

# Direct Hire Associates

## Planning Your Next Job Search

### Cure for the common mistakes

#### **Do not focus on money**

More money doesn't mean a better job; it only means more money. Focusing on a higher starting salary is the number one mistake job seekers make. This is a dangerous primary criterion; if your new employer feels they have overpaid for you, the standards to which you are held may be unreasonable. Additionally, asking for a pay increase based on an arbitrary online "worth calculator" may harm your chances of getting the job. From your employer's perspective, your competition may appear to be more serious to change jobs for a lateral in pay because the opportunity is more important than the money. Don't rule out a move for a lateral in pay. Look to set yourself up for success by seeking a job doing something you enjoy, working with good people, in a company that suits you culturally. Your mindset should not be to make up for being underpaid in the past; your mindset should be earning a better paycheck in your next role through performance. If you do the right thing, the money will come. You will be rewarded over time, not necessarily on day one.

#### **Do not focus on the job title**

Titles are for novels, not for jobs. If you are a Finance Manager in a small corporation, those same responsibilities in a Fortune 500 company may be associated with the title Senior Financial Analyst. Why? Because titles are free: they don't mean anything. As you seek your next role, do not get hung up on the title. The focus should be on the job duties, responsibilities, and long-term potential of the role.

#### **Do not worry about all the little details**

Focus on what matters in the job: the responsibilities, the company culture, and the people you work with. If you are interviewing for a job as a senior manager and one of your first questions in your interview is "do you pay for parking?" you will quickly become less interesting to the potential employer. Why? Because you are giving the impression that you are more focused on the meaningless details rather than the job itself. In seeking a new job, you are not only seeking a role that you find enjoyable and fulfilling, but you want a job that will develop you professionally and move you in the direction of your long-term career goals. Regardless of whether a potential employer pays for parking, includes a cell phone, offers free sodas, or has a spacious nap room, your focus should be on getting an offer at the right company, with the right people, doing the right thing.

#### **Do not push back on particular hiring criteria**

You are applying for their job – they can have almost any kind of criteria they want. Whether your audience is a recruiter or a hiring manager, if they feel a particular experience (i.e. software experience) is important for you to have, don't spend time trying to convince them that it's not significant. You won't change their mind on what they think they need. If you have the experience requested, highlight it. If you don't have it, admit it. Being upfront and candid about who you are and what experiences you bring to the table will help establish realistic expectations for you when you land the role.

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**Do not run from your current job**

Understand where you've come from in order to get to where you want to be. If you find yourself in a job that you despise or in a role that you are unhappy with, don't assume that a mere job switch will solve your situation.

If you're looking to "escape" from your job, you might want to slow down and ask yourself how you arrived at the position you're in. Launching yourself into a new job simply to escape another is a waste of your time and will most likely lead you into another undesirable situation.

**Do not pitch your audience**

The correct thinking is to realize that you do not know what your interviewer is looking for. This does not mean you have to guess or become a mind reader. Start the conversation about your background as a matter of engaging your audience. Then elicit some feedback from him or her. Pay particular attention to any direction or topic that may be interesting to them. Such topics might be clues as to what he or she is ultimately after. You cannot start the interview by asking what they are looking for, but after rapport is established, you may ask for a little guidance. Be cautious of trying too hard, or overselling in the interview; if you find yourself speaking for 5+ minutes without any kind of verbal response, you've likely bored your audience to sleep (or death) and you are almost guaranteed to be off track.

**Do not avoid an industry specialty**

The correct thinking when you begin your career is to get broad, diverse experience. Once you have actual work experience in your particular functional area, you then want to work toward becoming the expert in a specific industry. Being an expert in your industry means not only gaining the experience, but also knowing your competition, establishing a broad network of professional relationships, and being in tune with the industry. Ultimately, this will help set you apart from the competition that may be equally qualified technically, but short on hard to quantify, industry-specific subtleties.

**Do not put too much weight on the company name**

Let go of your perception of XYZ Company's famous product or service. Realize that your job satisfaction will be derived directly from the working relationship that you'll have with your colleagues, not your company's tagline or logo. It's nice to work for an employer with a recognizable name, but unless you're surrounded by the right people, large well known employers are often not all they are cracked up to be.

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