

CAREER SEARCH AMERICA

CAREER TRANSITION TOOLBOX WHITEPAPER

THE CAREER SEARCH PROCESS:

FOUR STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL
CAREER SEARCH



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INTRODUCTION

AN OVERVIEW

Want to know the secret to a successful career search? It's simple: **Plan the work...and work the plan.** Simple, yes. But, let's be honest. No one says this is going to be easy. You can help yourself enormously, however, by taking your time, being thoughtful, and making progress according to a carefully designed and coherent plan.

That's where we come in. Career Search America breaks the process down into three sequential phases: Preparation, Strategy, and Implementation.

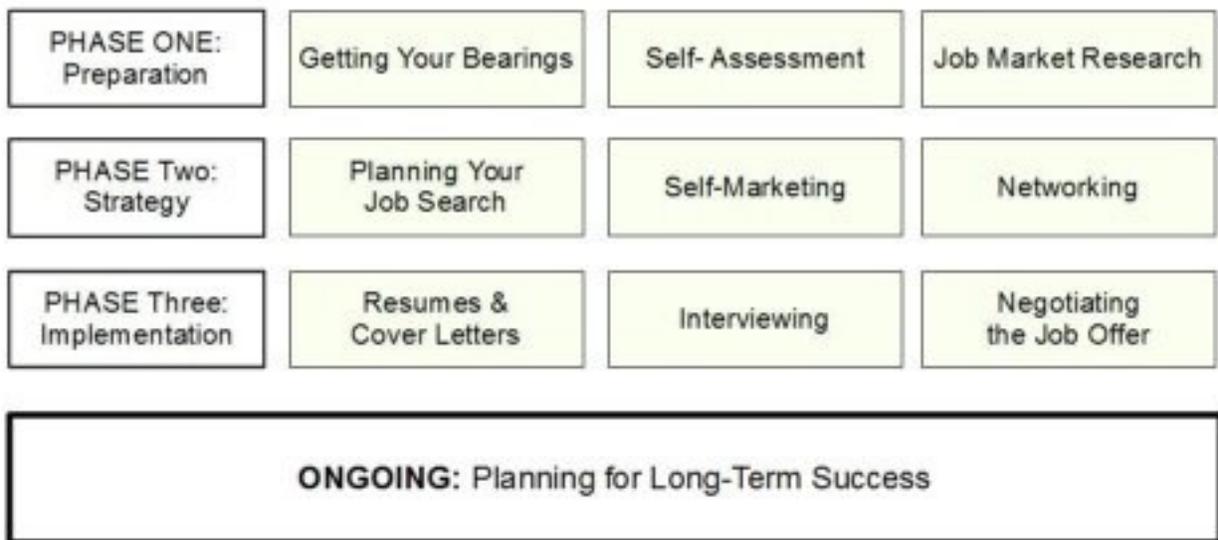
PREPARATION

BEFORE ALL ELSE: PREPARE!

Many people, out of a sense of urgency or impatience, skimp this vital first step. Please don't! If you set out in the "wrong" direction (and we'll talk about "right" and "wrong" directions soon), then you can do everything else perfectly and still be unhappy with the results.

No one wants to be out of work or between jobs. We get it. But an upfront investment of time and reflection will pay big dividends further down the line.

The following flowchart presents a series of interdependent process steps that work together to become the building blocks to your next career or dream job.



The Preparation phase includes:

- Understanding the transition process
- Self assessment
- Exploring career options
- Personal goal setting
- Getting to know the market, employment trends and learning where those “hot jobs” may be found
- Deciding if you need further education or training
- Identifying helpful resources for helpful career change advice: coaches or counselors
- Beginning to sketch out a preliminary map of your own career path

STRATEGY

A solid battle plan-- based on careful preparation, self-knowledge and research--will multiply your effectiveness many times over. A strategic approach focuses your thinking and directs your activities. It helps you clarify the mission, size up the competition and move into action. Furthermore, a good strategy provides alternatives and back up plans, remains flexible when conditions change and keeps you on track. Specifically, an effective career search strategy helps you to:

- Identify career goals and objectives
- Conduct a personal SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats)
- Develop contingency plans
- Assemble the tools you’ll need such as job-specific resumes and targeted cover letters
- Whip your professional image into fighting form

IMPLEMENTATION

Then, the final step prior to the job offer is Implementation.

Now, fully prepared with your strategy in hand, you’re ready to close in on your next career opportunity. Implementation is all about staying organized and playing the numbers. In Sales they say that if every sale is worth a \$100 and it takes a hundred “no’s” to get a “yes,” then greet every refusal as if the prospect were handing you a ten dollar bill. The same holds true for your career search. You know it’s only a matter of time. You know this because you’ve prepared and you’ve done your research. Keep your head down. Keep moving forward, and don’t give any thought to would-be opportunities that don’t pan out.

Key aspects of the Implementation phase include:

- gathering the information you’ll need for your resume
- learning about the different types of resumes and their uses
- writing targeted, job specific resumes for each job opportunity..easily and effectively
- creating cover letters that grab attention and get you to the head of the line
- how to master the art of the interview (see our articles Job Interview Akido, and The 5 Most Common but Deadly Job Interview Mistakes
- How to negotiate the job offer for the best possible salary and benefits

PLANNING FOR LONG-TERM SUCCESS

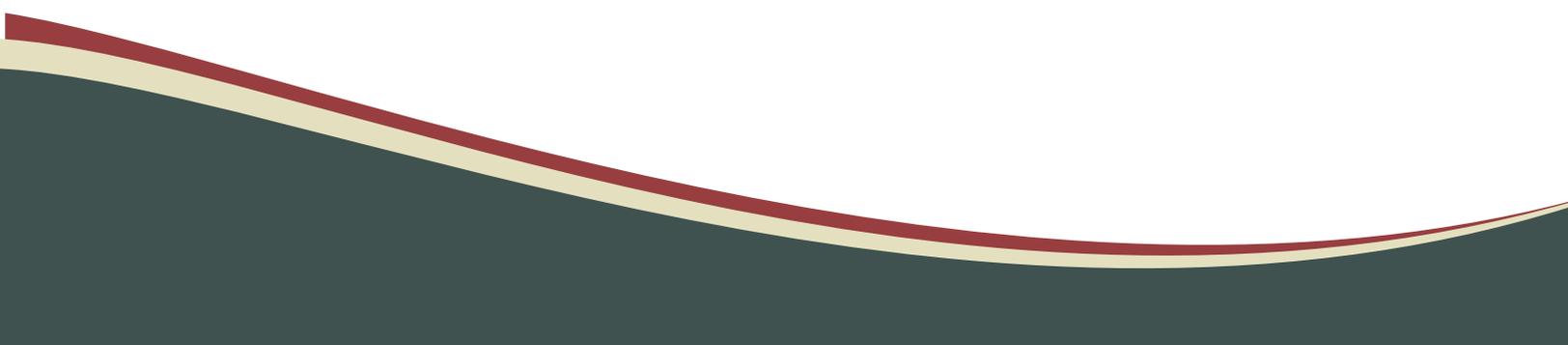
But it doesn't end here! Once you've landed that "dream job," the last step Planning for Long Term Success begins...and never ends.

Even if your Career Search campaign is a resounding success, the odds (and the stats) are that in another 4-5 years you'll be at it again. And the very best thing you can do to improve your chances in a subsequent transition is to become and remain a superstar in the job you just landed.

HR professionals and hiring managers know that "past behavior is the best predictor of future performance."

Make the most of what you have right now and opportunity will continue to beat a path to your door.

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

- Get yourself organized before you start.
 - Learn about the transition process.
 - Do a thorough personal assessment.
 - Learn about the job market.
 - Line up helpful resources.
 - Create a winning strategy.
 - Get into action and keep on going no matter what!
 - Customize your approach to each new opportunity.
 - Learn how to interview and negotiate for a top salary.
 - Keep thinking ahead.
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