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Job Search Checklist

Pre-Job Search:

- Complete Personal Inventory
 - ✓ Is it possible that you don't need a career change? If you're on the fence about making this big move, you may enjoy this read:
 - ["Love Your Job-The New Rules for Career Happiness"](#)
 - ✓ Once you've decided it's time to make a career change, the first step is to identify your Skills. There are some great books on this topic. But this is one of my favorites.
 - ["Now Discover your Strengths"](#)
 - ✓ Find a Job you LOVE. Yes it is possible! Here are a couple of books to help you on this journey.
 - ["The Pathfinder: How to Choose or Change you Career for a Lifetime of Satisfaction and Success."](#)
 - ["Live the Life of Your Dreams by Doing Work You Love: A Beginner's Guide to Gain Clarity, Get Unstuck and Take Action"](#)
 - ["Mid-Life Career Rescue"](#)
- Research Jobs to find Skill Set Match-no magic here. Simply run a google search for the job title/industry you've decided you want. Read the job postings/descriptions and look for required skills; experiences and keywords used.
- Social Media Account Maintenance
 - ✓ Delete Unprofessional Posts from all Accounts (Twitter/G+/Instagram etc.)
 - ✓ If you haven't posted in months (or years!) pick one or two channels and get active.
- LinkedIn
 - ✓ Create a [custom URL](#) that includes your name.
 - ✓ Select your profile picture carefully-look at what others in your field use for ideas but when in doubt, always err to professional.
 - ✓ Get creative with an [attention getting headline](#).
 - ✓ Create/Update Profile.
 - ✓ [Adjust Privacy Settings](#) if your employer doesn't know you're looking.
 - ✓ Join Job Seeker [FREE webinar](#). The webinar promotes LinkedIn Premium feature which isn't free, but you'll pick up lots of great tips.
 - ✓ Follow Companies for your Target Employers.
 - ✓ Follow/Connect with Recruiters-Field specific if possible.
 - ✓ Use [Advanced Search](#) feature to find those with your desired job and/or company. Read their profiles thoroughly paying special attention to the keywords they use in their profiles and experiences. You should also run Google search on the job title to ensure your results are consistent.
 - ✓ Connect with those in your field (if appropriate). NOTE: You should always send a "Message" through the system once your connection is accepted. It doesn't have to be a novel. Just a short note, "thanks for connecting. How can I help?"

Pre-Job Search (Continued):

- [Join Groups](#) relative to your desired field.
- Engage by either posting your own content or “Liking” and “Commenting” on others posts at least once per week.
- Create Job Board Accounts
 - ✓ While it can be almost impossible to find a job through one of the popular on-line providers, they do offer “real” jobs and as such you should be active in this space. With that said, it should be a minimal amount of your job search efforts. It can take a while to find sites relevant to your industry and profile creation can be a time suck as well. Get these housekeeping items done before your job search heats up

Job Search-It’s Time!!

- Resume
 - ✓ AFTER you identify the types of jobs you want, update your resume. Be sure to tailor your experiences, description of accomplishments etc. to your desired position.
 - ✓ If you’re struggling with your Resume, there are TONS of great resume writing services. Simply run a Google search for “Resume Writing Services” and find one that has a style (and fee structure!) that works for you.
 - ✓ Make sure to include your full name in the file name for your Resume. So mine would look like, KathiMillerMiller.Resume Recruiters love this because it saves them the time to rename your info.
 - ✓ Check my post, [“8 Deadly Resume Mistakes”](#)
 - ✓ Save your Resume as a PDF to avoid any formatting problems when sending electronically.
 - ✓ Upload your Resume to LinkedIn and all job posting boards (think Monster, Career Builder etc.)
- Find Jobs
 - ✓ Keep active with your LinkedIn posting and continue to build connections in your field.
 - ✓ Identify folks you feel could help in your search and make it a point to interact with them. “Liking” or “Commenting” on their post is the easiest way to build those relationships within LinkedIn.
 - ✓ Let your Network know specifically what kind of opportunity you’re looking for.
 - ✓ Spend time on-line, but first read, [“5 Reasons On-line Job Searches Fail”](#)
- Cover Letters
 - ✓ Commit to creating a personalized Cover Letter for every job. Yes, it will take time. But it’s an absolute requirement if you want your dream job. Besides, recruiters can smell canned cover letters miles away!
 - ✓ Make sure to include your full name in the file name for your Cover Letter. So mine would look like, KathiMillerMiller.CoverLetter
 - ✓ Read, [“Tips to Make Your Cover Letter Rock”](#)
 - ✓ Save your Cover Letter as a PDF to avoid any formatting issues when sending electronically.

Interviews-Who Hoo!!

- Research
 - ✓ Use LinkedIn to research each person you will be meeting with.
 - ✓ Review the company website and LinkedIn pages. And be sure to check out the “About Us” section on their website as you’ll find lots of great stuff there.
 - ✓ Know your value. Never go to an interview without a solid idea of what compensation the position is worth.
 - ✓ Talk to someone who works at the company. Maybe it’s someone you already know or a second or third degree connection on LinkedIn.
 - ✓ Check out the latest industry related news. It’s not a requirement that you know every small detail, but being able to chat about the latest trends/topics will be a great help during your interview.

Interviews-Who Hoo (Continued)!!

- Interview Prep
 - ✓ Expect lots of situational questions like, “what did you do when?” or “what would you do if?”
 - ✓ Pick examples to demonstrate your skills. For example: instead of saying, “Yes I get along well with co-workers.” You may share a recent story of some conflict between co-workers where you were able to take a leadership role and solve the problem.
 - ✓ Find someone to practice with. In an ideal world, it should be someone you respect and aren’t overly familiar with, but in a pinch your mom or best friend will work. If you’re taking this approach, just make it as realistic as possible!
 - ✓ And no matter what, prepare 3-4 questions to ask them! Remember this interview is as much your opportunity to see if it’s a good fit for you. For some ideas on this, check out [“13 Interview Questions to Score a Home Run!”](#)
 - ✓ Gather your materials. If you have completed similar work, it’s a great idea to take examples with you to the interview. It can be a bit time-consuming to find and decide how to present what you want to share, so don’t wait until the last minute on this!
 - ✓ Practice your handshake. And yes I’m serious. Make it firm and maintain eye contact.
 - ✓ Review your Resume. Has something changed or could you perhaps tailor it a bit more to this specific opportunity? Make any changes and then print 5-7 copies to take with you.
 - ✓ Plan your style. While an interview doesn’t necessarily require a shopping trip, what you wear is important. Match your style to that of the company/industry you’re meeting with. When in doubt, go safe with a business suit. And don’t forget, if you’re wearing something you already own, check to see if it needs taken to the dry cleaners.
 - ✓ Plan your note-taking approach. It can be as simple as an old fashioned portfolio or as tech friendly as an iPad. But it’s critical you show up with some sort of ability to take notes during the interview.

It’s almost here....the day BEFORE your interview:

- Take a test drive. Being late for an interview can be fatal so it’s important to minimize the chance for errors. Drive to the exact location of your interview at the same time of day to allow for traffic congestion. Time your route and then add an extra 15-20 minute cushion. PS- don’t forget to allow time to find parking and freshen up in a restroom before heading to the reception area.
- Get lots of rest the night before your interview. It’s hard to be sharp, vibrant and quick on your feet when you were awake all night running through scenarios!
- Gather your Resume and portfolio items together.
- Pick up clothes from the dry cleaners and/or press everything
- Confirm the interview with a simple email indicating you are looking forward to the discussion.
- Review the company website; LinkedIn profile of those you will be meeting with; job description; the examples you plan to share and the questions you want to ask.
- Plan to go light on the perfume/cologne and heavy on the personal hygiene. And don’t forget that your hands tell a lot about your personality. Fingernails should be clean and for the ladies nail polish should be either clear or neutral.
- Catch up on current events. Even if you don’t regularly read the paper, it’s important to know what’s going on in the world. While admittedly you want to stay away from politics, sex and religion it’s likely you will gain some tidbits that may come in handy for rapport building.
- And RELAX! I know it’s easier said than done but you’ve done all your preparation so spend the evening doing something that helps you chill.

Interview Day-Finally!

- Review all your materials one final time.
- Grab your portfolio of work examples and whatever you plan to use for notetaking.
- Leave at the time you determined was necessary during your test drive.
- After finding a parking place, turn off your phone. Yes, I said OFF. Silent is still a distraction. In fact, if you feel comfortable doing so, your best bet is to leave your phone in your car.
- Find a restroom before checking in at reception. Do that final check on hair; make-up and teeth. There's nothing worse than finding out after the interview that you had some remnants from lunch just hanging out!
- Once you check in, it's likely you will wait in a reception area for a few minutes. While waiting, make sure you exhibit great posture and whatever you do, stay off your cell phone! In many cases the hiring manager will come to the reception area to greet you. And being glued to your cell phone is a horrible first impression!
- When you are greeted, execute that handshake you practiced!
- Let the interviewer set the pace. If they want to chat for a bit, then by all means chat away. But if they want to jump right into things then get your game face on!
- Make great eye contact. The importance of eye contact during interviews simply can't be overstated. The ability to make eye contact demonstrates confidence and makes you appear trustworthy.
- Find a way to weave your real-world examples into your responses to questions.
- Don't be afraid to ask a follow-up question.
- Never answer a question you don't fully understand. If you're unsure simply ask for greater detail.
- Typically the interviewer will ask if you have any questions near the end of the interview. But even if they don't offer, it's critical you ask the 3-4 questions you chose during your Interview Prep stage.
- Ask what the next steps are and what kind of timeline you can expect.
- Make a strong summary statement before ending the interview. This can be as simple as recapping a couple of points from your discussion and sharing that you would love to join the team or as bold as telling them why you should be their top candidate.
- Thank for their time; make eye contact and offer a strong parting handshake.

Post Interview:

- Write a hand-written (yes people still do that!) thank you note to the person you met with. And if you can figure out a gentle way to weave in a reminder of something you talked about (personal or professional), even better!
- Send any additional items requested during the interview to the hiring manager. This could perhaps be a writing assignment or other type of skills test.
- Connect with anyone you met during the interview process on LinkedIn. Once they accept your connection request, send a quick message thanking them for the opportunity and the connection.
- If you have any contacts inside the organization, reach out to them and let them know how the interview went and that you'd appreciate any additional insight they can offer.
- And wait. And wait. And wait until just **before** the timeline they shared with you during the interview. At this point, you want to send a quick email to the hiring manager. Your message is simple and might look something like this: "The more I think about this position; I'm excited and think it's a great fit for both of us. I know you thought you would be close to wrapping things up about now. How is your process going?"
- Continue to look for other career opportunities. No matter how well you may feel the interview went, you don't have a job offer yet. So, if you're serious about a career change continue looking for opportunities.

Job Offer:

- If you received a job offer, congratulations!!!
- Now the next question is will you accept it? Believe it or not, there are lots of things to weigh before making a career move. Check out [“10 Things to Consider BEFORE accepting a New Job”](#) for some important tips.
- If you can negotiate a package you are happy with, it’s important to start your new job off on the right foot. While there are lots of things to consider, these [“14 Tips to Succeed in Your New Job”](#) should get you started.

Rejection Letter:

- If you weren’t successful in getting a job offer, take a deep breath. While no one likes rejection the reality is that only one person got the job offer. For some specific tips check out, [“So You Received a Rejection Letter...Now What?”](#)