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8 Tips - Stay Productive When In-Between Jobs
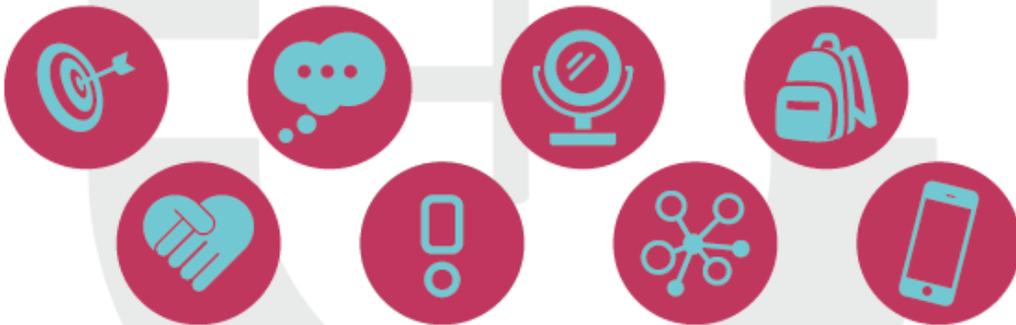
Depending on how you spend your time, being in between jobs can be either the most refreshing experience you'll ever have or the worst. From an employer's perspective, the way you spend that time can say a lot about your work ethic and how you'll fit into their organisation. Although it takes a lot of determination to stay productive while you're out of work, here are eight tips on how to take advantage of your free time and increase your chance of finding the job of your dreams.

Many jobseekers are familiar with the cliché that job searching is a full-time job. Although it is true that job searching takes a lot of time and effort, scrolling through job boards for 24 hours a day is not the way to go. Focusing your efforts on your priorities can make a world of difference to finding that next job. If you're looking for a job in a specialist industry, you should focus on the companies operating in that market and free up some time to perfect your personal branding.

Focus Your Efforts on What is Most Important

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Identify Key Elements You're Looking for in a Job

This is your chance to dream a little. Think on your ideal job: what are the aspects that you cannot sacrifice and which can you compromise on? It doesn't hurt to be ambitious, and

your dream may lead you to very exciting opportunities.

Continue Your Professional Development

Take the time you have away from the daily grind to reflect on who you are and who you want to be. What are your strengths and weaknesses? What are your goals and how can you reach them? Take the time to assess the areas you need to improve on and see how you can address these weaknesses to become more well-rounded. You should also look for courses or other self-improvement exercises that can help you upskill.

Keep Up to Date

Keeping up to date with the latest developments in the industry will keep you sharp and demonstrate your strong work ethic. This is especially important in the fast-changing IT industry, where new technological breakthroughs can shake up the entire industry sector. It is a good idea to subscribe to LinkedIn groups, the official communication channels of well-known companies or blogs of industry thought leaders.

However, you should be careful when choosing which information channels to follow. There's a lot of information out there, so it's important to be selective about what you read and sieve out unreliable sources.

Contracting, Interning and Volunteering

It's also a good idea to look for other ways to keep your skills sharp. Is there an opportunity to take on short-term contract work? Another good strategy is to seek an internship, freelance or a volunteering opportunity with the companies you would like to work for. Though it's not guaranteed, there's always a chance that these opportunities may turn into a full-time role. In fact, surveys reveal that you have a 7 out of 10 chance of being hired by the company you interned with.

Stay Alert

The most obvious advice is to keep a close eye on job boards and career sites by setting up job alerts. If you employ the service of a recruitment agency, it's important to keep in touch with your Recruiters. It's quite easy to miss the opportunity of a lifetime just because the opening was filled before you had a chance to apply.

Expand Your Network

Unfortunately, it's all too easy to let your insecurities get in the way of networking in a room full of strangers, especially if you're in-between jobs. However, there's no reason why you shouldn't be bold, so get out there and talk! The Canterbury Software Cluster offers a great opportunity to meet other professionals in the IT industry. If there are specific companies you're interested in, see if you know anyone who's employed by them through the grapevine and talk to the employees about what it's like to work there.

Follow Up

When you're applying for jobs, it's crucial to follow up after interviews or initial phone calls. If you don't hear from your interviewer by the time they said you would, then don't be afraid to ask for an update. This will demonstrate that you're proactive, which will give you an edge above other candidates.

Even if you receive that dreaded rejection call, a good follow up can turn that rejection into an opportunity. Take time to find out why you didn't get the job, and what you should do differently next time to increase your chances. You should always ask for direct feedback from the interviewers, rather

than making your own assumptions.

Summary

Too often jobseekers choose to work with a company that isn't aligned with their personal values or career objectives because they cannot afford to be out of work. However, your job satisfaction is an integral part of your personal well-being, and your performance on the job can have a lasting impact on your self-confidence. Many of these jobseekers end up leaving again, only more frustrated than before.

Do not despair! By taking a proactive approach, you can turn your downtime into an opportunity and find the job that you always dreamed of.

If you need help finding the best match for your skills and expertise, we can help you explore your options and discover opportunities in the IT sector. Please feel free to get in touch with us today.