



The Cambridge Perspective

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Job Hunting? Protect Your Reputation



Whether you're contemplating a new career direction, or just thinking of moving to a new company, you should give some serious thought to your job search strategy before taking action.

Most people begin their job search by dusting off their old resume, adding their latest job, and then targeting a group of recipients. This method will, more often than not, result in a random, unsuccessful job search. "More importantly" says Graham Carver, President of Cambridge, "it can give the impression to hiring managers that you're disorganized, unprepared, or just plain *unimpressive*."

Define Yourself

The first commandment of a proper job search is KNOW THYSELF. You can't

expect a prospective employer to know what you're looking for if you're not exactly sure of what it is yourself.

Give some thought to whether you're looking to further advance in your current career path, or would a change of direction be more fulfilling? In many cases, psychological testing can help you identify suitable and rewarding career alternatives.

Before taking any action, you should be able to communicate a) your key areas of interest, experience and major skill sets, b) your values and how you can integrate them into your desired position and c) your achievements and career progression.

Demonstrate Your Value

Once you're clear about who you are and where you want to go, you can strategically create a resume and cover letter that highlight the skill sets and personal characteristics that are most valuable to your target employer(s). "Your resume should provide just enough information to entice them into asking for a meeting" says Chris Poole, Partner.

When preparing your resume, keep in mind:

- The best format for an executive resume is in reverse chronological order, summarizing

your functional skill sets. This allows the reader to see your career progression, while highlighting your strengths.

- Focus on your achievements (which tell the reader about you) – rather than your responsibilities (which tell them about the job). This is one of the most commonly

overlooked, and most important features of your resume.

- **Quantify** yourself; use specific examples and detailed figures to back up your statements.

- Create multiple resumes and cover

letters that highlight transferable skills sets to target different industries or positions you are seeking.



Network Effectively

Up to 85% of the opportunities available at any given time are not advertised. This means that you must utilize every resource available to you - not just classified ads, but trade papers, professional associations, the internet and message boards - to unearth the hidden job market. But the most powerful resource available to you is your own network of contacts.

Everyone - from your parents to your dentist - is a potential network contact. While friends, business associates, industry connections and associations are obvious



2323 Yonge St., Ste. 203
Toronto, ON, M4P 2C9
Phone: 416-484-8408
Fax: 416-484-0151
mail@cambridgmgmt.com
www.cambridgmgmt.com



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sources, the most successful “networkers” look for opportunities everywhere.

The idea behind networking is not to ask for a job, but to be directed to as many other individuals as possible in response to the question: “Who do you know that I should be talking to?”

Be prepared to turn a networking opportunity into an impromptu interview at the contact's request, but be brief and avoid asking for anything more than information. Eventually, your contacts will lead you to the opportunities, if you're careful not to impose on them.

Maintain an ongoing relationship with executive recruiters by providing your updated resume with your career requirements, but keep in mind that most recruiters are in the business of finding people for available positions - not positions for available people. An occasional telephone call will keep you at 'top of mind' for new opportunities, without annoying anyone.

A good reputation can open many hidden doors, as well. Take advantage of networking opportunities that can increase your industry profile. Speaking engagements and industry events offer the opportunity to expand your network and showcase your talents.

Another method of enhancing your industry profile is to become a mentor to younger peers, who often have valuable contacts of their own. Many executives find mentoring a rewarding activity in itself.

Interview with Impact

Don't be fooled into thinking that your impressive track record and background research will clinch the job, even if you are impeccably qualified for the role. A good interviewer will be probing for compatibility

with the hiring organization's corporate culture, so your chances at making the short list are significantly improved if you can find a mutual interest or some personal connection with the interviewer.

But don't lose sight of your original goal: to find the right role. “Often, people become so focused on ‘nailing the interview’ that they forget to ask their own questions” says Elisabeth Windfeld, Partner.

Always follow up with a thank you note, to refresh the interviewer's memory and reinforce your image as a thorough professional.

Sign with Confidence

Before accepting an offer, make sure you understand the full compensation package and how it will be applied, including bonuses, signing & exit benefits, health benefits, etc.

Where an executive search firm is involved, they can help you to negotiate the terms, since it is in their best interest to ensure that both parties are satisfied with the agreement.

As with all activities in the process, be prompt and decisive in your actions. Your behaviour will be taken as an indicator of how you will approach the new position.

The most important fact to keep in mind throughout the process is that you are *both* a salesman and a customer in the job search process. You're selling yourself to a company on the one hand, but you're also receiving a job in return.

If you can focus on how to best present your “product” while thoroughly investigating their “product”, you have the basis for finding the right fit, where both you and the company will be equally rewarded. •

If you really care... Don't give cash!

We've seen an increase in the frequency of the “Career Transition or Cash” option allowing departing employees to choose a cash settlement over Career Transition services. Too many individuals take the cash and then struggle in a disorganized, half-hearted job search because they lack the skills or resources needed to mount an effective search on their own. Not surprisingly, they resent the ex-employer for allowing them to make the mistake.

The career transition benefit demonstrates that your firm cares about its employees, and is committed to providing assistance. An effective program benefits not only the departing employee, but also the remaining employees' morale, your legal position and your company's reputation. Commit to providing valuable services and benefits to your employees - or save your money.

Cambridge Management Planning offers a full suite of services including Executive Search, Director Search, Interim Management, Executive Coaching and Career Transition services. Call us for more information:

Graham Carver, President - Ext. 203
Elesha Browne, Partner - Ext. 226
David Howes, Partner - Ext. 210
Chris Poole, Partner - Ext. 205
Peter Shrive, Partner - Ext. 204
Terry Wray, Partner - Ext. 202

2323 Yonge Street, Ste. 203
Toronto, ON M4P 2C9
Telephone: 416-484-8408
www.cambridgmgmt.com

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**When two men in business always
agree, one of them is unnecessary.**

- William Wrigley Jr.