

Get  
the  
Job



# Search Like It's Your Job

**S**earching for a job can be as passive or as active a task as you want it to be. The question is how bad do you want it? When you treat your job search as your first priority, you are guaranteed to see better results more quickly.

## **CUSTOMIZE YOUR PROFESSIONAL DOCUMENTS**

The importance of keeping your resume up to date is obvious. It is also essential to customize your professional documents to each job for which you apply. If you are applying for several positions at once and have decided to adapt your cover letter from one position to another, have someone other than yourself proofread it. The last thing you want to do is send a cover letter and resume to one employer with another's name on it.

## **NETWORK OFTEN**

When you are looking for a job, you should find ways to network. Networking is an invaluable professional skill, so take the steps to get your face and your work in front of other people. This can be in the form of emails, meeting former colleagues and peers for lunch or coffee, or attending conferences and organized networking events. You need to be able to sell yourself in two minutes or less; this is what professionals call the elevator pitch.

## **CREATE ORIGINAL CONTENT**

Crafting and publishing original content on your professional social profiles is an



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effective way to demonstrate your knowledge and show people what you're passionate about. This is about getting your name in front of leaders in your industry. Keep a routine publishing schedule, whether this is once per day,

per week or every two weeks; the regularity will not only keep you writing but will hopefully gain you a few followers.

## **SEND A THANK YOU NOTE**

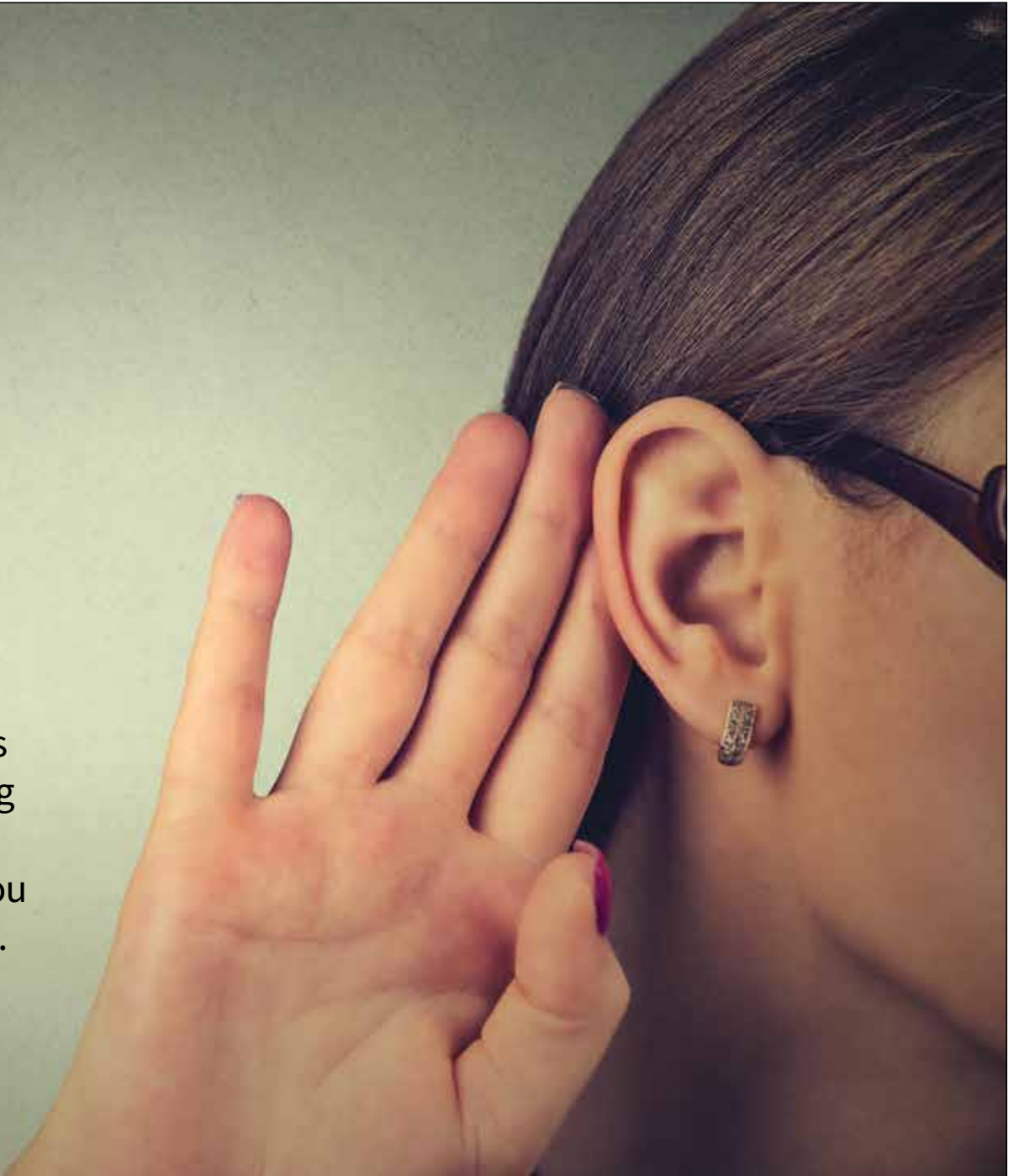
Send a quick note thanking

each potential employer who took the time to interview you. This is your final opportunity to get your name in front of those with hiring power in a company and to leave them with a positive impression of you. This prac-

tice isn't exclusively for interviews. By sending someone you met at a networking event a quick email soon after — even a brief, “it was so nice chatting with you this afternoon” — will help you grow your professional network.

# Be a More Confident Leader

Being seen as a confident leader is one of the most sought-after goals of professionals everywhere. But being an effective leader is not a destination as much as it is a continual journey. You should constantly assess your efficacy.



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Here are three behaviors you can adopt to strengthen your leadership skills.

## **LEARN HOW TO SAY NO**

Communication is the key to success. When information is shared effectively, it helps to nurture and build relationships, which in turn keep business running smoothly. Choose your words carefully. The power of saying no isn't merely in turning down projects,

but how we turn down projects. Many people use the word can't when saying no. That implies a lack of options. Don't implies the decision is a choice.

## **LISTEN ACTIVELY**

Many leaders focus so much on what they're saying they can overlook what others are saying. Listening to people is just as important as what you say to them. Active listening makes other people

feel heard and that their opinions and ideas are valued. This is a technique that involves fully concentrating, understanding, responding and remembering what was said. Active listening also involves watching the speaker's body language and responding to it.

## **UNDERSTAND (AND APPRECIATE) YOUR LIMITATIONS**

Know one person cannot do it

all, and that's OK. Executives at the top of their industry didn't get there on their own. They had a whole network of people that advised, guided and supported them on their journey to success. The key is to use your limitations as a guide when building your team. Working with people who fill your gaps and push you to learn will not only make you a better leader but will cause others to respect you.

# Dealing with Resume Gaps

Putting together a resume always comes with a certain level of stress, even before an interview is scheduled and especially if there are gaps.

Remember, your resume was strong enough to gain you an interview. They are interested in you.

Also, consider the fact that it is uncommon for anyone to stay with one (or even two or three) employers until retirement. It is all in how these gaps are framed. Here are the most common reasons for gaps on your resume and how you should address them.

## **YOU WERE LAID OFF**

This is nothing to be embarrassed about; job security isn't what it used to be. The important thing is to speak well of your previous employer. Even if it wasn't the most pleasant experience, bad-mouthing does nothing but make you look bad. Instead, talk about what you accomplished in your tenure there, what skills you developed and any accolades you earned. Then connect the experience to the job you hope to get by discussing how you would like to build on those skills with this company and how the company would benefit from your expertise.

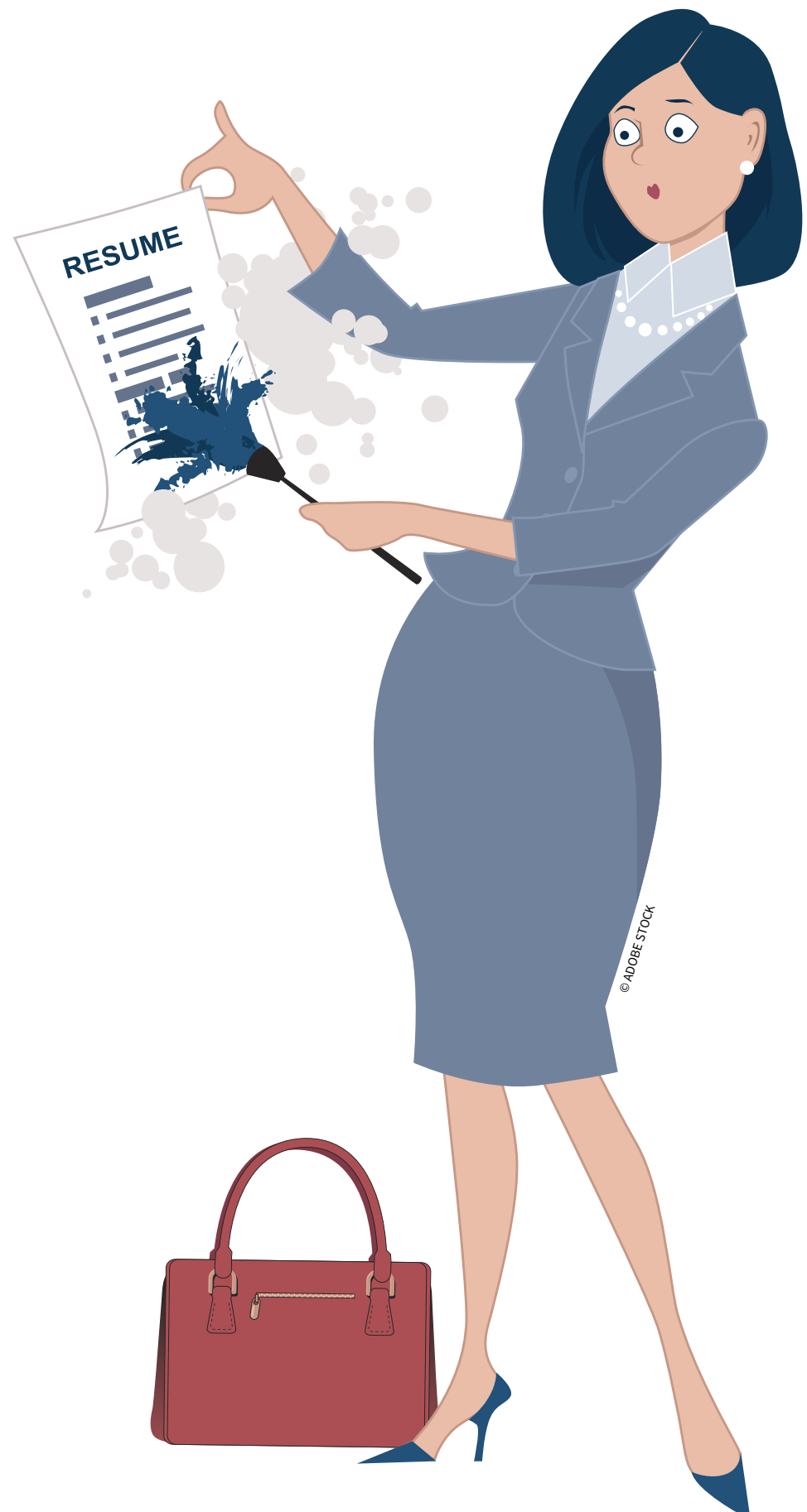
## **YOU LEFT YOUR PREVIOUS JOB FOR SCHOOL**

Continuing your education at any level requires determination, hard work and ingenuity. These are qualities every employer is looking for. Finishing a degree demonstrated that you achieve the goals you set. Vocalize this. Now that you've accomplished your educational goals, you are excited for the opportunity to put that knowledge into practice and work towards your professional goals.

## **YOU LEFT YOUR PREVIOUS JOB TO TRAVEL**

You want to connect the experience with your personal development. Yes, you had a blast and have a slew of amazing photos to prove it, but what did you gain from the experience? Maybe it taught you how to communicate better with others and appreciate a culture other than your own.

Many prospective employers are looking for people who can not only perform the technical aspect of a job who that will fit in with the work culture and be an engaging and dynamic addition to their team.







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# Networking for Beginners

**N**etworking does not come naturally to most people and yet it is one of the most pervasive ways to land a job and work your way up the ladder in the professional arena. Networking is a key component to advancement and creating new opportunities.

Approaching someone you don't know and striking up a conversation certainly isn't the most comfortable feeling but it doesn't have to be hard either. Here are just a few ways to initiate a rapport with a professional stranger.

## **SAY HELLO**

Don't get so nervous you forget that a simple, friendly greeting is a great way to start. No one is going to snub you for approaching them

with a smile and saying hello. Odds are they are as nervous as you are and is happy someone else started the conversation.

## **KEEP IT SIMPLE**

Don't feel you have to jump straight into shop talk. Ask people how they spend their time. This phrasing is important because it allows the other person to respond in the direction they want and is respectful of those

who may not be working at the moment. You don't want to create an awkward moment from the beginning by asking someone what they do for a living only to find out they were laid off six months ago.

## **KEEP IT CURRENT**

If it feels like you have nothing in common, remember that we all live in the same world and you can always discuss current events.

It's best to adhere to dinner table decorum and avoid topics of politics and religion, but anything else is great fodder for discussion.

## **STICK WITH WHAT YOU KNOW**

If a natural rapport hasn't developed in the first few minutes, stick with what you know. Talking about yourself can be a great way to encourage the other person to do the same.

# The Five-Year Plan Question

This is one of the most common questions asked during a job interview and the question most people have no idea how to answer. Why? Because the answers that come to mind first, like to be making more money or to have the position of the person interviewing you, may not necessarily be great interview etiquette.

So how do you answer this question in a way that isn't rude, isn't a lie and still makes you look appealing to potential employers?

## FOCUS ON SKILLS

Think about where this position could realistically take you. In this position, what industry knowledge will you gain? Connect this knowledge with how you want to be seen. By choosing to develop certain skills and knowledge, this job could put you in a position to be a leader in your industry. These skills don't have to be industry-specific either. If the opening is for a manager's position, you can easily discuss welcoming the opportunity to advance your leadership skills.

## THINK BROAD STROKES

This is especially important if the job you are interviewing for is needed but is just a lay-over in your professional journey. Answering with, "I want to be in a position where I will continue to be challenged every day," or "Leading a team that makes me learn as much as they do" are good places to start.

## ANSWER WHAT THEY AREN'T ASKING

Most of the time when potential employers ask this question, they are trying to



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gauge your ambition, your dedication and your drive to make things happen. But they can't really come out and ask, "Are you an ambitious person?" Take charge of the

direction of the conversation — all good interviews should be conversations — and give an example of these qualities to put your interviewer's mind at ease.

## FLATTERY

If you can work in a compliment into the conversation in an organic way, all the better. For example, if you hope to be an expert in the IT

industry, focus on how the company you're interviewing with fits into the industry's landscape and highlight how excited you are to contribute to it.



# Continuing Education

**E**ducation is one of the greatest investments we can make in ourselves. It can make us more aware and provoke us to do better than we had before. It is also, in many cases, the key to advancement. There are many ways to approach gaining additional or higher training.

How you choose to approach continuing your professional education will depend on both the amount of time and money you wish to invest in the process.

## GRADUATE SCHOOL

Entering a graduate program can be a great way to advance both your knowledge and your career. Obtaining an advanced degree for many comes with hefty student loans, and it is important to have a plan on how you will pay those loans back before you even start. Be sure to research all your options. There may be a certification program that will give you what you need for a smaller financial investment.

## PROFESSIONAL CONFERENCES

Keeping up with trends in your field is an essential component to a successful career. Attending professional conferences not only keeps you up-to-date in your industry but also provides you the opportunity to network with others in your field. Take this opportunity to build new relationships. You never know when small talk will lead to your next potential boss or business partner.

## INDEPENDENT READING

Continuing your professional education doesn't have to be



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an expensive endeavor. In fact, it can be free. A library card can be one of your greatest professional assets. Visit your

local library and see what books they have available related to your field.

Many libraries take part in

an interlibrary share system that allows you to check out books from other public libraries. Also ask your librarian

about the library's e-book collection. Some libraries also hold seminars about employment-related topics.

# Software Developer

The technology industry is booming, which is good news for jobs. Whether you are trying to pick a college major or considering a career change, becoming a software developer could be a great career move. It is well paying, secure and values passion and creativity.

## JOB DESCRIPTION

Software developers help shape the technologies we use on a daily basis. They are part dreamer and part creator. Many developers conceptualize new ideas and have the technical expertise to make that concept a reality. They work across a broad set of industries on projects of computer systems design and practical application.

## EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

Many software developers can land a well-paying position with a bachelor's degree. When building your resume, keep in mind that employers are also looking for relevant side projects.

Did you enter any contests while earning your degree? Do you have a thick folder of original ideas? To be sought after, you need to have a proven track record of your skills.

Someone with no degree but a laundry list of accomplishments or a robust portfolio of completed projects would be an easy hire.

Translation: Drive and creativity are the greatest assets of a burgeoning software developer.

## EMPLOYMENT STATS

Software developers will see more than 30 percent in



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employment growth over the next 10 years, according the Bureau of Labor Statistics — a rate higher than all other occupations. The bureau estimates more than 250,000 jobs

will be created. This is due to the increasing advancements in technology and demand for software innovation.

The United States Department of Labor reports

that software developers earned a median salary of just over \$100,000 as of 2016 — with developers earning upwards of \$157,000 on the high end and about \$58,000

on the low end, which depend mostly on geographic location. This is considerably higher than most other occupations that don't require a college education.