

Navigating your job search



I'm convinced many in today's unemployed workforce don't understand that a successful job search requires a lot of time, effort and the acquisition of new skills.

A recent incident confirmed this when the spouse of my wife's friend lost his job and asked me to assist him with his job search. At no cost, I provided him with access to my company's comprehensive online job search skills program and later offered to review his resume upon completion.

A few weeks later, I received a draft of his resume and was surprised to see many of the key recommendations outlined in our module on resume-writing were conspicuously missing.

When he didn't respond to my inquiry as to why, I could only conclude the reason had to be attributed to some of the common potholes that routinely trip up many job seekers: ignorance of the multi-faceted process of the job search; common observations were consistent; giving up; or laziness.

My observations were confirmed by Vic Benoit, a highly talented executive career transition coach in the former New York area and the former head of staffing for such corporate giants as Pepsi and Heineken.

Vic said he frequently witnesses the same behavior and offered a succinct analogy: "You can hire a personal fitness trainer to help you get into shape, but there's no escaping the fact that ultimately you must be the one lifting the weights."

His point is on the mark. If you want to land a job in today's tight labor market, you must make the commitment to learn the essential skills and be prepared to do some heavy lifting. Getting your body in shape takes time, commitment and effort — as does finding a job.

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MATT DUREE is author of Job Search Secrets from the Reluctant Expert and CEO of Orlando-based Navigator Institute. Contact him at mdurfee@navexec.com.

Her company, Orlando-based InCharge Debt Solutions, decided to work with Habitat for Humanity Orlando, which builds houses for low-income people and helps them get the financial counseling they need to succeed in home ownership.

For Etta Money, it was an easy choice: InCharge Debt Solutions, which builds houses for low-income people and helps them get the financial counseling they need to succeed in home ownership.

Others help their charities of choice through less-heralded ways such as volunteering time to mentor or tutor, or taking part in fundraising events.

But choosing which charity with which to work should involve careful planning. For Etta Money, it was an easy choice: InCharge Debt Solutions, which builds houses for low-income people and helps them get the financial counseling they need to succeed in home ownership.

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Finally, after drumming up employee volunteers and creating a plan, the next step is action and evaluation. Like any business strategy, corporate volunteer programs should be evaluated based on return on investment. Measuring the success of the program enables management to evaluate what changes need to be made for the next event, as well as monitor employee satisfaction with the program and measure community impact.

BY CINDY BARTH

Some companies like to give back to their communities in big ways such as corporate campaigns that raise millions of dollars for a cause.

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Giving back

How businesses are making a difference

ily homeowners successful. Part of that is teaching them to save for maintenance needs and being careful with credit."

So how can your company set up its own volunteer program?

The first step is selecting your cause. There must be a balance between a cause your employees have a vested interest in and finding a cause that's in line with your company's mission and goals. Brand alignment is key in attracting potential like-minded clients and encouraging employee engagement in the program.

And that employee participation is a crucial step in the creation of any corporate volunteer program, so you should make sure your cause encourages the involvement of every employee and that participation won't be limited by physical or financial limitations.

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Making a difference

InCharge's Etta Money leads charge to help new homeowners



InCharge Debt Solutions' Etta Money, right, helps new homeowners put their financial lives in order. Inset: Rose Nelson and family holding the keys to their new Habitat home.



Quick tips

- Select your cause.
• Round up employees and create a strategic plan.
• Evaluate program success and recognize employee participation.



"Many times, companies have the greatest of intentions when deciding to get behind a particular cause, but the program isn't as successful as they hoped because the communities they serve and the employees who work for them may not feel connected to the issue or understand who benefits from the companies' support," said Natalie N. Smith, manager of business training at HandsOn Network, the largest volunteer network in the nation. "Companies should think of their programs as an extension of their brand and reach out to community partners, and find out what the real needs are in the communities where they do business."

New Habitat homeowner Alice Tolliver, for one, is glad InCharge did just that. "Their help put me on the right path before taking ownership of my Habitat home. It was a real blessing for me to get that knowledge."

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Washington Business Journal's Nicole Duhing also contributed to this story.