

30-Minute Get The Job™ E-Course Free Preview

Dear Job Seeker:

Finding a job can be the hardest, most frustrating, and ego-bruising work you ever do. But at the same time, this is your opportunity to set your course for a new future. How well you conduct your job search will determine your future earnings, how satisfied you are with your future job, and possibly even where you live.

With the right tools, you can do more than just get another job. A well-conducted job search can bring you a *better* job – with higher pay and greater job satisfaction.

You may or may not have entered the job market willingly. Perhaps you were fired or laid off involuntarily. Or perhaps you're just getting out of school or the Military. But no matter what circumstances brought you to this place, we at The Resume Advantage are here to see that your job search is a total success.

We've developed this course to do just that – help you find and land the job you want as quickly as possible. And we'd like you to enjoy the first part of it absolutely FREE – just for visiting us online.

Your FREE Preview covers the basics of successful job searches. It will help you set goals and objectives, make your job search a *priority*, and begin to uncover leads in the “hidden job market.”

Abraham Lincoln once said, “Things may come to those who wait, but only the things left by those who hustle.”

If you're really serious about your job search, don't be the one who waits. You can get the rest of this FREE e-course just for ordering your Custom Crafted Resume by The Resume Advantage. You'll not only have a **resume that obliterates your competition and gets you the interview**, you'll have the knowledge to give an interview that *virtually guarantees you the job*.

Our Get The Job™ eCourse covers topics like:

- Networking your way into hidden opportunities
“Networking is all about staying connected. It focuses on building, expanding, and nurturing your networks. You build your network by developing a contact list and contacting them for information, advice and referrals. You expand your network by following up on referrals and making cold calls that link you and your network to those of others. And you nurture your network by staying in

contact, thanking individuals for their assistance, and doing good deeds and returning favors for those who remain a part of your network.

Realize from the start that a network is something you must constantly build, expand and nurture. Otherwise, you become a one-time networker who primarily used other people to get ahead.”

- Keeping a positive attitude and sharp mental focus during your search
“Try to set up a system of rewards related to specific goals so that you can occasionally celebrate successes. These little rewards will help keep you focused and motivated throughout your job search.

And take time every day to remind yourself of your value. It may be hard to grasp in the face of a long job search, but finishing such statements as:

- *I bring value to employers because I’m good at...*
- *I bring value to employers because I help impact the bottom line by...*
- *I bring value to employers because I help solve problems associated with...*
- *I bring value to employers because I help save time and money through my ability to...*

... will help you to stay positive. It will also help you to have great answers when it comes time to interview.”

- Interview Strategies that make employers want to hire you
“The key to not only giving an impressive interview, but lowering your stress level as well, is to be prepared. Employers are looking for someone who’s done their homework, who’s familiar with the company and what it does. Knowing that you are that person will help you relax and have confidence.

There is no excuse for not completely researching a company before you arrive for an interview. Even small, private firms can be researched if you’re determined.

Of course, this is where your networking can really come in handy. Do you know anyone who works there already? Do any of your contacts know someone on the inside?”

- Power negotiating for the best possible job offer
“Be prepared to negotiate salary from day one of your job search! Don’t wait to learn how to deal with this issue until you are interviewing or you are offered a position. Questions about salary often arise in the first telephone screen or even earlier, with a question about your salary requirements included in an ad or online posting. You must learn how to deal with these requests so that you don’t harm your future negotiating position, box yourself into a lower salary, or eliminate yourself from consideration right at the start.

- Knowing What You're Worth
"If you want to negotiate from a position of power you absolutely must know what your services are worth. You need to put together some hard numbers about average compensation for someone with your skills, qualifications, experience, industry and area."
- Important must-ask job interview questions compiled from our extensive interview research.

In short, it's everything you need for a successful job search. Together with your Custom Crafted Resume and Targeted Cover Letter, the information in this E-Course will help you hear those magic words sooner than you ever thought possible:

"You're hired!"

Here's to your success!

Lee Gerstein,
The Resume Advantage.

Don't stop here! Make sure you're armed with ALL the information you need for a successful job search. Click Here to order your Custom Crafted Resume, and receive the rest of this course absolutely FREE!

Part One: The Keys To Job Search Success

Setting a Realistic Objective

If you don't know where you're going, it's a sure bet you'll never get there. Having a clear goal in mind for your job search helps you stay focused on the opportunities that matter, rather than scattering your efforts toward every possibility that arises.

Successful job seekers know what they want to do. They have goals that guide them toward a job that's fit for them. Identifying what it is you want to do can be one of the most difficult job search tasks, but it keeps you from conducting a random search. If all you've been doing is finding available opportunities and then adjusting your skills and objectives to fit them, you may wind up with a job that makes you miserable.

Start focusing your job objective by thinking about your personal interests and aspirations. Ask yourself things like:

- Where do I want to be 5 or 10 years from now?
- Is my present (or previous) job the type of work I want to continue doing?
- Looking over my work history, what tasks did I enjoy performing the most?
- What did I enjoy the least?
- Do I enjoy supervising others?
- Do I enjoy working with a team, or being on my own?

Make an honest assessment of your skills, interests and qualifications, and use them to narrow your focus. Once you've acquired a target, you're ready to start shooting for it!

Prioritizing And Organizing Your Search

If you are serious about finding a good job, you simply must make your job search a top priority activity. Too many job seekers fall into the trap of wishful thinking. They visualize their ideal job, how much more money they'll be making, and the new benefits they'll receive. But they take little concrete action to make those dreams a reality.

Finding a job has to be your number one priority. Every day, put at least three tasks related to your job search at the top of your to-do list, and don't do anything else until you've accomplished those tasks. Items such as conducting research, making telephone calls, submitting resumes, sending thank-you notes and networking must be done consistently to be successful.

Make your job search the first thing you think about every morning, and the last thing you think about every night. By doing this, you force yourself to make it a priority.

When you first get started, finding a new job can seem like a daunting task. But like any big task, it is much easier if you break it down into manageable chunks. The following checklist will help you organize and navigate your job search:

Place a check beside each task as it's completed:

- _____ Identify skills, abilities and interests
- _____ Specify a job/ career objective
- _____ Research individuals, organizations, communities, and jobs
- _____ **Order Custom Crafted Resume and Targeted Cover Letters from The Resume Advantage**
- _____ Conduct informational/ networking interviews
- _____ Manage job interviews
- _____ Negotiate salary and terms of employment
- _____ Start work!

Tapping The Hidden Job Market

It's unclear exactly what percentages of jobs aren't advertised traditionally. Some figures claim fewer than half; some say as little as 20%. But it is clear that more and more companies are using newspapers and internet services as a method of last resort – only after they've been through referrals from current employees and applicants from a company web site. So if the only place you are searching is classified ads and online job boards, you are missing out on the vast majority of available opportunity!

According to the University of Minnesota, "The OPEN job market is where jobs are publicly advertised such as newspaper ads, large national internet sites, job training centers, and employment agencies. In the open job market, you often can find job openings to apply for, but your odds of securing the position are significantly reduced. This is because you are competing with literally hundreds of applicants many with skills equal to or better than yours. **Only 20% of all jobs are found in the open job market!**"

(Source:

http://www.stpaulcareers.umn.edu/jobsearch/find_positions/hidden_market.html)

You can uncover many of these hidden opportunities by:

- Researching companies online
- Searching employer's job listing pages

- Networking, online and off
- Cold-calling potential employers
- Directly applying to a company, even if no jobs are currently posted

Finding unadvertised jobs will take more detective work on your part than just perusing the local classified ads. But the leads you do find are often more promising, and come with much less competition.

Assessment Questions:

1. What is my employment objective?
2. Have I established job searching as my top priority? If not, what can I do to make it so?
3. How will I tap the hidden job market? How much time will I devote to it as opposed to traditionally advertised openings?

Part Two: How To Network

Many people are intimidated by the idea of “networking.” They see it as circulating around a room exchanging business cards, or pestering strangers for a job. Fortunately, nothing could be further from the truth.

At its heart, networking is just the art of being friendly, asking questions and recognizing opportunities. When done right, it can not only open doors, but can (and should) strengthen casual relationships.

Getting Started

*"Today's technology allows the average job-seeker with an Internet connection to send resumes to corporate and third-party recruiters by the hundreds, if not thousands. Unfortunately, **few submissions stand out because the generic approach** used by most candidates shows no regard for the individual company being targeted. On the other side of the coin, it forces recruiters more than ever to **depend on referrals** from people they trust to help sift the wheat from the chaff. One recent tool, **online social networks**, has helped many job-seekers gain an inside referral to a company that they might otherwise have been shut out of."*

Glenn Gutmacher, Founder, Recruiting-Online.com
<http://www.recruiting-online.com>

The internet can be a networking goldmine. Message boards and online forums allow you to “meet” people from all over the country – many of whom can be that inside connection to the job you’re seeking.

Websites, such as www.linkedin.com, allow you to search companies and find the individuals you need to contact – and even tell you how to reach them.

Online forums such as Yahoo! Groups (<http://groups.yahoo.com>) offer hundreds of different opportunities to network within certain industries, geographical locations, or even with people of similar interests.

Don’t stop with Yahoo. Use your favorite search engine to locate other forums specific to your industry or job search target.

The next place to look is close to home. Friends and family, current and former coworkers, alumni from your school, a wide range of people in your industry – these are already part of your network. Reach out to them. If you haven’t heard from them in a while, give them a quick call or drop them a short note.

Networking is all about staying connected. It focuses on building, expanding, and nurturing your networks. You build your network by developing a contact list and contacting them for information, advice and referrals. You expand your network by following up on referrals and making cold calls that link you and your network to those of others. And you nurture your network by staying in contact, thanking individuals for their assistance, and doing good deeds and returning favors for those who remain a part of your network.

Realize from the start that a network is something you must constantly build, expand and nurture. Otherwise, you become a one-time networker who primarily used other people to get ahead.

Expanding Your Network

To spread the widest net possible, you'll need to start making new acquaintances. Every time you talk to a friend or colleague about your job search, ask for suggestions of other you might speak to, and follow up on their referrals.

You'll also want to attend organized events, such as Chamber of Commerce mixers, trade and professional association meetings in your industry – the list is practically endless.

But don't think that just because your goal is to network, you have to go around forcing business cards on everyone you see. Just be friendly, and focus on making new friends. Let the business card exchange be a natural outgrowth of conversation. Not only will you seem less pushy, you'll have had much more time to make a lasting impression.

You'll have the greatest chance for success if you go back to the same groups over and over than if you constantly go to new ones all the time. Find two or three that seem to have the right mix of people and keep going back. You'll have the chance to not only make new contacts, but nurture existing ones as well.

Nurturing Your Network

The key to successful networking is in follow up. If you don't follow up with the people you meet, you've wasted your time in meeting them. You might think that just because you told them over cocktails that you were looking for a job that they'll remember you when one comes up. But the truth is, unless you were already familiar to them you've already been forgotten.

After meeting someone new, send them a "nice-to-meet-you" note and invite them to attend another event with you or make a date for lunch or coffee. Find out what the two of you have in common, and see if there is an activity you could share.

Building relationships like this takes time and effort, but relationships are the core of networking. The people in your network should be people you truly enjoy interacting with, because if you're doing it right, you'll be spending a lot of time with them.

Common Networking Errors To Avoid

- DON'T become a networking pest, similar to in-your-face salespeople who won't take "no" for an answer
- DON'T waste valuable time networking with the wrong people, or with losers who have very little to offer a job seeker
- DON'T confuse networking with taking advantage of people
- DON'T turn off potential networking contacts by asking them for a job rather than information, advice, and referrals
- DO be sure to express gratitude for the contact's time and assistance
- DO return favors when the opportunity arises
- DO be pleasant, persistent and professional, rather than aggressive and obnoxious

At its heart, a Network is just a giant social circle. Treat your contacts like friends, and you may not only get a job, but develop a rewarding relationship as well.

Assessment Questions:

1. Have I avoided networking in the past because I felt intimidated by it? If so, what steps will I take *this week* to get over my fear?
2. Who are at least 10 acquaintances I can reestablish lost contact with?
3. What organized events can I attend this week to gain new contacts?
4. Is there anyone I've met recently whom I haven't followed up with? What can I do to rectify that situation?

Part Three: Keeping Up Morale

As we said earlier, searching for a job can be one of the most disheartening experiences in life. Unfortunately, most seekers have to endure a string of rejections before getting to the one big “yes!” that finally ends your search.

It’s easy to become discouraged in the face of so much rejection. And it’s tempting to cut back on your job search activities because of it, or start going through the motions of looking for a job by sending out more letters and resumes in response to classified ads and online job postings – which can lead to more rejection.

You cannot let yourself become disillusioned and quit after receiving a handful of rejections. But how do you keep your morale up and your ego intact during your search?

Keeping a Positive Attitude

Don’t focus entirely on the big goal of landing your job. Be sure to set smaller goals along the way, and reward yourself for achieving them.

For example, let’s say you set a goal for the week of sending out 20 resumes, making 35 networking calls, and arranging 4 informational interviews. Once you reach that goal, reward yourself with dinner at your favorite restaurant.

Try to set up a system of rewards related to specific goals so that you can occasionally celebrate successes. These little rewards will help keep you focused and motivated throughout your job search.

And take time every day to remind yourself of your value. It may be hard to grasp in the face of a long job search, but finishing such statements as:

- I bring value to employers because I’m good at...
- I bring value to employers because I help impact the bottom line by...
- I bring value to employers because I help solve problems associated with...
- I bring value to employers because I help save time and money through my ability to...

... will help you to stay positive. It will also help you to have great answers when it comes time to interview.

Dealing With Rejection

Kentucky Fried Chicken is a mega-success by any standard. Yet before founding it, the 65-year-old Harlan Sanders found himself retired and broke. So, he decided to sell his fried chicken recipe.

Unfortunately, it seemed that no one was interested. The future Colonel Sanders was turned down *over one thousand times* before finally hearing “Yes.”

Yet somehow, Harlan Sanders refused to give up. He kept pushing, and the rest is History.

Unfortunately, you’re not going to get every job you apply for, either. That’s a simple fact. But there are ways of dealing with the rejections that help take the sting out.

Treat rejections as just part of the game – the markers you have to pass on the pathway to your new job. You cannot get to the final acceptance without acquiring numerous rejections. So instead of seeing each one as a dead end, see it as getting one step closer to the goal.

Here is a time-tested method that is working for our clients: Act like you're a detective and find 10 suspects every day. Turn your suspects into prospects, your prospects into opportunities and before one months time you’ll be surprised at how many opportunities are out there.

This is how top sales producers in every industry earn well above average incomes – by never giving up.

Support Groups

The more people involved in your job search, the more chances for success you have. Surrounding yourself with supportive people will also make it that much harder to get discouraged.

It’s a good idea to find your own support group. Your group should consist of three or more individuals who are job hunting. Try to schedule regular meetings with specific purposes in mind.

The group may be highly social, especially if it encompasses close friends, but it should also be task oriented. Each meeting should set performance goals for the group for the week. For example, you might set a goal of making 20 new contacts and conducting 5 informational interviews. At the next meeting, each group member shares his progress, and the others hold him accountable for reaching goals.

Critique each other’s progress, make suggestions for improving the job search, and develop new strategies together. You’ll gain valuable information and feedback that’s normally difficult to gain on your own. And you’ll provide each other with important psychological support to get through your job search.

Controlling The Controllable

One of the hardest parts of searching for a job is the lack of a feeling of control. But there are some parts of the process you can control. Keeping a handle on them will help you feel on top of your search.

You can't control how interviewers will respond to you, or the competition you face for a particular job. You can control how you respond to interviewers, and the manner in which you convey your advantages as a candidate. You can't control whether networking contacts will pass along leads or ideas to you. You can control how frequently you will network, who you will network with, and how easy you'll make it for people to help you.

Uncertainty about your job or future employment is not a comfortable feeling. You may be surprised at the number of things that are under your control:

- The number of networking calls you make each week
- The types of activities you will focus on in your search
- The number of hours per day you spend on your search
- Sending follow-up notes to interviewers or networking contacts
- Participating in professional associations that will increase your visibility and reputation among hiring managers
- Taking a course to keep your skills and knowledge fresh
- Your attitude

By focusing on the things you can control, rather than the things you can't, you'll cut way down on the amount of stress you experience during your job search.

Assessment Questions:

1. What three intermediate goals have I set for my job search, and how will I reward myself for meeting them?
2. In what four ways do I bring value to an employer?
3. Name two acquaintances that might be interested in forming a job search support group.
4. Name five things regarding my job search that I can control. What am I doing to control these items?

Part Four: Impressive Interviews

The job interview is the single most important step towards landing a job. It's make-it-or-break-it time.

Which makes it the most stressful part of your job search as well.

Preparation Is The Key

The key to not only giving an impressive interview, but lowering your stress level as well, is to be prepared. Employers are looking for someone who's done their homework, who's familiar with the company and what it does. Knowing that you are that person will help you relax and have confidence.

There is no excuse for not completely researching a company before you arrive for an interview. Even small, private firms can be researched if you're determined.

Of course, this is where your networking can really come in handy. Do you know anyone who works there already? Do any of your contacts know someone on the inside?

Go beyond looking at the company's website. An Internet search can turn up news articles, and perhaps even press releases issued by the firm. If you can determine the author of the release, you can contact them and say, "I saw your press release. It looks really good. Would you be open to me asking a few questions? I'm doing research on your company."

There's also a (free) website, www.pubsub.com, where you can subscribe to alerts and be notified anytime news or articles are published about an industry or company.

Leave no stone unturned. The more you know about the company, the better your chances of impressing the interviewer.

Avoid The Mistakes That Kill Opportunity

Keep in mind that while speaking to you, the interviewer has two goals in mind: He wants to find the right person for the job, but he also wants to eliminate everyone else. To make sure you don't fall into the second category, here are some common errors to avoid:

- Arriving late to the interview
- Presenting a poor appearance – always be well groomed and appropriately dressed
- Giving short or incomplete answers to questions

- Appearing to have no goals, direction or enthusiasm
- Feeling superficial or insincere
- Failing to ask questions about the job or employer

Dress For Success

The first 30 seconds of an interview can be the most crucial. Because it's then that the interviewer is forming that all-important first impression. Make it a good one and the rest of the interview will go well. But make a bad first impression, and it's virtually impossible to recover.

That makes how you dress critically important. A good rule of thumb is to dress one or two levels above the job you're interviewing for. If you're interviewing for a professional position where employees are expected to wear business attire, put on your best suit for the interview. In a company where casual attire is the norm, try to dress one step above the norm. If you're interviewing for a blue-collar position where a suit would be overkill, you still should dress conservatively – at least wear an open-collared shirt.

Never show up for an interview in jeans and a t-shirt!

You don't want your attire to be a distraction – by being *over or* under dressed. Nor do you want to look like you just don't know how to put yourself together. Be neatly dressed and well groomed, no matter how dressed up you are.

Body Language

It's a known fact that 80% of what you say is non-verbal, so pay special attention to what you say with your body – from the moment you walk in the door.

Try to carry yourself in a friendly, professional manner. While you wait, it's a good idea to be reading material related to the company you're interviewing with – and it's even better if you can work that fact naturally into the interview. "I was catching up on the latest _____. What do you think about it?"

Also, taking notes during the interview is very important. It gives the non-verbal message that you are interested, and the impression that you are detail-oriented.

How To Handle The Questions

You can anticipate before you ever walk into the interview 90 – 95% of the questions you'll be asked. You can expect to be asked about:

- Your education and work experience
- Your personality
- Your work habits
- Your ability to work with others

- Your career goals

Be sure to listen fully to the interviewer when he speaks. People sense when you're giving your full attention, and it shows them that they are important to you, interesting, valued, and respected. They'll then want to extend to you the same respect.

When it comes time to respond, make it your goal to connect with interviewers.

- Single-mindedly stay on course with your responses. Remember that your objective is to gain employment by educating the employer of *your value*. Show him how hiring you will benefit him.
- Use eye contact, open body language, facial animation, and appropriate gestures to engage the interviewer. Reflect back and confirm your understanding of what is being said. And be sure to ask lots of questions yourself.
- Remember, "Brevity is the soul of wit." Know what your point is, and get to it quickly.
- Prove your claims. Instead of just promising to make the company more efficient, give specific examples of how you increased productivity for a previous employer.
- Show your ability to benefit the employer's bottom line, productivity, problems, etc. Frame all of your comments in light of how you will benefit the employer.

Questions YOU Should Ask

Successful interviewing will take more than responding to questions. It is expected that you ask questions that prove you are a thinking employee and worthy of receiving a job offer!

Don't try to wait until the actual interview to come up with the questions you'll ask, either. You may be too nervous when the time comes. Use the list below, along with your own research into the company, to write them in advance.

Of course, The Resume Advantage is always here to help if you need us. See the end of this course for information on FREE interview coaching!

Here are some questions to get you started:

- Why is your company successful?
- What must your company do to stay successful?
- How does your company make money?
- What are your strategies to get and keep customers?
- What is the vision for this company in three years?
- What does it take to succeed here?
- Why have other people failed here?
- Are your competitors ABC, Inc., and XYZ, Inc.?

- What differentiates your products and company from the competitors?
- Why are (the target job position, e.g., salespeople or scientists or accountants) important to your company?
- How important are (target job position: _____) to the company?
- What are your expectations for the job?
- What important (job position task: _____) is not being done well today?
- What are you looking for?
- What kind of training is available?
- What are the concerns about this position?
- What will it take for someone like me to be accepted by your company?
- What is your hiring process?
- Who else is involved in the decision process to hire?
- Is there any question I should be asking that I am not asking?

Assessment Questions

1. Have I sufficiently researched the company I'm about to interview with? Do I know enough about them to ask intelligent questions, and show how hiring me will benefit them?
2. What is the dress code for the company? Will the attire I've chosen for the interview make a positive impression, without drawing undue attention?
3. Are there any personal grooming issues I need to take care of before the interview, such as getting a haircut/ style, removing excess body piercing, etc?
4. In what five ways will hiring me benefit this potential employer? How will I communicate these benefits during my interview?
5. What questions have I formulated on my own based on researching the position?

Part Five: Negotiating Job Offers

Be prepared to negotiate salary from day one of your job search! Don't wait to learn how to deal with this issue until you are interviewing or you are offered a position. Questions about salary often arise in the first telephone screen or even earlier, with a question about your salary requirements included in an ad or online posting. You must learn how to deal with these requests so that you don't harm your future negotiating position, box yourself into a lower salary, or eliminate yourself from consideration right at the start.

Knowing What You're Worth

If you want to negotiate from a position of power you absolutely must know what your services are worth. You need to put together some hard numbers about average compensation for someone with your skills, qualifications, experience, industry and area.

There are lots of places to look for this information. Online resources such as monster.com, careerbuilder.com, and salary.com all have tools you can use to get salary estimates. Many classified ads and online job postings also list salary information that you can add to your collection.

You should also include salary questions as part of your networking interviews. Ask such things as, "What is an average salary for someone with my qualifications at your company?" or "How does your company determine salary ranges?"

You wouldn't want to come out and ask your contact what she makes, of course, but you should be able to get a good idea of what's possible from her. If she works for a very large company, she may also have an employee handbook with published salary ranges, so don't forget to ask.

Control The Timing

Discussing salary too early puts you at a distinct disadvantage. Many employers will bring up the question of salary early in the interview – what they're trying to do is rule you in or out of the position.

How do you respond to the question when it arises without being rude or insulting? Deflect a question with a question. "I really need to know more about the position and my responsibilities before I can discuss compensation. Can you tell me about..."

This not only puts off the salary question until (hopefully) you've been offered the job, but it also shows the employer that you are a thoughtful professional who's concerned about more than just getting paid.

In fact, you don't want to discuss money until you've been offered the job if at all possible. At any time before that, if you're asked, "What are your salary requirements?" you can respond with, "Are you offering me the job?" if the answer is "No," then you can again say, "I really need to know more about your company and the position before I feel comfortable discussing compensation."

But it's also a great opportunity to turn the tables, and get some more information by asking, "By the way, how much are you paying at present for this position?"

Getting the employer to volunteer salary information first gives you the upper hand.

Offers And Counter Offers

Despite what many job seekers believe, salary is almost always negotiable. Most employers, unless they're hiring for entry-level positions, have some flexibility to negotiate salary or benefits. And while most aren't looking to exploit you, most don't want to pay more than they have to, either.

The key is to establish your value in the eyes of the employer. You've done that every step of the way, from your Custom Crafted Resume to how you handled yourself in the interview.

Always talk about salary ranges, rather than specific dollar amounts. This gives you flexibility in the negotiation process.

Say, for example, the employer cites a figure of \$60,000 a year. You then counter by saying something like, "Based on my salary research, as well as my experience, I was thinking more in terms of \$60,000 - \$70,000 a year."

Put the employers offer at the bottom of the range. This establishes common ground – the employer may not want to go over \$60K, but at least he knows you are within his budget. Most likely, he'll counter by saying something like, "Well, we might be able to go as high as \$63,000." To which you respond, "Is it possible to go to \$66,000?"

You'll soon discover that anything is possible if handled professionally, if you're flexible and can support your requests with the value you provide.

Negotiating The Benefits Package

In order to get a true picture of the value of the job you're being offered, you must carefully weigh the worth of the benefits package. Sometimes employers will try to make an offer seem more impressive than it is by "dressing up" what amounts to standard benefits. On the other hand, some stock options and retirement contributions can considerably sweeten the deal.

Make a list of each item in the offered package, and it's dollar value. Adding up those figures will give you the true value of your potential benefits.

In addition to the standard health insurance and vacation pay, you'll want to consider such items as corporate profit sharing, any signing bonus, continuing education, tuition reimbursements for you or your family members, child care, company vehicle use, travel, use of company owned facilities, discounts, moving expenses, laptop, potential severance packages, and more.

You may find that an offer from Company X for \$50,000 has a true value of \$55,000 when considering the benefits package. But Company Y's \$45,000 offer may translate to more than \$65,000 when you examine their benefits. Important information for making your decision!

Finally, if the salary offered by an employer you'd really like to work for doesn't meet your expectations, you can try to sweeten the deal with a better benefits package. You might be able to negotiate items like longer paid vacations, flex-time, or profit sharing to make the whole package more worthwhile.

Don't Rush To Judgment

No employer will fault you for taking time to consider their offer before giving your decision. In fact, if you jump at the offer without any thought, you may appear needy and reckless.

Accepting a job is a major decision, and it should not be taken lightly – even if you've been out of work for six months and the bills are about to bury you. You are committing the majority of your available time every week, and a considerable chunk of your life to this company. Are you sure this is the job you want?

Ask yourself the same questions you asked at the beginning of your job search:

- What do I want to be doing five years from now?
- How will this job affect my personal life?
- Will I dread going to work every day, or do I think I'll be excited and fulfilled?
- Do I know enough about the employer and the future of this organization?
- How have the previous occupants of this position fared? Why did they have problems, and what will I do differently?
- Are there other opportunities that would better meet my goals?

While an employer expects you to give his offer careful consideration, he won't appreciate it if you're playing games. Don't play "hard to get" or tell him you've got another offer if you don't. You may get by in the short term, but dishonesty always comes back to bite you.

Assessment Questions:

1. What salary range is typical for someone of my skills, experience, and qualifications in the industry and location in which I'll be working?
2. What unique value do I bring to an employer that justifies a higher salary?
3. What benefits must an offer contain to be worthwhile to me? What are some I'd like to get if I can? What monetary value do these benefits hold?
4. Am I comfortable with the idea of negotiating for my salary and benefits package? If not, what can I do to put myself more at ease?

Congratulations! You're now armed with the knowledge to make your job search a total success. Together with your Custom Crafted Resume and Targeted Cover Letter, you should be on your way to a new and rewarding job.

Of course, this isn't the end. We here at The Resume Advantage are here to help in any way we can. If you have any questions, problems – or perhaps just need some advice – feel free to contact us.

And don't forget to let us know when you land that new job. We love to hear success stories!

Until then, Here's To Your Success!

Lee Gerstein

PS – Here at The Resume Advantage, we're always willing to help. If you need a little extra advice in preparing for an interview, or coming up with questions to ask during one, I'd be happy to talk to you.

After all, even million-dollar executives have coaches. Or, as the Chicago Tribune once stated, "Who exactly seeks out a coach? Winners who want even more out of life."

There's no charge for the first 15-minute consultation. And if you still need help after that, I'd be happy to talk to you about arranging a coaching plan.

Just give me a call at: (800) 658-1JOB (1562), or email me at info@1resumewriting.com.

I look forward to hearing from you!

Lee