

The 5 Steps to Building Our "Career House"

By Joe Rosenlicht

When searching for a new job or career, it's best to approach the search in a logical and sequential way. In much the same way as we would build a house, we first have to lay the foundation before constructing the framework. Using this analogy helps to clarify and simplify the process. Here are the steps to take in order to achieve our job search goals.

Step 1: The career "foundation" starts with our professional and personal values. It's a good idea to take some time to think about, make a list of, and prioritize our values, (i.e.) what's important to us in our next position. Doing this will help to more accurately identify positions that would be a good fit for us. It can also help greatly if we want to switch industries, but still uncertain about what field(s) to explore. Making sure our values align with our jobs is critical to career happiness.

Step 2: Now we're ready to construct the framework, starting with the resume. This includes not only making sure it's up to date, but also taking such steps as highlighting professional accomplishments (not just job responsibilities), making it visually appealing, making generous use of bullets, double-checking spelling and grammar, keeping it to a certain length (usually within two pages), etc. It's also crucial to highlight transferable skills when switching industries. Note: It's not uncommon to have more than one version of a resume depending on the intended audience.

Step 3: After we clarify our values and get the resume ironed out, it's then time to begin the job search itself. One of the most important elements of the search is networking. It's true that we're more likely to get the job we want if we know how to network effectively. And this includes both attending traditional in-person networking events as well as taking advantage of online networking sites like [linkedin](#) and yes, [facebook](#). If we network on an ongoing and consistent basis, and not only when we're conducting a job search, we'll be in a much better position to make use of our network and shorten the transition time to our next career. Along with networking of course are the career websites (monster.com, etc), company websites that post their job openings, and the traditional stand-by newspaper classifieds. The best strategy is to use a combination of methods available to us.

Step 4: OK, so now we've sent out our resume and been granted an interview. The next step in building our "career house" is to prepare for the interview. Different approaches work for different people, but in my experience working with clients, what has proven very effective is to first discuss some challenging questions and some possible responses. Taking it then one step further, conducting a mock interview is a great way to practice and get comfortable with the process. Before the interview, it's a good idea to research the organization because more often than not, the interviewer will ask what we know about their organization. We should also think of some good questions that we can ask them that reflect what we know about them as well as determine if *they* are a good fit for *us*. After all, they're not only interviewing us, but we're also interviewing them. One final point: many interviews can feel like interrogations, so try to keep it as conversational as possible by interjecting questions throughout the interview.

Step 5: Our "house" is almost finished. We've done really well in the interview and we've been offered the job! Now it's time to evaluate the offer and decide if we'll be happy with the job and happy with the organization overall. This goes back to our list of values and determining if our values are in line with theirs. For example, if what we value most are autonomy, open communication, a short commute and a life outside the workplace, will we

be able to have those things if we take the job? Chances are no job will meet 100% of our values, so that's where prioritizing comes into play. And always trust our gut instincts. It's usually a pretty accurate indicator.

So there we have it. Our "house" is built. We now have the keys to enter. Again, it's important to follow a sequential and systematic path. It will prove to be the shortest and most direct road to landing our next job or career.

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