



Career Change Guide

from innovative

We thank you for choosing Innovative as your career partner! If you are new to working with a search firm, then we would like to get you familiar with the process.

First and most importantly, we may not have your next job waiting, but our goal is to arm you with the tools necessary to conduct an aggressive and comprehensive career search both now and in the future. We have provided our Career Marketing Pro to help you down the path to a successful and prosperous career, so best of luck!



E.C.L.A.M.S.: You and the Job Market

Find out quickly how you match up with the most important components of any Job Search and then take your results to the market.

The Resume is Your Calling Card

Creating your own personal & professional brand could be your only chance to get in the door with many companies. Let us help ensure your best message is sent the first time, with our resume creation essentials.

Use References to Differentiate

Your secret weapon in the battle of the job search is the lasting impression on those you have worked with over your career...we'll show you how to maximize your success in this section.

Using the Internet to Manage Your Career

We will show you some strategies for uncovering more jobs and how to get your resume towards the top of the stack, but also how to master the power of social networks to find the hidden jobs your peers and competitors don't know about.

Market Yourself...Don't Wait for Them!

While there are many search firms & career services out there that may help, they are limited to the jobs their clients are listing with them. If you want to maximize your results, follow these helpful steps to uncover more opportunities and how to increase your response rates from companies.

Make or Break: Interviewing to Win

Whether you feel you are a strong interviewer or not, this section offers some tips and strategies from over fifteen years of success and failure. If you don't get a laugh, you will at least find out how to maximize your minutes with companies and avoid some popular pitfalls.

E.C.L.A.M.S. - You and the Job Market

Not everyone sees their career in black and white. While some career professionals look at money, others are more interested in the skills they develop or how close they work to home. Our E.C.L.A.M.S. model was developed to get you thinking about what is most important as you look to match up with potential employers.

Environment

Everyone wants to enjoy where they work, but they also want to make sure the people they work with and the tools around them are the best fit for them. Do you enjoy the freedoms you need to be truly successful? Are your co-workers supportive or competitive? Are you allowed to use the Internet, listen to music, or take a sanity day? What type of environment suits you best?

Challenge

Most people do not enjoy sitting idly by while the world passes them by. As humans, most of us strive to learn more and be forced to think, but we also want to be rewarded for it, so having the type of career that encourages learning, a free exchange of ideas, and some inherent risk is important. What's most important to you?

Location

Is it really the best use of your time to spend two or more hours of your day sitting on a freeway or on an airplane? Make sure you find a job that is close enough in proximity (20-40 minutes) so that you can get to work each day without stress. How long a commute is too much for you?

Advancement

Not everyone cares if they get promoted; in fact many people are simply happiest with as little responsibility as possible. But most of us like to at least know that opportunities do exist to improve our situation, learn more, or be recognized for the work we do. Are you getting the recognition you deserve?

Money

We can't really live without it today, and most of us wish we had more. But how important money is in your career should never be the sole reason for change. We applaud you for wanting more, and in most cases it serves as the perfect measurement to your hard work and success, but if you let it define you and your entire career you may wind up feeling a void at the end of the day. How much is enough for you when it comes to your job?

Stability

Most people would be surprised to know that when they feel like they want more money, what they really want is the stability a good job can bring. What good is \$10,000 more per year if you might be out of work for a month or two? Be sure that when you choose your next career destination that the company you are joining has a good track record of employee tenure and solid financial legs. How important is it to you to know your job won't disappear for reasons beyond your control?

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S tability

Your Resume is Your Calling Card

Constructing a resume can be made into a profession all its own, and there are companies that try and sell these services. All you really need to know is what we have provided free of charge.

Many pros like you fall into the trap of using the template provided by Microsoft and do not keep your potential reader in mind. We have broken down all the components of a good resume and how you can best approach it, but to see some good final versions, visit www.ispycareers.com.



Who is My Audience?

Recruiters

Most agencies need to move quickly to fill their clients' jobs, so you need to get them interested and match your resume to many jobs they may have. Use a skills KEYWORDS section to get them to quickly spot your strengths and match you accordingly.

Human Resources & Corporate Recruitment

They always look for what is dictated by their company vision and hiring culture, so address things like JOB TENURE and CAREER PROGRESSION, use proper grammar and tense, and explain any education with specific date ranges.

Hiring Managers

Your future supervisor is looking for specific skills and HOW YOU APPLIED THEM ON THE JOB, so don't just describe what you did, but include the tools you did the work with, such as important technologies, utilities, and training. Hint: Create a CERTIFICATIONS section if you have any.

What are the Essential Components of a Great Resume?

OBJECTIVE OR SUMMARY STATEMENT

Senior Software Development Professional seeking an opportunity with a team environment that values creativity and enables me to maximize my capabilities.

SKILLS

Your SKILLS section should include all the technical and non-technical attributes that you have used over your career, classified by Operating Systems/Platforms, Languages, Databases, Utilities, and any other Methodologies or industry-related terms.

EXPERIENCE

Your job experience should clearly state the chronology of your career, with the most recent at the top and descending from there. When listing several job moves within a long tenured job, always list the entire date range with the employer and then specific titles as sub-sections within. Also, below each job you have held, list a TECHNOLOGIES USED paragraph below.

CERTIFICATIONS & TRAINING

Any technology or industry certifications or completed training you have received should be displayed in their own section in the resume.

EDUCATION

List an education section whether you have received a college degree or not, even if you list highest level completed as your high school, or some coursework completed toward Bachelor of Science at the University of Texas.

Use References to Differentiate

Employers find that the most important way to validate the strengths of a potential hire is to check with professional references, but most will wait until they are ready to make an offer before they take the time to check with them.

So why wait until the end to use these powerful contacts to your advantage?

By assembling your references ahead of time, including powerful letters of recommendation from those who have valued your work, you will be amazed at how many more doors you will open and interviews you land.



"I have worked with David for five years and there is no other Software Consultant who could handle the challenges our clients demand from us on a daily basis. Not only is the quality of his work phenomenal, but his client management skills are world class."

Who are the best references?

Most people assume that only their current boss or a former manager will suffice, but there are many other great options for references. Look for those who can attest the quality of your work, how well you perform as part of a team, and how well you handle challenges:

- Co-Workers & Peers
- Vendors or Partners
- Clients and Customers
- Team Leads

Turn Your References into a High-Value Marketing Tool

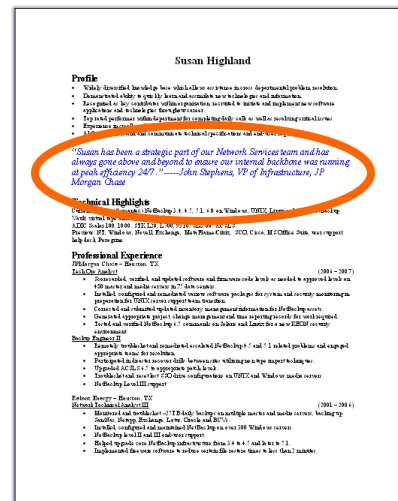
There are multiple vehicles for marketing your references to your advantage, but perhaps no other method is as valuable and easy to utilize than the resume itself.

By inserting pull quotes into the body of your resume, either within the section of employment where the reference is applicable or at the top of the page you will draw the reader to a unique sales pitch on you and your skills.

Other ways of marketing references include:

- Cover Letter or Email Introduction
- Separate "References Summary"
- Letters of Recommendation
- Online Social Networking Profile (LinkedIn, Facebook)

By taking extra steps in the beginning of your search and assembling your references, you not only differentiate yourself from the pack, but add value to your profile.



The resume is a great place to insert quotes from references

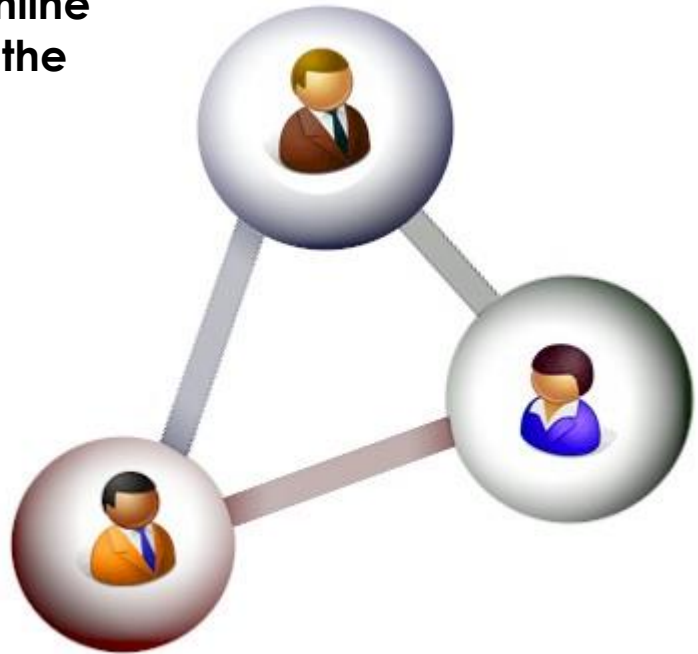
Using the Internet to Manage Your Career

Creating and Maintaining an Online Career Biography has become the Wave of the “Present”

Just two years ago, online social networking consisted of playful and colorful homepages where only young people exchanged dating tips and exchanged info with classmates.

Today, the web has become a virtual business meet market that offers endless possibilities for reaching any audience.

With the right guidance and strategy, social networking can be your best chance to find out about job opportunities or in many cases have those opportunities come looking for you.



Where do I begin?

STEP 1 - Find a good social networking site such as LinkedIn and study the inner workings of the site, such as “how to create a profile” and “how to connect with others”. If you can view some examples of other professionals’ pages then study what others are doing before creating your profile.

STEP 2 – Create a strong biography that is brief enough to read quickly, but that has a link or expansion box for more detail. You may not want to make it look like you are pursuing a job in case your current employer is out there, so keep it short yet solid.

STEP 3 – Send out connection invitations so that those who know you can quickly connect with you and open their networks to you.

STEP 4 – Sit back and let the site work for you. Most good networking sites will have folks contacting you about business or career opportunities, but your contacts may have vast networks of their own that offer job titles of folks with countless commonalities with you whom you will want to connect with.

Finally, you will find that the best sites will offer job postings, company research, and other tools that allow you to keep tabs on the best of what is out there.



Web Warning!

In a trend that is growing, hiring companies are consistently visiting the home pages of prospective hires, so make sure your personal site reflects the image you want to portray in the career market!



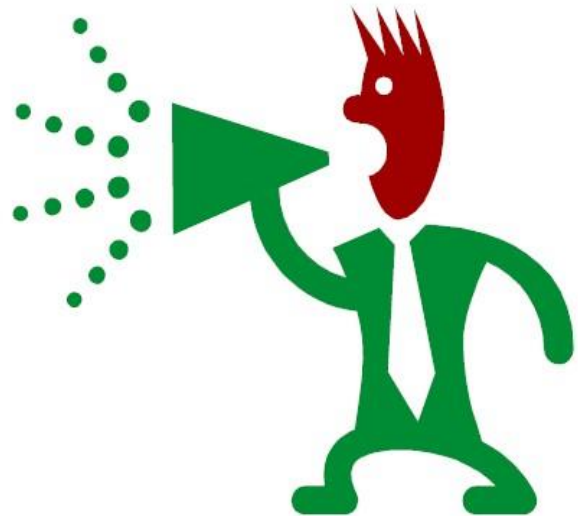
Don't Wait for Them to Come to You

Today's competitive job climate does not allow for career professionals to sit back and wait on responses

When economic times are prosperous, most of us can afford to sit back and wait for employers to call with job offers. But when times are tough and jobs are fewer, only the most aggressive will survive.

The good news is that there are more tools available than ever before that allow for online collaboration and information about jobs and markets.

Knowing where to go is only the beginning...you have to be willing to go a little further by crafting a marketing presentation on yourself and then shout it out to the world.



PACKAGE YOURSELF

You are the Product

The biggest mistake job seekers make early in the process is they forget to design a strong message about who they are and what they want.

If done properly, the best package that sells you for a job will consist of the following:

Multiple versions of your resume that will target various jobs

References that sell with quotes inside the resume

Targeted Cover Letters

Online Homepage on Networking Site

RESEARCH MARKET

Do your Homework

Job boards make for a good start in finding opportunities but they are only a beginning.

Submitting your resume to a job on a board will send you to the bottom of a stack that may never be seen, so you must go deeper to get noticed.

After finding an ad online, do not submit your resume but go to the company's website and research company contacts.

Another idea is to visit social networks and do company searches for names of people to connect with such as peers or future co-workers.

SELL YOURSELF

Ready...Set...Sell!

Now that you have done your research and identified company targets, craft your presentation to the appropriate audience:

Managers

So you found the name of the VP of Technology on the company's website and wish to contact them. The best way to get their attention is to email or mail a cover letter and resume with references followed up with a phone call.

Peers

Once you have found peers on LinkedIn or the like, send them an email with your resume and ask if they will market you internally. Most companies offer bonuses for referrals.

Make or Break: Interviewing to Win

Give yourself an advantage with some insider tips on how to interview and how to prepare

With the number of options companies have in hiring talent, they are using stricter interviewing methods to audition future employees. While some job professionals think they aced their interviews when they leave, they often forget that it is more than doing well that puts them in the lead for the job.

Below are some helpful basic tips, snippets from the front lines, and advanced success strategies:

What to Do

Research the company website beforehand

Bring a list of questions

Dress for success: Suit and tie or women's business suit or dress

Ask for cards or write down names after introductions

Make good eye contact when addressing the interviewer



What NOT to Do

Do not show up late. Find good directions and arrive 5-10 minutes early

Do not interrupt the interviewer

Do not reveal tattoos, or facial piercings. Get a fresh haircut or style

Never yawn, check your watch, or look off at distractions

Turn off your cell phone completely before entering the building

ADVANCED STRATEGIES FOR DEFEATING THE COMPETITION

Bring specific examples of your work and be prepared to elaborate. Most people answer too briefly, so try and link what you have done with how you can help them. See our website for more info

Take a problem-solver approach by asking questions about what their challenges have been in this role before or why the position has come available.

Avoid any defensive posture when answering a question that may knock you off balance – Remember, they want to see how you react to negative situations, so remain calm and cool.

If you have any nervous habits, try and cross your feet under the table and take long deep breaths when the interviewer is speaking.

LESSONS FROM THE FRONT LINES TO LIVE BY

One hiring manager mentioned hearing someone he had just interviewed in the hallway on his cell phone bragging about how he nailed the job, along with some disturbing expletives...he never got a call back.

A job seeker decided to make a quick trip to the men's room after his interview only to overhear two interviewers in the stalls discussing him in a less-than-flattering perspective.

During her interview, a prospective hire was asked to explain several provocative photos and language found on her online networking site...the interview lasted less than fifteen minutes.



Additional Resources

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Make the most of your search today by using these other helpful sites for more information and tips.

Social Networks

Sign on and expand your professional network today with these great sites:

www.linkedin.com

www.facebook.com

www.twitter.com

Job Boards & Aggregators

While it's just a beginning, many opportunities await online. Tap into these great boards to jumpstart your career:

www.monster.com

www.jobing.com

www.indeed.com

www.careerbuilder.com

www.dice.com

www.craigslist.com

www.glassdoor.com

Premium Resources

These sites charge small fees but can open doors and provide excellent guidance for management and executive careers:

www.theladders.com

www.execunet.com

INNOVATIVE STAFFING

For more information and expanded resource libraries, visit
www.go2innovative.com

Job Listings enable our client companies to advertise current openings or ongoing needs with options of job branding or confidentiality.

Our Jobseeker Toolkit provides career professionals the opportunity to connect with peers in their niche, advance their skills, and exchange information and ideas using the following tools created by Innovative:

Technical Advice
Salary Info
Job Updates
One-on-One Advice
Contact a Recruiter
Step-by-Step Guides