

The Job Search in a Tough Economy

7 Hiring Trends in 2009

Trend No. 1: Bigger paychecks

Sixty-six percent of employers plan to increase pay for existing employees and one third of hiring managers estimate increasing salaries on initial offers to new employees in 2009.

Trend No. 2: Flexible work arrangements

Thirty-one percent of employers say they plan to provide the following options for workers in 2009: alternate schedules (70 percent); telecommuting (48 percent); compressed workweeks (40 percent); summer hours (19 percent); job sharing (13 percent); and sabbaticals (7 percent).

Trend No. 3: Green jobs

Employers have tried to gain traction using environmentally friendly policies for a while and the New Year shows more of the same. Last year, one-in-ten hiring managers added "green jobs," which are environmentally conscious positions, compared to 13 percent of employers who plan to add them in 2009.

Trend No. 4: Recruitment tools

As employers slow down on hiring, recruitment budgets shrink as well. As a result, more employers are using the Internet as an employment medium. Twenty-three percent of employers say that although their hiring budgets will decrease in 2009, they will spend money on the following staffing vehicles: online recruitment sites (19 percent); newspaper classifieds (15 percent); career fairs (12 percent); staffing firms and recruiters (12 percent); and social networking sites (7 percent).

Trend No. 5: Retaining retirees

Though baby boomers are approaching retirement age, many are continuing to work -- both out of desire and necessity. Employers are looking at ways to retain these workers; 17 percent say they will likely rehire retirees from other companies in 2009 and 12 percent plan to offer incentives for baby boomers to stay on with the company longer.

Trend No. 6: Diversity recruitment

Hiring managers will also focus recruitment efforts on employing diverse workers. Employers said they plan to hire Hispanic, African American and mature workers aggressively in 2009. Eighty-eight percent of companies say they will continue to recruit bilingual candidates, as well.

Trend No. 7: Freelance or contract hiring

To continue their cost-cutting efforts, employers are using freelance or contract workers to help support their businesses. Twenty-eight percent of hiring managers expect to utilize these workers in 2009.

Source: <http://www.careerbuilder.com/Article/CB-1104-Getting-Hired-7-Hiring-Trends-to-Follow-in-2009/>

Job Search Tips

Don't procrastinate.

Looking for a job or internship takes time (typically months) and needs to be a priority. While you have competing demands on your time, a job search requires time and energy. If you are really serious about finding a job or internship, you must reserve time in your schedule to focus on it.

Strengthen your candidacy and make connections.

What are you doing now to build your resume? Are you interning, volunteering or actively involved on campus or in the community? Many employers, especially in a tight economy, recruit interns as full-time hires.

Prepare your job search materials early.

You need a good resume. You must be ready to respond immediately as you become aware of jobs for which you want to be considered.

Use multiple strategies.

Students need to begin their job search at least 6-12 months prior to graduation. It is important to strike a balance between looking for advertised openings and unadvertised openings (the hidden job market). A complete job search is not surfing the Internet. Most job openings are not advertised, so it is important to concentrate on the hidden job market through networking.

Take responsibility and focus on the positive.

Realize that getting a job is your responsibility, while simultaneously recognizing that there are external factors beyond your control. Don't waste precious energy and time on "woe is me" or other negatives.

Compete!

If you don't apply, you will definitely not get the job. Do not let what you hear about the job market immobilize you. If you don't apply and don't let people know you're looking, you won't be selected. Guaranteed. But, compete smart. Do a quality job search.

Consider short-term service opportunities or temporary positions.

It's possible to pursue professionally oriented positions that are temporary, educational, or service-oriented. Short-term experiences can serve as a way to gain experience, increase self-confidence, earn money, and perhaps lead to something more permanent. A good way to secure "bridge" or "interim work" is by "temping" through a temporary employment agency.

Keep at it!

A job search rarely produces results immediately. It takes time and effort. Some leads will take you to dead ends, and, unfortunately, rejection is part of the job search process. Try not to lose focus and keep going. Pick yourself up and get back in the race.

Position yourself for the future.

While you may have to accept a first position that isn't your "dream job," keep in mind that many kinds of experiences can be career stepping-stones. Make choices that increase your future options. Learning new skills, volunteering in a field that professionally interests you while working "just for money," thoughtfully investigating graduate school, and effectively networking are positive steps to take for the long term.

Networking 101

Approximately 80% of all job openings are never advertised. People network every day without thinking about it. However, more people are including formal networking as part of their daily activities.

Networking Strategies

- Do not just wait to bump into people. Initiate contacts for the sole purpose of networking.
- Develop a networking list. Make contact with each person on your list. Add names of people you meet or are referred to by your contacts.
- Set networking goals. Write down specific goals for how many networking contacts you plan to make each week. Regularly check your progress.
- Set goals for each meeting. Don't just get together and see where it leads; meet with a purpose. Express this goal when you arrange the meeting.
- Come to the meeting prepared. Know what questions you want to ask. Take notes.
- Always ask if the person knows of anyone else you should meet. Ask if you can use her/his name when contacting the person.
- Maintain networking files. Keep a record of the outcomes of each contact and important information about the person.
- Whenever possible, meet in person.
- Let the person know you value the information and professional opinion.
- Plan your follow-up. At the time you meet with someone, plan when you will contact this person again. Write it down on a follow-up calendar.
- If you agree to do something for someone, be sure to follow through.
- Say "thank you" often. Send a thank-you letter or card.

The Networking Campaign

People you know well: friends, family, neighbors and co-workers.

This is a good place to begin your networking campaign. This is the group that you can ask for the most assistance.

People you see occasionally: acquaintances, business contacts.

More than 25% of the people who find jobs through networking received the referral from someone they see once a year or less! These are people with whom you may be less comfortable, but they also have the greatest potential. Ask this group for ideas and referrals. Let them know you only want 30 minutes of their time. Come well prepared; be professional and organized in your discussion.

Referrals from your other networking contacts.

Stretch your network by meeting new people who are the friends, associates, and acquaintances of your networking contacts. At every meeting you should ask if the person knows of anyone else to whom you should talk. Sometimes these will be people with additional information, but they may also be potential employers. When approaching a referral contact, you should introduce yourself with a lead statement that will get their attention. It is very useful to use the name of the person who referred you. State your purpose and request a meeting. You should also limit the time for the meeting, be well prepared, and professional.

Cold calling people you do not know and to whom you have not been referred.

Through your employment research and networking you may discover the names of people with whom you would like to talk. This type of contact takes another level of confidence, but the potential is great. Take the initiative and you will find that these contacts will pay off.

Creative Job-Search Methods

- Treat your job search as a job, putting in 25 to 40 hours per week, with the majority of time spent connecting with people.
- Make full use of social networking sites, but stay professional.
- Set up informational interviews with alumni.
- Volunteer and network at professional organizations.
- Pound the pavement and contact employers face-to-face, rather than making initial contact through a cover letter and resume.
- Create clever individual marketing pieces to send to prospective employers that show creativity, interests, and skills.
- Submit examples of work to juried sites.
- Contact organizations from Europe to Latin America, offering to work for room and meals.
- Plan social events to connect students with employers.
- Travel to city of your choice to meet with employers in person.
- Work part time while volunteering to gain exposure to various occupations, enhance or develop new skills, and establish contacts.
- Create a business card or a credit-card-sized CD-ROM about yourself and accomplishments, and pass out at career fairs and mail to prospective employers.
- Put extra effort into networking strategies.
- Tap into the network of alumni by shadowing or doing informational interviews with alumni and employers during winter or spring break, or take advantage of other mentoring or networking opportunities.
- Take unpaid internships to get into a company of choice.
- Rewrite your cover letter and resume and craft it to match the job requirements and preferences according to the posting and your own research on the company.
- Narrow your search and set yourself apart by leveraging what makes you unique, and focusing your search on companies for which that would have value.
- Know what you are looking for, but also be open to unexpected opportunities.
- Use formal, pre-existing programs and resources.
- Start your job search earlier than you might have done in better economic times.
- Be open-minded and flexible.