



Karen L. Brajenovich, MA, CRC, CPDM, SPHR
P. O. Box 28487, San José, CA 95159-8487
Phone (408) 287-6188 • Fax (408) 287-6189
E-mail karen@brajenovich.com

OUTLINE OF JOB SEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

I have actively worked as Vocational Rehabilitation and Disability Management Counselor since 1986. I have primarily worked with people who have sustained a disability, but the outline applies to all job seekers. The following is meant to assist people in the return to work process. It is not meant to be considered exhaustive, but does provide an outline of some sage advice in the process of changing careers and looking for a job.

STEPS IN PREPARATION FOR RETURN TO WORK OR JOB CHANGE

- A. Assessment - Gain understanding of your levels of knowledge, skills, abilities, interests, and any barriers to RTW
- B. Testing - Via Adult Ed programs, Community Colleges, EDD/One Stop Centers and private testing
- C. Interest Identification - Exploration via phone, Internet, personal contacts, library, counselors, labor unions, family members/friends, and books such as *What Color Is Your Parachute* by Richard Bolles.
- D. Define your strategy / plan - Per Dr. Phillip McGraw, the 10 characteristics of success are:
 - 1. Identify your Goals
 - 2. Have a written strategy to obtain goals
 - 3. Have passion for the goals
 - 4. Be truthful to yourself about the reality of obtaining goals - no self denial
 - 5. Be flexible in your approach
 - 6. Risk and try new approaches
 - 7. Surround yourself with a nucleus of supportive and truthful others
 - 8. Work actively toward goals until the results are achieved
 - 9. Priority list is established and followed
 - 10. Self management (mental, physical, emotional and spiritual health)



Karen L. Brajenovich, MA, CRC, CPDM, SPHR
P. O. Box 28487, San José, CA 95159-8487
Phone (408) 287-6188 • Fax (408) 287-6189
E-mail karen@brajenovich.com

- E. Establish short term and long term goals - i.e. obtain driver's license, increase ESL, complete GED, increase work skills (skill set fill in/classes--certificate--AA --BA --MA), etc. Accept jobs in the short run that help to prepare you for the long term
- F. Consider Your Choices and Put Your Plan into Motion
1. Direct job placement with no skill upgrade
 2. On the Job Training while working
 3. Educational Training at a training provider
 4. Self employment

JOB SEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Prepare an error-free resume
2. Make clear copies on resume paper for better impact
3. Assure that the key words are within the top third of your resume so as to be picked up by resume scanning software.
4. Develop a cover letter to be customized as needed to fit the job.
5. Have both an email and presentation version of your resume.
6. Have different resume's for different focus areas.
7. Tell the truth on your resume...they'll figure it out eventually!
8. Have someone read your resume to give you feedback on content, style and errors
9. If you do not have internet access, find a trusted someone who does and will let you send and receive email so as to open up your communication options
10. Have available a completed sample job application filled in with all relevant dates, names, numbers and addresses. Signed copies can also be used with some employers.
11. Make sure you fully complete any application..leave no blanks.
12. Become expert on yourself (skills, strengths, goals, etc.) and practice answers to interview questions.
13. Find out information about the employer before the interview.
14. Come up with a list of 10 strengths and understand your weaknesses (no one's perfect!)
15. Obtain reference letters from previous employers and professional friends



Karen L. Brajenovich, MA, CRC, CPDM, SPHR
P. O. Box 28487, San José, CA 95159-8487
Phone (408) 287-6188 • Fax (408) 287-6189
E-mail karen@brajenovich.com

16. Clarify with most recent employers what will be reported to new employers in case of past in-voluntary separations.
17. Consider going back to school to update skills or get a new certificate or degree.
18. Use testing offered by local community colleges to discover strengths and interests.
19. Put together a portfolio with samples of your work.
20. Put the word out to friends and family that you are looking for work.
21. Obtain an updated copy of the regional phone book or online directory and cold call employers..only 20% of all jobs are advertised.
22. Be groomed, dress appropriately and wear minimal perfume to an interview.
23. Have a current area map in your car to avoid being late to interviews.
24. Have available an answering machine with a professional outgoing message.
25. Have a pad of paper/pencil next to the phone, in your purse or car.
26. Teach your children how to answer the phone and record messages.
27. Remove all non-professional content about yourself from public websites.
28. Register your resume with EDD's CALJOBS service.
29. Register for any assistance offered through your local One Stop Career Center.
30. Check with any career services programs for which you qualify as a Veteran, senior or graduate from an educational institution.
31. Sign up your resume on other on-line search sites.
32. Use professional networking internet sites.
33. Consider all sources.. newspapers, internet, word of mouth
34. Don't put all your eggs in one basket and keep up the search until you have confirmation of a job.
35. Go to seminars put on by professional organizations in your field of interest.
36. Consider becoming a member of a industry / trade association to access job boards.
37. Put together an organized job search binder with multiple copies of all job search documentation to hand out during interviews.
38. Consider volunteer services as a way to get your foot in the door.
39. Look at temporary agencies as a way to survey employers and increase skills.
40. Treat your job search as if it were a job and set a schedule of things to do, Monday to Friday, 8:00am -5:00pm.
41. Send Thank You follow ups communications after all interviews.
42. If you don't hear from a company, call back..if nothing else to get feedback on your resume or interviewing skills.
43. Consider working with a career coach, mentor or counselor.
44. Consider contacting your local SBA or Chamber of Commerce regarding starting your own business .



Karen L. Brajenovich, MA, CRC, CPDM, SPHR
P. O. Box 28487, San José, CA 95159-8487
Phone (408) 287-6188 • Fax (408) 287-6189
E-mail karen@brajenovich.com

JOB SEARCH WITH A DISABILITY

In addition to all of the recommendations above, here are some other considerations:

1. Remember we all are disabled in one way or another, so don't feel self conscious and be proud of what you have to offer. Someone needs you.
2. The key is to know your abilities..or if you must.. your disabilities. If you can perform the essential functions of the job, *you do not have a disability for the job!*
3. Understand the anti- discrimination policy coverage provided thru Fair Employment & Housing Act (FEHA) and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) - For more information, contact the:
 - State Department of Fair Employment and Housing at 1-800-884-1684
 - Equal Employment Opportunity Commission at 1-800-USA-EEOC
4. Try to obtain an up to date, written "work abilities" form from your treating doctor outlining all that you CAN do. If your physician does not have this type of form, have them contact me and one will be provided free of charge.
5. Try to obtain a written job description detailing the essential functions and physical demands of the position before the interview.
6. Ask questions about the job requirements at the interview.
7. Do not volunteer unnecessary medical information, but be truthful if it comes up.
8. Become familiar with State laws concerning illegal questions asked in an interview/job application.
9. Use N.A. or Not Applicable in lieu of yes or no if asked illegal questions on an application.
10. Only apply for jobs in which you are relatively assured you can perform the essential functions, but, don't be discouraged if the job doesn't work out to be what you thought ...There's no harm in trying and becoming informed.
11. Don't be afraid to request a job accommodation if needed. If you are the best candidate for the job, providing an accommodation should not be a problem, as long as it's reasonable and you can safely perform the essential functions.
12. Express the positive points of any disability, i.e., have knowledge/skills/abilities to do the job; are more careful, focused, aware of abilities, and pre-matched to the job.
13. Recognize that there is a shortage of qualified workers that is only going to get worse as the Baby Boomers retire and the following generations are smaller. Employers need YOU!

BEST OF LUCK TO YOU IN YOUR JOB SEARCH!!