

## **Why Your Job Search Should Start Now: Tips from Top Executives**

As a business writer, I work with top executives from many Fortune 500 companies. Over the years, I've found that most of them start preparing their resumes now for job searches in September and October. I asked a few of them why this was the best time of year for a job search. Their answers were quite interesting, and I thought I'd share them with you.

### **1. New fiscal year = more money.**

Many businesses use the end of quarters, such as June 30 or September 30, to end their fiscal year. When the new fiscal year begins, budgets are fresh and full. Companies will post more job openings because the budget is available to fill them. Because some hiring managers may have waited for the beginning of the fiscal year to start searching for new staff, they'll be hungry to hire.

From a negotiation perspective, it's definitely smart to start looking while budgets are new. One of my clients is a CFO for a top aerospace company. He offers this advice: "Ask for more than you want, because there's a better chance you'll get it. You can get more in salary, more in bonuses, more in extras when the managers are feeling flush. It's just like your own budget: you're more likely to blow a little extra money right after payday because you've got it to spend. If a manager really wants you at this time of year, he'll pay for your moving expenses, your signing bonus, and your higher salary. But don't ask him at the end of the fiscal year, because you won't get squat. It's not a smart business decision for him."

### **2. Out with the old benefits, in with the new.**

When you're three-quarters of the way through the calendar year, you've probably used up a lot of your annual vacation and other benefits. According to savvy

executives, this is a smart way to maximize what you get from your old job just before moving on to a new job with new benefits.

A human resources director for a major financial services company said, “I probably shouldn’t say this, but before you quit, it makes sense to use as much as you can of all of those corporate benefits: vacation, insurance, flexible spending, holidays, sick leave. People don’t understand that it’s like leaving money on the table if you don’t. Just be sure you don’t overuse them. Lots of benefits, like vacation time, are pro-rated based on the amount of time you’ve worked that year. If you use more than you actually have, you might find it deducted from your last paycheck!”

### **3. Time is on your side.**

It doesn’t make sense to do a job search when no one will be in the office to hire you. The fall months are sort of a sweet spot between summer vacation and winter holidays. You’re more likely to get in for an interview in September and October than you are in late November or December, when almost everyone is away for the holidays.

One of my clients, a sales executive for a major retail company, said, “It’s hard enough to catch me in the office as it is; I travel a lot. So it always amazes me when people expect to be interviewed right away during the summer or during holidays, when I’m on vacation. I’m not changing my vacation to do an interview. They can wait.” It’s much more logical to time your job search when a larger number of hiring managers are available.

Targeting your job search means more than just selecting the type of job you want. Top executives also use good timing to maximize their opportunities. Take their advice, and you might find yourself in a great new job before the new year.

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