

## CHALLENGER 2019 JOB SEARCH CHECKLIST

### Schedule and Complete These Next Steps

\_\_\_\_\_ GET ORGANIZED – Figure out a system to organize and keep track of your activities, and start using your system immediately. Be prepared to adapt it as you go forward and find ways to improve or streamline it. You can use paper and pencil, binders and notebooks, a daily and weekly calendar, your computer, your phone – or any combination that works for you. Have a convenient place where you can work privately, use the internet, and make and receive phone calls.

\_\_\_\_\_ YOUR SELF INTRODUCTION – Describe your skills and how you can make a contribution, and explain what you're aiming to do next. Know what makes you special vs. all the other candidates who are applying for work in your arena. This is the basis for your professional "branding," your "positioning," and your "elevator speech," etc. Pick 3 strengths you like to use, and know what benefit they offer prospective hiring organizations.

\_\_\_\_\_ YOUR RESUME – Include accomplishments/achievements and quantify their impact if at all possible; confirm accuracy of dates, titles, contact information, etc. You need to have a good resume version that you can be using soon; you may continue to edit it/customize it for specific opportunities after that. Concentrate on getting the content of your resume first, then you can experiment with the look and format of the information. (Look online for examples -- here's a good article on how to write a good resume from *Money Magazine* <http://time.com/money/5053350/resume-tips-free-template/> )

\_\_\_\_\_ YOUR COVER LETTERS – Yes, cover letters count! Create a basic "template" for your cover letters, including 3-to-4 bullet points that will highlight why your experience and skills match up with the roles you're applying for. If you write 6-to- 8 bullet points you can choose from (and edit) you'll be able to customize a cover letter easily and quickly. The bullet points should not repeat exactly what you've written in your resume.

\_\_\_\_\_ YOUR EMAIL – Use a professional email address with your full first and last name, not a gimmicky or hobby oriented email (ex.: "GolfProChris.") Do not use an email you share with anyone else, and make sure that your full name shows up as the sender in your recipients' inboxes. ("Chris Johnson," not just "Chris.") If you have changed your first or last name, or both, create a new email address. Avoid using AOL.com emails! Create an email signature that includes your name and phone number and LinkedIn URL. Check your emails frequently during the day, and respond quickly to messages. Put your main point or recommendations in the subject line. Use spellcheck for your emails and break long paragraphs into shorter ones for easy skimming.

\_\_\_\_\_ YOUR PHONE / VOICE MAIL / TEXTING. Answer all phone calls immediately, or return them within 2 hours during business hours. Update your voice mail message and make sure it is short, clear, and professional. Identify yourself by first and last name. Don't text recruiters, interviewers, or hiring managers without asking for their permission, as they may view texting as an intrusion.

**Source: Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc. ©**



\_\_\_\_\_YOUR LINKED IN PROFILE – Create a strong profile with a great headline, professional picture, interesting summary, and customized URL; and fill in your jobs and accomplishments, education and certification, etc. Reach out to expand your contacts. Post an update at least every week. Signal your interest in exploring opportunities with recruiters in your Job Preferences. Linked In is constantly changing, so use the Help function or just type your Linked In questions into your favorite browser (Google, Bing, Safari, Firefox, etc.) for the latest “how-to’s.”

\_\_\_\_\_YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS – Draft a dozen concise examples of your accomplishments and rehearse them so you can tell them in less than 2 minutes each. Emphasize the accomplishments that hiring managers value in a candidate for the jobs that interest you (ex. increased revenues or profits, cost savings, improved efficiency, customer satisfaction, compliance, accuracy, etc. or whatever benchmarks apply to your industry and area of expertise.)

\_\_\_\_\_YOUR TARGET LISTS of PEOPLE and COMPANIES – Draft lists of people you know/can be introduced to, and companies you’re interested in. Sketch out a plan to research people (in Linked In, online, with contacts) and organizations (start online with their web pages, Linked In pages, and also search for their main competitors so you’re familiar with their competitive marketplace.

\_\_\_\_\_YOUR NETWORKING & OUTREACH – Start connecting with people you know, and new people in all areas of your life – groups you belong to, former and recent co-workers/bosses/vendors, neighbors and friends, and your barber or hair dresser, car mechanic, dentist, etc. Let them know what you’re interested in, and ask for their ideas, information, suggestions, and even introductions to people who work, or have worked at your targeted companies. Then ask how you can help them!

\_\_\_\_\_ YOUR FOLLOW UP – Follow up after a reasonable time has passed – send thank you notes within 24 hours, and reach out a few days later to follow up on a voice message or email you sent.

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