



The 6 lessons to learn from the job search...

Bob McIntosh

If there's anyone who's tired of hearing, "The job search is a full time job," it's me. This cliché is as worn out as my favorite pair of jeans. So I'm proposing a different saying: "The job search is like going to school." Why? Because going to school implies learning something, whereas a full time job can mean a whole slew of things.

The lessons of the job search are of a different nature but are important in their own regard. The following six lessons I propose you must learn before sending out your résumé.

Lesson One: It sucks losing your job. This is the first lesson you learn from the job search. And how well you handle this it will determine your success. Let me advise you to allow yourself a period of suffering, no less than three days, no more than two weeks*. It's not clear if everyone goes through the five stages of grief in the same order, or if you'll even experience all five stages of grief, which are: Denial and Isolation, Anger, Bargaining, Depression, and Acceptance

Lesson Two: Know what you want to do before acting. Picture saying to your kids and wife/husband that the whole family is going on a trip, and they ask, "Where?" Your response is "I don't know." Your family members won't have faith in your planning ability. This lesson is important because without knowing what you want to do—where you're going on your trip—you'll be spinning your wheels. You'll lack direction and be totally ineffective.

So when jobseekers tell me they're not sure what they want to do, I tell them until they know what they want to do, all the dandy advice they've been receiving is a waste of time.

Lesson Three: Let people know you're looking for work. This seems like the most obvious lesson, but you'd be surprised how many people don't let their friends, neighbors, convenience store owner, hair stylist, etc., know they're out of work. How can these people help you if they don't know.

I remember years ago when one of my customers came to my office just before

Christmas. I asked him what his plans were and he told me his family was hosting the dinner. Great I replied. But what he said threw me for a loop. "It's going to be weird. No one knows I'm out of work," he replied. Family and friends can be your best allies.

Lesson Four: Futility 101. Anyone who thinks sending out 600 résumés will result in 300 interviews and 30 job offers probably also believes the sun revolves around the earth. Despite the many blog posts, books, and speakers who say using job boards as the primary method of looking for work is a waste of time; many jobseekers still do this.

Six hundred is not a number I drew out of a hat. I recall reading on LinkedIn about a person who was seeking career advice and was bewildered that she hadn't received one interview. Yes, she had mailed out 600 résumés and waited for the phone to ring.

Lesson Five: Do your research. Remember when you were in school and had to do research to write papers? Now your research is even more important. So instead of "shotgunning" résumés, research the companies for which you'd like to work. Develop a list of 20 or so companies and determine where there's growth by going to their websites. For companies showing growth, send approach letters asking to meet with someone at the company for an informational meeting.

Key points: Don't ask for a job during the informational meetings. Instead ask illuminating questions that create a vibrant conversation, a conversation that will secure an important connection. Who knows, maybe there is a job developing at the company. You might be recommended to the hiring manager if you're able to impress your new connection.

Lesson Six: Connect with others. Whether you want to attend networking events or prefer to focus on connecting in the community, make sure you're identifying people who can be of assistance. LinkedIn's Companies feature has proved to be a great tool for this, but simply making inquiries can work as well.

