

Searching for your ideal job?

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Job seeking tips for the laboratory animal research professional

Job searching can be difficult but with good preparation and hard work, finding the right career move can be akin to pinpointing the proverbial needle in a haystack. If you know where to look and can put into practice some useful techniques, success can be yours. Here are a few hints that may help.

Work with an agency

Recruiters or career placement agencies (also known as 'headhunters') can help you to find the ideal career opportunity; they usually provide their services for the job seeker completely free of charge, too. These agencies have excellent contacts in the industry and are often made aware of vacancies before they are advertised. They will also do the searching for you, reviewing thousands of job opportunities to find those that are a perfect match for your aspirations.

Keep up to press with the job ads!

Even without the help of a professional agency, there is still a great deal that you can do yourself to maximize your options and discover your dream career. Newspapers and journals seem to be an obvious source of career opportunities, but job ads account for only a small percentage of jobs that are actually filled. Nonetheless, you should scan ads in relevant publications, not only to seek out a new employer, but also to gather market intelligence. Advertisements, even for positions in seemingly unrelated disciplines, can still help you spot opportunities, identify potential employers, and evaluate

your worth. Read job ads carefully, paying close attention to the required skills, qualifications, experience, and personal qualities. Then assess how well you match the requirements. Don't waste time chasing lost causes. If advertisements invite you to call for more information, then do so. It gives you the chance to make a good first impression and gather vital additional information about the post.

Internet searching

The internet offers a broad variety of tools to assist in searching for a job, from looking at specialist agencies to viewing information from a specific organization. By using keywords you can immediately access information at the touch of a button. Many sites (e.g., <http://www.monster.com>, <http://www.hotjobs.com>, or <http://www.careerbuilder.com>) now offer you the opportunity to post your CV or resume on the internet and make the most of your global job opportunities. Remember that a well thought out and presented CV can make or break the opportunity for you; we will be discussing CV preparation skills in an upcoming issue.

The importance of networking

The majority of jobs are unadvertised and hidden from public view. Effective networking could be your gateway into this vital and lucrative market. If you haven't already built a network of contacts, a good place to start is to write down all the potential contacts you could develop. Include recruitment agencies at the top of your list and you might also include customers, suppliers, competitors, past employers, and former colleagues or managers. Social and community contacts can also be useful. Networking has its own rules. Always ask for advice; never ask for a job outright.

Be honest and open about issues such as redundancy. Keep to a manageable number of contacts. Don't ask or expect too much. And always retain the initiative.

Taking the initiative

Attending animal technology conferences and seminars may also facilitate your job search. Conferences are not only excellent for networking, but also for meeting with potential employers. Many major research organizations will be present, providing an ideal opportunity to talk about current opportunities and distribute copies of your CV. You may also consider going one step further by presenting a paper or poster; this will raise your profile and also looks good on your CV. Remember also that the very publications that you scan for career opportunities are also an ideal forum for marketing yourself; taking out a well-written job-wanted advertisement is another way to present yourself to potential employers.

The direct approach

Using the market intelligence you may have gained from the job ads or the 'tip off' you may have been given by one of your contacts, be direct! Write to your target employers and advertise yourself as the ideal solution to their needs. A well written one-page letter with a short and concise CV could just land on the right person's desk at the right time, and even if they do not have a suitable vacancy at this moment in time you can always ask to be placed on file. Don't forget that fortune favors the brave and that some of the best long-term career moves have been made through a mixture of luck and initiative. Your ideal job is out there waiting for you.

Employing these strategies should help you find your dream job in no time. Good luck with your job search!

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