto.com>  
jobsonline.com <http://www.jobsonline.com>  
Careerlab.com <http://www.Careerlab.com>  
Careerperfect.com <http://www.Careerperfect.com>  
Jobweb.com <http://www.Jobweb.com>

## **BDPA Chicago - Career Websites Corporate Advisory Council Members**

Please visit [Blacks Gone Geek – BDPA Chicago Career Websites](#) for the most current list.

**BDPA Chicago Program Meeting:** For info on the program meeting, please go to [www.bdpa-chicago.org](http://www.bdpa-chicago.org) and look under program meeting.

### **More Tips**

P.I.E. – A Formula for Success

There are three elements important to players who want to fine tune their skill and move up in their profession. They must:

- Perform exceptionally well.
- Cultivate the proper image.
- Manage their exposure so the right people will know them.

Each of the three P.I.E. elements carries a different weight in upward mobility. All three are essential to promotion but they have different roles and weights relative to their impact on long term success. The breakdown is as follows:

- Performance = 10%
- Image = 30%
- Exposure = 60%

From Empowering Yourself by Harvey J. Coleman

### **WBS – Process Steps**

Plan your work and work your plan.

Study Yourself

#### **Planning**

- Gather and analyze the facts of the current project situation.

Set Your Objectives

- Set project objectives (desired results).

Study the Environment

Work Out a Strategy

- Develop possible alternative courses of action.
- Identify the negative consequences of each course of action.
- Decide on a basic course of action.

Work Out a Game Plan

- Develop strategies (priorities, sequence, timing of major steps).
- Determine when and how overall progress will be measured.

#### **Organizing**

- Identify and analyze the various job tasks necessary to implement the project.

Form Your Team

- Define scope of relationships, roles and responsibilities
- Determine the allocation of resources (including budget, etc.).

#### **Implementing**

Project Execution

- Coordinate day-to-day activities.

### **Controlling**

- Complete periodic status reports
- Measure progress toward and/or deviation from the project's goals
- Take corrective action on the project (recycle project plans).

### **Special Considerations**

Attire/Dress

Resume

30 second summary (career objective)

90 second summary (cover letter)

references

Leads

Resource Websites

Networking Events

- Pink Slip Parties
- Career Fairs
- BDPA Program Meetings
- Social Networking (Facebook, etc.)

Salary Research

Company Research