

A job search must co-exist with your day job

Imagine you have finally come to the decision to move on from your current job after months /perhaps years of thinking about whether to make the step or not. Now, one of the big challenges you face is that you have to search for that new perfect job while you are still full-time employed. A lot of people face this dilemma and manage in different ways. Some of the challenges I hear from clients are the following:

- I have decided to find something new but not sure what?
- I am full-time in my present job so how can I find time to look for another?
- It is very difficult to make/take phone calls from my present employer.
- It looks too obvious if I take too many days off for interviews
- I can only really focus on one thing at a time.
- I feel like I am betraying my employer by using their time for my job search.
- The market is very small – if I get my resume out there, word will spread quickly and get back to my employer.

Now, the question is, how do I handle these challenges and still move forward and find the right job without ‘burning my bridge’?

Finding Your New Path:

It is not uncommon to be in the stage where you have decided to move on from what you are currently doing but not quite sure about the next step. This is a very key moment to really look at yourself and be very aware of what you like to do, what you don't like to do, your strengths and weaknesses. I find that most people don't usually take the time to go through the self-awareness stage and instead jump from one thing to the next in hope that the next leap will land them in the right place. Perhaps this will happen, but you are much more likely to end up in that 'ideal' job if you are able to describe it and know what is perfect about it for YOU. This is the stage clients will call me up – to coach them – support them in their self-awareness and help them to identify career moves.

Balancing the workload:

I think one of the biggest obstacles is handling everything at once. Most full-time jobs are more than 9-5 and require a lot of energy and commitment. This is where your time management and prioritizing can play a key role. There is never enough time for everything, so it is even more important that you are able to really know the key things you need to do both at your current job and in the job search. Make yourself an action plan if it will help. Then you need to carve that time into your schedule, whether it is early morning, lunch time, evenings, taking time off or other. This is a time you need to really multi-task but be on top of everything.

Loyalties, ethics:

I think most people would agree that it is better to find a job while you are still employed. But how to do this properly? Some possibilities are:

- Use your own time (early morning, lunch, after work, etc) to do the majority of your job search.
- If you receive a call during work hours, ask if you can call back.
- Always give your personal phone numbers and not office numbers.
- Use a non-work email account
- Selectively take time off of work for important interviews.
- In some cases you may even have the kind of relationship with your boss that you can tell him/her.

Using my current network

Searching through your current network may be helpful but it can leak back if you are not careful. Be careful and fully aware of the pros and cons for each person you talk to about your job search and ask for confidentiality if it is appropriate. Be selective about who you contact and for what purpose. You will need to be prepared to deal with the situation of word getting back to your employer before you have told him/her. What would you say to them in this scenario?

At the end of the day, finding a new job while doing your current job can be challenging to say the least. In this trying, perhaps stressful time it is important to stay true to yourself, your values and what you believe in because these will follow you everywhere and it is not always WHAT you do, but HOW you do it that will be remembered.