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FiredUP Job Search – Check List

How to use this check list: There are four major categories of activities essential to getting your next job– (1) *professional clarity*, (2) *market readiness*, (3) *increased visibility* and (4) *interview readiness*. Review each item within the four categories to ensure that you are working your search to its fullest. Check off those items you have begun or completed, and get moving on the rest.

1) Professional Clarity – **do not skip this section!** If you have not done a self assessment recently then it is imperative that you start here. Not only will this help you to make intelligent decisions on how you move forward in your career, it will also help you with the language/words to use for many aspects of your search (networking, resume development, interviewing). There are many options available to you, from taking online assessments and reviewing them yourself, to taking assessments via a [career coach](#) certified to guide you through the interpretation of your assessment and answering your questions. Below are a few ways that you can begin gaining professional clarity:

- Personal Assessment (Resources: [PersonalityType Assessment™](#), [assessment.com](#), [The Birkman Method](#), [MatchMining](#))
 - Occupational Exploration (Resources: [Career Voyages](#), [Career One Stop](#), [O*Net Center](#), [CA Career Zone](#))
 - Career Values Exercise (Resources: [Career Paths](#), [My Job Doctor](#), [Training For Life](#), [MatchMining](#))
 - Career Coaching (Resources: [FiredUP Careers](#))
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2) Market Readiness – This category includes all the marketing tools you’ll need for a successful job search, such as your resume, cover letter, and ‘30 second professional pitch’. It also includes the necessary research you’ll need to do to target your search and present your best professional-self to employers.

- Current, market ready resume** - Before you send out your resume, make sure it is ready for ‘today’s’ job market. Below par resumes are deleted faster than you can blink – make sure yours is strong and speaks directly to the needs of the employer you are targeting. (Resources: [Free Resume ebook](#))

- Resume reviewed by Resume Expert** (**Resources:** [Free Review](#))

- 30 Second Professional Pitch** – Practiced out loud at least 50 times and with friends and confidants who can give you feedback on tone, body language and verbiage. This is your professional response to “tell me about yourself” – make sure it is quick, speaks to your expertise, value add, knowledge and desire and can be delivered in a 30 second nutshell...clean and crisp. Stuck on this? Ask your friends how they would describe you in 30 seconds. (**Resources:** [Southwest Job Network](#), [FiredUP Interviewing](#))

- Market Research** – You have researched the market/industry of your interest and have researched companies that have the type of position you are targeting. Additionally, you have done salary research on the positions of interest. (**Resources:** [Hoover’s](#), [Vault](#), [CNN](#), [Library of Congress](#), [Edgar Online](#), [Biz Web](#), [Google Research](#), **Salary Research:** [Payscale](#), [Salary.com](#), [JobStar.org](#), [RileyGuide.com](#)).

- Informational Interviews** – You are continuously conducting informational interviews with individuals who can provide you with in depth information for your targeted position(s). You have developed a set of questions to ask in order to guide the informational interview. Note: Never show up expecting the individual to manage the conversation. Be prepared and professional and remember this interview is for ‘information’ purposes, so do not ask for a job but have your resume with you in the event you are asked for it. (**Resources:** [information meeting questions](#), [The Informational Interview](#))

- Cover Letter** – Cover letters are a very important part of your resume submittals. Always prepare a cover letter when sending your resume for consideration unless the online process does not allow for anything but the resume itself. Our favorite is the job match or ‘T-letter’ style, where you write a few sentences to introduce yourself, then create two columns – one titled ‘Your Requirements’ and the second titled ‘My Qualifications’. Then list 4 or 5 bullet points that correspond to the two columns. Using the ‘T-letter’ style quickly communicates to the employer that you fit their position. (**Resources:** [iseek.org](#))

- Reference List** – Don’t use ‘references available upon request’ at the bottom of your resume. Instead, prepare a professional list of references on a separate page that you will take with you to your interviews. (**Resources:** [iseek.org](#))



3) Increased Visibility – tapping into the ‘hidden job market’. Consider in-person and online visibility (networking) to be the most important and valuable asset of your campaign. Statistics show that over 83% of all jobs are filled via networking. So, build a strong professional network, both personally and online and continue to do so throughout your career. Employers want to hire people who are current with today’s technology and social networks. Don’t be caught off guard when asked if you are on LinkedIn or Facebook – it is assumed these days that you are. If you are not an active member of these two giant social/professional networks you may be viewed as out of touch with how to operate in today’s workplace and how to network effectively. Likewise, pay special attending to your ‘personal branding’; figure out how you want to be viewed and then develop a plan that takes you in that direction in all aspects of your career. Personal branding is one of the most effective platforms in building a strong reputation, network and career.

- LinkedIn** – LinkedIn now has over 30 million members. Once you join be certain to complete your professional profile and begin to invite others you know to join your network. You'll be amazed at how quickly your online network grows and you will soon have a google link to your LinkedIn page, gaining you greater online visibility in the event an employer or recruiter Googles your name. LinkedIn provides job seekers with access to more than 4 million jobs via networking. Make sure that you also request recommendations for those you know and have worked with, and join "groups" as well – this is a great way to stay in touch and you'll be surprised at how many job postings are listed on LinkedIn.
- Facebook** – Today's savvy professionals have a Facebook profile and are active in joining groups as well as communicating to their Facebook contacts. This network is simple to use, connects you with numerous resources and its fun.
- Personal Branding** – An important part of building your online presence, as well as your reputation and continued network. (Resources: DanSchwabel.com)
- Twitter** – Tweeting is fast becoming one of the hottest ways to network your way to your next position. It's easy to sign up and quick to provide updates and helpful information for those who decide to follow you. Be sure to remember that any online information you share on any of the social networking sites is a way that employers will view your 'personal brand'. So, be sure to keep it professional. (Resources: [Twitter](#), [TweetMyJobs.com](#), [TwitterJobSearch](#))
- Alumni Groups** – These groups can be a networking blessing. Now is the time to connect with your college alumni group. If you can't find it, Google 'alumni networking' and you'll find hundreds of colleges listed. Large companies may also have alumni groups, so check into groups from your past employers. Remember, often people are allowed to invite friends into the group, so if you see a group you would like to belong to check to see if any of your friends can get you into the group. And don't forget to check and see if your alumni is located on LinkedIn – most are.
- Local Networking** – Many cities have local networking groups (i.e. Toastmasters), check with your local Chamber of Commerce. You should open up your networking by joining hobby groups you may be interested in, local music and/or reading networks...the list is endless. Open up your network, do not only consider 'job searching' networks – that is too limited. Other outside networks will introduce you to people who are most likely working and perhaps at a company you would like to join. (Resources: [Meet UP](#), [Networking Links](#), [Cup Of Coffee Networkers](#), [ExecutivesNetwork](#))
- Church** – Your local church may very well have a networking and/or job search group. Check with them to see. More than likely you do not have to be a member of the church to be a part of this network.
- Niche Job Boards** – With more and more niche job boards coming onto the scene, the large job boards (Monster, HotJobs, CareerBuilder) are not necessarily the best places to focus. Seek out job boards that are a niche within your profession. (Resources: [Green Career Central](#), [Top 100 Niche Sites 2009](#))
- References** – Make sure your professional references are aware that you are seeking employment. Contact them and get their approval to use them as a reference. If you have interviewed with an employer and are asked for references, don't forget to contact your references to let them know that XYZ

Company may be calling them regarding your interview and give them the heads up on the position you interviewing for.

4) Interview Readiness – Many people overestimate their interview skills, and believe they can memorize their resume and ‘wing it’ for the rest of the interview. The best way to get the job offer is to start preparing your interview skills now, and then tune your content to the employer. By preparing and practicing for your interview you will beat out your competition. Here are some essential items you will want to practice and know prior to your interview.

Image – Get some opinions on the overall image you project to others. Be open to making some needed changes to ‘update’ your image and/or increase your overall professional appearance. This isn’t always easy when you’ve become accustomed to certain style, but stay open to change. Remember – always dress one level above the level you are trying to achieve. (Resources: [ZoomJobs](#))

Interview Questions; Q&A – Practice, practice, practice is the mantra for interviewing...never try to ‘wing’ your interview. (Resources: [FiredUP Interviewing](#))

Accomplishment Focus – Spelling out your strengths via accomplishment driven conversation is one of the key ingredients to a successful interview. To flush out your accomplishments ask yourself these questions around your previous position(s) or academia experience: What was my challenge, What action did I take to meet the challenge and What was the “result”. This is a great way to pull out your accomplishments (make sure you have them listed on your resume as well).

Engaging Questions – Asking your interviewer questions about the job that relate directly to your individual accomplishments will ensure that you are always discussing your assets and organization contributions. (Resources: [iseek.org](#))

Bridging the Gaps – Preparing and becoming comfortable with your gaps or weaknesses pertaining to the position you are interviewing for will ensure that the employer feels comfortable that you ‘know yourself’ and that you are able to meet the challenges of the position. (Resources: [MatchMining](#))



Good Luck!
Need a career coach?
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