# Concluding Your Job Search ... Starting Your New Job

## By Bob Madison

Congratulations on landing a new position! Of course you’re happy ... you should be. But before you say, “thank goodness that’s over”, there are several things remaining to be done. These will help you start your new job on the right foot ... and better position you should you have to re-enter the job market in the future (sorry to mention that possibility!). Here are some tips:

**Celebrate.** How you do this is up to you and your finances. Something simple, and relatively inexpensive, will do just fine ... example: a nice dinner out with your spouse, significant other or close friends. A long weekend at a nice resort, a day at a spa or on the golf course ... whatever relaxes *you* ... can re-charge your enthusiasm and help you plunge into your new responsibilities with vigor.

**Thank EVERYONE.** “Everyone” includes all those with whom you networked or who assisted you along the job search journey. Hopefully, you kept good records so you have names, addresses: postal and e-mail, telephone numbers. Send letters on your personal stationery (not on the new company letterhead!) to those on your “#1 List” ... those who went the extra mile to help you, those who stuck with you throughout your search. Personalize these letters ... no form letters please to your “#1 List” people; they deserve this special attention. You may want to call your “#1 List” people, rather than sending a letter, however, the mechanics of chasing others by telephone can be time-consuming. A nice touch for those who provided special assistance would be an appropriate gift such as a bottle of wine, flowers or a small gift certificate.

You can send thank you notes to others, not on your “#1 List”, by e-mail. Even if these are more of a form note, add a small personal reference to each e-mail.

Your notes of appreciation, on letterhead or e-mail, should state your new position, work address, phone, e-mail. Let everyone know you're willing to assist them should they need something from you.

**Give back.** Chances are that you will receive calls from job seekers, like you were a short while ago. Remember the anxiety that you experienced as you made your initial networking calls. Remember how wonderful it was to have someone take time to listen, talk with you and try to assist your search efforts. Take time to listen to the callers and, if possible, help them with suggestions for expanding their network. Even better, meet with them for a few minutes face-to-face.

**Keep your “resume” current.** Oh, no, you cry, not another resume!! No, you need not start over again. You should, however, track your jobs, accomplishments, achievements, job objectives and results. You might want to set aside a few minutes every couple of weeks to record this data. *Should* you enter a future job search situation, updating your resume will be much easier. This is also a good process for ensuring that you’re prepared for performance reviews with your boss.

**Update your LinkedIn profile.** Revise the Experience section, Contact Information and you may want to change your Headline.

**Keep networking.** Think of networking as developing and maintaining long-term relationships, not as “using” someone or a quick fix to help your job search. Continue to stay in touch with those who you met during your search, those who showed interest in you and your career and those who were helpful. Obviously these include your “#1 List” mentioned above. Be willing to be a resource to these people, to reciprocate with your help should they need it.

You just may be in another job search before you leave the workforce and retire. If so, you will want to include your prior network contacts for assistance. Even if you never again are involved in a job search or career change, your network contacts can often be a valuable resource bank for helping you with business issues.

*Expand* your network ... along with maintaining the contacts you have already made. Develop contacts in your business-related and professional associations, civic groups, etc. You never know when or how people may be able to help you in life or in business ... or how you might assist them.

**Your first “one hundred days” on the job.** OK, so it may be your first couple of months ... or first six months ... or whatever. Here are a few things to keep in mind *early* into your new job:

* **Listen, look and learn.** You’re anxious to “fly your colors”, let the boss and others know your talents and (let’s be honest) make a dynamite early impression. All well and good ... but spend more time asking questions, listening (*really* listening) and observing than talking. Your primary focus, early on, should be to learn and you can only do that by asking, listening and observing. What should you learn? Some examples: the work culture, how things really get done (or not done), the strengths and not so strong characteristics of your boss and co-workers, who are the “go to” people ... and the list goes on.
* **Set your (short term) sights.**  Meet with your supervisor as soon as possible and discuss her/his expectations of you, the organization’s goals and direction and your individual goals-objectives. If your boss is difficult to pin down for a meeting of this type, put down some goals-objectives-expectations that you see for yourself in the position and ask for his/her confirmation or modification.
* **Self-evaluation.** Take a look back at prior jobs: what were your strengths, weaknesses, needs, areas where personal development was helpful or lacking. How, in your current, new, job can you apply and build on these strengths? Where, in this job, might you pay particular attention to any past weaknesses ... so they don’t become a barrier now? You should have learned from your earlier jobs (even those that were distasteful); *what* did you learn and how can your learning assist you currently?
* **Get things done.** This may seem obvious, but often it’s not. Once you have a reasonable idea of your objectives and the job’s requirements, *get moving ... accomplish something*! Sometimes new employees spend too much time trying to “figure out” the organization’s politics, smoozing with co-workers (not the same as asking, listening, observing mentioned above) and never get around to getting things done in their jobs. Your actions (and accomplishments) will truly be your best spokesperson.
* **If you’re a new boss.** Everything above applies, especially “asking, listening, observing” with your new work team. An additional idea: ask those reporting to you to list 1) their Hopes & Expectations for you, them, the department 2) their Concerns & Fears ... you, them, department. You develop the same lists. Meet (all together) and share the data ... develop plans to see that (positive) Hopes/Expectations will be fulfilled and that Concerns/Fears will be addressed and, hopefully, short circuited.

**Reestablish balance.** Chances are, you have led an “unbalanced” existence as an active job seeker ... tuning out everything except what relates to the search. Now is a time to re-connect with family, friends, perhaps community involvements that you pushed into the background during the search process. “But the new job requires all my time and attention. I’ll get around to spending time with the spouse and kids when things settle down.” Surprise! ... things *won’t* settle down; you will continue to have more on your (work) plate than you can handle. Better to start now with prioritizing your life’s activities and regaining some of that balance you temporarily lost during your search. Your spouse, children, friends and, yes, work colleagues and new boss, will applaud your efforts.

**Self-evaluation ... Chapter 2.** At least once a year, review your performance as you perceive it and from the feedback of co-workers, your boss, customers. Do this whether or not you are expecting a formal performance review. How do you stack up against your current job goals? Are you on track with the career vision you had when you started with this organization? How is the company or organization doing and what does their future appear to be? ... as you saw it when you accepted the job? ... brighter? ... in trouble? Are you planning for changes to your profession, technology or business and acting appropriately?

Again, congratulations and best wishes for success in your new position and career.

*About the Author:*

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