

The Strategic Steps to Success

Planning is essential to any success. When you're given a few weeks of leisure time and wish to spend it traveling, you're more likely to get your money's worth by spending a bit of time online seeking the best deals on airfare, hotels, and car rentals. If you're going grocery shopping, you're much less likely to spend unnecessarily if you plan ahead with a grocery list and coupon clipping. If you're in the market for a new family vehicle, you're better off researching the sales, taking test drives at a few dealerships, seeking car reviews, then making a final decision.

It is equally important to plan how you will conduct your job search — a good, well-thought out strategy will put you much closer to your dream job. Embarking on a job search without a clear plan of attack is no better than aimlessly wandering around a grocery store with an empty belly and no clear idea of what your food needs might be.

We've focused this month's issue on this very idea: the importance of thinking strategically when it comes to the job search. I hope you find it an inspiring motivator that helps you get back on track to your future!

As usual, I encourage you to continue sending in your ideas and suggestions to newsletter@flowork.com.



John-Paul Hatala, Ph.D.
Flowork Founder

This month's FlowTIP:
Manage your time.
See page 3 for more information.

What's New?

Social Capital Development: An Online Learning Program

Flowork has created a unique, self-directed, online, interactive course and certification program that instructs individuals how to systematically turn their own personal social networks (online or not) into powerful tools for accomplishing their everyday goals and objectives. To view a demo, click on the following links:

Social Capital Development Course Overview:

http://cls.emantras.com/Clients/Flowork/Social_Capital_Development/overview/Launch.html

Social Capital Development Course Module 1:

http://cls.emantras.com/Clients/Flowork/Social_Capital_Development/module1/Launch.html



Dr. Hatala Conducting Presentations in Toronto

If your agency purchases ten copies of *The Strategic Networker* and is located in the Greater Toronto Area, Dr. Hatala will personally deliver and conduct a one-hour session on strategic networking for your staff and clients. For more information please email info@flowork.com.

Online Job Search Management Demo!

Flowork is proud to announce the launch of a unique online job search case management system that will allow practitioners to monitor their client's job search via the Internet. If you would like more information on this online tool or would like to sign up for an online demo, please contact info@flowork.com.

Managing a Job Seeker Caseload *With Less Resources and Time*

Now that layoffs and downsizing are becoming a more and more common occurrence, career practitioners are handling a larger caseload of job seekers than they ever have before. So how do we manage more with less?



A good starting point is to have a plan. Whether you're a career practitioner working for a non-profit employment agency or out on your own working privately, the same principles apply. If your case loads are getting larger and your resources are staying the same, finding a solution will not come about as a result of the same old routines.

The key to handling more job seekers with less resources is to think strategically not only from your caseload perspective but from that of the clients you're serving. A good plan will accommodate one-on-one time as well as provide a solid framework for self-directed work done by the job seeker. In fact, the latter is probably the most important — because even in good times, the biggest challenge to helping anyone is that it tends to happen when you're not even with them.

Job search research performed and reviewed by Flowork over the last number of years has focused on two major themes: job search clarity and job search intensity.

Clarity is all about thinking strategically about the type of job the individual is looking for and having a backup plan if they're unsuccessful in obtaining their ideal job. The unfortunate reality is that most job seekers won't get their ideal dream job — Job A — and will have to resort to Job B. Acknowledging this right from the beginning is crucial if they are going to increase the likelihood of success.

Along with clarity comes job search intensity. The more work or effort an individual puts towards their job search, the greater the likelihood of not only finding a job but doing so in a shorter amount of time. It's just common sense, right? Although it seems like a fairly simple concept, it's one of the most difficult things to actually encourage a job seeker to do, especially if they have been unemployed for an extended period of time. Remember this; the longer your client is unemployed the more difficult it

will be to help them. A number of factors impact their transition, including lack of motivation, depression, and low self-confidence just to name a few.

Basically, if you can ensure that there is some clarity and that job search intensity is high, success may occur simply by accident — the job seeker could be in the right place at the right time. So how do you manage this?

Flowork has placed a lot of effort in developing systems that manage this process. Most recently, an online methodology was introduced that allows the job seeker and coach to work together in managing clarity and intensity. You can check it out for yourself at www.jobsearchboard.com. The system will allow your clients to think strategically about their job search — but, more importantly, it will monitor their job search intensity.

Essentially, it was built on “push technology,” which means that an email is automatically generated that reminds the job seeker something is about to happen or needs to be done. At the same time, it sends the same information to the coach so that they can be ready to assist in the process. Ultimately, this allows the job coach to easily manage their client's transition back into the labor market.

The goal of developing the tool was to ensure that career practitioners who are helping job seekers in the active job search phase are able to manage multiple clients in a virtual real-time environment.

With this in mind, there are also a number of low-tech ways to manage the job search process for your clients while using the same principles. This will require keeping track of job search numbers and ensuring that job search clarity is prevalent throughout the process, but is essentially the same as the online format (except everything is done manually).

If you're interested in learning more about the process, please do not hesitate to contact Flowork today. Whether it's through a high- or low-tech vehicle, the same principles apply. Either way, Flowork is confident that you'll be able to find some useful tools for managing more with less.

Conduct a Job Search!

Don't Just Look for a Job!

What's the difference between looking for a job and conducting a job search? On the surface, it doesn't appear to be much since the end goal is the same. There are, however, major differences between the two.

Both psychological and tactical advantages can be obtained when you tell people you're conducting a job search. The key to any successful job search is all about thinking strategically. The organization is certainly searching for the right fit with a candidate, but the job seeker is also looking for the right fit with an organization. It is much more likely that many job seekers will take positions that are not their first choice — and in doing so, they take the risk of not positioning them self for future opportunities that are more in line with their career goals.

When conducting a job search, you're essentially determining which opportunities align with your career ambitions. If they don't align, you may choose not to take the job. Letting employers know that you're conducting a job search not only brings credibility, it allows you to negotiate from a stronger position if a job offer is made.

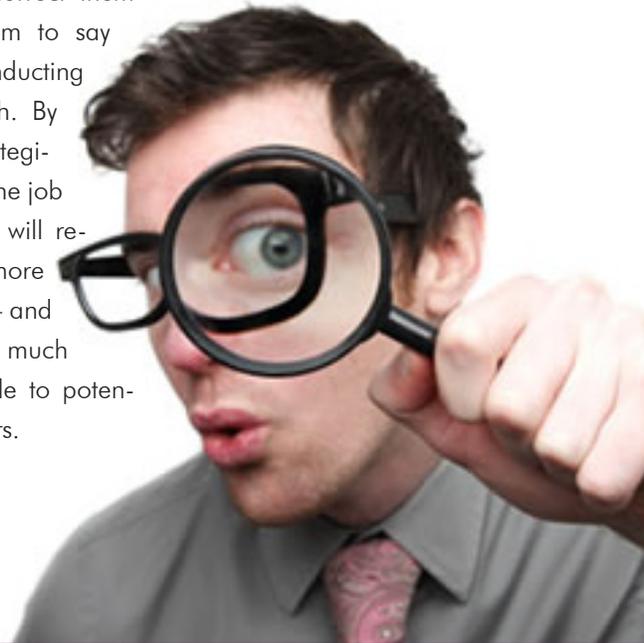
Psychologically, "conducting a search" instead of aimlessly "looking for a job" provides the job seeker with a sense of control. The key is to rule out the opportunities that do not align with long-term goals — which, in and of itself, provides a sense of control in a process which is often left to the employer alone. If the job seeker feels that they have some control in the process, it could positively — and greatly — affect their motivation to continue conducting the job search.

From the tactical side, conducting a job search brings credibility to the job seeker. If you tell an employer at an interview,

"I'm in the process of conducting a job search," it demonstrates the fact that you're not simply looking for a job but rather an opportunity that strategically makes sense to the job seeker and the organization. If it results in a job offer, the job seeker can then remind the employer that they're still in the process of conducting a job search and that they require some time to make sure this is the right fit for them and the employer.

Most importantly, conducting a job search is about being strategic. After all, you can still be employed and conduct a job search. No one may be the wiser. The reality is that the more people know that the job seeker is looking for work, the greater the likelihood of running into some information that may be helpful to finding a job.

So the next time you or your client tells someone they're looking for a job, correct them and tell them to say they're conducting a job search. By thinking strategically about the job search, they will remain much more motivated — and will become much more credible to potential employers.



This Month's flowTIP:

Manage your time. Most people are unaware that the job search is a date-driven process. The time it takes to find a job depends on a number of factors, most especially those affected by the organization's hiring cycles. A hiring cycle is the timeline from when an employer initially posts a position through the time a new candidate begins to work. The hiring cycle determines the chance of landing the job, and if we're not moving from step to step within the typical hiring cycle, the likelihood of getting the job dramatically decreases. If we become more aware of the cycles in our industry, we're more likely to understand our chances of getting a job. Realistically speaking, these cycles occur constantly, which is why it is so important to identify them. Once we do, it's easier then to manage the cycles we're in and attempt to increase our chances of landing the job.

Dealing with Job Search Burnout

by Amy Lindgren - March 1, 2011 - The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Recently, I presented to a group of job seekers on the topic of job search burnout.

Things started out well enough, with participants providing their symptoms: hitting the wall, feeling hopeless, doing the same things without success, losing energy ... each person's answer was descriptive enough to elicit nods from the others.

The conversation turned dicey, however, when one fellow declared that current job search strategies are all "bull." This isn't a new situation for me as a presenter, and I've written about similar experiences before. But I had to admit, this job seeker was very articulate in making his point.

Unlike some participants in past workshops whose frustration seems focused on the world at large, this man (I'll call him Bill) took issue with people in my profession. "Everyone says the same thing," he said heatedly. "Contact the company directly. Network. Don't wait for a job to be posted. But it's all bull. It doesn't work."

Of course I'm paraphrasing, since I wasn't writing down his comments. But I was certainly paying attention. Because what Bill was parroting back to me from other job search professionals was essentially the same advice I was about to give the group. And many were nodding in agreement with his comments. Uh-oh. Tough crowd.

It's probably lucky I was giving this talk in Minnesota, where the cultural reluctance to make a scene overrides almost any impulse for revolt. Eventually I was able to win back most of those in the room -- I think. Still, the level of frustration Bill and others were expressing reminds me that those feelings are likely shared by job seekers elsewhere. With that in mind, I'll provide here some of my thoughts and remedies for job search burnout.

As a first step, if you think you're burned out, it's worth noting your symptoms. Whether you're dealing with a job search, a bad work situation, or any other seemingly endless situation, you might be experiencing a common pattern of feeling overwhelmed, hopeless, lethargic and generally unenthusiastic about your circumstances. Expressing these feelings in writing or conversation will help you see that they're valid and need to be dealt with so you can move forward.

When it comes to job search, I have learned that easing burnout involves attention to three areas: isolation, process and timeline.

In terms of isolation, the primary remedy is to connect with others on a frequent schedule. In some cases, a job search buddy or support group will help. Others will find better relief by using a therapist to deal with the emotions they're experiencing, particularly if there's a question of depression or anxiety to be managed.

Process refers to the actual steps or strategies for job search, and timeline means the dates one chooses in advance for completing those steps. Surprisingly, an awful lot of job seekers have little or no strategy when it comes to job search. They launch themselves at the market full of hope and energy, but with no plan for success. In their defense, this technique often works in a better market, and it may well have worked for them in the past. But a tight market requires an airtight plan.

The value of process when fighting job search burnout is twofold. First, one could have a reasonable expectation of earlier success, which might keep burnout at bay altogether. But if not, another value of having a process is the sense of control it elicits. And it's not a false sense, mind you, but actual control based on predetermined decisions about how a job search will be conducted.

As an example, Bill was relating the outline of a very useful strategy, where one decides what job to seek, then identifies the companies that might use those workers, then contacts the department managers directly or through networking to see if they need a employee. This is how you find unadvertised openings, and it's been working for decades.

But this isn't the entire formula. One needs predetermined quotas for their daily contacts and the determination to make them, no matter what. Then one needs a predetermined date on the calendar at which to evaluate the results of the search -- and to move on to Plan B if needed. To do otherwise would be to repeat the same steps without success for months on end -- a sure way to invite burnout while also relinquishing control.

I can't promise that this will eliminate burnout, but I do know that attention to the issues of isolation, process and timeline is never wasted, whether the job seeker is burned out or not.

Flowork offers the benefits of social capital to anyone of any age. The Education Flowork Program offers educational institutions (Kindergarten through higher education) to ensure their students, faculty and staff become aware of the power of information by networking. Corporate Flowork and the Flowork Workforce Development Program introduces corporations, non-profit organizations, government, and workforce development groups to ways they might increase the flow of information between individuals, departments, divisions and units. Floworks founder Dr. John-Paul Hatola is available for speaking engagements nationwide. If you are interested in booking him for an on-site speaking engagement, please call us at 1-877-flowork or visit www.flowork.com and click "contact us" to discuss your needs.



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