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How To Make Yourself More Employable In 2012



6 practical tips to ensure you stand out from the crowd while job hunting in the new year.

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Feel like you've tried everything to find a job, but don't seem to be getting anywhere? It may be time to review your game plan, says career psychologist Zakiyya Essa. "Even with a tough economic climate and high rates of unemployment, there are ways to make yourself more employable. And enhancing your employability does not need to be complicated or expensive either."

Essa suggests these steps for young career-seekers and recent grads to gain an edge in today's job market: "Remember, it's your responsibility to take ownership of the job-seeking process - nobody can do it for you."

Learn new things

Learning new and diverse skills will enable you to adapt to competitive situations and environments. Employers want to see you have the capacity to grow, but they're also looking for well-rounded candidates who can get the job done. For example, as an employee you may have to travel. Invest in getting your driver's license - even if you don't own a car - so you can use a company or hired vehicle for external meetings or business trips.

Or teach yourself how to make questionnaires on Google apps to 'wow' your boss the next time he/she needs to conduct an internal survey.



Gallo

Manage your expectations

The job may not meet your specific requirements or qualifications, but could allow you to get a foot in the door and access other opportunities. Don't wait for the perfect opportunity to arise, create it. Take on more than is expected of you to show your manager what you've got to offer, and don't be afraid to highlight your achievements. These days hard work is not enough - you need to make sure your boss knows you're working hard, so speak up for yourself. And remember the basics - arrive on time, don't watch the clock, only take leave when necessary and always speak confidently and assertively.

Get social savvy

Many companies now sport an online image, making networking easier. Post your CV on job sites and register an online profile on professional networking sites such as one on LinkedIn. Use social media networks like Facebook and Twitter to follow the companies you're interested in, and to keep up to date with new developments in your industry. And don't be afraid to follow up with companies even if you're rejected or don't make it to the first round of interviews - this will help them remember you should a suitable position become available. The same goes for recruiters - it's easier for them to remember and recommend you if they meet you in person. There's still something to say about good old face-to-face networking!

Brush up on your IT skills

Education alone is not going to guarantee you a placement. Become tech savvy and acquire must-have IT skills such as typing skills, online research skills, familiarity with operating systems and Microsoft Office. Play around with different features in presentation software, Excel spreadsheets and word documents available on most computers today. A certificate from a certified training institution will stand out on your CV, but remember to research training providers beforehand, looking for hidden costs such as registration fees and checking out testimonials or reviews on customer service or review sites.

Keep productive

Don't let unemployment win. Do part-time work, apply for internships or engage in volunteer work to gain experience. Employers want to see what you've done to get yourself 'job-ready'. Being productive also helps to show employers that you're able to take initiative.

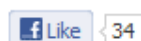
Think and act like a winner

Successful people keep their eye on the ball and are motivated to achieve. They are confident and continuously seek to improve themselves. But, in the context of high youth unemployment, it can be difficult to stay upbeat and confident. So, seek out the company of people who will highlight your strengths; offer you support and mentorship; or have achieved success in their own lives and careers.

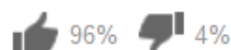
Zakiyya Essa is the founder of The Career Guidance Company (Pty) Ltd.

(www.careerguidancejohannesburg.com). She has a Master's degree in Community-based Counselling Psychology from the University of the Witwatersrand.

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