

## ASK ANNIE

### Job-Hunting in Tough Times: 12 Ways to Improve Your Chances

Fortune.com

November 12, 2001

By: Anne Fisher

*The Five O'Clock Club*, a terrific nationwide career-counseling network, boasts 14 years of research and experience at helping displaced managers land on their feet. Chief operating officer Richard Bayer, PH.D, offers a dozen suggestions – some commonsensical but often overlooked, others a bit surprising – for turbo-charging your job search:

1. **Expand your job-hunting targets.** Instead of assuming you want the same kind of job in the same geographic location, think about moving, look into larger or smaller companies than you've worked in before, or consider seeking a different kind of position than you've had so far. Think creatively.
2. **Target what you want.** Bayer quotes actress Lily Tomlin: *I always wanted to be somebody, but I should have been more specific.* Once you've thought hard about what you want to do next, select specific geographic areas, industries, and positions, and concentrate your efforts on those.
3. **Expect to be looking for a while.** The average professional or manager is taking longer these days to find a job, so it's sensible to work out some financial back-up plans, says Bayer. What kind of side work could you do to earn money? How could you reduce your expenses? He suggests joining a job-hunting group to get support, ideas, and contacts.
4. **Think of job-hunting as your job.** Plan your job search campaign and work at it 35 hours a week if you're unemployed, 15 hours a week if you're employed, says Bayer. It's only when you're devoting a certain number of hours per week to your job hunt that you can get some momentum built up.
5. **Follow-up, and then follow-up some more.** After you've met with someone who had no job for you, keep in touch with that person by letting him or her know how your search is going or by sending a magazine article that would be of interest, for example, Bayer says. Follow-up is the main opportunity you have to turn a job interview into a job offer.
6. **Stay persistent.** *The Five O'Clock Club's* research shows that, after sending a résumé the average job seeker has to place eight follow-up calls before getting a job interview. Do not leave messages for the person to call you back, says Bayer. Instead, keep on calling until you reach him or her.
7. **Target 200 positions.** That's right, 200. These aren't job openings, but rather positions that would be appropriate, Bayer explains. For instance, if a certain company had 30 appropriate sales positions (not openings), a job hunter would have to target only six or seven such companies to get a decent offer quickly. Attrition happens.
8. **Don't put all your eggs in one basket.** Try to have six to 10 job possibilities in the works concurrently. Five of those will fall away through no fault of your own if, for instance, the company decides not to hire anyone right now, says Bayer.
9. **Prioritize your résumé.** Bear in mind that the average résumé is looked at for only 10 seconds. Yours should have a summary spelling out the most important accomplishments you want the reader to know.
10. **Write persuasive thank-you notes.** Thank-you notes after an interview are nice, but don't neglect to include a few lines aimed at influencing the interviewer to hire you.
11. **Network, network, network.** Networking is crucial – and works especially well if you concentrate on cultivating contacts who are two levels higher than you are. Notes Bayer, they are the ones in a position to hire you or recommend that you be hired.
12. **Keep your spirits up.** We're seeing an alarming number of job hunters becoming discouraged and dropping out of the job market. Don't be one of them, urges Bayer. Many of the things you are experiencing are being experienced by almost everybody else out there. ***Hang in there. You'll find something!***