



**UNEMPLOYMENT-MORE THAN LACK OF EMPLOYMENT: THE
FUNCTION OF A JOB CLUB**

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Unemployment-More Than Lack of Employment

The function of a Job Club

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Learning Objectives: As a result of this workshop, participants will be able to:

- 1-Understand the changes that are taking place in the hiring process which make it more difficult to find and secure employment.
- 2-Understand needs of those who are out of work which hamper their job search.
- 3-Understand the advantages gained by belonging to a job club.

Workshop Abstract:

Hiring has changed making job seeking more difficult and competition for jobs is heavy, so getting a job involves more than simply going out and finding a job opening.

Job Clubs are springing up to help job seekers navigate the job hunting maze.

Workshop Description and References: Unemployment requires more than just finding a job. There have been drastic changes in hiring practices so getting a job involves more than simply going out and finding a job opening. In addition, many of those who are now finding themselves out of work have been in long term employment and have not had to seek employment for a long time. This has resulted in a lot of people who are out of work, yet many jobs remain unfilled. It is important for job seekers to understand how employers hire in order to locate job openings and successfully secure a job. Many job seekers today face long term unemployment as a result the current job market. This often results in them becoming discouraged which drains their energy and hampers their efforts to find work. In addition, competition is heavy for lower level jobs and the economy is forcing companies to operate as efficiently as possible. As a result, it is no longer enough to show that you are qualified for the position. Many of those competing with them for a position are equally qualified, so job seekers also need to be prepared to show that they have a proven track record of getting results. Job Clubs are springing up to help job seekers navigate the job hunting maze through interaction with professional counselors and the experiences of others who are also looking for work. Since the other members face similar difficulties, they can help each other deal with the frustrations of long term unemployment through encouraging each other. In addition, the knowledge gained through the collective experience, enables them to beat out the competition.

I-Introduction-Unemployment figures don't give a complete picture of unemployment today. They only include those registered with the unemployment network and there are a lot of people who have been unsuccessful in finding work and have given up looking. They are not counted in the unemployment figures. When you add the number who are no longer seeking jobs or are in part-time jobs because they could not find fulltime jobs, the actual unemployment figures are almost double the published figures. There are far

more people who are out of work longer than ever before and yet many jobs go unfilled for longer than ever before so there is a clear disconnect between job seekers and jobs.

II-There are dramatic changes taking place in the hiring process which make it more difficult to find and secure employment.

A-Changes in finding job openings

1-Newspapers are no longer the primary source of job listings-Many companies no longer list job openings in the newspapers.

2-Employers now use a wide variety of ways to list job openings-It is not a matter of this and that as it is this or that. As a result, job seekers are often confused about how to seek a job.

3-Direct contact not always possible-While it used to be common to contact potential employers looking for someone who is hiring and leave them a resume in case a opening arises in the future, many employers now refuse to take resumes, accept phone calls, or visits. Many employers no longer keep resumes on file in case they get future openings.

4-Staffing agencies becoming major source of hiring-They are increasingly popular with both employers and employees because it saves considerable work. However, many job seekers do not understand staffing agencies and waste time and money.

a-Some agencies supply temporary workers while others do the hiring for companies and job seekers need to know the difference. Temp agencies often prevent you from hiring in to a company where you are sent to work. Staffing agencies do the hiring for a company and may send you on a temporary assignment that could turn into a full-time job.

b-Some require you to pay a fee up front. Job seekers often assume the agency will automatically work hard to get you hired. However, many agencies do little once they get paid so they are very poor investments. Other agencies arrange for the fee to be taken out of your wages once you are hired or are paid by the employer and job seekers assume the agency will work hard to get them hired.

c-However, the agency gets paid when someone gets hired and it may not be you. Agencies must provide the employer with the best worker possible for the job or the employer will find another agency to supply their workers. Therefore they will push their best prospects and ignore lesser prospects and those with impediments to hiring. Therefore, the job seeker must convince the agency they are the best qualified in the same way they would impress an employer, though it is more difficult since there is often no immediate job opening.

5-On-line sources- While technology has opened up vast new ways to locate job openings, it is also muddying the waters making it more difficult to find job openings. There are no clear guides to locating job openings through the internet. There are a vast number on on-line sources for job hunters however there are two types of sites. There are primary sources which list job openings for companies and there are consolidating sources which search the net for job listings and consolidate them into one source.

a-The consolidating sources are the best place to locate listings because it saves going around to a lot of different sites and they often pick up many listings which you would never find.

1-However, one downside is that you never know where they got their listings. Some sources get their listings from primary sources and keep in touch with the primary

source to insure that the listing is current. However many sources consolidate from other consolidating sources and the listings may be quite old by the time you find them. Many listings may be outdated and no longer taking applicants.

2-In addition, when you apply to a consolidating source, your application goes down the line through all the previous listings. Applications are weeded out at each level increasing the chance that your application will never be seen by the potential employer.

b-The primary sources are the best place to apply because you know the listings are current. In addition, you know that your application will not be weeded out before it reaches the employer's desk. However, it is often difficult to find primary listings unless you have an inside source that notifies you that it is available and current.

c-Therefore, it is often best to search the consolidating listings to locate job openings and then go directly to the primary source to verify the listing is current and to apply so you know your application is not weeded out before it gets to the employer.

6-On-line applications-An increasing number of businesses are posting openings and accepting applications through their website. Postings for openings are made on their website but are often not made outside their website so you have to check their website frequently for listings. Some accept applications at any time and hold them for when openings occur while others only accept applications for openings that have been posted.

7-Many jobs are never posted-A notice is circulated to employees asking for recommendations. While we usually associate the practice with small mom and pop stores who don't want to go through the frustration of interviewing a lot of people, we are seeing an increasing number of large companies who are not posting openings anywhere outside the company. All upper level positions are filled from within the company. The entry level positions that are vacated are then open for hiring. A notice is circulated through the office and employees are asked to recommend friends and family who they feel would make good workers. Those recommended are then interviewed and the positions are filled from those recommended. This takes a lot of guesswork out of the hiring practice because you have someone in the company that already knows the person and is willing to recommend them. It also benefits the company because upper level positions are filled with people who have moved up through the company and have proven track records.

B-Changes in hiring practices

1-Companies that accept applications online often don't accept resumes or cover letters. They have a template you enter your data so it is uniform. Therefore, it is good to send a hard copy afterward to catch their attention. Note on the cover letter that you have already filed an application online, or it will probably be thrown out.

2- Many employers quick-scan resumes-You have to make sure yours grabs their attention. Don't just list jobs and say what you did. You must show you did above average work by citing accomplishments, commendations, and awards that set you above the average. Some companies that get a lot of applications, particularly staffing agencies, use a machine to scan them. The machine looks for the right words so it is important to be sure the right words are included.

3-Increased competition makes competing more difficult You need to show the interviewer that your skills match what they are looking for. A skill match chart will help them make the connection. Leave it with them after the interview for them to review. In

addition, you must show that you stand out from the rest. Review your accomplishments and what you can bring to benefit the company beyond the norm. If the job is different from your past experience, be sure to stress your ability to adapt to the job.

4-You need to research the company and the interviewer if possible. Be familiar with the products they produce and/or services they provide so you can discuss them comfortably. It shows you have an interest in the company and are willing to research it. Look for any common ground or common interests that you may have with the interviewer that you can capitalize on, but don't over do it.

III-Understanding the needs of those out of work which hamper their job search

1- Need guidance-Many don't understand the changes taking place because they have not sought a job for a long time. They don't know where to start and waste time on ineffective methods.

2- Need encouragement- Many try traditional methods are therefore unemployed for a long time. Continual rejection or lack of response can become discouraging. Eventually they begin to feel like there is no hope of getting a job..

IV-Understanding the advantages of belonging to a job club-There are two types of job clubs, limited and ongoing.

A-Limited-often used by government and commercial job search groups and often run up to 8-12 weeks. Though called job clubs, they are more job search training classes. A recent study by the Dept. of Labor found that after 12 weeks (3 months), 74% of older workers active in job search training classes had found employment as opposed to 22% of older workers who had not belonged. A limited job club helps in two ways.

1-Teaches proper use of technology. Many are applying the old job search techniques to new technology and it doesn't work. It's very addictive to be on the web, searching, doing email, finding and applying for jobs -feels very productive, but may not be. A computer search may be helpful but has its downside.

a-Layers of consolidating sources narrows chances that employers will see your application. You need to seek openings in consolidated listings but apply in the original listing if possible.

b-Lack of knowledge may restrict chances. Not knowing where to look means many opportunities are missed and not knowing how to apply may mean many applications are rejected.

2-Provides Access to Experienced Professional It gives you access to someone experienced in job search who can assist you. Facilitators are usually trained and experienced in assisting with job search. they can help job seeker in several ways.

a-Help clarifying job goals-Usually have testing or instruction in clarifying goals.

b-Help with resumes-Usually review resumes and suggest improvements.

c-Instruction in preparing for and dealing with interviews. Usually involve role playing and mock interviews.

B-Ongoing-Has the advantage of a limited job club with additional benefits.

1-Encouragement-It is easy to become discouraged by continual rejection. The group has other people going through what you are going through. When you are alone at your computer and not succeeding at your job search, you can begin to think that you are the

only person who can't land a job. Attending job clubs will help you see that other smart competent people are also struggling. As you see others getting jobs, you are encouraged.

2-Access to others going through the process. Their experiences can help you anticipate problems and prepare for them. For instance, one woman told our group about her experience applying for a job at a large company. She got out of her car in the parking lot and met a man also getting out of his car. She asked him for directions and then proceeded into the building. He followed her into the building and rode up on the elevator with her and they both got off on the same floor. On the way, he asked her about who she was seeing and why. When she was ushered into the interview, she found the man was her interviewer. She didn't know it but her interview had started in the parking lot.

3-Accountability-It is easy to let job hunting slide but having to account for each week's work, encourages you to be looking.

4-Networking-It enlarges the number of people looking for you. Other members may hear of jobs they don't qualify for but you might. As members share openings they hear about, it helps other members who might not otherwise hear about those jobs. You'll meet many new people. Connect with them on Linked-In, particularly if you don't have 500 Connections yet. Then, stay in touch as you progress in your careers, continuing to help each other succeed.

5-Opportunity to Improve-It gives you an opportunity to improve your resume and practice your introduction speech, and your interview skills in a group that is supportive. And the other group members can help you proofread and, probably, improve your resume, your Linked-In Profile, and other job search documents.

6-Inside Contacts-Those who have graduated from the program can provide you with access to their employer. They can become resources who can let you know of openings in their companies and help you know who to contact. Having someone inside the company can be a big help. One woman was telling our group about how she got a job. She decided to visit a friend she hadn't seen in a while and was telling her she had seen the perfect job opportunity but the deadline was past and they weren't taking any more applications. The friend suggested maybe her husband could help. The woman had no idea where her friend's husband worked. The friend's husband happened to be president of that company. The friend called her husband and her husband scheduled an interview based on his wife's recommendation. The company later interviewed her and hired her. While she still had to qualify for the job, she got an interview she would not have gotten otherwise and her friend's recommendation gave her credibility. Many Human Resource people will look more closely at a resume if it is recommended by someone in the company where they might not otherwise have considered it. Some companies don't hire anyone without the recommendation of someone inside the company.