

Randstad Employment Tips

Beating the Odds—Finding a Job in
These Economic Times



Beating the Odds—Finding a Job in These Economic Times

Finding a job during these economic times can be tough—with many ups and downs along the way. A fiercely competitive job market requires a relentless search for opportunities. It's a game you can win by knowing who you are, what you can do, and then playing by the rules and making the best possible impression.

Tips for the job seeker

Take a professional inventory.

What are your strengths and weaknesses? What skills and knowledge do you have to offer? Once you have a realistic picture of who you are and what you can do, then you're ready to project an accurate portrait of your job skills, knowledge and capabilities to prospective employers.

Tap into traditional sources of job leads.

Local newspaper help-wanted ads, community publications, trade and professional journals and specialty publications are a great source.

Network.

About seven out of 10 jobs are found through networking. Start by identifying 25–50 people who might be able to help in your job search, including former co-workers and bosses, vendors, friends, family, associates, church members, classmates, doctors, educational and professional acquaintances. Then start contacting these people to ask for job leads. Try this soft-sell approach: "I've recently been laid off from my job. I just wanted to let everyone know not to

reach me at my old office or send e-mails there. By the way, please let me know if you hear of any suitable opportunities in the finance field.” Also consider networking through career-specific business and professional organizations.

Check out online job databases.

Regularly check Internet job boards like www.monster.com or www.careerbuilder.com. There are also numerous job sites specific to industries and professions. One timesaving Website, www.wantedjobs.com, lets you search more than 250 of the best Internet job sites. Look at sites of companies in which you are interested. Often they post open positions to their site before broadcasting to other job boards.

Post your resume to career sites.

Be sure they include keywords for your particular field. Recruiters mining resume databases set up keyword searches.

Explore other employment resources.

Internships will help you get exposure to different companies and fields. Job fairs are a great source for new leads and information about companies hiring. Staffing companies can place you in temporary, contract and direct hire positions. It’s a way to earn money while you search for that perfect job, and often a temporary position may lead to a regular, full-time job.

Print vs. electronic résumés?

You’ll need both types of résumés to support your job search. Be sure to have them ready. Know the differences in how you design and organize a resume for print versus online. With an electronic resume, keywords are the most important element.

Avoid common résumé bloopers.

Misspellings, grammatical and factual errors can kill your chances for the job before you even have an opportunity to interview. Proofread!

Customize your résumé and cover letter.

Mass-marketed, generic résumés and cover letters generally don't work. Customize your résumés and cover letters to the job opportunity and company.

Prepare and practice for the interview.

Research the company. Visit the company's Website. Read the latest press releases to find out about new developments. Review common interview questions and prepare your answers ahead of time. Devise a list of questions to ask your prospective employer. Be prepared to clearly and concisely state your strengths and why you are perfect for the position. Practice makes perfect, so rehearse with a mock interview.

Be punctual and dress appropriately for the interview.

It is always better to be overdressed than underdressed.

Never doubt the message of a firm handshake.

Simple things like your handshake and your body language speak volumes about who you are and your suitability for the job and company culture.

Project an enthusiastic and upbeat attitude.

Smile and do what you can do develop a good rapport with the interviewer.

Manage your job search like a pro.

How well you manage your search can be a key differentiator between you and your competition. Develop a plan. Stay focused on your objectives. Complete tasks on time. Follow the process. Keep good records. Sound familiar? It takes the same effort and skills you use to manage a job—focusing on goals, staying organized, communicating effectively and following through in a timely manner.

Practice phone etiquette and preparedness.

Ensure your voicemail or answering machine greeting is professional and appropriate. Be prepared with a notepad and cheat sheet for that out-of-the-blue telephone call from a recruiter.

Budget your time wisely.

Looking for a job is a full-time job. Dedicate appropriate time to all job lead sources. For example, spend 20% of your job search online, 45% networking, 15% reviewing and responding to classifieds, 5% on other job search resources like job fairs, local civic and religious groups and industry associations, etc. and approximately 15% on managing the job search overall.

Never, never, never give up.

Keep a positive attitude. Be persistent and maintain the momentum you started with—after all it's not how fast you start, but how well you finish.

Good luck in your job search!

Books to read

Local libraries, bookstores and the Internet are full of information on how to find the perfect job. Look in the careers section, or do online searches using keywords such as “interviewing,” “resume,” “cover letter,” “employment opportunities” and “job search.”

Web sites to check out

Following is a list of recommended Websites, which feature job postings as well as information about job searching, résumé writing and interviewing techniques.

Internet job boards

- www.monster.com, www.careerbuilder.com,
www.hotjobs.com
The Internet’s biggest job boards
- www.ajb.dni.us
America’s Job Bank, a service of the U.S. Department of Labor

Web sites

- careers.wsj.com
Career Journal by the Wall Street Journal
- careerweb.com
A Career Advice Center
- careers.yahoo.com
Yahoo! Careers

About us

Randstad North America is a leading staffing company, providing employment services, including full-time, part-time, short-term, long-term and direct-hire positions in five skill practices: office, industrial, creative, technical and professional. For more information, locate an agent nearest you.