

EMPLOYMENT

Six New Year's resolutions for the job seeker



Rick Taylor

Starting a new year without employment is stressful in the best of circumstances. But given today's uncertain economy, it can seem overwhelming. So, why not start the New Year with some new ideas?

Re-invent yourself

Think about other ways that you can earn a living that you would enjoy. Katy was a human resource administrator at a local bank. Her job was eliminated, she looked for a couple of months, and then she decided to try something else. She enrolled at a school to learn to be an X-ray technician. Shortly after getting her certification, she found a job at a local hospital.

There are many great colleges and trade schools in Cleveland. Find out what jobs are in demand and get some added skills.

Attend networking groups

Natalie, a recently-downsized graphic artist, was told about transition groups sponsored by a community group. She had initially resisted going to any of their weekly networking meetings.

A former coworker urged Natalie to accompany her one evening to a networking meeting at a nearby church. Natalie quickly learned that the group was invaluable to her job search. In addition to giving her hope and optimism, the group helped her deal with feelings of loss.

"It was wonderful to talk to people who were feeling the same emotional ups and downs as I was feeling. We helped each other," said Natalie.

Due to these contacts, she is returning for her third interview at a company and is hoping to get an offer soon.

Jim Grant in his book "Get The Job (and Compensation) You Want" said, "the three most important things in the job search are networking, networking and networking." Some 60 to 70 percent of the jobs in Northeast Ohio are filled this way. Therefore, you should spend that percent of time doing the same

Beef up your technology skills

Ned, a recently laid off quality coordinator said, "I wish I was better at using technology to facilitate my job search. Everything about searching for a job is completely different than it was a few years ago. Information is online, and there are so many Web sites to search and post my resume. I don't know where to turn next."

Ned is correct. Looking for a job is greatly enhanced by utilizing technology. How do you find out what is available, and how do you get proficient?

There are many job sites in the local area including Cleveland.com. The local library and computer savvy friends are great places to get help if you are unfamiliar with how to navigate these sites. Keep in mind, you should only spend about 15 percent of your time on the internet because that is the percentage of positions that are filled via the internet.

Update your resume and cover letters

Joanie's position at an insurance company was eliminated as a result of the difficult economy. She worked to complete her resume and a sample cover letter, but after several months of searching, she felt it might be a good idea to revisit both documents.

"I know that many companies utilize sophisticated recruiting systems and search online for resumes with specific keywords. How can I be sure I have the right ones?"

One of the best ways to find the appropriate keywords for your field is to look at job postings in the paper and online.

Get up to speed on the latest Tools, such as LinkedIn, FaceBook and Twitter

Many job transition candidates have had very little exposure to LinkedIn, FaceBook and Twitter. Some have profiles on LinkedIn but have no idea of the power of the site and how to use it effectively in a job search.

Monica, a former designer of greeting cards, was frustrated because she applied for positions online but never heard back from the companies. Her friend Sirena

showed her how to use LinkedIn to see who in her network could introduce her to someone at the company.

"It was a miracle. I no longer felt that my resume was going into a black hole whenever I applied online," she said.

Randy was skeptical of Facebook. He only thought of it as a site where his teenagers spent too many hours. His son suggested he set up an account and contact all of his former classmates and military contacts. Randy was pleasantly surprised when he was contacted by one of his high school classmates

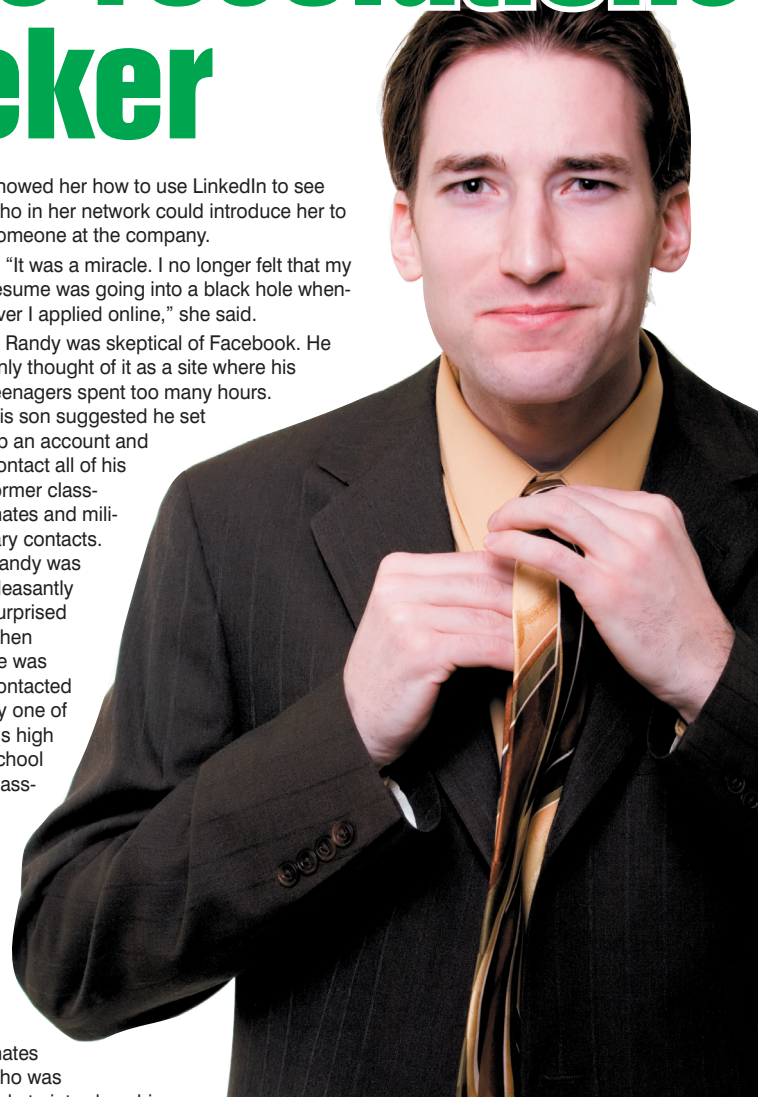
mates who was able to introduce him to a decision maker at a company where he had a great interest. Twitter can be used in the same way.

Learn about entrepreneurial options

Dolly, a merchandising professional for a large retail broker, decided she no longer wanted to do that kind of work.

"I don't know where to turn to explore other opportunities. I might want to buy a franchise or start a business of my own. Where do I go?"

If you are interested in buying or starting a business, one of the best online resources is www.entrepreneurship.org, which is



supported by the Kauffman Foundation, the world's largest non-profit organization devoted exclusively to entrepreneurship.

So now you have some resolutions to start you on your way for the New Year. The most important thing to remember is that the most challenging part of a job search is remaining positive. Don't isolate yourself. Seek out networking groups and just do it.

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