

Conducting Your

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Search

During the Holidays.

Holiday Job Searching *Don't Believe the Myths*

Many job searchers are convinced that job searching between Thanksgiving and the middle of January is a waste of time. If you buy into this myth about holiday job searching, you are losing one of the better job searching seasons of the year. During this holiday job search season, you enjoy reduced competition for jobs and more. Debunk the common holiday job searching myths.

During this holiday season, you enjoy reduced competition for jobs and easier access to decision makers who are actually in the office. Fall trade shows are over and holiday vacations have yet to kick in.

You have the opportunity to help people spend their budgets before year end. Hiring managers, with fresh goals for the new year, are eager to find people who can help them get the jump on goal accomplishment. If nothing else, many organizations interview in December for positions starting at the first of the year.

Holiday Job Searching Tips

If you're ready to drop the seasonal holiday job searching blues, here are several tips that will help your holiday job search.

- * Use holiday events for schmoozing with family, friends and acquaintances. You never know who will produce your next job lead. Attend as many events as you can reasonably fit into your calendar. You don't want to be obnoxious about your job search and aggravate friends and relatives. But, do prepare a brief statement that tells people you are looking for a job and the kind of job you seek.

- * Send holiday cards with your business card enclosed to hiring managers with whom you've recently interviewed. Send one to well-connected friends as well.

- * Create a job searching schedule with at least one item to accomplish every day. Don't get lazy or depressed; keep your spirits up by taking positive action during the entire holiday season.

- * Check the classifieds in your target job searching markets from late November through December. Those employers are still conducting their searches, unless they happened upon a "perfect" candidate. Continue to check the online job boards as well. And, don't forget to check company Web sites if you have selected employers for whom you'd like to work.

- * Check professional association websites for advertised positions.

- * Take seasonal work during the holidays to tide your finances into the New Year. Temporary agencies also see an increase in employer requests as companies struggle to complete annual goals and enable employees to use their vacation time.

Take all of the job searching tips you've gathered throughout your job search and work doubly hard to accomplish them during the holiday job searching season. You won't be sorry.

How to Use the Holidays to Job Search

Are you about to start a job search or are you in the midst of looking for a new job? Are you thinking about waiting to start or putting your job search on hold? If so, think again. Contrary to popular opinion, this is a good time of year to find a job. Employers don't stop hiring just because it's the holidays. In addition, the holiday season is a perfect time of year to network your way to a new job.

Why Hiring Continues

Most companies, hiring and personnel activities continue at all times of year, because the needs that drive hiring - competitive pressures, growing markets, strategic initiatives - don't take a break.

Tips for a Holiday Job Search

Employers continue to focus on hiring, even though there is a temptation to do otherwise. The same should hold true for job seekers. It can be easier to say "I'm not going to bother, it's a bad time of year for job hunting." than it is to move forward with a job search. However, for those who do keep plugging away, the additional opportunities are worth the effort.

Don't Slow Down Your Job Search

Some people give up job searching between Thanksgiving and New Years. Don't be one of them. Employers are still hiring and there may be less competition from other job seekers this time of year. In addition, companies that budget on an annual basis may have jobs that they need to hire for now.

Use Down Time

If you're working at company where the holiday season is a slow one, take advantage. If you have vacation time you need to use up, schedule some networking meetings. It's an ideal time of year to connect with acquaintances you haven't been in touch with in a while. Both to celebrate the holiday season and to let them know you're in the market for a job.

Use Personal and Professional Events

If you are attending a holiday social event, it is definitely appropriate to mention that you are job searching. Accept all the invitations you receive, both personal and professional. You never know who may be able to help. Friends and family, as well as business acquaintances are typically more than happy to assist.

Send Holiday Cards

Sending a "Happy Holidays" or a "Happy New Year" greeting card to networking contacts, recruiters, and to employers you have interviewed with is another good way to connect with those who can help with your job search.

Connect Online

Send e-mail or use a social networking site (like Classmates.com or Friendster) to get in touch. The holiday season is a good excuse to touch base and a good time to reinforce or expand your network.

Relax and Enjoy

During this time of year, it's also important to take some time for yourself and your family. Do relax a little and don't forget to enjoy the holiday season. That's important too, for all of us, whether we are job seeking, or not.

How to Look for a Job During the Holidays

Many people believe the myth that companies stop hiring during the whirlwind of winter holidays. Although hiring does taper in December, hiring activity never really stops -- something to consider if you're considering ramping up the job hunt in the new year.

CareerBuilder.com's latest survey shows hiring managers are optimistic about recruitment in the months to come. While 12 percent of hiring managers say they will be decreasing employment at their locations from third to fourth quarter, 49 percent say they will be increasing their staffs with a balanced mix of incremental and replacement employees.

Thirty-eight percent of 700 hiring managers primarily operating in services industries who were surveyed in August said they plan to do the majority of their hiring for the year in the fourth quarter. Twenty five percent said they would do the majority of their hiring in the third quarter. When CareerBuilder first asked hiring managers this question in May, 44 percent had initially reported they would hire the most workers in the third quarter with a lesser 22 percent expecting to recruit the most in the fourth quarter. The August survey indicates that some recruitment activities originally intended for the third quarter will be spilling over to the October through December timeframe.

A study by outplacement firm Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc. found that the odds of being downsized increase by as much as 54 percent between October 1 and New Year's Eve. This is the time when companies finalize their budgets for the coming year or make last minute cutbacks to improve the year-end bottom line. But, they'll also know if they'll be hiring or expanding their employee base in the near future.

The smart job seeker can take advantage of having an edge over their competitors who have become lax in searching. Here are some job tips for the year-end job seeker.

Beef up your portfolio.

Print and take home personal files on your computer and locate copies of your performance appraisals and other personnel records. At the same time, update your résumé with all of the past year's skills and accomplishments. Make PDFs of any work samples, presentations, published work and research.

Begin immediately.

If the bad news is that most layoffs occur during the last three months of the year, the good news is that the period between Thanksgiving and New Year's is one of the best times to find a job. "Because budget approvals expire at the end of the year, there is a sense of urgency among hiring managers and recruiters," explains Human Resources expert Lori Kocon. "Yet while HR is usually in full recruiting mode, most people put their job searches on hold during the holidays. The result is it's more of a candidate's market."

Exhaust your resources.

Try some of the best tactics rarely used, says Don Straits, CEO of Corporate Warriors. Add graphs or charts to your resume. Send work samples with your resume. Create an online portfolio. Directly contact department heads by name rather than the generic human resources contact. Attend industry association meetings. Burn your portfolio and résumé onto a CD and send to potential employers.

Capitalize on the holiday spirit.

What better time to network than when people are in good spirits and socializing frequently? Go to parties and gatherings, especially those where you're likely to meet new people who could be sources of job leads. Make it a point to listen more than talk. Be positive and upbeat. While you won't want to hand out resumes or press for contacts or referrals, you will want to let people know you are looking and follow up with them after the party. Seek out all the other participants and network like crazy.

Keep your schedule flexible for interviews and meetings.

Avoid taking weeklong trips. Though there may be a strong interest in hiring, the hectic pace of parties and shopping makes it harder to schedule mutually convenient appointments. Roger Martin had been out of work for nine months, when on December 21, he got called back to interview with the head of a brand marketing firm. He flew to California to meet the CEO, who was vacationing with his wife's family, and received an offer on Christmas Eve. He was later told his willingness to make the trip during the holidays helped him clinch the job.

A Job For The Holidays

If the first item on your holiday wish list is a job, you just may get your wish.

That is, if you lay off the eggnog and work the phones. Many people see the time between Thanksgiving and the winter holidays as downtime, a period where business goes into a lull. They are wrong, wrong, wrong, according to Challenger, Gray & Christmas.

In fact, the professional outplacement firm says, this month can be an excellent time to look for a tech job.

Around 20 percent of job seekers take a break during the holidays, Challenger said, figuring that they'll begin another full-court press on Jan. 2. Those who do will miss out on what the company estimates at 300,000 managerial and professional jobs that may be added in the closing months of the year.

"The end of year used to be a slow period for most businesses, but the 24/7 global economy has changed all of that. There is no slow period now. Companies make constant adjustments to their payrolls regardless of the date on the calendar," CEO John Challenger said in a statement.

He noted that companies are setting their budgets for the coming year, so managers know what they have to work with in terms of expansion. In addition some managers speed up the hiring process to use up funds from the current year.

One caveat to this rosy picture, however, is that the lion's share of those 30,000 jobs won't be in technology. There, the cuts continue.

According to Challenger, technology companies announced 41,439 job cuts in the third quarter, up 4.3 percent from 39,720 in the second quarter. For the year, tech-job cuts totaling 140,696 were 18.8 percent higher than the three-quarter total of 118,427 in 2004.

But Challenger saw signs that job cuts in the sector, which includes computers, telecommunications, electronics and e-commerce, may be slowing. The 41,439 job cuts announced between July and September were 24 percent lower than the 54,701 job cuts during the same period in 2004.

In 2006, the company expects the biggest job gains to come in the financial services, technology, health care, energy and international business sectors, which together could create as many as 1.3 million new jobs next year.

When it comes to salaries, though, the technology industry finally seems to be recovering from its dot-bomb hangover.
