

Dale Kurow

Career & Executive Coach

Strategies & Tools for Rapid Career Advancement



Job Search Checklist

Don't approach your job hunt in a haphazard way! Boost your job search efforts with these 5 road-tested strategies.



The job market has become more competitive, and the interviewing process more sophisticated than it was just a few years ago. With the power of the Internet, and continuous advances in communication, landing a new position requires a lot more than simply rewriting your resume.

If you're serious about finding a new job that will really make you happy, you'll have to identify the skills you want to use and the core values that are most important to you.

You'll also need a plan.

A job search plan helps you stay focused on the key activities to be accomplished **before** you start your campaign. And it prevents you from skipping crucial steps or tackling them in a haphazard way.

To help you do this, I've compiled a checklist of **5 key activities** that constitute a successful job search.

How many of them have you addressed?

Dale Kurow, M.S.
Career & Executive Coach
Strategies for Rapid Career Advancement
Tel 212-787-6097 • E-mail dale@dalekurow.com • www.dalekurow.com

© 2005 Dale Kurow, M.S. All rights reserved.



What are your motivated skills?

I'm sure you have a long list of skills that you're quite good at. However, when you think about continuing to use some of these skills in your next job and beyond, you get a sinking feeling in your stomach. Sound familiar?

Only when you use the skills you love AND that you are good at (or at least have a reasonable competency in) will you be happy in the work you do.

I want you to make two lists:

1. A list of all the skills you have, and
2. A list of the skills you want to use. (Even if you are not expert in every skill you want to use, do not despair.)

Because the skills you want to use are your **motivated** skills, you will often find a way to close the experience gap between what you know and what you need to know. An employer will hire an enthusiastic candidate, hungry to do the work, over an applicant who is competent but complacent. They might even provide the training to make up the difference.

RESOURCE :

If you want a terrific resource to help you develop your skills list, I recommend Richard Bolles' seminal *What Color Is Your Parachute?* This book, which is updated every year, provides extensive skill lists to guide you.



What do you value?

What are values and how do they relate to your career?

Work values are the critical needs that must be fulfilled for you to function optimally in the workplace. Examples: morality and ethics, recognition, security, prestige, public contact, etc.

Understanding your work values will help you select the job that's best for you and determine what type of company and industry to pursue.

Here's an exercise to help you define your values:

Think about 3 peak moments in your career. Write about them. What happened? What were you doing? What were others doing? What made these moments so important and memorable? How did you feel? What values were being honored that made you feel this way?

Take your time and re-live the moments. Don't rush it; you may need several sittings. Come up with a list of the 5-10 values most important to you. When you do, you'll be able to test a potential job/company/industry against your values to know if it's a good fit.

EXAMPLE :

Irene was a CPA and MBA who worked as a research analyst on Wall Street. She was miserable in her current position because of the political and anti-female environment of her company. Irene loved her profession but wanted to find a company and position that would be a better fit. She was unsure of her next move because she was afraid of jumping from one bad situation to another.

After writing about her peak professional moments, Irene confirmed that she loved working with numbers. She realized that her most important value was to have challenging work that involved analyzing numbers. Her second most important value was being recognized by her superiors and financially acknowledged for her contributions. Both were sorely lacking in her current job. And third, she needed to work in a culture that had a track record of promoting and training women.

One month later, she was interviewed by a prominent Wall Street firm. Because she had taken the time to understand her own values, Irene was able to test the company's suitability before the interview. She spoke to both current and ex-employees. In doing so, she found out that the firm supported growth from within and had a history of including women in top positions. On her final interview, her potential new boss asked her what she valued! Irene confidently responded with the work values she'd clarified through her peak moments exercise.

Result: Two days later, Irene received an offer from this firm. She felt secure in accepting the offer because she had been diligent in doing her homework before interviewing. More importantly, Irene was confident that this opportunity was a good fit because it satisfied her two top values (analyzing numbers and a culture that recognized and awarded contributions). Lastly, she was confident because she had chosen a firm that had a policy of including women in high-ranking positions.

Getting clear on your values is the single most powerful way of insuring that your next job is a good choice for you.



Your job search skills

Your Elevator Speech

An elevator speech is a one-minute “commercial” that expresses what you do in a persuasive, compelling way (leaving the listener wanting more). An elevator speech will serve you well in every aspect of your job search. It will help you to be prepared when you go to a networking event. You will also need to know what to say when you have those unexpected encounters that could lead you to your next job.

RESOURCE :

For help in crafting your elevator speech, check out my article *Preparing Your Elevator Speech* at: http://www.dalekurow.com/articles/elevator_speech

Your Interviewing Preparedness

Interviewing well takes practice. To do your best on an interview, think about what questions you might be asked. Rehearse your answers, including how to react in stressful situations, and find and use language that best describes your abilities. Don't ramble. Keep your answers brief; one to two minutes maximum. Ask for feedback about your style and responses from the interviewer after the interview so you can learn what to do better the next time.

In-person interviews aren't the only type of interviews you may be asked to do. More and more companies are using a range of communication formats to help them eliminate job candidates.

Here's an example of recent interview questions that a client was asked to respond to by email prior to the actual interview:

- When deciding between job offers, what are your top 3 criteria?
- What experiences have prepared you for a role like this one?
- Of all your friends and acquaintances, who has the best job, and why?

The phone interview, in particular, is a crucial first step in the interview process.

RESOURCE :

[Check out these excerpts](#) from my E-Book *Phone Interview Skills Sharpened Right Here!* to help you prepare for your next phone interview.



Do Your Research

Second only to lacking the requisite skills, the main reason candidates don't get to the next step—the face-to-face interview—is failure to properly research the company.

Undertaking in-depth research can be a tedious part of prepping for a phone interview. However, it is a key ingredient in getting you a ticket to the next round. In researching the company, there is no such thing as being too prepared. Your ability to cite facts and paraphrase from relevant business articles will impress the interviewer.

Before the interview, have these facts about the company at your fingertips:

- ✓ The company's products and/or services
- ✓ The size of the company, number of employees, rank within its industry
- ✓ The company's primary customers and competitors
- ✓ The location of the company's offices, plants and facilities
- ✓ The company's goals, philosophy and mission statement
- ✓ Names of the company's key players (Chairman, CEO, President, etc.)
- ✓ The financial health of the company
- ✓ The company's performance in the last year
- ✓ The career paths and training offered by the company
- ✓ Media exposure and/or major articles that have appeared about the company within the last 3-6 months

RESOURCES :

To research a company, first check their web site. Next, get the company's annual report if it's a publicly owned firm. If time is limited, visit these web sites to view annual reports for free:

Annual Report Gallery
<http://www.reportgallery.com>

The Public Register's Annual Report Service
<http://www.prars.com>

Next, visit these two web sites; they provide company profiles and an insider's view of what it's like to work at the company:

Vault.com
<http://www.vault.com>

Wetfeet.com
<http://www.wetfeet.com>



Your network

85% of all jobs are obtained through networking. To make the most of networking connections, it's best to develop your network and nurture it before you need it. Even if you haven't done this before you need a new job, it's not too late to start. One good way to grow your network is to attend professional and trade association meetings.

RESOURCE :

Not sure where to find the best associations in your field? Check out the *Encyclopedia of Associations* in the reference section of the public library. It lists the contact information of the national chapter of every association in the United States. Then visit the web site to find the local chapter and go to a meeting as a guest to see if you want to join.

Here's a word of caution before selecting networking events. Ask your industry contacts what trade associations they belong to or would recommend. You might find that even though an association has members in your discipline, it may not attract the level of networking contact you seek.

What to bring when you go to events? Here's a surprise. Bring photographs of your kids/grandkids/pets.

True networking story:

At one of the networking breakfasts I attended a few years ago, an entire table of strangers started to connect when one person mentioned his children. This prompted others at our table to talk about their kids. Photos were shared, which led to the exchange of information about schools, interests and hobbies. Bonding over something other than business-related matters really helped to keep these contacts fresh in my memory.

Find creative ways to stay in touch with your new contacts. Here are a few ideas:

- Have a supply of keep-in-touch cards at the ready to send with a friendly hello or details about an upcoming event.
- Suggest that you meet before the next event for coffee or a drink.
- Email your new contact about a web site or job lead of interest.
- Clip, copy and save industry-pertinent articles to send at a later date.

Read a reputable daily newspaper (*The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal*), skim business magazines for articles (*Forbes, Business Week, Fast Company*) and subscribe to e-newsletters that will give you a source of current business information that you can send to your new contacts with a personal note.

The only way networking will work is if you put aside the time to follow up with your new contacts.

RESOURCE :

For more networking tips, check out my *Surefire Networking Tips* E-Book at:
http://www.dalekurow.com/networking_ebook.



Your resume

Hard-Copy Resumes

Everyone is familiar with the hard-copy version of a resume. It's the printed version that you mail, email or fax.

Did you know that the top third of the first page of your resume is the most crucial part of your resume? It is where you "brand" yourself. By branding I mean that it needs to describe in compelling verbs and adjectives what distinguishes you from your competition.

After reading thousands of resumes, here are the key aspects I focus on:

- Does your summary statement at the top of the first page highlight the skills you want to use in your next job and downplay those you don't?
- Does the summary section present you in a unique and convincing way (separate your qualifications and candidacy from the crowd)?
- Did you include an outstanding quote from a prior boss or performance appraisal immediately after your summary statement?
- Have you written bullet points under each job that speak to your accomplishments, with quantifiable results? Do not merely list responsibilities!
- Is your resume 2 pages or less, font size at least 11 points and easy to read?

Electronic Resumes

A survey by the Society of Human Resources found that one-third of HR professionals would prefer to receive resumes by email. Your job is to make them happy. Unlike attaching your Word document resume to your email, an electronic resume is free of special formatting and can be read by anyone, regardless of the software program they are using.

RESOURCE:

A great resource for doing a computerized job search, including how to write, design and use an effective electronic resume, is: *Resumes in Cyberspace* by Pat Criscito.



This checklist is a blueprint designed to help you network, interview and respond more confidently to an interviewer's questions.

If you've done your homework in the above areas, you will do a much better job of presenting yourself and increase your chances of getting a job that's a good fit.

Remember, your goal is to secure a job that you will make you look forward to Monday mornings!

Good luck, and here's to you landing a great job!

Need help in crafting your job search plan? Can't figure out your motivated skills or name your values? Are you just plain stuck? Email Dale at dale@dalekurow.com or call 212/787-6097 to schedule a complimentary 30-minute consultation. Jumpstart your job search today with an experienced, caring partner at your side. Visit Dale's web site at <http://www.dalekurow.com> for free articles, quizzes and career information.

Dale Kurow, M.S., is an author and a career and executive coach in NYC. Dale works with clients across the U.S. and internationally, helping them to survive office politics, become better managers, and figure out their next career moves.

Dale Kurow, M.S.
Career & Executive Coach
Strategies for Rapid Career Advancement
Tel 212-787-6097 • E-mail dale@dalekurow.com • www.dalekurow.com

© 2005 Dale Kurow, M.S. All rights reserved.