

Stay on Top of the Job Search Process!

Whether you're a new graduate or you've been in the workforce for decades, it's never too late to start putting some serious work into your self-marketing materials. The problem many experienced job seekers run into when trying to write a resume is that their heads spin when they begin to think about what they've done over a 10- or 20-year career. That's why it's a good idea to start early, long before you will be looking for a new job.

This isn't required every day, but once every few months, stop and take inventory of your job. What have you accomplished in the past few months? What have you done that your peers haven't? What areas are you excelling in? What types of tasks (old and new) are you handling? What have you done to improve your company? Whom have you impressed and why? Write this information down, and store it in a file somewhere. The small amount of time it takes to do periodic self-assessment will save you a lot of time and effort in the long run, allowing you to commence with your job search that much faster.

You should also be constantly assessing your industry's marketplace. Certain types of jobs come into and fall out of demand. New fields may be opening up or becoming extinct. How do you fit into the big picture? What is out there that might be perfect for you that you aren't even aware of yet? Contacting employment agencies or career centers at local high schools, colleges, and universities may help you answer these questions and find other valuable job search resources.

More important, make sure you are always taking a fresh and forward-thinking approach. A client once told me that he felt his resume was perfect as it was and he didn't want to make any changes to it at all. The reason he felt so confident was that he had developed his resume in collaboration with a hiring manager at a major company, and it contained all of the things that this person looked for in a resume. The problem? He'd done this collaborative revision in 1996, and he was telling me this in 2006.

You should never submit a resume you used several years ago, even one year ago, to a job you're applying for now. Not only have you evolved throughout your career, how you should present yourself has too. Even if the resume was fantastic at the time and your position hasn't changed since you last revised it, the job market, marketing techniques, and your perspective on your experience will have all changed.

Those who remain open and flexible with regard to their job searches have given careful thought to where they've been and where they're going, and they aren't afraid to go after what they want are those who will meet with continued success in the job marketplace.