

CHAPTER 10

JOB SEEKING METHODS

MORALE

Most of the activities in a job search campaign can best be described with words like embarrassing, discouraging, frustrating, irritating and time consuming. Any is serious enough, but since they all apply to a job search campaign, it is easy to see why it is difficult to maintain a high morale.

There is no automatic way to overcome a low morale problem. It is, however, important to keep the following things in mind.

1. Almost everyone experiences morale problems when seeking employment.
2. The frustrating, humiliating, irritating experiences you may have are not usually a reflection on you as a person.
3. Many of the negative aspects of the job search are beyond your control.
4. Getting a job is a series of failures that usually ends with success.

There are some suggestions in dealing with the whole morale problem and some may help to eliminate several of the negative feelings you may have.

1. Be sure that you are really working full-time on your job search.
2. Be sure that you have a plan of action in finding employment.
3. The past is over so live for the present. Have a positive attitude!
4. Expect that your morale will occasionally be low.
5. When things really seem bad, take a few days off from your job search. When you actively return to the job hunt, do it with gusto!

FEAR

Fear is a normal part of finding a job. Most people do not go through the job search process without, at some time or another, being frightened.

Fear can come in different forms. For some job seekers, “the enemy” is people - interviewers, receptionists or members of the contact network. For others, the enemy is paper - applications, resumes or even the personal inventory. For still others, the enemy is all of the above and more. Common fears include fear of failure, fear of rejection and fear of embarrassment.

Most do not eliminate fear during the job search. Help in reducing fear can be the fact that you know the specific things that frighten you. You can work on your fears by working on the following suggestions.

1. Always be prepared for the job seeking processes.
2. Practice interviewing and filling out application forms. Practice should help you feel more confident.
3. If people frighten you, props can help. A prop is a physical object which can help you tell another person about you. Sample props are your resume, samples of your work, a portfolio or letters of recommendation.
4. As stated before, fear is a normal part of the job search process. If you can accept it as such, it will not be as likely to paralyze you.
5. Don't let fear stop you. You can only succeed in your job search if you progress, despite fear.

Fear, like a cold, is something you must learn to live with. Reduce it as best you can and keep reminding yourself, particularly when you are afraid, that you DO have something to offer in finding employment.

DOOR-TO-DOOR CANVASSING

It has been estimated that as many as 50% of all job openings are never advertised. In other words, about 5 of every 10 openings never hit the want-ads, agencies, employment offices, etc.

Those jobs are filled, however, and one of the ways they are filled is through the method known as door-to-door canvassing. This is the process of calling on employers for whom you would like to work, regardless of whether or not there is a known job opening. If it is well planned, door-to-door canvassing is probably the most effective job search method.

Most job seekers do not use it fully or effectively because it requires a lot of time and a lot of courage. Door-to-door canvassing often involves being told “No” to your face.

Every time you go out canvassing you must be as prepared as if you were going to a formal interview. Research each employer you plan to contact and know the name of the person you want to see. It is far more effective to ask for a specific person when door-to-door canvassing.

The goal of door-to-door canvassing is not to see how many applications you can fill out in any given day or merely to drop off resumes and talk to the company receptionist. The goal is not to visit an employer once, never to return again.

The goal of this canvassing method is to get to see the person who does the hiring for the company. It does work!

Once you have thoroughly researched the employers you intend to canvass and have determined the person with whom you should speak, you are ready to begin making personal visits. Your goal is to convince the employer that you would be an outstanding addition to the company organization. To do this you must be able to relate your personal employability specifically to that company.

You must be polite. Sales are not made by being unpleasant. Be professional, patient, persistent and a good listener. Be prepared to answer questions with the company receptionist. While your goal is to see the person who does the hiring, the receptionist’s goal might be to keep you from doing just that. Comments made by the receptionist may include:

1. “Is it concerning employment?”
2. “May I ask what it’s about?”
3. “He/she is not available (or not in) at this time.”
4. “I’m sorry, but we are not accepting applications or hiring at this particular time.”
5. “If you’ll fill out this application, we’ll keep it on file and contact you if anything opens in your field.”
6. “If you’d like to leave your resume, I’ll have Mr./Ms. _____ review it when he/she returns.”

Door-to-Door Canvassing (cont.)

You must be prepared to respond to statements like these without either offending the receptionist or being discouraged. Such responses require thought and preparation.

Questions about why you want to see the person in charge can truthfully be answered by saying you wish to discuss opportunities for future employment. If your target person is not available, you may ask if you can wait or if you can make an appointment.

Merely filling out the application and then leaving often short-circuits the door-to-door canvassing campaign. Remember, your goal is not to fill out applications. You want an interview!

Along the same lines, keep in mind that a resume is least effective when you let it represent you to an employer. Use your resume as a starting point in your conversation with the person who does the hiring. Do not just leave your resume for the employer to review later.

The best time to go door-to-door canvassing is Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, mid-morning and mid-afternoon hours are best. Avoid the week between Christmas and New Year's since many "key" people are out of the office at that time.

Do not canvass employers who you know have employees in your career field on lay-off. Legally they cannot hire anyone in an area if there are any employees laid off.

While this canvassing method is a frustrating, often humiliating approach to the job search, it has one decided advantage – **IT WORKS!** It involves time, organization and careful planning. You may have to visit an employer several times before you are successful. The key is getting to see the person who does the hiring.

Do not be discouraged if an employer is "not hiring" when you make your canvassing calls. The door-to-door calls and return visits pave the way for future hiring.

Your chances of getting to the person who does the hiring increase dramatically each time you make a return visit to an employer. Returning once every two or four weeks is appropriate. Practice what you plan to say each time you visit an employer.

Once in awhile you may be "in the right place at the right time" and get a job offer immediately. More often, however, you will be creating a good impression so that, when a position does occur, the employer will think of you as an ideal candidate. He/she will have a face to associate with your resume or application form.

Once you get to see the person who does the hiring, your primary objective is to convince that employer that YOU would be a valuable employee. You must be able to identify specific things about your background, skills and experiences that relate to that particular employer. Above all, you must be prepared.

DOOR-TO-DOOR CANVASSING EMPLOYER LIST

After prioritizing your employer list in Exercise #18, it becomes necessary to select those employers located in your area with which you wish to make a personal contact.

Select ten (10) employers from your priority employer list and prepare columns for your first, second and third contacts with each employer.

<u>Employer</u>	<u>Dates</u>		
	<u>1st</u> <u>Contact</u>	<u>2nd</u> <u>Contact</u>	<u>3rd</u> <u>Contact</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Pull the employer information cards from your preferred employer card file system prepared in Exercise #19.

If you have not already done so, develop and reproduce your resume to take along when contacting the employers on your door-to-door campaign.

RESUME/TARGETED COVER LETTER CAMPAIGN

The resume/targeted cover letter campaign is a “rifle” approach, a direct mail campaign. You are targeting a specific letter to a specific person, aiming at a specific job. Such a campaign involves organization, research and planning. It also requires follow-up.

In a resume/targeted cover letter campaign you will send an individual your cover letter, with a resume enclosed, to each preferred employer on your employer list. This method of job is most effective when correspondence is sent to the person who might ultimately be your boss.

A campaign of this nature will probably not get you a job offer because, more often than not, there will not be any job openings at that particular time. Therefore, your objective is to make a positive impression so that, when an opening does occur, YOU immediately come to mind as a likely candidate.

If you do not get a response to your targeted campaign letter, do not give up! Write a second letter to the same person. Restate your interest in the company and indicate that you will phone that person to set up the interview.

Keep accurate records of all correspondence you send, along with records of any results. The resume/targeted cover letter campaign should be an important part of your job search particularly if you have preferred employers who are outside of your local geographic area.

RESUME/MASS MAILING CAMPAIGN

The resume/mass mailing campaign is one of the most commonly used methods in the job search process. It is also one of the least effective.

A resume/mass mailing campaign involves mass-mailing a standard resume, along with a standard cover letter, to a large number of employers. Because the letters to a variety of employers and employees in the company, the response to this kind of campaign is less than ten percent. Employers are literally swamped by resumes, especially around graduation time. This is another reason why the response rate is so low.

All of this makes the mass mailing of resumes seem like a rather futile process. However, if you receive one good job lead from such a campaign, it may have been well worth the time, money and effort you have spent. Only you can weigh the costs and benefits of a resume/mass mailing campaign.

Keep a list of all employers to whom you send resume, along with a record of any response you receive. For those employers who do respond in one form or another, you may want to pursue the contact, either through a personal visit or with an individual letter sent to the appropriate departmental supervisor.

RESUME/TARGETED COVER LETTER CAMPAIGN EMPLOYER LIST

Essentially, this a low volume mail campaign which features your resume and an original (not a copy or reproduction) cover letter sent to a specific person, possibly a departmental supervisor, who might ultimately be your boss.

Select ten (10) employers from your priority employer list and prepare columns for your first and second letters and telephone call to each employer. The employers you select may be the same employers you selected for your Door-to-Door Canvassing campaign, or they may be a completely different group.

<u>Employer</u>	<u>Dates</u>		
	<u>Letter, Resume</u>	<u>2nd Letter</u>	<u>Phone Call</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Pull the employer information cards from your preferred employer card file system prepared in Exercise #19.

If you have not already done so, develop and reproduce your resume to send to the employers on your Resume/Targeted Cover Letter campaign list. In addition, prepare individual letters of application to send to these employers.

Other Methods To Finding Employment

Another extremely important method in searching for employment involves company web sites. This is the process of searching web sites of employers for whom you would like to work, regardless of whether or not there is a known job opening. If the employer has a job to fill it will likely be posted somewhere on their web site. You may be encouraged to apply via online application and attach your resume and cover letter.

Searching for a job should begin about three to four months prior to graduation from your chosen career field. Additional steps you should take includes, but not limited to, the following:

1. Register with Student Employment Services at NWTC if you are a current NWTC student or past NWTC graduate
2. Practice your interviewing skills. Prepare yourself for the types of questions you may be asked at a job interview
3. Make sure your telephone voice message is appropriate for employers who may call you to arrange an interview or offer you a job
4. If you have an account on FaceBook or MySpace please remove any pictures that may be offensive from an employer's perspective
5. Search other important web sites that list employment opportunities such as, but not limited to, Wisconsin JobNet, NationJob, etc.
6. Attend and participate in job/career fairs offered in your job seeking area