

10 Tips for a Focused Job Hunt

By Laura Morsch, CareerBuilder.com

You're not sure what you want to do, but you know it's not this. When you're searching for a new career, the possibilities are nearly endless. Experts say there are more than 20,000 job titles out there.

Finding your dream job, then, isn't so simple. In their book "The Insider's Guide to Finding a Job" (JIST), Wendy Enelow and Shelly Goldman offer these tips to help you narrow down what you really want to do for a living, and focus your job hunt.

1. Know yourself.

Do some soul searching to identify what interests, motivates and excites you. Use these attributes as your guide for exploring career paths and opportunities.

2. Take career assessments.

Career tests can give you a wealth of information about your skills, core competencies, motivators and work preferences – and many are now available online.

3. Get feedback from others.

It's hard to see yourself the same way others see you. Ask your friends, family and co-workers about your skills and abilities. Understanding what they see in you, what they like about you and what needs work can be instrumental in helping you determine your professional persona.

4. Understand what motivates you.

Are you motivated by prestige or a seven-figure salary? By making a difference in the world or contributing to your company's bottom line?

5. Control your own career destiny.

"Twenty years ago, you could accept a position with a large corporation and know, to some degree, that you would work there throughout your entire career," Enelow and Goldman write. Back then, the company drove your career, advancing it as the company saw fit.

Times have changed. Now, you will likely work for at least five companies (likely even more), and you are responsible for driving your career. Determine which track you want, and be sure that track takes you where you want to go professionally.

6. Consider the organizational fit.

In today's streamlined, productivity-focused workplace, organizational and cultural fit are more important than ever. Consider your values and principles to determine whether you'll be a good fit and feel comfortable working for a particular organization.

7. Find a mentor.

Mentors will be your allies and provide you with great insight to help you plan and advance your career. It's important to find the right mentor – one who will guide you and has the contacts to make things happen. Consider current or past supervisors, college professors, industry contacts, business leaders and other people you admire and respect.

8. Be open-minded.

Your career is all about change, growth and new opportunities, but you have to be open to exploration and discovery.

9. Remember to have a work/life balance.

In your 20s and 30s, when you are still establishing your career, it's OK to devote a huge percentage of your life to work. But when you're in your 40s, your personal life and issues may become more important to you, it's important to find a company that will give you a work/life balance.

10. Let yourself off the hook.

If you're unsatisfied with your career, do something about it. Take control and start paving the way to a fulfilling, satisfying career today.

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