

The Five O'Clock Club

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11 Hints for job Hunting in a Tight Market

NEW YORK– The job market is a bit tighter now, so it's helpful to review the basics of what job hunters should be doing at this time.

1. Expand your job-hunting targets.

Think of other geographic areas, larger or smaller companies, other kinds of positions.

2. Expect to be "in search" for the long haul.

The average professional or managerial worker is taking longer to get a job. So it is sensible to develop financial backup plans. What kind of side work could you do to earn money? How could you reduce your expenses? Join a job-hunting group to get support, ideas, and contacts.

When you meet someone who doesn't "have" anything for you right now, that's okay. Plan to get in touch with that person again. Build relationships so you can contact them later.

3. Keep your spirits up.

An alarming number of job hunters in the U.S.A. are becoming discouraged and dropping out of the job market. Don't be one of them. Many of the things you are experiencing are being experienced by just about everybody else. Hang in there, get a fresh start, and you will find something.

4. Think about developing new skills.

If you suspect your old skills are out-of-date, develop new ones. If you can't get a job because you don't have the experience, get the experience. Join an association related to your new skill area.

5. Become a skilled job hunter.

Being good at your job does not make you good at getting jobs. Good job hunters know what they want, what the market wants, and how to present themselves. Learn how to job-hunt like an expert.

11 Hints for Job Hunting in a Tight Market Page-2

6. Look for opportunities.

In this economy, opportunities probably will not come knocking on your door. Chances are, your present company and even the industry you are in are going to change. So rather than just doing the same old job, think of how you can take on new assignments so that you are at the forefront of the changes. Put out feelers to find out whether you are marketable outside your company. Continually test the waters.

7. Target what you want.

As Lily Tomlin said, "I always wanted to be somebody, but I should have been more specific." Be sure you select specific geographic areas, specific industries, and specific positions within those industries.

8. Learn how to get interviews.

There are a lot of techniques for generating interviews. The basic ones are: answering ads, using search firms, contacting companies directly, and networking. Only 10 percent of all jobs are filled through ads and search firms, so it is wise to learn how to contact companies directly and how to network properly.

9. See people two levels higher than you are.

When you are in the initial stages of exploring a target area, contact people at your level to find out about that area and see how well your skills match up.

But then you must contact people who are at a higher level than you are. They are the ones who are in a position to hire you or recommend that you be hired.

10. Job hunting is your job.

Plan your job-hunting campaign. Work at it 35 hours a week if you are unemployed, and 15 hours a week if you are employed. It's only when you are devoting a certain number of hours a week to your search that you can get some momentum built up. Of course, you also need to be concerned about the quality of your campaign.

11. Follow-up, follow-up, follow-up.

After you have met with someone who had no job for you, keep in touch with that person by letting him or her know how your search is going or by sending a magazine article that would be of interest, for example. After a job interview, consider what they liked about you and what they didn't, and how you could influence their hiring decision. Follow-up is the main opportunity you have to turn a job interview into a job offer.

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The Five O' Clock Club is the nation's premier career counseling network. It is the only career program in which members meet with professional counselors and peers on a regular weekly basis in a friendly, club-type format. The Club offers small group career counseling across the U.S. and Canada. www.FiveOClockClub.com

Richard Bayer, Ph.D. and economist, ethicist and author on labor economics, is the Chief Operating Officer of The Five O'Clock Club. He is a frequent guest on local and national media including the TODAY SHOW, CNN and others. He and the Club have also been featured in *The Economist*, *Success* magazine, *FORTUNE* magazine, *Business Week* magazine and other publications. Dr. Bayer is co-chair of The Employment Roundtable, and a member of the Board of Workforce America (The Five O'Clock Club's not-for-profit arm, which helps adults in Harlem).