

Undoubtedly, this is the toughest year on record to land a new job. Reaching your career goal will take courage and nerves of steel. Are you up to the challenge? Here are three tips for job-search endurance that will keep you on the right track toward your employment goal.

1. Keep your career goal realistic.

This is not the time to strike out in a risky career direction. Following your heart toward a career in which you have little qualifications could yield months of frustration as you find yourself competing against legions of candidates far more qualified. Unless you are in the position to hold out for a very long job search, concentrate on positions where you are best qualified.

2. Realize it will take longer to land your next position.

If you've never experienced a lengthy job search, set your expectations out several months and practice patience. You will apply for many positions as the perfect candidate, and get no response. Expect that. You will conduct perfect interviews and hear nothing back. Expect that as well. Just remember that eventually the right company with the right job at the right time will come your way if you stay calm and focused and don't let discouragement keep you from moving forward. Just keep with it.

3. Write a better resume than your competition.

Less jobs and more applicants equals extremely high competition. The quality of your resume has never been more important. For the best possible resume keep these guidelines in mind:

- Focus your resume. Avoid a one-size-fits-all resume.
- Showcase your best information in the top half of page one.
- Include accomplishments that illustrate your ability to solve today's business challenges.

4. Sharpen your interview skills.

With employers interviewing only the best of the best, when you are chosen to interview be sure you are your competitive best. You CANNOT "just wing" an interview and expect to be called back for a second. Today it takes solid interview strategy to earn a second round of interviews. Interview books are helpful, but they usually fall short of teaching you how to read the interviewer's mind to understand his/her hiring motivations. A study in the art of selling is more effective to achieve great interview performance. A few basic selling strategies include:

- Asking the right questions to understand the interviewer's "hot button" motivations.
- Formulate answers around the interviewer's motivations.
- Know your accomplishments well enough to weave them effectively through your interview to achieve top candidate status.

Throughout 2009, the best jobs will go to those who persevere and stay focused. Keeping your expectations and goals realistic will help prevent the emotional ups and downs. Prepare for your job search as if you were competing in a marathon. With patience, endurance and skill you will win your next job.

gain top performing skills in resume writing, interview preparation and salary negotiation. Learn more about Deborah Walker, career coach at:

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