

# Game Plan for Getting a Job



The right frame of mind means all the difference in getting a job. Think like an entrepreneur & own your own business.

Take charge of your career and think like a business owner. Here's a game plan to help you think more confidently about who you are and what opportunities are right for you:

## **Step 1: Develop the Right Frame of Mind:**

Being an entrepreneur means you get to call your own shots. Even if you have no clue what your career will look like, pretend you do and act like an owner by building a business plan. A business plan can range from a few words on a napkin to a volume of pages. What's important is that it's in writing and not thoughts in your head. Your plan should describe what your business is and how you're going to make it succeed. Be POSITIVE and get FOCUSED on building your business!

## **Step 2: Understand Your Product -- YOU:**

To be successful, every company must have a clear understanding of what business it's in. No matter if you're a doctor, attorney, restaurant owner or librarian, you are selling a product or service. YOU are the product and you had better

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have a clear understanding of who you are and what separates you from a crowd. Be honest and objective and ask tough questions about yourself: What do you like/dislike? What are your strengths/weaknesses? Do you like being a part of a team or prefer working on your own? What are your core personal values? What examples do you have that illustrate your skills and intensity of your passions and interests?

Consider geography in the mix. Where would you be happiest in terms of living and balancing both professional priorities and personal interests? Are there communities where others share the same values as you? Do you want to live in a city, suburb or more rural community. How far are you willing to commute? Do you want to work from home? Are there organizations and/or resources in close proximity to allow you to be successful?

### **Step 3: Understand Your Market:**

Next, shift your focus externally on the world around you to gauge how well your business might be received. Close your eyes and think about events making headlines around the world. What trends do you see emerging in the future? What factors will create opportunities or pose threats? What industries/organizations will be winners or losers? Try to answer WHY events are happening and how you can create/leverage an opportunity. Start with the big picture and refine your focus. How will your career be impacted by these trends?

### **Step 4: Leverage Your Network to Confirm Your Beliefs:**

Next, conduct research by leveraging connections with family, friends, alumni networks, etc. to learn about different career opportunities and validate your opinions/beliefs about trends in the marketplace. As part of your research, inquire about their career and the path they followed to get where they are today. What are their responsibilities and how is their company adapting to changes in the market..

Remember these meetings are informational interviews, not job interviews. Your goal is NOT to ask if they know of any job openings or if they can pass along your resume. Most professionals are flattered by your interest in them and very willing to talk about what they do for a living.

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The more interviews you have, the more comfortable, informed and poised you will be. As your awareness of trends and different career opportunities increases, reflect further on what defines and differentiates individual organizations. Just as you bring your own unique personality and perspective to a given situation, companies also have a unique culture and identity that shapes its focus and strategy. Challenge yourself to find organizations whose culture aligns with your own personal values and beliefs. Also, write down key notes, impressions and takeaways immediately after every meeting.

Don't forget that every interview represents an opportunity to leave a lasting impression. Take advantage of the situation by being as professional as possible: dress appropriately, arrive ahead of schedule, be prepared to lead a conversation and have lots of questions. Finally, follow-up promptly on every meeting with a short thank you letter. Email is fine, however handwritten notes have even more impact.

### **Step 5: Revisit Your Business Plan:**

Once you've finished interviewing others, it's time to revisit and re-evaluate your original business plan. With interview notes fresh in hand, is your strategy still relevant or did you learn of other career opportunities that you might want to pursue? Did you meet anyone who you might like to work with or who you think could be an advocate for you?

Hopefully, the people you most enjoyed meeting were also drawn to you as well. Having met and formed a positive impression of you, these people will be more inclined to be an advocate for you with other key contacts or opportunities you might want to pursue.

### **Step 6: A Final Perspective:**

Think like an entrepreneur building a business and you will change your outlook in terms of understanding what you offer and, in exchange, what the world can offer you. Be strategic, do research and leverage your network to capitalize on a career that's perfect for you. Good luck!

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