

TIP

Tactical Information for Progress
for Job Seekers

With the ever-changing employment climate, it's more important than ever to professionally differentiate yourself, and pay attention to your personal brand and the perception associated with your name.

Here are some functionally *candid* **TIPs**, (Tactical Information for Progress) that may aid you on your path to personal and professional success:

A quick way to stay OFF the A-list!

When a search partner/recruiter calls or e-mails you, **ALWAYS RESPOND**, whether it is immediately self-serving or not. To what level you wish to engage is up to you, BUT it is *always* a *netweaving* opportunity! Responsiveness is a reflection of your professional style, personal brand, and will keep lines of communications open. If you are contacted about an opportunity, *don't* circumvent the process and go around the search partner or recruiter as that activity is closely tracked and speaks to your style. Remember, everything comes full-circle.

Communicate clearly when leaving a voicemail!

This may sound elementary, but when you're on the receiving end, you might be surprised. **ALWAYS** leave your contact information in its entirety, opposed to saying "It's Bob returning your call. Call me." Communicate your full name, and **SPELL** your last name. Speak slowly and clearly when leaving your phone number(s) and e-mail address, and **INCLUDE** your area code. This alone will increase your return response rate, as the recipient may be mobile and outside of your area code, and be positioned to respond to you virtually. Remember, this is the virtual age of technology.

Naming your softcopy resume is more critical than you may think!

Talent acquisition professionals, as well as, hiring managers, receive unsolicited resumes in high volume. With this in mind, you want to **KEEP YOUR NAME TOP-OF-MIND**, and make it easy for the recipient to store and retrieve your information. Name your resume **LASTNAMEfirst.pdf OR .doc**. If you have a more common name, include your middle initial and separate your **LASTNAMEmiddleinitialFIRSTNAME**, by UPPER and lower case for ease-of read. If it all runs together in the same case, the recipient may not be able to easily read your name.

How important is an e-mail address!

E-mails are a common and critical component of immediate impact and communication. Your e-mail address on your resume should be your personal e-mail, **NOT** your corporate e-mail. In addition, your e-mail should allow your full name to be visible to the recipient. This will also ensure consistency, and continue to keep your name TOP-OF-MIND.

Your resume is your marketing document!

In a resume, talent acquisition professionals look for content and ease-of-read. With this in mind, it's a good idea to highlight your core competencies at the TOP of the first page to include any professional certifications; i.e. - (CPA, CMA, PE, PMP, JD, etc.). Beneath companies, it's a good idea to indicate the size of the organization, and industry i.e. - (857MM privately held consumer plastics manufacturer). Ideally, keep your resume to 3 pages. CV's are expected to be longer as they tend to focus on R&D and academic related expertise and may include patents, authored periodicals, product innovations, etc.

Display your expertise a bit. If you're a marketing or graphic design professional, consider differentiating your resume by incorporating organizational logos. Perhaps, include a personal webpage with your resume.

Cultural fit is just as important to companies as it is to candidates. To aid in the potential discussion of this, consider adding a brief and concise "cultural statement" to your resume **INSTEAD** of "Objective".

Include your e-mail address, and ensure it's named appropriately with your name. Include your LinkedIn.com profile hyperlink, and ensure your LinkedIn.com profile is complete and professional.

Include some relevant accomplishments. Maintain chronological format. Maintain no more than 3 professional font styles and sizes. Comic Sans is not considered a professional differentiator. Keep in mind, full disclosure is best, and establishes a sense of trust from the onset, so include all experience and your graduation dates.

Culture Fit!

Cultural fit is just as important to companies as it is to candidates. To aid in the discussion of this, consider adding a brief and concise “cultural statement” to your resume “Objective”. When composing your “culture statement”, consider cultural traits and differentiators, such as shared vision, what motivates you, what inspires you, how you want to be regarded, and showcase what is important to you.

Gauge culture fit throughout the interview process prior to the offer stage. Pay attention to the layout of physical space and get a pulse on the pace....are employees engaged productively and focused *or* is it unproductive chatter and playing Candy Crush. Consider asking an employer what *they* would change about their culture?? The answer to this can be very insightful. Consider asking an employer what makes their best employees successful??

VCL (Video Cover Letter)?

Although *HIGH*-tech does not replace *HIGH*-touch, consider an innovative differentiator like a 60-80 second video clip link in the content of your email introduction with your resume attached. This gives a prospective employer a glimpse into some of the intangibles like personal style, personality traits, level of enthusiasm, and engagement style. Keep it personable, identify 5 points (3 professional, 2 personal), speak slowly, don't regurgitate your resume, and close with a next step in mind.

Keep your resume updated!

This speaks for itself, but timing is still a critical factor in search. Position yourself to be responsive with your marketing document by always keeping it updated. Keeping it on a flash drive with you, or retaining it on a cloud, or Google Docs, may be a value-add. Responsiveness is a KEY factor in the search process!

Using LinkedIn.com is a good online professional networking resource!

LinkedIn.com is a low-to-no cost *professional* networking resource that will serve you well in establishing and maintaining your professional network AND your personal brand. It's a great tool to showcase your expertise and style while increasing your visibility AND searchability. Although it has 400+ million members globally, from a professional perspective, don't use it as a popularity contest. At the same time, having less than 100 connections isn't viewed favorably. It's okay to be selective about who you want in your network. Like anything, you will need to cultivate it on a routine basis, and offer value to your network. The time you invest in it will reflect favorably on you.

When you use the LinkedIn.com server to add connections or request recommendations, take the time to customize your inquiry to the individual, opposed to using the standard verbiage and hitting the "send" button.

When you set up your profile, get some objective views. Include your personal e-mail address in your profile and make it visible so others can reach out to you more easily. Ensure your profile is complete. Check your privacy settings and keep your email up-to-date. Include a professional headshot on your profile AND consider uploading a differentiating background image. Join LinkedIn groups specific to your interest, function and industry. Consider creating a professional LinkedIn group. Use the "follow" function to increase your visibility with specific companies who have a LinkedIn company profile. If you're conducting an open job search, upload your resume to your profile and add work related samples to the Slideshare function. If you don't want to be contacted by prospects or colleagues, then don't use LinkedIn.com. This would be self-defeating.

How does LinkedIn impact your personal brand!

With over 400 Million members, LinkedIn has proven to be a reputable value-add *professional* resource. Your profile and activity on LinkedIn is a direct reflection of your professional brand and social media footprint. When you "like", "comment" or "share" a post or image, your entire network is notified of your action, unless your settings are modified. Using LinkedIn as a [Facebook](#) social media channel is an inappropriate use and may not reflect well on your professional style and brand. With this in mind, use the POWER of your social media network wisely.

Use caution with your social media footprint!

If you're on Facebook, Twitter, Myspace, GooglePlus, Instagram, FourSquare, Pinterest, YouTube, LinkedIn, or have blogs, online networks, forum comments, online product reviews, etc, then you have a social media footprint which can be traced to you. With this in mind, manage your footprint and be aware of the images and comments you post. Remember it's easy to post things in the privacy of your own space and not consider who's eyes may see your comments and images.

Research, Research, Research!!

Research is a critical component to the job search, that is often overlooked. Doing your research reflects well on you, and moreover, it gives you more control in mapping out your path. Too often job seekers blindly send out several resumes and sit back and wait. This creates frustration and can be quite discouraging.

Research supports a proactive approach and empowers you to have more control over exactly WHO you're sending your information to, and allows you to track your personal success, while increasing your network and maintaining open lines of communication. In this climate, it's important to approach companies and hiring executives directly. Your research may help you identify common denominators, such as, the CEO may have attended the same college as you did or the SVP, Ops belongs to the same professional trade organization you do, or the CFO is from your hometown. Those common denominators will aid you in introducing yourself to these decision makers.

Research increases your knowledge base of a specific industry, company, or hiring executives. Empower yourself with information and apply that knowledge appropriately. You can Google for hours upon hours, and still not find the valid information you need. If you need assistance with valid business intel, contact Kelly at kp@pgroup.net or Kelly@CareerAdvisorServices.com.

Google!

Along the lines of research, set up Google Alerts for specific companies you're targeting, as well as, your own name. Go to <http://google.com/alerts>, enter your search term and enter your e-mail address. When you've created your alerts, Google will e-mail you whenever it indexes the terms in your alert string. This is also a way to see how you're branding yourself when you enter your name in the search box.

Get a library card!

Sign-up or renew your library card. There are *many* business resources you can gain access to online that are **FREE** to library card holders. Some resources are available on-site ONLY.

Own your job search and career transition!

Don't continue to blindly send out resumes and wait for a response. Start mapping your job search or career transition proactively and empower yourself by first identifying 10 companies you would like to penetrate based on your personal criteria, including some select retained or contingent search firms. Research and document them, so you can track your personal progress. If you're a **CAS** - <http://www.CareerAdvisorServices.com> client, we collaborate with you and develop your personal Dashboard in a user-friendly format with cloud based access to track your progress.

Don't underestimate the power of E-mail!

E-mails used to be viewed as a short form of quick communiqué. Not anymore. E-mail is a display of your written style of communication, and usually consistent with one's verbal communication style. Don't be lazy with your verbiage. Statistics indicate a single email will be seen by 11 people for every single person you send it to. Typically, e-mails are forwarded numerous times, and the communication thread is for all to see. Every e-mail does not have to be novel, BUT the more the recipient is engaged by your content, the more YOUR NAME IS TOP-OF-MIND. E-mail also keeps those lines of communication open, so use it wisely.

Always send Thank You's!

After an interview, meeting, video conference, or a trade show encounter, ALWAYS send a **Thank You** via e-mail. It has immediate impact in demonstrating your style, professionalism, responsiveness, listening ability, and continues to keep those lines of communications open. ALSO consider a Video Thank You clip (60-80 seconds) link.

Network amongst professional trade organizations!

It's a good idea to network within your particular field and/or industry through related professional trade organizations. Position yourself to be viewed as a value-add to your trade organization. Many times you will have a pulse on opportunities that you may not otherwise be aware of. Industry tends to favor industry for many reasons.

Network, Network, Network!

Don't underestimate the power of networking/netweaving. A key element to networking is being responsive, even when it's not immediately self-serving. Don't reach out to someone you haven't communicated with in years, and suddenly ask for their help. Understand you need to earn and **CULTIVATE YOUR NETWORK** over time. It is not an entitlement. Networking/netweaving is about what **YOU CAN GIVE**, opposed to what you can get. If you approach networking with this in mind, it will serve you well. Some say "it's all about who you know." In reality, **IT'S ABOUT WHAT THEY KNOW ABOUT YOU.**

What is behavior-based interviewing??

Most employers use behavior based interviewing, which is based on the belief that past behavior and performance predicts future behavior and performance. It is used to determine the applicant's potential for long-term success with their company, and critical to their succession planning initiatives. Be prepared for some of these questions in a phone interview.

How can I prepare for a behavior-based interview?

We look for demonstrated examples of behavior from your past experience that is directly related to the job function. An example might be, if an employer wanted to know about your leadership ability and influence, they might ask something like "tell me about a time, when you had to persuade others to do something your way?" And be prepared to provide examples of when results didn't turn out as you planned, and what your next plan of action was.

Before starting the interview process, it's a good idea to identify 2 to 3 of your top selling points and determine how you will convey them using what many call **PAR (problem, action, and result)**.

To be better prepared for behavioral interviews, keep a personal achievement diary at work and document your PAR (problem, action, result) stories. This will give you a documented reference of your accomplishments.

Wishing you well on your path to success!

TIPs (Tactical Information for Progress for job seekers)

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