

JOB SEARCH CHECKLIST

Taking the time to reflect on your long term goals will help you map out an effective, consistent message to employers on all fronts.

Looking for a job requires discipline and focus, and we strongly encourage each of our clients to ask themselves tough questions at the beginning of the process, schedule milestones (both big and small) to reward themselves when completed, and revisit key assumptions as they continue through the job search process.

This is a partial list of the kinds of questions our GoBeyond experts discuss with every client.

THE CHECKLIST

Early stage questions to ask yourself as you prepare for a successful search:

GEOGRAPHY and LOGISTICS: Where would I like to live and work? What is a realistic commute for me? Am I willing to move?

CULTURE: What is the ideal culture in which I would thrive? Do I thrive in independent environments or in a more team-oriented setting? Do I want to work in a large organization with more horizontal or vertical growth opportunities or in a smaller organization that may offer more immediate responsibility? Do I prefer structure, or a more laid-back environment?

INDUSTRY TARGETS: What industries and related fields interest me most? Be specific! Which companies might be most interested in my background and would help me grow professionally?

COMPANY TARGET TASK: Using your current professional and personal network and the Internet, create a list of target companies. What do they have in common? Is it a narrow or broad group of companies?

A PERSONAL ASSESSMENT

Now that you have done some research, you are ready to begin writing key documents and for a more in-depth personal assessment:

RESUMÉ: What is the key message you're trying to get across? As you write and update your resumé, ask yourself, if somebody looks at this for only 15 seconds, what would they learn about me? What would I like them to take away from that initial review?

COVER LETTER: The resumé is going to be enhanced dramatically by a well-written cover letter. What is the most compelling summary of your relevant professional experience that you could communicate in a brief cover letter? Create several versions, tailored to distinctive audiences, companies, and, eventually, hiring managers.

SOCIAL MEDIA: Consider the message that your social media profiles convey – LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter feed, Pinterest. Do you have a plan for how to manage these during your job search campaign?

PERSONAL BRAND: This one deserves more space than this article allows. Your personal brand is about differentiating yourself in a crowded marketplace. And a great brand is primarily about:

Meaning
Memorability
Distinctiveness

Like much of this process, a personal branding exercise starts with an in-depth evaluation about your personal strengths and weaknesses, married to a set of realistic and relevant objectives. The deeper you look inside and test identities that are true to you and appealing to hiring managers, the more likely you will be to find an ideal match. It is important to revisit this exercise, as your personal brand is an evolving identity that will reflect your personal and professional growth.

Given the complexity of this topic, GoBeyond has developed an in-depth seminar on creating a relevant, personal brand for your career. Check our website for dates or contact us to learn more.

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ELEVATOR PITCH: Once you have a clearer sense of your personal brand, you can create a cocktail-length answer. Think about how you answer the simplest question – tell me about yourself. What would you say if you have 5 minutes? If you have 30 seconds? At a cocktail party? At a networking event? Test this out with friends and experts you trust and encourage candid feedback. The more you practice this, the easier it gets.

NETWORKING: We all recognize that networking is a lifetime skill that improves with practice and time. Let your contacts know what you're doing, but be specific. **Rule #1 – Do not ask for 'informational interviews'.** Focus instead on specific asks to be respectful of their time.

RESOURCES and SUPPORT

Check out our other articles on key best practices like writing a great resumé, interview best practices, and job marketplace trends!