

# Unemployed YES! Unemployable NO!

## 9 Points you "need to know" to get the job

"Dear Mr. Smith, thank you for returning the completed application form for the position of Assistant. After careful consideration we regret to inform you that your application has been unsuccessful on this occasion." Sound familiar? If you're used to receiving this kind of letter and are on the point of giving up, DON'T! Read on.

Thousands of people every week go through the ritual of scanning the classifieds looking for suitable work. Some are successful, some are not. The result can be discouraging and leaves us with a sense of hopelessness. So, what can we do about it? Let's look at a few pointers which may increase our chances of securing work.

Part 1.

### Getting Ready

#### 1. Are You Prepared?

Our job-search kit needs to contain some basic essentials; current resume, generic cover letter, completed dummy application form (we may need this every time we fill out a company application form, because we can copy from it, instead of having to remember all that information), local labour market information, list of potential employers, job-search planner, telephone (although this is not absolutely essential, a telephone with an answering machine or service is a very beneficial tool to have for many reasons), envelopes and stamps (for those mailed applications), a good set of neat clothes to wear for interviews (personal presentation is a very important part of the process, dress and appearance need to match our enthusiasm for getting a job, which should be impressive), and lastly but not finally, a good attitude. An employer can spot a positive attitude a mile away, and from the feedback that I have read, attitude is the No 1 reason why employers hire.

Once we have all or most of the items in the list above, we are already ahead of most other job-seekers. So, we're prepared, what next?

#### 2. Target The Job-Search

Ask yourself the question, What jobs have I been looking for? Have you been applying for specific positions related to your experience and qualifications? Or are you just looking for anything? Depending on your location, the local labour market, and your own work history, it is often better to target your search into areas that match your experience. For example, a person with lots of retail sales experience who can't find a position in a store may start applying for a driving job. Anyone can drive, right? Well, yes but...an employer who is looking for a driver will look for someone who has driving experience plus forklift qualifications, ability to load etc. If you're a salesperson, look for sales, you stand a better chance of getting hired if you stick to what you know.

### 3. Don't Give Up

The political career of the great statesman, Sir Winston Churchill is a good example to follow. He was subjected to many challenges in his life, and put his political reputation on the line when he dared to disagree with the established status quo. He was rejected by his colleagues, accepted, and then rejected again. In addition, he suffered from depression and called it his black dog. Yet, during one of the greatest periods of crisis the UK has ever known, he exhorted the country by saying never, never, never give in. Fighting against great odds with little resources to start, we all know the outcome of that affair.

Persistence is the key to success.

As we look around our civilised society, we see all manner of different people doing a variety of jobs. We don't all have the same talents and abilities, but each one of us has the potential to succeed in our own particular field. The problem is, we don't all know what our field looks like. I knew a man who was a kitchen assistant in an hotel doing the washing up. He was an easy-going, placid individual with no exceptional intellect or education. But he had a hidden talent. He could juggle. He picked up some lemons one day and gave us a demonstration of his ability. He was good. Had he chosen to use this ability in a different environment, he might have made a few bucks entertaining the public. The message is, never underestimate yourself and lose belief in your skills and abilities. No-one can take away your skills, and somewhere out there someone is looking for a person with your unique experience. Be persistent, don't give up.

### 4. Discover Your Unique Talents

Moving on to the next point, many people feel like the proverbial square peg in a round hole. What hidden talents do you have? This is the bottom line. What do you do that is so motivating, that you lose track of time? Reading, writing, doing odd jobs around the house, art, music, listening to others, politics, surfing the Internet, sport, public speaking? I'm sure you get the point. We all have our interests, and some of those can be used for our line of work. Why not? Our jobs don't have to be a boring, painful, useless waste of our time. We can be doing something that sparks our interest and gets us involved from start to finish.

In order to get on the right track, most people need some form of career guidance or counseling. This helps us to identify our aptitudes and abilities and could lead into a fulfilling career. It is available from independent consultants, or Federal Government agencies, who usually have all the necessary assessment tools. Alternatively, there are many books at the library on the subject of career planning. *What Color Is Your Parachute?* by Richard Nelson Bolles is probably the most popular and useful book on the subject. The reference section of your library is sure to be able to help. Many of these books contain self-administered exercises and questions designed to help discover our aptitudes, skills and interests.

Once a decision has been made on which career path to follow, it is worth inquiring about training through government schemes or college bursars.

## Summary

1. Be prepared for our job search with all the necessary tools
2. Target the job search in areas that are consistent with our experience
3. Exercise persistence in our job search, and continue to maintain a positive attitude despite the barriers we may face
4. Discover our unique hidden talents that we can utilize in our jobs. If we are not sure what hidden talents we have, we can consider career planning through a recognized consultant or agency.

## Part 2

### **The Actual Job-Search**

Let's assume now, that you know what you want to do, have the necessary qualifications or experience, but either you've had difficulty securing a position or you don't know how to conduct an effective job-search. What can we do in addition to scanning the classified ads everyday?

The answer to that question is simple, although not easy.

#### 1. Networking

Leave no stone unturned in our efforts to find a suitable employer. One of the most effective ways to find a job is to tap the hidden job market. Apply for the positions that are never advertised. This is where NETWORKING comes in, and if you're not familiar with that term, it means contacting potential employers, or telling everyone we know that we are in the market for a job.

Many jobs are never posted because the employer already knows someone who is looking for work. Or, he doesn't want a pile of resumes to have to sort through. Or, he just didn't get round to it yet. There are many reasons why employers don't want to post a position, and some don't have to anyway. There are people waiting who are ready, willing and able. An employer would rather choose someone he already knows. By contacting him, talking to him and leaving your resume, you will be one of those people.

#### 2. Plan The Campaign

Many job seekers pound the pavement with a stack of resumes, and leave them wherever they can. Sometimes this method works, but most times it is better to plan a telephone campaign and phone potential employers to get a face-to-face interview. Telling the employer that you are conducting research, and would like to interview him, is usually a good way to get an appointment with the person who does the hiring and

firing. Some employers like people who show initiative and may find a place for you in the company. At the very least you will have met the most important person in the company who will no doubt remember you. Take copies of any testimonials or qualifications you may have, and be prepared to give references if asked. Be prepared is the most important thing to bear in mind; a job may depend on it.

### 3. Be Prepared For Rejection

Unfortunately, rejection is a necessary part of the job-search process. But the more people you see, the better your chances of finding the employer who has a vacancy coming up in the near future. Remember, be positively persistent.

### 4. Maintain Contact And Develop A Relationship

This, could be the single most important step of the campaign, and epitomises the whole point of the exercise. Keep in touch with the people you meet, send them a letter of thanks, and call them periodically to assess the current situation. Developing a rapport with a potential employer, gets more people in the door than any other method known to employment counsellors. Keep a record of all your contacts, and maintain a good system of recording the results of your efforts. This alone will serve to encourage you as you see the effort put in and the progress being made.

### 5. Consider Relocating

One last thing to bear in mind. If you are prepared to travel and re-locate it will increase your chances of finding employment. If you live in an area where work is scarce, and you have a particular job goal in mind, then relocating to where the work is could be the move for you. Don't overlook this point if you are ambitious and want to further your career in your chosen field.

## EPILOGUE

The advice and suggestions offered in this article are given in the hope you will be successful in your job search. At the very least you will have increased your chances of becoming employed. The rejection letter you received yesterday may be your last. Don't wait for your job to come to you, go out and get it.

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