

HOLIDAY JOB SEARCHING TIPS

The holiday season is just around the corner. To many people, that means bells ringing, carolers singing and job openings waning. However, the holiday season offers some rare career opportunities that are not available the rest of the year. The real problem is that many job seekers cannot identify these opportunities.

This month's newsletter explains the need-to-know-facts of performing a job search during the holidays. With a keen eye, you can take advantage of the opportunities that everyone else misses by paying attention to the following:

1. Networking at holiday parties
2. Sending holiday cards with a purpose
3. Working around vacation schedules
4. Beating the holiday blues

1. NETWORKING AT HOLIDAY PARTIES

The holidays bring more than a seemingly eternal string of parties. With these social outings come a string of fantastic networking opportunities. You can meet a wide array of people in many diverse fields.

Even if you don't feel like attending a party, the opportunity is too great to pass up. To get the most out of the occasion, keep these points in mind:

- **BE CONSERVATIVE.** You are trying to impress potential employers and colleagues. The party may not be an interview, but some restraint must be exercised. Avoid revealing or questionable clothing and limit your alcohol consumption.
- **BE CASUAL.** Being overly aggressive about getting employment information will turn people away. You may be at the party to find a job, but everyone else came to unwind. As you meet new people, the topic of employment will eventually come up, and you can casually mention your job search.
- **BE PREPARED.** As a job hunter, you should always have business cards with you. Anyone you might talk to about work will meet a plethora of people over the course of the night. Giving them a business card gives them a reminder of who you are.

2. SENDING HOLIDAY CARDS WITH A PURPOSE

It may seem a bit cheesy, but holiday cards are a fantastic and easy way to get the attention of an employer or recruiter. There is a good chance you will be sending cards to friends and family already, so there is not very much extra work to do.

While the process is not complicated, it involves a little more effort than shoving a card into an envelope, there are a few things to keep in mind:

- Avoid holiday specific cards. As a matter of professional courtesy and respect for religious diversity use generic cards with messages like "Happy Holidays", "Season's Greetings" or "Happy New Year".
- Use a simple message inside your card, such as "Looking forward to seeing you in the New Year", "Happy to see you this holiday season" or "Best Wishes".
- Do not send cards to people you have not corresponded with. The real advantage of sending a holiday card is that it serves as an unimposing reminder to people with whom you have interviewed or discussed work. A stranger will toss the card in the trash.

3. WORKING AROUND VACATION SCHEDULES

The biggest obstacle that a job hunter will face during the holiday season is timing. People go on vacations, schedules become tight, and open time slots vanish. This does not mean that people have stopped hiring. To have any success, you will have to fight the hands of time. This means leaving yourself available and flexible. Consider these points:

- The early bird catches the worm. If you contact a recruiter earlier in the holiday season, they will have more available time periods in their schedule.
- Since the holiday schedule is so chaotic, recruiters have time slots appear and disappear all the time. You never know when a recruiter may unexpectedly be available so be prepared for a call at any time.
- Hold back on a vacation. If other job seekers are not available during the holidays and you are, you stand a much better shot at landing a job.

4. BEATING THE HOLIDAY BLUES

Regardless of financial position, people often get depressed and/or lonely during the holiday season. Being in between jobs cannot help the situation. In such a time, it is very easy to lose site of goals or suffer more serious psychological problems.

Tips on how to search for a job during the holidays are probably not going help you fight off clinical depression, but they can help you to kick those holiday blues out the door. Try to remember:

- Create a holiday schedule. Schedules allow you to allocate time for constructive job hunting activities and set aside time for relaxation or holiday celebrations. This way you can be productive and enjoy yourself.
- 'Tis the season to give. During the holiday season, a tremendous number of volunteer opportunities appear. Helping others can give you a sense of pride and even put a smile on your face, Furthermore, volunteering gives you more experience to put on your resume and opportunities to network with other people. At the very least, you will be contributing to your community.

Conclusion

Many people fall into the illusion that career opportunities do not exist during the winter holidays, but this simply is not true. Some recruiters have even admitted that December is their busiest time of the year. This does not mean you are guaranteed to land a job, but it also does not mean that you should take a break from your search. With these tips and a bit of luck, you may just get the one thing you want the most this holiday season.

Nathan Newberger
Managing Editor "Helping You Find More Jobs Faster"