

## The Top Seven Things To Do To Get A Job

**FORBES.com** - If you've been out of work for several months and aren't getting any interviews--or you're going on interviews but not getting any offers--you should adjust your approach to job-hunting. Here are seven basic steps to take.

### **Beef up your résumé.**

Write a résumé with strong language that emphasizes results. Replace hackneyed expressions like "strong team player" and "possess organizational skills" with strong, active verbs that demonstrate results. Whenever possible, use numbers to indicate performance. Instead of saying "Managed a team of three" say "Managed a team of three employees who interacted with clients and had a 100% client retention rate over two years."

Include keywords related to your skill set and background, since many big companies use computers to screen résumés for phrases like "analyst" or "financial modeling." Have a friend double-check your résumé for spelling and grammatical errors, and always be honest. "You cannot succeed in this competitive market if your résumé isn't 100% accurate," says Connie Thanasoulis-Cerrachio, a career coach and former chief operating officer for Merrill Lynch Campus Recruiting.

### **Write a killer cover letter.**

Write a one-page cover letter that makes a compelling case for why you should be hired. It shouldn't be a regurgitation of your résumé. The introductory paragraph should state the position you're applying for. The middle few paragraphs should highlight the critical three elements of the job description, explaining why you're a good fit for the job. Use the hirer's language. If the job ad says the candidate needs 10 years of experience using communication skills, describe how your communication skills brought in new business at a previous job.

### **Focus your job search.**

Make a list of the companies where you'd most like to work, and use your personal network and sites like LinkedIn to find connections at each one.

### **Be smart about social media.**

First, make sure that your online reputation is clean. Either set your Facebook settings so prospective employers can't see your updates and photos, or choose to post information that presents you in a positive, professional light. Post your résumé and a good photo on LinkedIn.

Start a Twitter account that you use professionally, and follow human resources people at companies that interest you. Retweet what they write when it's good, and comment on any interesting posts. After a few weeks of following them, send them a message directly, saying, "I'd love to talk about your company. It's a place I've always wanted to work, and I'd love to hear about your experience there," suggests Dan Schawbel, author *Me 2.0: Build a Powerful Brand to Achieve Career Success*.

### **Ace your interview.**

Learn as much as you can about the company and the position before you go in for an interview. Always prepare at least three smart questions in advance. In the actual interview, don't be afraid to look eager. Be enthusiastic, and convince the hiring manager that you truly want the job. Don't boast, but boldly state your accomplishments, and tell stories that illustrate your best qualities. Never badmouth a former boss, co-worker or company. Try to mirror the interviewer's tone; if he or she is casual and friendly, try to loosen up.

Be prepared for common questions like "What are your strengths and weaknesses?" The key to answering the weakness part--and you should always have an answer--is to spin it in a positive light. You might say, "I'm not the strongest analytically, but I've been working on that, and when I put together a report, I always have someone check it." "The interviewer wants to know that you're self-aware and mature enough to talk about your weaknesses," says Thanasoulis-Cerrachio. "You have to know how to describe a weakness the right way."

### **Stay in the game.**

Use the time between jobs to keep existing skills fresh and develop new ones. If you have the resources, take a class in a topic that's relevant to your field. Volunteer or find freelance work through your network or on Craigslist. "The worst thing to do is go into an interview, and when they ask what you've been doing, you stare at them with a blank face," says Schawbel.

### **Network, network, network.**

Develop your network, and don't be shy about broadcasting your job search. Ask your friends and contacts who they know and whether they can make introductions for you. Spin your situation in a positive light by telling people you're excited to have new opportunities. Prepare a 15- to 30-second "elevator pitch" that summarizes your job experience and ambitions, and that you can use in social situations, like an alumni cocktail hour.