



KEEPING MOMENTUM IN YOUR JOB SEARCH

A Candidate complained to me the other day “I’m just sick of hearing prospective employers say, ‘We’ll keep you in mind!’” My response was, “I’m with you brother!”

Although I have a cool title “Director of Client Relations”, my role at Pinnacle Group is to build relationships with existing clients, prospective clients and candidates to make sure firms are thinking of us when they’re adding to their team. So, my role is exactly like yours – I’m looking for new jobs. Lucky you, you only have to find one job for yourself. I am responsible for finding many jobs – for all of you! For all practical purposes, I’m a professional job hunter.

While you are looking for one opportunity that suits your specific skills, geography, experience level and industry, I’m looking for roles in private equity, venture capital, boutique investment banks, mezzanine and distressed debt and secondaries/funds of funds and in all of their respective industry groups (eg. healthcare, software, clean tech, industrials, etc.) Likewise, since my firm recruits for firms from the Analyst to the Partner level in 25 cities, my efforts are broad but also need to be targeted based upon my focus for that period of time. I’m used to finding ways to keep myself psyched about looking for new opportunities all day, every day and beating back job search burnout. Here is how I keep myself looking for a new and different job every day, these tips are bound to work for you, too.

Looking for a Job IS Your Job Right Now If you’re looking for a new job, you need to give your job search the priority in your life that it deserves. That means setting clear hours each day that you are “at work” on finding your next opportunity. Block them into your calendar and don’t let other things intrude. This really is a case where your consistent day in, day out effort will be rewarded.

Get Organized & Set Clear Goals Every evening, before I end my day, I create a written detailed plan. The plan has blocks of time set aside for calls to people I know already, calls to prospective clients and candidates, responding to email & voicemail, addressing incoming inquiries, research, reading and planning. Creating this detailed plan takes about 30-45 minutes at the end of each day and I can’t imagine leaving work without setting my detailed plan for the next day.

By the way, I mean *detailed* – as in names, phone numbers, assembling any notes that will help me manage my calls. I prioritize my plan and, for phone calls, I sort the list by time zone and by subject. There is no sense calling someone on the West Coast at 7am – they’re not in and that means voice mail. I want to catch my prospects when they’re most receptive and when they’re available. I also want to talk to as many people as I can about a similar topic. That means, I might plan to call 4 healthcare vc investors in a row and

then 4 candidates with vc healthcare experience right afterward before I move on to calls on mezzanine players. I start with a list of at least 40 calls for each day I'm in the office so I can move quickly down my organized list if the person I'm looking for isn't in, or can't talk.

Work the Plan Having a plan is important, working the plan is essential. I set time for each part of my plan (calls, in person meetings, emails, planning). When I'm on the road, those have only three parts – eg meetings and returning emails/calls and notes/planning. During each block of time, I work that part of my plan. For example, when I am scheduled to make calls – no matter what, I sit down at my desk and start making calls. I don't spend time check my email, I don't get sidetracked reading industry blogs or surfing the web or gabbing with my co-workers. Nothing is more important than making the calls. I use calls as the most important piece to start with each day because most of us are phone phobic and would rather email or noodle around on the internet. Jump in and get it done. Some days, I set my plan to start with a "warm" call – someone I know will take my call and get me jump started on positive vibes. Then, I just keep moving down my list from call to call or task to task, until I've completed my plan for the day.

Minimize Distractions and Plan Breaks When I was in law school, I had the cleanest bathroom because I wanted to do **anything** but study and everything else interested me. Frequently I work from a hotel room when I'm on the road or from home, so I know how easy it is to get distracted and how much discipline it takes to stay focused. I learned that doing the hardest thing first each day was the best way to get traction. Now, no matter where I'm working, I start with a cup of tea on my desk and I do not leave my desk until I've made 10 calls. No refills, bathroom breaks, web surfing. I get to business and get my first 10 calls done. Then I have a break – check my email and voicemail messages, get some more tea, etc. And, I limit my break to 15 minutes – then back on the phone for 10 more calls. That way, by lunch time, I'm well along to getting all my calls done and have the afternoon for returning calls, sending emails, researching and planning for the next day.

Reward Yourself I once ate an entire one pound bag of Oreos in an entire day. For those of you who know I'm a health food nut, that seems impossible. But, I was avoiding a brief I needed to write for an important case. So I rewarded myself with 2 Oreos every time I finished one section of the document. It was a small token, but I wouldn't eat the cookies until I achieved that goal. By halfway through the bag, it might have been the sugar buzz that helped me finish the brief, who knows! Find what works for you, break your daily plan into manageable pieces and then when you've reached that goal (10 calls, 15 emails, whatever) go for a run, watch American Idol you taped last night, whatever works, then get back in the saddle and get through your plan.

Anticipate Rejection and Use it to Assess Your Skills I make lots of calls each day where I learn that the firm isn't yet ready to engage a recruiter, or they've decided to recruit on their own, or they've engaged another recruiter. It's ok. While I'd rather that every call or meeting turned into a new search assignment, I'm realistic and I don't take

rejection personally. But, I do ask for candid feedback from each person I interact with about how I can improve what I'm doing. I'm also realistic that not everyone is comfortable giving candid feedback, so each day I compile a list of things I've learned, guessed are a problem or I may need to mull over to improve my success. At the end of the week, I review it to see any commonalities, places I can improve or ways to alter what I'm looking for. I ask myself a 3 part question at the end of each week and I write out the answers: What did I do well this week? (Hint: do more of that next week!) What could I have done better this week? What did I waste time on? Find a way to NOT do that next week when you're making your plan.

Likewise, you should be undertaking a regular review of your skills (including your personality, interests and values), how they fit for each firm you are approaching and whether you should be broadening the type of opportunities (or industries) where your skills could apply. This process of refining your understanding of how you "fit" or if you don't is critical to your success. There are lots of skills assessment tools on the web or in books, make sure you're regularly setting aside time to think about how you can use what you know in a different industry or position.

Try Something Different The saying goes "insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results." Has your job search looked the same for the whole time you've been doing it? You send resumes by email. You check job boards & apply to jobs. You email recruiters to ask if there's anything new. Are you going to new networking events? Are you doing volunteer work? Are you reading the trade rags and then making calls to people about the deals they've done? Are you teaching something or writing about it? Diversify your skills, your network and revive your passion about something so it can rub off on your job search. Don't be like Sisyphus rolling the same stone up the same hill day after day, it robs you of your enthusiasm which is critical to your success.

Take Care of Yourself Get dressed (don't do your job search in your pajamas!), exercise every day, make time to be with friends who make you laugh, breathe some sense of meaning into this process for yourself. Revamp your finances so you don't have to be breathless with your back up against the wall. When you're really burned out, take a break. Give yourself a vacation from your job search. Regroup and rethink what else you could be doing as your career. For nearly 20 years I have asked almost everyone I meet what they would do with themselves if money was no object. It gives tremendous insight into what you should be doing. Ponder that question and really discover whether there's a way to be doing that (or at least a little of it) while you're looking for your next job. It will help you to feel some sense of purpose and meaning and you might discover that money is not what's keeping you from doing what you really want to do.

See the Big Picture to Stay Positive I've learned to take the pressure off myself by not viewing any call or meeting as critical to my success. That doesn't mean I don't think they're each important. It means that I keep them each in perspective. I look at every call, every meeting as an opportunity to build a relationship. I know that, in the long run,

my success will come from being my best self with every person I talk to or meet. I think of every person I meet as being either a candidate, or a client, or one becoming the other, or someone who knows one or the other **and** as (and this is the most important piece) 15 interesting minutes of my day. In most every call or meeting I have each day, I find a way to connect with the other person on a meaningful level other than “what they can do for me”. I try to find a way to laugh, to empathize, to feel as though I am being of service to that person in that moment. I know that, in the end, it will all work out. My meaningful goal and its reward are those feelings of connection. Let this job search help you connect with your authentic self and with the people you’re meeting. Most jobs are filled with people who connect with each other and that can’t be bought at any price.

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