

Job Search Strategy Coaching Program

Launching a job search can feel overwhelming. But, having a comprehensive job-search strategy planned out can make this whole process a lot easier.

During this 6-week program, you'll elevate your job search and be ready to demonstrate to your future employer why you're the perfect candidate.

We cover a ton of information over the six weeks. The coaching sessions will focus on reviewing one of the strategy topics, followed by homework that puts the lessons into practice. By the time you finish the program, you will have an updated resume, a cleaned-up and appropriate social media presence, a plan of attack for applying to jobs you want, and know how to impress in every step of the application process.

The sections below are now a schedule, but gives you an idea of the topics you'll learn.

- Define Your Goals
- Update Your Resume
- Write a Dazzling Cover Letter
- Optimize Your LinkedIn Profile
- Screen Your Social Media
- Know Your Resources
- Work Your Network
- Outsmart the Applicant Tracking System
- Make a Schedule and Flex Your Follow-Up
- Manage Your Communication Strategy
- Write an Awesome Thank You Note
- Nail Your Negotiation

Define Your Goals

Before you update your resume and start applying to open opportunities, you'll need to understand what you're looking for first. Are you hoping for more responsibility or a shorter commute? Are you dying to work for a company that allows dogs in the office? Taking time to identify your goals (big and small) will help you home in on the types of jobs you should be targeting.

Feeling stuck? Try ranking these five critical elements in order of importance:

- Company Culture
- Opportunity for Growth
- Salary and Benefits
- Stability/Security
- Level of Responsibility

If you value stability over all else, a startup may not be the best fit for you. If company culture and opportunity are at the top of your list, an established corporation probably isn't a perfect match.

Identifying specific day-to-day responsibilities you'd like to perform will also be essential as you begin to update your resume, cover letter, and LinkedIn profile. Begin by asking yourself what you've enjoyed doing

most in your career and what you'd prefer to never do again. This exercise should help you to picture your ideal role more clearly.

Last of all, try browsing job postings for different roles you're considering. Do you find the responsibilities described to be interesting and exciting or dull and boring? Jot down the duties that appeal the most to you and keep them in mind as you begin searching and reading job descriptions.

Update Your Resume

When a prospective employer looks at your resume, he should instantly understand what type of position you're looking for and how your experience lines up with his needs. He should also be able to easily pick out your most significant accomplishments.

You mustn't only list your past responsibilities; you want your resume to tell a compelling story of what you've accomplished and how your experience would translate into the new role. For example, if you're planning to apply for executive assistant opportunities that require extensive calendaring, be sure to highlight your experience managing robust schedules for three C-level executives.

You'll need to tweak your resume for each role you apply to, ensuring that you've featured your most relevant experience. Having a solid draft ready will make your life much easier when you're in the midst of the search.

Once you've finished updating your resume, run through the checklist below to make sure you've covered all of the bases.

My resume:

- Is tailored to the types of roles I'm targeting
- Has up-to-date contact information (including my customized LinkedIn URL)
- Does not include my full address (all you need is city and state)
- Features a professional email address
- Highlights my career achievements and accomplishments
- Is easy to read and follow
- Has about four to eight bullet points (or less) for each of my jobs
- Is keyword optimized, meaning it includes words and phrases that are common to the industry and position I'm targeting
- Uses engaging action words (e.g., manage, develop, cultivate, drive, establish)
- Is free of spelling and grammatical errors
- Has been proofread by a trusted friend, colleague, or professional
- Is completely accurate
- Features my most applicable and transferrable experience in the top third of the page

Write a Dazzling Cover Letter

There is debate around whether or not cover letters are still necessary, but as long as some employers still require them, you won't want to skip this step. A stellar one can be the difference between landing an interview or landing in the "thanks, but no thanks" pile, so let's make sure you're turning in your A-game.

While you're also going to need to tailor this for every role you apply to, having an initial template or outline prepared will save you time. Here's a list of everything your cover letter should include to get you started.

My cover letter:

- Is customized for each and every role that I apply to
- Is addressed to the hiring manager, recruiter, or human resources representative at the company
- Includes my up-to-date contact information
- Is broken up into three or four brief paragraphs, or two paragraphs with a bullet-pointed section in the middle
- Clearly states which position I'm applying for in my opening paragraph
- Shows that I've researched the company: one way to demonstrate this is by mentioning a recent company accomplishment or news story: "I saw that you were recently named one of the best companies to work for..."
- Highlights a brief selection of my applicable career achievements
- Is free of spelling or grammatical errors
- Has been proofread by a trusted friend, colleague, or professional
- Is completely accurate

Optimize Your LinkedIn Profile

For a lot of recruiters these days, if you aren't on LinkedIn, you don't exist. Developing a stellar profile and a strong presence will build your professional credibility and help you to get noticed. Once you get your LinkedIn page up-to-date and packed with relevant keywords, you'll likely be surprised at how much more attention your profile will get.

Let's look at the elements of a standout profile. Keep in mind that this should be an extension of your resume and cover letter – not a carbon copy.

My LinkedIn profile:

- ✓ Features a professional profile photo
- ✓ Has an engaging headline
- ✓ Has a customized URL
- ✓ Features an engaging summary
- ✓ Is up to date (includes my most recent work history)
- ✓ Highlights my career achievements and accomplishments
- ✓ Is keyword optimized
- ✓ Includes my education and professional certifications
- ✓ Includes my volunteer experience (If applicable)
- ✓ Has a comprehensive list of my skills
- ✓ Features recommendations from current and former colleagues and supervisors
- ✓ Is free of spelling and grammatical errors
- ✓ Has been proofread by a trusted friend, colleague, or professional
- ✓ Is completely accurate
- ✓ Don't forget to maintain your presence – you can do it in 15 minutes per week

Prepare Your Professional References

You don't need to include a list of references on your resume or cover letter, but you should have a list of strong, professional options ready to go. Keep in mind that most companies have fairly strict policies around references and will typically only confirm your job title, dates of employment, and salary information. You'll want to secure others who would be comfortable speaking from personal experience and not on behalf of the company.

Start by identifying three to five people; these can be past or present colleagues, professors, or supervisors. Then, ask each person in advance if he or she would be willing to serve as a reference. If they say yes, confirm the preferred method of contact, and be sure to stay in touch. If it looks like a prospective employer is getting ready to check your references, give everyone on your list a heads up.

You may come across someone unwilling or unable to serve as a reference for you, and that's OK! You only want to include people who are excited to talk about how great you are. Furthermore, if you suspect that one of your references isn't giving you the glowing recommendation you'd hoped for, take her off your list. You should feel confident in every name you provide.

Screen Your Social Media

By now, we all know that hiring managers are probably Googling you. So, you should be able to answer "yes" to at least one of the following questions:

1. Is your blog, Facebook, Instagram, Tumblr, and any other platform set to private?
2. Is not, are these accounts scrubbed clean of controversial or inappropriate content?

If you answered no to both of these questions, you might want to make some changes to your account settings. If a drunken photo or a rant about your current boss are the first things that pop up when a potential employer googles you, you probably won't be hearing from that company.

Social media can also have a positive impact on your job search. If you are hoping to manage online communities, work in public relations or marketing, or be a writer, regularly posting compelling, professional, industry-related content is a great way to get noticed and show off your skills.

Know Your Resources

Identifying your job-search resources is a crucial step in this process. There are tons of ways to find new opportunities, but the most common ones are job boards, company career pages, recruiting agencies, and networking. Let's look closer at each:

1. Job Boards

These are websites or apps that feature a variety of current job postings.

2. Company Career Pages

Making a list of companies you'd like to work for and going directly to their websites is another great way to find new opportunities.

3. Recruiting Agencies

These are independent firms that match people with openings at their client companies. They may not be for everyone, but they usually have the inside scoop on what the job market looks like and can provide helpful tips on your resume and interview skills.

4. Networking

Your network is probably the most valuable resource that you'll have at your disposal. This includes your friends, family, former colleagues, and professional connections.

******Once you're identified all of your resources, you'll want to spend some time evaluating which will be most useful. Diversifying them will be crucial to your success – don't rely on just one! Pay attention to how often you hear back about jobs you've applied for (even if it's a "thanks but no thanks" email) and take note of which resource you used to find each role. For example, if you apply to a bunch of jobs through an industry-specific job board and never hear anything back, but get a handful of responses whenever you apply through LinkedIn, you'll want to focus more of your attention there.