



Job Search Guide for the Holidays

Don't put your job search on 'ICE'
for the holidays - *Accelerate it!*

Kara Varner, MAOM, CPRW

 A Platinum *Resume* LLC

www.a platinum resume.com

719-339-2659

Holiday Hiring Myths...

I'm sure you've heard it....there is a myth that begins to float around this time of year that says that companies don't hire during the holidays. *But it's just that...a myth.*

Some companies do slow down their employee search – while others take the time to concentrate on hiring for the New Year and kick it up a notch.



Just ask the jobseeker who was offered a job on Black Friday, or the one who was invited in for a second interview two days before Christmas. Can you afford to miss these kinds of opportunities because you believe the myth?

Employers hire all 12 months of the year. In fact, many new positions are **funded to start with a new budget year** — which often coincides with a new calendar year. Other hiring managers have hiring budgets that must be spent **before the end of the year** — making them motivated to hire by Dec 31st.

Putting your job search on hold between Thanksgiving and New Years isn't just a bad idea – it is a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Like hockey great Wayne Gretzky said, “You miss 100% of the shots you don't take.” If you're not looking for a job during the holidays – you're not going to find one.



Why the holidays can be a **great time** to continue your job search...

The holidays can offer some natural and enjoyable opportunities to network and spread the word about your job search during casual conversation.

You may already have a calendar full of social gatherings, parties, holiday events, children's events, professional association/affiliation events, fundraisers, or even travel that provide valuable opportunities for networking.

If you find that your calendar is not full – step away from your job board search and consider searching your local newspapers for upcoming events that would provide you the opportunity to not only meet new people, but also learn about a new cause, association, or civic group in your local area. *Enjoy the journey of finding new ways to network.*

Most of these strategies are viable for you whether you are unemployed or if you currently have a job, but are looking to improve your career situation.

Working on your job search during the holidays may also mean less competition from other candidates who put their job search on hold.

Many people wait until January — making it a New Year's Resolution — to look for a new job. If you wait until January 2 to start working on your resume and/or begin your job search, you will only have more competition.

Tip: Take note of the sponsors and vendor for events that you are attending and check their web sites for employment opportunities.

Even if you are not offered a job in December, you can lay a lot of the groundwork by making connections before the end of the year.

Dedicating some time during the holidays to your job search may increase the chances that you'll be hired quickly in the New Year.

It may even be easier to connect with a hiring manager during December, as many key personnel are in the office while other staff take paid holiday time off during the month.



12 Ideas for Job Searching During the **Holidays**

*Here are some strategies you can use
during your holiday job search.*

1. **Set goals for your job search.**

Rather than setting just one goal 'To Get a New Job' – set benchmark goals to make a certain number of new connections or to schedule a certain number of informational interviews. Making progress on these types of smaller goals will ultimately propel you towards achieving your goal of landing a new job. Stay organized and set up a process to hold yourself accountable!

2. **Accept most of the invitations you receive for holiday parties and get-togethers.**

Whether it's a social or charity event, dinner party, spouse's Christmas party, or professional association event, use these opportunities to reacquaint yourself with people who might be useful in your job search, and make new connections. Be sure to follow-up.

3. **Re-connect with old friends and colleagues.**

Your professional and social media networks can be a great source of information, job leads, and referrals. Get back in touch with previous co-workers and supervisors, people you knew in high school, college, or through professional affiliations. See what people are doing now!

4. **Host your own holiday party.**

It doesn't have to be anything formal or elaborate. Hosting your own holiday open house, dinner party, or get-together can help jumpstart your job search (but that shouldn't be the focus of your party, of course!). However, extending an invitation gives you a great way to reach out and talk with someone you haven't spoken to in a while!

5. **Ask for specific information or even a little help.**

Remember that you may be asked about your job search during holiday events so be ready to turn this question into an opportunity. For example, ask your contacts if they know anyone who works at "x" company instead of asking if they know of anyone hiring. During the holidays, your contacts might have more time to be of assistance, and they might be in a mood to be generous!



6. **Do a little Strategic Company / Hiring Manager Research.**

Take some time to start researching your 'target' companies to include information about hiring managers who may be able to provide some assistance with furthering your job search. This research can be done through a LinkedIn company/individual search, Facebook company search, or even a Google search. Information that may be valuable to you in connecting with key decision makers in your target company includes: biographies, social media presence, professional associations/hobbies that you have in common, schools attended, groups they follow, and/or articles they may have written or published.

7. Volunteer.

There are many opportunities during the holidays to give your time to charities and organizations. Some of these opportunities might also help you build your network, make new connections, and bolster your résumé.

8. Use holiday cards to connect.

If Christmas cards, holiday letters, and e-greetings are part of your end-of-the-year tradition, mentioning your job search (*if you're currently unemployed, or your position is ending*) can be a useful strategy. Let people know you're looking!



9. Create a business networking card.

Develop a professional business card that provides your contact information and social media links — especially to your LinkedIn profile. You can use this in lieu of your normal business card — or instead of it, if you're unemployed. This is especially helpful during holiday events.

10. Update your social media presence.

If you don't yet have a LinkedIn profile, now is the time to create yours. If you have one, give it a fresh look. Is it time to update it? Can you increase your number of Connections — or solicit additional Recommendations? Have you attended an event that you can comment on? Are you in a position to write/post a short professional article to share during the holidays?

11. Look for opportunities to get your foot in the door.

If you are currently unemployed, look for temporary or seasonal jobs that may lead to full-time positions. Almost 80% of positions are hired internally – if not more!

12. Connect or Re-connect with recruiters in your field.

Many recruiters are trying to reach year-end recruiting goals at this time of the year, and you may have just the skills they are looking for. Ask to schedule some time with them to plan a strategic approach to your job search going forward in conjunction with their organization.

Make sure you are reachable. You might be asked to interview at unusual times — for example, the day before Christmas or New Year's Eve!

Keep your phone on — and make sure you're checking your voice mail and email regularly!



Take this time to work on you!



If you feel that you must step away from your job search during the holidays – or just need to take a break – then take this time to increase your professional skills!

Invest in your professional development by taking online courses or pursuing a 4-6 week certificate on-line or through a local venue. Or take this time to learn something new!

Here are some ideas & resources:

- ✓ ***Check your local public library***
- ✓ ***Check local community colleges***
- ✓ ***Google relevant certificates in your industry for career enhancement***
- ✓ ***Update your software skills***
- ✓ ***Update your knowledge of LinkedIn***
- ✓ ***Check your local workforce or employment center for courses on Networking & Volunteer opportunities***
- ✓ ***Check your local paper for courses offered by local companies [you would be surprised how many marketing, financial, educational, and business companies offer courses for free or a low fee]. Types of classes may be: Managing Conflict, QuickBooks Tutorial, Finance Planning for the New Year, or Employee Management. These are courses you can add to your resume!***

*****When purchasing a professional development course through a college - check and see if you are eligible for financial assistance.***

Challenges To Overcome when conducting your Holiday Job Search

Conducting a job search in December is not without its challenges, however. While some hiring managers are hard at work throughout the month, others may be on vacation. Some companies also close during the week from Christmas to New Year's Day.

The holidays can also distract you from your job search. Shopping, vacations, family activities, and holiday parties can all take away time from your job search, if you're not careful.

Check your attitude, too. The holidays are a season of joy and thankfulness, but that can be tough when you're out of work. However, it's important to maintain a positive attitude — or at least “fake it until you make it.” Even if you're not feeling it, “act as if” you are, because employers want to hire positive, optimistic employees.

Accept that there may be some rejection along with the holiday cheer this year for you. You may get a rejection letter — but remember that rejections are a normal part of job searching. Keep your chin up and keep moving forward with your goals!

Also, don't overextend yourself during the holidays. Be sure to exercise, get enough sleep, and eat well.

Watch out for holiday employment scams. In your desire to make extra cash for the holidays, don't get caught up in job-related scams — like fake mystery shopping gigs, package processing rip-offs, or work-at-home cons.

Check out job opportunities carefully, and never accept payments for work you haven't done yet.

Stay alert for opportunities and remain focused; remember, if it sounds too good to be true... it is!



STAY ON TARGET!

Do not be surprised if you don't hear anything back right away after submitting an application or completing an interview.

Many people use their accumulated vacation time before the end of the year, you may find yourself waiting a bit longer than usual for a response to your résumé or to a follow-up after a job interview.

Be patient, but *persistent*. If it's your goal to find a new job in the New Year, don't put off your job search just because it's the holiday season.

A job search that starts in December gives you the opportunity to get hired before the end of the year — or to have momentum and a head start on other candidates once the calendar turns over on January 1.

