

Job Seekers: Avoid Giving Away Your Job Search

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If you're looking for a job **outside** your current employer, it's often helpful to avoid giving away your job search. That's because if you're discovered, it can sour your relationship with your boss, which can be detrimental if you change your mind about obtaining another job. And, there are some managers (hopefully rare) who may even take the drastic step of ending your employment.

Hiding your job search can be difficult in this era of social media use, so always think before you act when it comes to posting anything online or discussing your activity with others (especially co-workers).

Here are tips to avoid giving away your job search:

Keep profiles updated. Always keep online profiles up-to-date so you won't trigger suspicions when you're actively looking. That way, people think you're diligent in keeping your information accurate, as opposed to thinking you're job hunting because you rarely make any updates and then suddenly make changes.

Lie low electronically. Unless you currently don't have a job or are working for yourself, avoid social media posts telling others that you're looking for a new job. This sounds obvious, but you'd be surprised how many people actively discuss their job hunt in social media forums – and then can't figure out how their employer found out.

Be careful what you display online. If you join groups for job hunting online, make sure they're hidden from view in your profile. For example, on LinkedIn you can change your Group settings so certain groups aren't visible on your public profile.

Don't wallpaper the world with your resume. Contrary to what many people think, uploading your resume to every possible job board or job site usually won't get you the job you desire. Even worse, it could get you unwanted publicity with the wrong people seeing it, such as you current company's HR recruiters or your boss. Instead, take the time to conduct research and target your resume to only those few key jobs you really want.

Conduct your job search from home, not work. Never use company equipment, such as a company computer or mobile phone, in in your job search because these leave electronic footprints that can be traced if the company chooses to do so. Further, co-workers can easily overhear your telephone conversations in a cubicle environment and sometimes even see your computer screen.

Conduct job hunting on your own time. Never conduct your job search on company time, because that's the same as stealing from the company (you're stealing work time). Take a personal day or vacation day for job search work (or use your lunch time and home computer), telephone interviews, and in-person interviews.

Choose appropriate times for telephone interviews. Preferably, schedule telephone interviews before work, during lunch, or after work. Even better, schedule them for your day off. Most hiring managers understand that if they're interviewing someone already employed, then they'll need to work around the person's schedule. Further, most savvy hiring managers look for potential employees who specifically state that their telephone interview needs to be scheduled at a time that won't conflict with their existing job, so they won't break any company policies.



Schedule in-person interviews during time off of work. Take advantage of your days off, paid time off, or vacation days when you need to attend in-person interviews. Avoid using sick days for interviewing – Murphy's Law will usually will kick in and you'll inevitably see someone from work who knows you're supposed to be at home sick.

Shhh. Not everyone at work is your friend and can keep information confidential – so be careful whom you tell. "Lindsey" (name changed) once confidentially shared with a co-worker that she was looking for another job. She thought this person was her friend. The next day Lindsey's boss confronted her about her job search. It turns out the co-worker was the person who shared the confidential information with others within the company and had purposely spread rumors so she could get Lindsey in trouble with their manager.

If, however, you're looking for a new job **within** your current employer, it will be difficult to keep your job search quiet. That's because most companies require that your manager be notified when you apply for a position in a different department. This is to ensure managers work together and that no workload or productivity issues are created when an employee moves into a different job. It also helps prevent problem employees from hopping from one department to another. Even if your job search is internal, it's still best to go about your job search quietly, with professionalism, and by following the tips above.

~ *Lisa Quast*, author of award-winning book, **YOUR CAREER, YOUR WAY!**

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