

NETWORKING
RESUME
LINKEDIN CAREER CHANGE
JOB
SEARCH
TOOLKIT
SECOND EDITION
INTERVIEWING
METHODS & TIPS
ONLINE BRAND LEGAL RIGHTS
RESOURCES

INTRODUCTION

This *Job Search Toolkit* is specially designed to help those who are looking for work after cancer. In it you will find information on improving your resume, cover letter and LinkedIn profile; tips for honing your interviewing and networking skills; and guidance in exploring more meaningful and alternative work and career options. You will also find an array of resources and tools to assist in your job search.

WE HOPE YOU FIND IT HELPFUL!

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THE JOB SEARCH TOOLKIT IS DEDICATED TO **CHARLA KRUPP**

(1953–2012), who worked valiantly and passionately throughout her treatment. She was the accomplished author of two best sellers, *How Not to Look Old* and *How to Never Look Fat Again*; a vibrant TV personality; and a well-regarded member of the beauty and fashion industries. Charla was a mentor, an inspiration, and a guiding force in her field and beyond. She was always willing to give advice, encouraging people to take risks and pursue their passions. This toolkit was written to help working people with cancer find professional fulfillment, reinvent themselves and follow their dreams, just as Charla did.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Genentech

A Member of the Roche Group

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Please note that this publication is designed to provide general information on the topics presented. It is provided with the understanding that Cancer and Careers is not engaged in rendering any legal or professional services through the information contained herein. The information provided should not be used as a substitute for professional services.



CANCER+ CAREERS

BE THE BOSS OVER CANCER



EDUCATION

NATIONAL EVENTS

Events and speaking engagements addressing the unique challenges of cancer in the workplace.

NATIONAL AND REGIONAL CONFERENCES ON WORK & CANCER

Conferences on the complexities of balancing cancer treatment and recovery with employment, featuring experts discussing legal issues, health insurance, job-hunting and more.

EDUCATIONAL SERIES FOR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

A multi-part accredited series, accessible via webinars/teleconferences and archived on cancerandcareers.org. The sessions provide targeted information on combining work and cancer treatment, so healthcare providers can effectively inform their patients. Includes a printed companion guide.

IN-SERVICE TRAINING FOR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

These in-depth accredited training sessions equip the staffs at national cancer hospitals and organizations to better understand and serve patients who must balance employment and a diagnosis.



SUPPORT

BALANCING WORK & CANCER WEBINARS

A series of webinars for people with cancer who are dealing with issues across the work continuum, including job search, working through treatment, disclosure and more.

ONLINE CAREER COACHING CENTER

Offers survivors free access to experts who address individual questions on how to manage work during and after treatment.

RESUME REVIEW SERVICE

This free service allows job-seeking cancer survivors to upload their resume and receive feedback from one of our professional career coaches.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT MICROGRANTS

The grants provide financial assistance for programs or training that enables survivors to enhance or build new skills.

SPONSORS

FOUNDING Avon Breast Cancer Crusade | Genentech

PLATINUM Pfizer Oncology | P&G Beauty | QVC | Tweezerman

GOLD Chanel, Inc. | The Estée Lauder Companies Inc. | Firmenich | L'Oréal USA | MaCher | Shiseido Americas

SILVER Allure | Cos Bar | Eisai | Kaplow | Laura Geller New York | Nordstrom | Seattle Genetics | Target

Cancer and Careers is a program of the Cosmetic Executive Women Foundation.



INFORMATION

CANCERANDCAREERS.ORG & CANCERANDCAREERS.ORG/ESPAÑOL

An interactive website with articles, a blog, an events calendar, a resource directory, a collective diary, videos, downloadable tools, and a newsfeed with recent posts and research on all issues related to work and cancer.

PUBLICATIONS

Cancer and Careers' library of materials includes English and Spanish versions of our *Living and Working with Cancer Workbook*, *Job Search Toolkit*, *Most Important Resources for Working People with Cancer*, *Survival Guide to Living with Cancer As a Chronic Disease*, *Survival Guide to Cancer on a Shoestring*, and *On-the-Go Guide* series. Also available in English is our *Manager's Kit*. Publications are distributed free to individuals and cancer organizations nationwide.



EMPOWERS AND EDUCATES PEOPLE WITH CANCER TO THRIVE IN THEIR WORKPLACE

JOB-HUNTING AFTER CANCER TREATMENT

There are a number of reasons why you might be looking for a new job during or after your cancer treatment. Maybe your personal values and work-related goals have changed because of your diagnosis and you want to switch to a more meaningful or interesting field. Perhaps you took an extended leave of absence for treatment and your employer wasn't obligated to hold your job for you. Or maybe you can no longer do the kind of job you were doing before treatment. Whatever the reason for your job search, there are important factors to consider as you begin it.

Looking for a new job is a process that has many highs and lows. There will be days with new leads or interview opportunities and days that feel like setbacks or rejection. All of that is normal and you'll want to think about how you are going to take care of yourself mentally, physically and emotionally through what can at times feel like a roller-coaster ride. Concentrate on being the most desirable candidate you can be and — as hard as it may be — try not to focus too much on your cancer experience. There are definitely things to consider related to treatment and recovery, which are discussed throughout this toolkit, but by equipping yourself with the right job-search tools, savvy and strategy, you will stand out among other applicants.

BEFORE SEEKING A NEW POSITION OR CHANGING FIELDS, ASK YOURSELF:

- What skills and interests do I have?
- What education/training do I have? Do I need more? How expensive will it be?
- Are companies currently hiring people in this position/field?
- Would I be willing to take a lower-level position?
- Do I have the stamina to handle a potentially stressful job search or career change right now, after dealing with the physical and emotional effects of cancer?

STARTING YOUR JOB SEARCH

Treat your job search as if it were an actual job. Set realistic daily or weekly goals for yourself; for example, sending out a specific number of resumes or taking an online course to learn new, marketable skills. Research which companies are hiring in your chosen field and try to make contacts there. Follow up on all leads and always use a professional tone over the phone and in writing.

Many companies do online searches for information about prospective employees. Having a LinkedIn account or a website showcasing your professional experience can be helpful, but putting too much personal information online can be harmful. For example, if you blog, tweet or update your Facebook status about a recent chemo treatment, your cancer diagnosis becomes public information, and you may prefer to keep your health information private during your job search. For more information on this topic, see the section on Online Reputation Management, on page 14.

According to the American Association for Cancer Research, nearly 15.5 million people in the U.S. are cancer survivors; many of them are in the prime of their working years when the cancer is diagnosed, and, like you, many are eager to get back to work, looking forward not only to having a steady income again, but also to the psychological benefits of work and of feeling more “normal” again.

KNOW WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT MATTERS TO YOU

- Who am I?
- What do I feel passionate about?
- What, if anything, was missing in my previous work situations?
- How can I make a difference for an employer? (Answer this one without reference to past job titles.)
- Am I a specialist and an expert or more of a generalist?
- What are my core strengths? (Think of these as a combination of transferable skills, interests, values and personality traits.)

LEARN SOMETHING NEW

Identify a skill or an area of knowledge that would be relevant to your desired future work, then learn it. You might go back to school, take an online course, study on your own, read books and magazines, observe others, earn a certification. Taking one or more of these active steps will increase your confidence as well as your market value.

KEEP UP WITH TECHNOLOGY

Learning about and understanding technology is not an option; it's a necessity. You don't need to know how to write HTML code, but you do need to know how to use LinkedIn, write a blog, and contribute to sites that support your personal brand and virtual resume. It's also important to keep up with technological changes and developments in your chosen field, so that you remain a competitive and valuable employee or candidate.

JOB-HUNTING AFTER CANCER TREATMENT

CREATE A JOB-SEARCH PLAN THAT IS FLEXIBLE

Your plan should encompass several tracks or options, including self-employment or even working for a startup. Many people have begun by seeking to work for others and ended up creating their own entrepreneurial opportunities.

Be open to doing two or three different things to cover income, benefits — and personal satisfaction. Don't think only in terms of traditional jobs, such as teacher, IT manager, social worker and accountant.

CREATE MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS

Get comfortable with the uncomfortable aspects of a job search: networking, introducing yourself, asking for help and advice, and follow-through.

Network broadly and deeply. Be relentless in your efforts to meet people of all kinds, and use every means of communication: face-to-face, voice mail, email, social media, postcards, shared articles and letters.

Always begin any communication by offering the other person something, such as an idea, a resource or an introduction to someone else.

AS YOU LOOK FOR A JOB AFTER CANCER, HERE ARE THREE TIPS TO SET YOURSELF UP FOR SUCCESS BOTH IN YOUR SEARCH AND ONCE YOU LAND THE JOB:

- 1.** Be honest with yourself about what you can commit to in a job. For example, try to get a full-time job only if you really feel strong enough; otherwise, look at part-time jobs.
- 2.** Consider all kinds of flexible situations, and think about which might work best for you. There are many factors to consider, but telecommuting (whether it's 100% of the time or occasionally), flexible schedules and part-time jobs all offer benefits to people who are juggling other priorities in their lives.
- 3.** Focus on doing something that you really want to do, ideally with people you want to work with. This should be a priority for everyone, but if you're keenly aware of how precious every day is, doing something worthwhile is especially important — and gratifying.

Networking is a powerful tool that can help you land the job you want. Most people find work by following up on leads suggested by people they know, not by answering “Help Wanted” or job-board ads. If the idea of asking friends, acquaintances, or former colleagues if they can assist with your search seems awkward or intimidating, the following suggestions might help bolster your networking skills.

SHUN SHYNESS

Networking requires calling or emailing people you haven’t spoken with in a while or may not know well. Fortunately, many people are eager to help if the request is specific and reasonable. Stay upbeat and focused, and keep your phone calls short.

ENGAGE YOUR CONNECTIONS

Think beyond your usual circle. Use your college alumni association to contact someone who works in your industry — or the industry you’d like to get into. Join a professional organization in your area to meet people in your field, or look up your former bosses on LinkedIn. Mention your job search when you chat with neighbors, acquaintances at your church or synagogue, even your doctor or dentist.

OFFER HELP IN RETURN

Reciprocity is key when networking. People are more willing to assist you in your job search if you can provide them with tips, resources or introductions to other people in your field.

NETWORKING EVEN AFTER LOSING TOUCH

One of the biggest challenges in tapping your network is reaching out to someone you haven’t spoken with in a long time. You may feel uncomfortable doing so now because you need something. If this is the case, do the following:

1. Acknowledge the lapse in time.
2. Explain the “Why now?”
3. Offer to do something in return.

Keep track of your contacts and communication. Cancer and Careers’ networking tracker, on page 13, will help keep you organized.

NETWORKING

LINKEDIN

Building an effective profile on the professional networking website www.linkedin.com has become as crucial as crafting a good resume. You can use LinkedIn not only to help with job-hunting, but also to build and manage your career.

LinkedIn multiplies your existing personal and professional networks many times over by making the connections of your connections available to you.

Over the past few years, employers have been turning increasingly to LinkedIn. They have two good reasons for doing so: It enables them to tap a much wider candidate pool, and it's inexpensive, replacing pricey headhunters as a recruitment tool for all but the most senior positions. Many LinkedIn users post job opportunities at their organizations to their own networks first.

So LinkedIn can provide a great leg up — but you have to devote some time and effort to it when you join. Below are some additional tips.

A GREAT LINKEDIN PROFILE

DON'T REITERATE YOUR RESUME. What you should provide is not your entire work history, but a focused profile. Tell your viewers what you've done professionally and what you hope to do. Create a very simple summary of your accomplishments and the kinds of things that you can do for an employer. Keep your language crisp, succinct and professional, and avoid the verbal slang you might use among friends or close colleagues, as it could be misread by prospective employers.

WRITE A THOUGHTFUL HEADLINE. Your headline is one of the first things that viewers of your profile see, therefore it's a great place to market your brand and describe yourself in an impactful way. You've got 120 characters here, so use them!

LINKEDIN HEADLINE EXAMPLES:

- Experienced Sales Professional Looking to Produce Revenue in the Industrial Products Industry
- Public Relations Manager Raising Consumer Visibility and Brand Awareness Through Creative Digital Programs
- Director of Communications | Branding | Online Marketing | Social Media
- Customer Service Professional — Resolves Customer Issues with Finesse and a Smile
- Benefits Administration — An Eye for Detail — A Sense of Urgency — Strong Client Focus
- Nonprofit Fund-raising and Program Management — Passionate About Making a Difference in the World
- Administrative Assistant — Calendar Management | Project Oversight | Frontline Service
- Construction Supervisor — Renovation, Construction Safety & Process Scheduling

POPULATE YOUR “SKILLS & ENDORSEMENTS.” This section is strictly about keywords. You can use up to 50 words and phrases here describing what you know and what you can do, and LinkedIn has a feature that allows people to endorse you based upon your keywords.

GET RECOMMENDATIONS. Many job-search experts advise that you ask people for recommendations whether you’re working, self-employed or looking for a job. As with the content of your profile, make sure that your recommendations are professionally relevant. Be specific when you request a recommendation, so that your chosen reference provides the most substantive and targeted information about you. Ideally, your recommendations will reflect the focus of the rest of your profile. If you want to highlight your fantastic public speaking or your innovative problem-solving, select references who best know you for that skill and ask them to focus on it in their recommendations. The good news about the recommendations process on LinkedIn is that you are able to approve someone’s recommendation before you post it. If you see something that you’d like to omit or rephrase, carefully approach the writer and discuss proposed changes. Job-search experts warn that recruiters often discount candidates who have no recommendations. But don’t go overboard: Five to eight substantive recommendations from former bosses, direct reports or colleagues will do the trick.

JOIN GROUPS. LinkedIn offers groups based on interest and association — professional societies, alumni organizations, and groups of past and current colleagues. You can even start your own networking group. Be selective: Choose one to five groups that are the most interesting and appealing to you. Don’t join more groups than you can actively participate in — participation is the whole point of LinkedIn. And be sure to introduce yourself when you join a group.

PUT UP A PICTURE. LinkedIn reports that members with profile photos receive 14 times more profile views than those without. Don’t worry about having the perfect head shot, but do humanize yourself with a picture.

CONNECTING ON LINKEDIN

Getting the word out that you are looking for work is more than half the battle. Even if you are employed, you can still update your profile without advertising that you are seeking a new job.

REMEMBER: IT IS A RECIPROCAL PROCESS. Networking is about give-and-take. Don’t shortchange yourself — you have connections and advice of value to offer to your growing network too.

KNOW WHAT YOU ARE ASKING. It is important to realize that most people are willing to help if you are able to articulate exactly what you need from them, so don’t be vague. LinkedIn is a professional network, so use it for more than getting introductions to hiring managers; ask your connections well-thought-out questions about developments in your field of interest.

NETWORKING

BE STRATEGIC ABOUT YOUR CONNECTIONS. Experts warn not to invite someone to connect with you if you don't know them at all. The goal is to have people help you and to help them in return, and you're less likely to get that reciprocity from strangers. Instead, use your growing network. If someone asks to connect with you and you don't feel comfortable accepting the invitation, then don't. Remember that your associations reflect you. Avoid using the default message when reaching out to connect with someone. It takes two minutes to customize your invitation.

GETTING THE MOST OUT OF LINKEDIN

DEVOTE SOME TIME TO YOUR PROFILE. Set a goal, such as 15 minutes a day. If you are active on the site, you will look more attractive to a potential employer. Post updates regularly and engage in pertinent online conversations. Updates will show that you are involved in your profession — and will keep your name uppermost in the minds of those in your network.

LINKEDIN'S HELPFUL HINTS

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE ADVICE PROVIDED BY THE SITE ITSELF. LinkedIn will suggest people you might know and groups that you might want to join. It also recommends jobs of interest posted on the network. Take advantage of its interactive guide to profile building, which reviews your profile and helps you strengthen weak areas. And be sure to check out the LinkedIn Learning Webinars, for tips on LinkedIn features and functionalities, as well as the LinkedIn Blog, for updates on the job market and online networking.

NETWORKING TRACKER

The opposite page contains a tracker to help you organize and stay on top of your networking efforts. As you attend events, meet people or connect with new contacts via email and social media, plug their names and details of the contact into this spreadsheet. Then use it to keep track of people you need to follow up with; that way, their information is stored in one place and easily accessible. Every few months, skim through this list and drop a note to those people you haven't been in touch with in a while. Besides being a good way to build relationships, the majority of jobs are found through connections like these.

NETWORKING TRACKER

Adapted from Jenny Blake, LifeAfterCollege.org.

NAME _____				
EMAIL	PHONE	COMPANY	WEBSITE	HOW WE MET
TO DO (NEXT STEPS)	DATE OF LAST CONTACT	METHOD OF CONTACT	FOLLOW UP?	NOTES

NAME _____				
EMAIL	PHONE	COMPANY	WEBSITE	HOW WE MET
TO DO (NEXT STEPS)	DATE OF LAST CONTACT	METHOD OF CONTACT	FOLLOW UP?	NOTES

NAME _____				
EMAIL	PHONE	COMPANY	WEBSITE	HOW WE MET
TO DO (NEXT STEPS)	DATE OF LAST CONTACT	METHOD OF CONTACT	FOLLOW UP?	NOTES

NAME _____				
EMAIL	PHONE	COMPANY	WEBSITE	HOW WE MET
TO DO (NEXT STEPS)	DATE OF LAST CONTACT	METHOD OF CONTACT	FOLLOW UP?	NOTES

ONLINE REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

Although online resources such as LinkedIn can create great opportunities for networking and job-hunting, you should keep in mind the other ways that social media can impact your job search. Each social media site that you use can come up in a search of your name on the Internet, and each one is an element of your online brand.

Keeping track of all the elements of one's online brand is a challenge. Human resources, management, future employers and even coworkers routinely peruse LinkedIn, Twitter, the blogosphere and Facebook. You *will* be Googled. But that doesn't imply that you can't control the messaging. Ensure that your personal brand is interesting, positive and conveys exactly how you'd like to be represented. For many cancer survivors, there is the added challenge of wanting to turn to online communities for support, but not wanting to risk being attached to their cancer diagnosis forever.

If you decide to share your story online, know that anything you put on the Internet becomes public and you may be disclosing your cancer to current or future employers. This section comprises information that will help you shape and manage your online image and reputation.

ONLINE BRAND

GOOGLE YOURSELF. Google yourself with the critical eye of a boss or potential boss. You might also check other sites, such as www.spokeo.com, which includes information on marital status, education, political views and religion. Does a future boss really need to know all that? (You can delete information about yourself from Spokeo.)

Remember that once you put information "out there," it stays out there. By checking to see what exists, you will at least be aware of what your current or future boss can find out, and you can be prepared for potential related questions.

QUIZ YOURSELF BEFORE POSTING. Before you post information, opinions or photos — especially to a social site — ask yourself:

- Would I want a boss (current or future) or coworkers to see this?
- Would I want this on the front page of a newspaper or the homepage of my favorite news site?
- Would I want my grandmother or mother to see this?

Even if you have already been very open about your diagnosis and don't care who knows it, at work or outside, you may still want to ask yourself these questions about other topics and about the nature and tone of your medical disclosures. And if you are hoping to keep a low profile about your cancer, you have to think even more seriously about what you post.

Another consideration: Should you talk online about volunteer work or other affiliations with cancer organizations or keep it quiet? If you decide to talk about it, you have to decide whether you want to identify as a volunteer only or as a volunteer and a survivor. You may have to choose between inspiring and encouraging others and preserving your privacy. Only you can decide if the trade-off is worth it.

HOW PUBLIC IS YOUR BLOG? Many patients and survivors blog about treatment, recovery and other cancer-related experiences. You should think about whether you want to blog anonymously, use a pseudonym or use your actual name. "Going public" might make it easier to build an audience, but if that's uncomfortable or you are not planning to disclose your diagnosis in professional circles, consider going the anonymous route or choosing a fake name, and get IT help setting up your blog, to minimize the chances of being unmasked.

SEEK SUPPORT UNDER THE RADAR. If you feel a need to share information about your treatment or recovery but want to keep a lower profile, consider websites intended for disclosing health information, many of which are free. One, www.caringbridge.org is meant for anyone with a significant health challenge. Messages you post will be seen only by those with access to your page. You can also use it to update family and friends easily, saving yourself multiple emails or calls. Another, www.mylifeline.org, offers cancer patients, survivors and caregivers the opportunity to create personal websites. Even with these options, you'll want to review the fine print and choose a privacy setting that meets your needs, as each one has different levels of security. These sites also give you the option of linking to social media platforms like Facebook. Think very carefully about whether you want the news you are sharing with your select family and friends to be posted on public social media websites.

MONITOR YOURSELF. Pay attention to privacy settings on social media such as Facebook; these allow you to control who sees what. Remember, however, that privacy-setting options change frequently, so the best course of action is to make sure you aren't posting things you don't want seen. And test your privacy settings frequently.

ONLINE REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

To keep your social media page focused on your personal life, you can decline requests from colleagues. A simple reply such as “Thanks for the invitation; I am keeping all my professional contacts on LinkedIn,” is sufficient.

On Twitter, you can sign up for an account for public tweets or protected tweets. If you choose the protected option, only your approved followers can view your tweets, and they can’t retweet.

If you are job-hunting, consider the time of day you tweet and network online and when you use the chat function on sites like Facebook. You will look most professional if you do it before or after traditional work hours or during lunchtime. Otherwise, it may appear as though you post and tweet the day away.

ONLINE REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

As discussed in the previous section, there can be lasting repercussions if you decide to share your diagnosis online, whether through online support groups, Facebook or other social media.

If you have already shared information online about your cancer experience or something else you no longer want to be public, there are steps that you can take to lessen the impact it may have.

There are many firms that specialize in online reputation management, or ORM. For an often-hefty fee, these firms promise to reshape your image by controlling what information appears most prominently when people search for you online. However, all the reputable firms agree that making information disappear completely is not possible.

In some cases, an ORM company may contact sites and ask them to delete information. But the sites have no legal obligation to do so, unless the content is proven untrue and defamatory. The main goal is to push down undesirable information so it appears much lower in search results.

To push down information, ORM companies post positive information. To generate the positive information, some companies conduct a lengthy interview with a client, then compose (or help the client compose) an online profile for several professional sites. ORM firms may also help the client create blog posts or new websites. Posting many different forms of content to take the place of information you want pushed down is crucial.

Reputable firms that offer to create content say the new content must be relevant to you, as well as original and honest. It should also link to other relevant content. If a website links to irrelevant content, its ranking will be lowered in the search engine, defeating the purpose for which it was created: to replace negative information with positive information.

HIRING A PRO: CHOOSING A COMPANY. The ORM field is still somewhat new, so it's important to shop around, do your research and be smart about choosing a service.

Among the ways to do that:

- Look for some indication the company is legitimate. For instance, does the website post a Better Business Bureau seal of approval? Does it offer a money-back guarantee if it doesn't deliver on a specific action — for example, clearing negative information from the first few pages of a search? How long has the company been in business? Is it ORM certified? Keep in mind this is a relatively new field.
- Pay attention to exactly what the company is providing. If a company says it can definitely clean up the information you want gone very quickly — let's say, in a matter of weeks — that's usually a red flag. Managing and changing information online is not a quick process. Beware of a company that promises to make *all* the information you don't want online disappear. Impossible, the experts agree.
- Expect a proposal or package of services geared to you and your needs. How long the process takes depends on a number of factors — e.g., how much you posted on how many sites, and other variables. Many companies offer a contract of several months' duration; some offer a year. After that, companies may offer maintenance packages to ensure your reputation stays as you want it.

HIRING A PRO: COSTS/CONSIDERATIONS. The fee range is broad (from several hundred to thousands of dollars), so you'll need to determine whether the company's price is worth it. For instance, a fee of \$10,000 may not hurt as much if you're up for a six-figure job or have one you want to keep.

DO-IT-YOURSELF REPUTATION IMPROVEMENT.

- Find out how much information is actually out there that you don't want floating around. Make sure you search Bing and Yahoo as well as Google. Also, search not only from your desktop but also from your mobile and tablet, as results can differ.
- Keep track of what information is listed where. If medical information you want deleted is on a site you can contact, send an email asking for the information to be deleted or blocked from being searchable.
- Delete what you can from your postings on Facebook and other media that talk about your cancer. The more active you've been on these sites, and the longer ago you posted about your cancer, the more likely it is that the information is already buried.
- Set up a Google alert. Plug in not only your name but your company's name, your name and title, or other ways people in your industry or profession might search for you. That way, you can keep track of any information that floats up in the alerts.
- Increase your presence on key sites, especially professional sites such as LinkedIn. Don't just fill out the basics. Build your profile. Be active on the site. Ask for recommendations. Give recommendations.

ONLINE REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

- Think beyond LinkedIn. Include Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, Tumblr, Facebook and others, spreading yourself around.
- If you can post a picture on professional sites, post a professional head shot, not a photo of your dog or your favorite vacation spot. A picture will produce more rankings in a search.
- In site profiles, focus most on defining who you are professionally. (This will also help you focus more on what you want professionally during your next job interview, review or meeting about a promotion.)

Whether or not you hire a professional to help manage your online reputation, keep careful notes about conversations and other actions with your boss or interviewer that may be related to your online medical information.

For instance, if you posted medical information about your cancer, and shortly afterward, a job offer you were expecting doesn't come through or a promotion is canceled, recording that on your timeline might be valuable if you decide to talk with your boss, interviewer, HR person or an employment attorney about discrimination.

The do-it-yourself steps may be enough to reconstruct your professional image online. If so, repeat them in a few months, then decide whether you can still go it alone or need the pros.

**DID YOU KNOW
THERE ARE WEBSITES
SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED
FOR SUPPORTING SOME-
ONE DIAGNOSED WITH
CANCER?**

> Download our Maintaining Online Privacy guide for help with setting up a secure profile: cancerandcareers.org/en/resource/charts-and-checklists.

Due in large part to the expansion of online communities and brands, the world of job-seeking has completely changed in the past decade. Much of the old wisdom about resume writing is now out of date. And while what you put into a resume today may be different, what *hasn't* changed is the fact that the final product must be carefully crafted.

RESUMES AT A GLANCE

• LENGTH

The one-page limit is out, unless you are entry-level; but don't go longer than two pages unless absolutely necessary.

• FORMAT

Strict chronological format is no longer the only way to go. Organizing and highlighting by functional expertise and skills is also popular and acceptable. Check out the Chronological and Functional/Chronological sample resumes, on pages 24-27.

• TIME COVERED

Cover 10 to 15 years only; not your entire working life. The general practice now is to skip the months in job tenure and specify only years. Be sure to move your dates to the right side of your resume.

• SUMMARY/PROFILE

At the top of your resume include two or three lines that outline your skills, experience and goals. It's also recommended that you add two or three professional characteristics that describe who you are and give your profile a little personality.

• EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Degrees, courses and certifications are important to list. Don't list your high school.

• OUTSIDE INTERESTS

Use your volunteer work and outside activities (avoid religious and political affiliation) to highlight additional skills.

HOW YOUR RESUME IS READ

The goal of a resume (and cover letter) isn't to get you the job; it's to get you the interview. It's important to think about how your resume is being read. Many recruiters use ATS (applicant tracking system) software, which scans resumes and eliminates those without specific keywords. As for human scanning, most hiring professionals say that during a first cut of submissions, they will look at your name, where you live, summary/profile and your most recent employer. Then they flip to the back and look at your education.

RESUMES

SUMMARY/PROFILE

It is absolutely necessary to have a profile or summary at the top. That is where the reader of the resume is going to get the most pertinent information about you and make a decision about whether to continue reading. But this doesn't mean a return to the old-style objective line. "To get a job in the financial industry" just doesn't cut it anymore.

A GOOD SUMMARY/PROFILE IS:

- Written with the audience in mind.
- A succinct, interesting summary of capabilities and accomplishments.
- Easy to read and understand.
- Focused on the kind of work you're looking for (it's not enough to be looking for a job, any job).
- Focused on the future, and on what you can do for your next employer.
- An essence of who you are.

If you want to change careers, state that goal right up front. Then make the case for your qualifications by showing how your skills will translate to the new environment.

SAMPLE PROFILES:

- Diverse work, student leadership and volunteer experience in fundraising, member recruiting, call-center supervision, event planning, publicity and childcare. Characterized as persuasive and sincere, perceptive at reading people and situations, and ambitious and goal focused with a natural ability to recruit, train, motivate and manage the performance of large teams. Technically proficient with Microsoft Office, social media and iPhoto; possess strong writing and presenting skills; fluent in Italian.
- Marketing professional with comprehensive experience in brand development, product marketing, internal communications, social media strategy and trade show management. Demonstrated agility at managing projects and collaborating with and influencing multiple stakeholders, including senior management, colleagues, clients and vendors. Characterized as dynamic, creative, passionate about learning and undertaking new projects, with a great facility for excelling under tight deadlines. Recently earned MBA in Marketing.
- Extensive experience in various senior administrative, executive support and communications positions for Fortune 500 companies. Significant accomplishments executing large-scale events flawlessly and creating and redesigning presentations and reports, with demonstrated agility at successfully managing multiple projects and tasks while meeting aggressive deadlines. Possess a great facility for influencing and collaborating with senior management, headquarters and field colleagues, vendors, customers and other key stakeholders. Career success is attributed to integrity, high standards, strong organizational

skills, outstanding verbal and written communication skills, and the ability to remain composed, focused, and efficient under extreme pressure and with changing priorities.

- Finance professional with in-depth and wide-breadth, progressive experience in financial analysis, treasury, and accounting roles across a range of industries. Committed to implementing quality- and process-improvement techniques that drive business operations to success and achieve corporate goals. Significant accomplishments increasing profits and reducing costs by using analytical and business skills. Characterized as decisive, organized, and proficient at leading and managing projects.

KEYWORDS

Both human readers and resume-scanning software look for specific keywords near the top of your resume. You can put these words in your summary profile, in a list of skills or in a list of professional qualifications. So important are keywords in today's job search that the U.S. government even helps job-seekers use the most targeted words to search for and get jobs. (Sample tip: Search for *analyst* instead of *researcher*.)

Keywords should be active, specific and focused on your accomplishments, rather than empty descriptions or desirable personality traits.

- Think: created, increased, underbudget
- Not: effective, outstanding, energetic

There are specific keywords and phrases for every industry, such as brand management, customer retention, cross-platform. A quick way to find the most desirable skills and traits for your targeted field is to take a look at recent job postings — they'll use the same words and concepts. On the next page are sample keywords for popular specialties.

SKILLS AND WORK EXPERIENCE

Keywords are also important to use in describing your work experience. At a minimum, 80% of the content on a resume should be your accomplishments. A good resume is not just a list of tasks or responsibilities. A potential employer wants to know how you're going to make a difference for them, how you are going to contribute, and they're going to align that with your description of your past experience.

- Define job titles: Titles don't always translate across industries.
- Avoid clichés: "Effective communicator," "go-getter," "dynamic leader" mean nothing; employers assume that you have good communication and leadership skills and drive.
- Be specific: Don't just list your budget or staff management responsibilities; specify how big a budget and how many staff members.
- Quantify achievements: If you saved the company money, increased website traffic, or gained members, use numbers. They'll attract the reader's eye and are concrete measures of accomplishments.
- List your hardware: Highlight professional certifications and your ability to use the tools of your trade: Excel, Salesforce, JavaScript, Adobe Photoshop, Quickbooks, etc.

RESUMES

SAMPLE KEYWORDS BY FUNCTIONAL SPECIALTY

ACCOUNTING/FINANCES

- Financial Modeling & Analysis
- Scorecards & KPIs
- Profitability Analysis
- Financial Reporting
- Variance Analysis
- Forecasting & Budgeting
- Strategic Planning
- Cash Management
- Project Management
- P&L Oversight
- Hyperion Enterprise & Essbase
- SAP
- Microsoft Office Suite
- FINRA Series 7 & 63
- Bloomberg Proficiency

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

- Calendar Management
- Global Travel Arrangement
- Report Creation
- Microsoft Office Suite
- Adobe
- Photoshop
- Event & Meeting Planning
- Vendor Liaison
- Process Improvement
- Research
- Billing & Invoicing
- Report Preparation
- Records Management

EDUCATION/TEACHING

- Student Assessment
- Elementary Education –All Subjects
- Differentiation Through Small Group Instruction
- SRBI Tiered Intervention
- Special Needs Programs
- Data Collection
- Lesson Planning & Implementation
- No Child Left Behind
- Classroom Management
- Parent-Teacher Communications
- AICE (Advanced International Certificate of Education Curriculum)
- OFCUS & PowerSchool

HEALTHCARE

- Certified Medical Assistant
- Certified Dialysis Technician
- Vital Sign Measurement
- Certified in First Aid & CPR
- Quality Assurance
- Medical Insurance Billing & Coding
- Phlebotomy
- EMR
- Vaccine Administration
- Patient Chart & Medical Record Keeping
- Surgery Scheduling
- Pharmaceutical & Supply Ordering & Inventory
- Patient Assessment & Relations
- Microsoft Office

HUMAN RESOURCES

- Mergers & Acquisitions
- Compensation Management
- Coaching/Mentoring
- Learning & Development
- Talent Acquisition
- Leadership Development
- Employee Relations
- Organizational Development
- Performance Management
- Employee Engagement
- Diversity & Inclusion

MARKETING/COMMUNICATIONS

- Social Media Management
- Digital Photography
- Blog & Speech Writing
- Branding & Launch Communications
- Communication Strategy
- Media Content Development
- Website Design & Development
- Global Brand Building
- MS Office, iWorks & WordPress
- Employee Communications
- Event Planning
- Strategic Writing
- Cross-Functional Team Leadership
- Public Relations
- Advocacy
- Client & Account Management

NON-PROFIT/NGO

- Team Leadership
- Program Design & Implementation
- Budget Management
- Community Outreach
- Development Strategy
- Event Planning
- Volunteer Recruitment
- Counseling
- Project Management
- Relationship Management
- Microsoft Office Suite
- HTML & Web Design
- Donor Engagement
- Marketing Communications
- Data Analysis
- Raiser's Edge

DEALING WITH THE GAP

For many cancer survivors the most pressing question about resumes is how to deal with gaps in work history. The assumption is that gaps are deadly on a resume, but ever since the economic downturn in 2008, many people have experienced long periods of time without a steady full-time job.

It is important to remember that your diagnosis is confidential. You are not obliged to disclose your cancer in an application or interview situation. For more on legal rights, turn to page 50.

There are a couple of key strategies you can consider for dealing with a resume gap:

- **List skills first:** List all of your career skills at the top of your resume; include three to six bulleted achievements that support and summarize your core strengths underneath each skill. Then, at the bottom of the first page of your resume, briefly list the companies you've worked for, your job titles and the years of employment. This is in line with the Functional/Chronological resume style, an example of which you'll find on pages 26 and 27.
- **Highlight other achievements:** Include your volunteer experience and community work and show how it translates into relevant job skills, such as the ability to multitask, plan events and manage staff.

Because the current practice for all resumes is to cover in detail only 10 to 15 years of your work history, if you want to include earlier skills and achievements, do it under a separate heading such as Additional Work Experience or Additional Skills. Or mention your earlier experience briefly in your profile or summary. Hiring experts suggest that when you reach the interview stage, prepare an explanation that you're comfortable with that addresses the gap — and stick to it. More strategies for handling the gap question in an interview can be found on page 33.

FINAL NOTES

- **Format:** Convert your resume to a PDF file, if possible, to guarantee that the layout and fonts are not altered when you email or submit it online.
- **Fonts and Readability:** A resume should be visually appealing, with plenty of white space. Recommended fonts include Arial, Times New Roman and Helvetica.
- **Contact Information:** Put your contact information on every page.
- **Content:** Don't consider your resume carved in stone. You should be able to customize it to fit specific positions you're applying for.
- **Digital Identity:** Always remember that your online identity, including your Facebook and Twitter profiles, is searchable and will likely be accessed by people vetting you for employment. More information on online reputation management can be found on page 14.

SAMPLE RESUME CHRONOLOGICAL, PAGE I

ALLISON COOK

51 Main Street, Framingham, MA 01705 • 617.555.1234 • acook@sample.com

CORE COMPETENCIES

- Product Development
- Product Launch
- Public Relations
- Product Training
- Consumer Insights
- Strategy Development
- Market Research
- Executive Presentations
- P&L Management
- Customer Relationships
- Project Management
- Microsoft Office

CAREER PROFILE: MARKETING PROFESSIONAL

Results-driven, highly motivated marketing professional with MBA and more than 10 years of progressive experience. Proven track record of success in consumer packaged goods. Excellent project management, leadership, and communication skills with the ability to take products from initial concept to product launches and manage product life cycle. Strong analytical, organizational, and decision-making skills, used to identify and capitalize on business development opportunities and maximize bottom line. Advocate of teamwork, continuous improvement, and customer satisfaction.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

GLAMOROUS BEAUTY PRODUCTS | BOSTON, MA

Supplier of hair color products; \$3.5m annual sales.

Director of Marketing

2012-2016

Managed, planned, and implemented the introduction of new products, line extensions, and new categories, including creation of packaging and development of collateral materials for all product lines (Dyeitnow, ShinyPlus, Kool-Kolor, and Macho Mousse).

- Efforts contributed to 8% sales growth in flat industry, enabling owner to sell company.
- Launched 12 new products in 2013 versus historical annual average of 2-3 new products annually.
- Responsible for P&L, forecasting, and marketing budget.
- Developed comprehensive “annual marketing plan” for Shiny Plus and key products launched in 2012.
- Developed retail and professional products, pricing, packaging, and promotional strategies to enter new distribution channels.
- Responsible for trade advertising and very successful viral PR campaign to increase brand awareness.
- Attended key domestic and international sales calls and tradeshows, including first retail show for the company in July 2012, which resulted in securing four new customers.
- Launched The Glamorous Zine, a quarterly newsletter for sales representatives.
- Supervised marketing coordinator.

BABYKINS PRODUCTS, INC. | STAMFORD, CT

Manufacturer of baby care products and furniture brands, holding #1 or #2 market share in each category; \$450m annual sales.

Associate Product Manager, Tinkerbelle – New Products

2011-2012

- Developed packaging for 6-sku-line extension for Tinkerbelle Spangle (\$20m brand).
- Updated launch packaging of Tinkerbelle Spangle to enhance communication of key benefits and include final marketing language, integrated from print advertising, television, and PR efforts.

SAMPLE RESUME CHRONOLOGICAL, PAGE 2

ALLISON COOK

51 Main Street, Framingham, MA 01705 • 617.555.1234 • acook@sample.com

- Analyzed consumer and market research to identify need gaps and provide launch recommendations on product, pricing, and marketing strategy to maximize brand sales volume, market share, and profit for new items.

THE XYZ TRIMMER COMPANY | STAMFORD, CT

Largest global supplier of manicure and pedicure products under SNIP® and other brands. Key accounts: Wal-Mart, Target, Kmart, Walgreen's, Rite Aid, and CVS; \$80m annual sales.

Director of Marketing

2008-2011

Marketing Manager

2006-2008

Managed, planned, and implemented the introduction of new products, line extensions, and new categories, including creation of packaging (domestic and international) and development of collateral materials for all product lines (KLIPKLIP, SNIP Men, Totally Groomed and all Private Label programs).

- Company sales increased more than 20% during tenure.
- Launched approximately 100 new skus each year across branded product.
- Responsible for P&L, forecasting and marketing budget.
- Analyzed Nielsen and home scan data.
- Managed department of five; Supervised marketing manager and forecast analyst.
- Developed domestic and international promotions; created custom retailer promotions quarterly.
- Relaunched company website in spring 2011 featuring new packaging and product details.
- Attended industry trade shows; presented quarterly marketing report to company and sales force.
- Prepared press releases and trade magazine articles; oversaw publication of company newsletter, contributed articles.
- Attended key domestic and international sales calls and trade shows.

VITALIFE INTERNATIONAL | MILFORD, CT

Formulators of nutritional supplements and personal care products; \$40m annual sales.

Brand Manager

2004-2006

- Spearheaded product development initiatives, from initial concept to product testing, development of product packaging and copy, and introduction at conventions and via website.
- Developed and implemented marketing strategies for three product lines.
- Supervised marketing coordinator and website copy editor.
- Developed promotional copy and materials for print, website, and email blasts.
- Successfully launched 23 products for five company events.

MAC WAREHOUSE, INC. | NORWALK, CT

Provider of computer products; \$2b annual sales.

Product Manager

2003-2004

- Managed \$30m category: determined product, pricing, and presentation via four company catalogs.
 - Managed the growth and profitability of \$37m product category via website.
-

EDUCATION

BOSTON UNIVERSITY | Boston, MA | MBA in marketing

2008

UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT | Storrs, CT | BS in business management

2002

SAMPLE RESUME FUNCTIONAL/CHRONOLOGICAL, PAGE I

Tina Kelley

235 First St., Dallas, TX 78247
210.555.1234 • tkelley@sample.com

TRAINING PROFESSIONAL—SUMMARY OF FUNCTIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Training Management

- More than six years of management experience, with a proven track record for successfully empowering teams through coaching, effective feedback, mentoring, encouraging creativity, and rewarding efforts.
- Managed teams of various levels, including front-line representatives in a call center environment and a team of highly skilled trainers responsible for company-wide training and development solutions.
- Previously responsible for managing all customer care-related training needs for two internal centers and nine external vendor contact centers.

Instructional Design and Delivery

- Possess a solid understanding of adult learning styles, curriculum development, and training methods that motivate and inspire.
- Comfortable speaking to groups of varying size and experience. Described as a natural problem-solver who uses innovation and creativity to perform needs analysis and design, develop, deliver, and evaluate training initiatives.
- Have designed and facilitated courses covering a broad range of topics, including:

Leadership Development	Change Management	Goal Setting
360-Degree Assessments	New-Hire Orientation	Team Building
Interpersonal Communication	Performance Appraisals	Technical Skills
DiSC Personality Assessments	Mentoring and Coaching	Call Center Quality
Transitioning into Management	Collaborating for Success	Soft-Skills Training

Organization and Leadership Development

- Hands-on experience with three company acquisitions and the implementation and management of interventions that enhanced leadership skills, minimized loss, increased performance levels, and positively impacted employee satisfaction.
- Handled the delivery of all change management initiatives and leadership development programs, as well as other organizational development needs identified through employee surveys, interviews, 360-degree assessments, focus groups, and observation.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Careforyou, San Antonio, TX

Senior Training and Organizational Effectiveness Specialist

2009 - 2015

Develop, manage and evaluate training and organizational effectiveness strategies that promote the development of a skilled, high-performing, motivated workforce focused on the achievement of company key performance indicators.

- Collaborate with business leaders to assess organizational functioning, develop improvement plans, and lead projects that support growth and drive results
- Serve as internal consultant to all levels of management to identify and resolve issues such as: employee retention, skill development, professional growth, succession planning, and performance improvement
- Partner with business unit leaders and serve as a strategic resource to assess company-wide training and development needs as well as provide recommendations for change
- Manage the process of identifying and addressing employee development opportunities through focus groups, 360-degree assessments, and blended training solutions that include instructor-led

SAMPLE RESUME FUNCTIONAL/CHRONOLOGICAL, PAGE 2

Tina Kelley

235 First St., Dallas, TX 78247
210.555.1234 • tkelley@sample.com

- classes, case studies, self-study, mentoring programs, e-learning, calibration sessions, vendor courses, coaching, role play, OJT, and Web-based training
- Provided change management support and training during a large-scale merging of two Fortune 500 companies
 - Managed the roll out of an online e-learning program and a learning management system (LMS) for 3,000+ employees
 - Launched a leadership development program to encourage professional development training for all company leaders

Blue Dot Energy, Austin, TX

Training Manager

2005 - 2007

Managed a department responsible for providing training and development solutions to all levels of the organization.

- Created a highly skilled training department within three months of hire.
- Established policies and procedures to ensure that training needs were met for a dynamic start-up company
- Developed an in-house trainer certification program to ensure integrity and consistency in the delivery of training materials and of the corporate brand when using internal or external train-the-trainer options
- Produced company's first Customer Care Training Manual and Leader's Guide to support distance-learning, resulting in a 27% decrease in travel time and expense
- Consistently received excellent feedback when measuring the transfer of training from the classroom to the job
- Created a "knowledge base" of training materials and resources to improve internal functioning, quality scores, and information sharing across all business units

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, University of Kentucky, Lexington

2004

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Training Manager Certification	The Training Clinic, Seal Beach, CA	2005
Professional Coach & Mentor Certification	Perrone-Ambrose, Chicago, IL	2006
Organizational Development Certification	Linkage, Inc, Burlington, MA	2007

Have attended various professional development workshops, including:

The Instructional System Design Model	Managing the Training Function	Effective Management Skills
360-Degree Assessment & Analysis	Call Center Trends & Strategies	Measuring Training ROI
Developing Organizational Leaders	Ethics for T&D Professionals	Adult Learning Styles

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

American Management Association (AMA)
Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)
American Society for Training and Development (ASTD)

SAMPLE RESUME ENTRY LEVEL

JANE SMITH

123 Street, Princeton, NJ 08544 | (203)555-1234 | person@princeton.edu

Seeking Entry Level Position as a Corporate Recruiter

Diverse work, student leadership, and volunteer experience in fundraising, member recruiting, call center supervision, event planning, publicity, and childcare. Characterized as persuasive and sincere, perceptive at reading people and situations, and ambitious and goal focused, with a natural ability to recruit, train, motivate, and manage the performance of large teams. Technically proficient in Microsoft Office, social media, and iPhoto; possess strong writing and presenting skills; fluent in Italian.

EDUCATION

Princeton University | Princeton, NJ | Bachelor of Arts - Psychology **2015**
Overall GPA: 3.20, Nominated captain of the Class of 2011 Annual Giving Campaign

Episcopal Academy | Merion, PA **2011**
GPA: 4.00, Cum Laude Society; awarded *George T. Davis* prize for highest scholarship in rising junior class; president of Drama Club.

WORK AND STUDENT LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

Princeton University Tigercall | Princeton, NJ **2012-2015**
Student Division of Princeton University Annual Giving Office

Caller

- Brought in more than \$25,000 in donations for the Annual Giving Campaign.
- Awarded *Caller of the Month* in 2012 for outstanding stats, perfect attendance, and a positive attitude.

Panhellenic Council | Princeton, NJ **2013-2014**
Panhellenic President

Oversaw management of three sororities with a combined total of 469 members.

- Established and organized first Philanthropic Greek Week on campus involving inter sorority competition that raised more than \$3000, which was donated to UNICEF for the Haitian Relief Effort.
- Sole spokesperson representing three sororities to generate positive publicity about sororities with Princeton University leadership and media.

Princeton Disability Awareness | Princeton, NJ **2013**
Volunteer

- Worked on various afterschool activities with an autistic child every week in 2008 and 2009.
- Participated in yearly *Princeton Disability Awareness Down Syndrome Conference*, working closely with children with Down syndrome.

Service in Style | Princeton, NJ **2012**
Publicity Chair

- Led committee of eight to design publicity campaign for fashion show benefit for Autism Speaks and the Eden Institute, which involved creating a Facebook campaign, T-shirts, posters, and invitations.
- Doubled attendance from previous year while significantly increasing awareness of autism.
- Raised more than \$10,000, a 75% increase over the previous year.

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

Nanny, full-time **Summers 2011-2013**
Cared for children ranging in age from newborn to six; handled all tutoring, life guarding, housework, activities, and cooking.

DEAUVILLE INN, Princeton, NJ **2012**
Waitress

Once you feel that your resume is in good shape and you've found some positions you would like to apply for, it's time to start working on your cover letter. If you have an opportunity to include a cover letter with your application, you should; it enables you to provide more details about your interest in the job and to differentiate yourself from other candidates. A cover letter is usually written as a separate document, but it can also be simply a cover email. If you are writing a separate letter, consider converting it into a PDF before sending, to ensure that your design and fonts remain the same from one operating system to another.

WRITING A COVER LETTER

It's extremely important not to regurgitate your resume when writing your cover letter. Nor should you use a generic letter that doesn't connect you with the position/company in question. Instead, you need to tailor your cover letter so that it draws parallels and/or highlights an experience that makes you uniquely suited to the specific job you are applying for. The cover letter is your opportunity to demonstrate your interest in the company and how you can successfully meet their needs.

You should also avoid addressing your letter to a generic human being, such as "Dear Hiring Manager," or "Dear Sir or Madam." Find out who will be reading your letter and address it directly to that individual. If that's not possible, it's better to omit the salutation altogether.

Keep your letter to no more than three paragraphs and make sure that every sentence in it gives the company a specific reason for hiring you. The idea is to sell yourself and stand out.

Don't begin your letter with a sentence like "I am writing to apply for the position you advertised." Instead, think of something to say that's directly relevant to the company and position, based on your research on the company and knowledge of the job. Once you have captured their attention, then let them know what position you're applying for and why.

For the body of the cover letter, you can use bullet points or brief paragraphs to explain your qualifications and how you will contribute to the organization. Be sure to include your email address and phone number at both the top and the bottom of your letter. And always remember to proofread your cover letter multiple times to ensure there aren't any typos or errors in spelling, grammar or style.

COVER LETTERS

SHOULD YOU ADDRESS YOUR CANCER DIAGNOSIS IN YOUR COVER LETTER?

This is a personal decision that each individual needs to make based on his or her own situation and what feels right for it. You are not obligated to disclose your diagnosis in your cover letter. The purpose of your letter and your resume is to get you a phone interview or an in-person meeting. The letter will be skimmed by a hiring manager to determine if you can put coherent thoughts together and make a strong argument for how you are the best fit for the job. No one shares every last detail about themselves in a cover letter (or in an interview, for that matter), so focus on writing the most compelling letter about your skills and interest in the role. Once you are more deeply engaged in the hiring process, you can determine whether sharing your diagnosis and/or other information is appropriate.

Remember, a cover letter is a static document that an employer reads to determine whether they should bring you in for an interview. When they read that letter, you won't be there to help them understand the news of your diagnosis or show them your readiness to work.

For advice on discussing your diagnosis during an interview, see page 36.

If you have a significant gap on your resume that represents a block of time when you didn't work, and you feel strongly about addressing it in your cover letter, consider writing something along the lines of: "After a period of family responsibilities, I returned to school to refresh and update my accounting skills. Since accounting standards and regulations have changed substantially in the past five years, this training was timely and highly relevant." The goal is to briefly explain your gap and demonstrate that you have stayed current.

KEY POINTERS FOR WRITING YOUR COVER LETTER:

1. Open with a bang.
2. Customize for the company.
3. Don't waste the reader's time.
4. Sell yourself.
5. Use bullets.
6. Explain the next step.
7. Proof your letter.
8. Follow up.

Once you've started networking, worked on building and/or cleaning up your online brand, and whipped your resume and cover letter into shape, it's time to start thinking about the next step in the job-search process: interviewing. Interviews make a lot of people nervous, so in this section we've pulled together our best tips and tools to help you feel calm and confident on the phone and face-to-face.

INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS

Dealing with cancer usually causes you to think long and hard about how satisfied you are in your job or career. Whether you are wondering if it's time to look for a job similar to the one you have (or had before your diagnosis) or are considering changing careers completely or even starting a business, it's important to gather as much information as possible.

If used well, an informational meeting is one of your most valuable resources. Why? Because it enables you to get an intimate perspective on someone's experiences and impressions in a much less stressful environment, compared with an actual job interview. It is a bit more structured than a networking meeting, without the pressure on the person you're speaking with to find you a job right away. Even so, sometimes an informational meeting does turn into an interview!

Here are some guidelines for arranging informational meetings, how to conduct yourself during one, and what to expect from it.

KNOW THE KIND OF INFORMATION YOU WANT, BEFORE YOU START ASKING PEOPLE TO MEET WITH YOU. What, exactly, are you looking to find out? Do you want to better understand a particular job or career you're considering? Do you want to learn how to write a blog or a book? Or how to start a business? Create a list of the questions you want to ask the person you meet with, so that you don't forget anything. This will also help that person understand what information is most useful to you. You don't want the conversation to wander — you want every minute to give you something valuable. Carefully screen and edit your questions ahead of time; you don't want to bombard this person with more than he or she can answer adequately in the time you have. And yes, it's okay to take notes during the meeting.

INTERVIEWS

THERE ARE MANY RESOURCES FOR FINDING PEOPLE TO ASK FOR INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS; USE THEM ALL.

- Ask your friends and colleagues to make introductions.
- Go to a social networking site such as LinkedIn to find people to meet.
- Ask executive recruiters for referrals.
- Search the websites of specific companies and identify people you'd like to meet with.

AN INFORMATIONAL MEETING IS AN IMPORTANT BUSINESS APPOINTMENT. The person you are meeting with is taking his or her time to meet with you and share expertise, so be sensitive to that person's needs and what's convenient for him/her in terms of location and time. Be sure you know the person's name and how to pronounce it and what his or her title is. Don't waste this person's time by being unprepared for the meeting.

Follow the same etiquette you would for any meeting. Show up on time and properly dressed. You don't need to wear a suit, but don't look as if you've just come from the beach. Be appreciative and attentive throughout, and don't overstay your welcome.

HAVE REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS. It isn't often that an informational meeting turns into an actual interview or even leads to a direct contact who knows about an actual job opening. If this does happen, great; but it's important to maintain realistic expectations. You may simply learn a few pieces of helpful information or be referred to another person, and this is okay.

OFFER TO HELP. Just as in any networking meeting, try to learn more about the person and his/her issues and challenges so that you can offer to introduce him/her to a useful contact or resource.

REMEMBER THIS MEETING CAN DEVELOP INTO A MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIP. Don't think of this informational interview as a onetime event. If you make the right impression and follow up, you can nurture the connection over a very long period of time — that's the essence of networking.

FOLLOW UP. This bears repeating: Follow up and do not disappear over time. Send a succinct but sincere thank-you note or email, and if you promised to send something, do it! If the person referred you to someone else, update them on your progress in making that connection.

DON'T WORRY IF THERE WASN'T ANY CHEMISTRY. Just as in networking, it's impossible to click with everyone. If you didn't feel a good connection, move on. (You must still follow up, however!)

JOB INTERVIEWS

You're eager to meet with the human resources manager who called you for an interview, but worried that the conversation will touch upon topics that you're not so eager to address. Read on to find out what you're obligated to disclose during your interview and what questions are off-limits for employers.

DURING THE INTERVIEW

If you look different because of cancer, you may be worried that your physical appearance will become an issue during your interview. The federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and state fair employment laws prohibit most employers from asking a job applicant about a disability before offering him/her a job. However, a potential employer may ask questions about whether you can perform the essential functions of the job and how you would perform those functions. For example, if you walk with a cane, the employer can't ask why you use a cane, but they can ask about your ability to carry heavy boxes or stand on your feet all day.

Of course, just because a prospective employer isn't supposed to ask about your health doesn't mean he or she won't; so it is always a good idea to think about how you might field the question that shouldn't have been asked. Will you disclose? Will you tell them they can't ask you that? Will you acknowledge that you have had a health issue in the past? Whatever you decide, just make sure that you give some thought to this ahead of time, so that you feel in control and prepared for anything that might come at you during the interview.

THE SWIVEL

Although it's illegal for employers to ask specific questions about your health, it's not out of the ordinary for them to inquire about a gap in employment. Again, stay in control and be prepared; decide on your answer ahead of time. The best answer is brief, expressed in general terms and focused more on the future than on the past. We call this technique "The Swivel," because your goal is to acknowledge and address what is asked, and then redirect — or swivel — the conversation toward something more productive that addresses your actual goals and desire for the job. The ideal swivel does not leave an opening for the interviewer to dig further into the gap but instead nudges them to pick up the conversation from the point you swivel it to. You don't want to lie during any part of the hiring process, but it is important to remember that no one shares every last detail about himself/herself in an interview. The purpose of the interview is to figure out whether you and the company are a good match. When planning your swivel, you'll want to come up with a succinct, authentic answer to the gap question and then practice it over and over until you feel completely comfortable with it.

SAMPLE SWIVELS

- "I was dealing with a family issue that is resolved now, AND I am thrilled to discuss how my management skills can build the team and grow your business."
- "I realized that what I was doing didn't fulfill me, so I took a step back to think about what would make

INTERVIEWS

me happy, AND I think my tech background would really be an asset not just in this role but to the company as a whole.”

Here are some examples of other challenging questions and how you can use the swivel to answer them:

- “When I Googled your name, an article came up in which you were interviewed about being diagnosed with cancer — are you still experiencing any problems or health needs?”
 - “Thank you for taking so much interest in me. The opportunity to speak to the press gave me some incredible new skills that I think would be particularly relevant to this role, including X, Y, Z.”
- “I noticed on your LinkedIn profile that you are a member of a lot of cancer-related groups. Are you a cancer survivor?”
 - “Like most people, I’ve been touched by cancer, and finding a way to give back is very important to me. Plus, all my volunteer work has afforded me the opportunity to develop some great skills that I believe would be applicable in this position, including X, Y, Z. I noticed the company is very involved in the Special Olympics. How did that become a priority? Will there be opportunities for someone in my role to participate?”

ONCE YOU ARE OFFERED THE JOB

You are not obligated to disclose any details about your cancer to potential employers during the interview process. Once you’re offered a job, however, they can ask you medical questions, as long as they’ve asked the same questions of everyone else to whom they’ve offered the same job. And if your answers reveal a medical disability, the employer can rescind the job offer only if your answer reveals that you are unable to perform the essential functions of the job with or without a reasonable accommodation or that your condition will make you a risk to yourself or others.

Employers can require you to undergo a medical exam once they offer you a position — but again, only if all similarly situated employees have had to as well. However, they can’t withdraw a job offer if a test reveals that you have a specific health condition; that’s only permissible if the exam shows that you won’t be able to perform the job you’ve been hired to do. You must be given the opportunity to show that you can perform the essential functions of the job before the offer can be withdrawn.

INTERVIEWING METHODS AND TIPS

Whether or not you are a cancer survivor, interviewing is the most essential and also the most stressful part of a job search. Below are some tips to help you through the process.

USE THE THREE C’S:

- 1. CLARIFY** the information that the interviewer is after. Ask follow-up questions as necessary to identify the specific competencies or knowledge sets that the interviewer is interested in.
- 2. COMMUNICATE** your value proposition by confirming the information requested or, when applicable,

by telling how you used the competency to achieve results for a former employer.

3. CONFIRM that you have answered the question or provided the information requested. Don't assume. Instead, ask: "Did that answer your question, [name of interviewer]?" "Is that what you are looking for in this position?" "Are those the sorts of results you are seeking here?"

PREPARE 8 TO 10 QUESTIONS TO ASK DURING YOUR INTERVIEW. QUESTIONS CAN FALL INTO THESE CATEGORIES:

- Situational questions regarding why the position is open; they can be specific or general (i.e., relevant to all job types).
- Job-specific questions that deal with how the job functions and relates to other positions in the company.
- Performance-measurement questions that help you understand how the position operates and will be evaluated.
- Support-related questions that deal with the people and resources that will make your job possible.
- Career-path questions that will provide a sense of where the position might lead.
- Personal and growth questions related to how the company will support your development over time.

IN ANY INTERVIEW, MAKE SURE YOU DO THE FOLLOWING:

- 1.** Think before responding to a question, to avoid giving a complex or rambling answer. Keep things simple. Expect to be asked about anything you say or have said in writing or verbally.
- 2.** As often as you can, respond to an interviewer's questions with specific behavioral and quantified achievements and examples from your experience, rather than give general answers. One way to prepare for this is to study the job description, highlight the key requirements, and then think of an example of something you did in a past job that illustrates your ability to use each skill and perform each task.
- 3.** Look at questions and responses as potentially sequential rather than as separate issues.
- 4.** Realize that your responses will be evaluated not only on their individual merits but also on the impression they make together, as a whole.
- 5.** Determine the focus or subject of each question you are asked, and request clarification if you need it. You might say, for example: "Your question seems to focus on [specific topic vs. general], is that correct?" Or, "I am not sure what you mean by [key word or phrase]; would you clarify that for me?"
- 6.** Try to relax, and be a good listener as well as speaker. Remember that successful interviewing involves building a relationship that leads to trust that leads to disclosures (theirs) that lead to stories and examples (yours) that build value that leads to a reason for them to hire you instead of your competition.
- 7.** Remember: The interview is also an opportunity to assess the company and whether it meets your needs and goals.
- 8.** Remember that although your cancer experience may be foremost in your mind, it's likely not in the mind of your interviewers. Try not to get caught up in it; rather, focus on your qualifications for the job.

INTERVIEWS

ALWAYS SUMMARIZE

“Before we conclude, let me recap what I believe we have identified as the skills/competencies that you are looking for in a successful candidate for this position.”

THANK-YOU NOTE

Send an email or hand-written thank-you note the same day, if possible, to everyone you met with. Mention something specific that was discussed. Then do what you promised: Stay in touch as the process moves forward.

HOW/WHEN TO ADDRESS YOUR CANCER IN INTERVIEWS

For many job-seeking survivors a big question is whether and how to address their cancer in an interview. You are not legally obligated to disclose a cancer diagnosis at any point in the hiring process (or once you are employed, for that matter); so the decision is more about what is important to you. However, you may need to disclose that you have a medical condition if you know you will be requesting reasonable accommodations. Even if that is the case, you want to be strategic about when you ask for a reasonable accommodation. Typically, you won't really know what you need until you have started a job and have a sense of how your remaining side-effects or doctors' appointments will affect the job, and vice versa.

Some survivors can't imagine a set of circumstances in which they wouldn't share their story, because it is part of who they are or even offers an example of a special skill — they became Internet-search experts while educating themselves about developments in treatment, for example — or a survival trait such as tenacity, grace under pressure or attention to detail that would make them a great candidate for a particular job. Others may view their experience as something they coped with and survived but still not something that defines them or that they want to make part of their identity — professional or private. After all, one of the pluses of starting a new job is being in a workplace where you aren't known as the person with cancer.

If you are someone who feels strongly about disclosing or you will need a reasonable accommodation, the real consideration isn't whether to tell, but when. We often get asked if someone should disclose during the first interview, if they know they are going to disclose eventually. This is where it's important to remember that the interview phase is part of a strategy to get hired, and the first interview is the very beginning of a relationship. The goal is to impress a prospective employer and advance to the next phase of the hiring process; so it is probably not the best time to share your cancer history. As you move through the various rounds of interviews, you'll want to pick a moment when you think the company is invested in you and likely to hire you. Or wait until the offer comes through and then share the information as part of your discussion of salary, benefits and other related components.

MOCK INTERVIEWS

The best way to prepare for an interview is to practice, practice, practice! Set up times with your friends, family or social worker to hold mock interviews. This will enable you to get more comfortable hearing and answering questions aloud. In this section you will find guidance for yourself and your mock interviewer on how to make the most of these practice sessions.

For the mock interviewer: Choose questions from different sections of the list below to help the interviewee get a feeling for answering these questions aloud. Don't ask them in order, and be sure to listen to the answers and ask relevant follow-up questions. You will be most helpful if you can imagine yourself as someone hiring for a specific job and truly assessing a candidate based on the answers you get. Also, take notes on the answers as you go, especially on things your "interviewee" says that will be useful to review and remember when the session is over — for example, an especially strong answer or a weak one that needs to be improved.

For the mock interviewee: Prepare in advance answers to the questions on the list, illustrated with as many real-life examples possible. Start by using the Cancer and Careers Interview Cheat Sheet at the end of this section, and after you have filled that in, think about other points you might need to consider. To make the practice as authentic as possible, tell your mock interviewer what kind of job you are applying for, what level, and anything else that can help him or her appear informed and believable.

THE QUESTIONS

- Tell me about yourself.
- Why did you leave your last job?
- Why should we hire you?
- Can you work under pressure, deadlines?
- Tell me about your most significant accomplishments in your present or most recent job.
- What is your primary strength?
- What is your primary weakness?
- What would you like to be doing five years from now?
- How do you organize and plan for major projects?
- Describe a difficult problem you've had to deal with.
- What would your current/most recent manager say about you?
- How many people have you managed in your previous jobs? What is your management style?
- How long have you been looking for another position?
- Have you ever been fired? If so, why?
- What have you done that shows initiative?
- I see there is a gap on your resume. Can you tell me why and what you were doing during this time?
- Do you have any medical conditions I should know about?
- Are there any accommodations that you might need in order to meet the requirements of this job?

JOB INTERVIEW

Fill in this template before each job interview; it will help you prepare and will provide an easy cheat sheet to have in front of you during the interview, in case you get nervous or feel stuck.

Adapted from Jenny Blake, LifeAfterCollege.org.

<p>5 KEY POINTS: The top 3-5 things I want the interviewer to remember about me. Highlight key strengths.</p> <p>▷ ▷ ▷ ▷ ▷ ▷</p>	<p>THIS IS WHY I ROCK: Stories/examples that show I'm a rock star and uniquely suited for this position!</p> <p>▷ ▷ ▷ ▷ ▷ ▷</p>	<p>AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT Strategic answers to that dreaded "Tell me about your weaknesses" question.</p> <p>▷ ▷ ▷ ▷ ▷ ▷</p>
<p>BRILLIANT MY IDEAS:</p> <p>▷ ▷ ▷ ▷ ▷ ▷</p> <p>Based on what I know, my suggestions for improvement or future direction of the team.</p> <p>▷ ▷ ▷ ▷ ▷</p>	<p>MY OVERALL WORK/TEAM PHILOSOPHY How I generally approach challenges & opportunities, and what excites me.</p> <p>▷ ▷ ▷ ▷ ▷ ▷</p>	<p>QUESTIONS I HAVE About the role, interviewer, company, growth opportunities, etc.</p> <p>▷ ▷ ▷ ▷ ▷</p>
<p>MY SHORT/LONG-TERM GOALS How this role fits well in my career plans. Why do I want THIS position? What makes me a good fit?</p> <p>▷ ▷ ▷ ▷ ▷ ▷</p>	<p>SPECIFIC CHALLENGES: What are some specific challenges I've faced, and how did I overcome them?</p> <p>▷ ▷ ▷ ▷ ▷ ▷</p>	<p>Short, clear responses that answer the gap question but stay focused on the future.</p> <p>EXPLANATION OF GAPS ON MY RESUME:</p> <p>▷ ▷ ▷ ▷ ▷</p>

For many survivors looking to return to work after cancer, the traditional, full-time nine-to-five job isn't necessarily going to be the right fit. You may still be recovering from treatment, you may not have enough energy to withstand the long commute every day, or maybe your priorities have changed and you no longer want to work all the time. If any of these is the case, you should think about alternative work options. This section explores a number of them.

PART-TIME WORK

Part-time work can allow you to seek treatment or cope with lingering side effects as needed during the day. People often string together two or more part-time jobs to create more financial stability and/or explore their creative side. After working in an office in the morning, you might head out to an art gallery job in the evening, or a band gig at night.

GAUGE YOUR ENERGY LEVEL — BUT THINK BEYOND IT

If two part-time jobs seem like too much, maybe you should seek a single part-time job, at least until your stamina increases. However, try not to evaluate what kind of part-time job (or jobs) work for you solely based on your current energy stores. Often, energy increases over time; so you should factor into your decision that potential future gain.

Think of what your needs are — not just a paycheck, but also flexibility, benefits and fulfillment. Beware: One danger of part-time work is that it can quickly “morph” into full-time work. You have to be clear from the start about what is expected in terms of output and hours.

GET CREATIVE WITH THE POSSIBILITIES, BUT STAY REALISTIC

Part-time doesn't necessarily mean working four hours at the company location, five days a week. Ask about flexible hours. For instance, if you're due to go in for chemo, you might work eight hours one day and take the next day off. Ask about working from home at least some of the days. This could allow you to lie low in your own room or study while you work if you're feeling depleted after a treatment, then return to the office environment as you regain strength. You may be able to find a part-time job (or jobs) that are entirely home-based. Work-at-home jobs run the gamut these days. They could involve telemarketing, Internet work, editing, writing or customer care, to name a few. (It's wise to check with your accountant about payment arrangements and deductible expenses before accepting a home-based position.)

FLEXIBLE WORK

Before you consider a part-time job that is entirely home-based, be honest: Can you resist the urge to switch on the television, catch up on reading or linger over Facebook?

Think about the isolation of an at-home job, too, and whether you can handle it. That's an especially crucial question if you live alone. And if you have young children, you may need someone to watch them while you work, even if you are in your own house.

CONTRACT WORK OR FREELANCING

Under these arrangements, you work as an independent contractor, providing services for a company, usually for a specific project or time period. You are considered self-employed by the Internal Revenue Service and therefore subject to self-employment tax in addition to federal and state income taxes. Benefits such as health insurance are rarely offered to freelancers.

Contract work is a fast-growing area, as it saves employers big bucks in benefits. Be sure the terms of your contract are straightforward and in writing. Consider whether the company will pay expenses such as transportation to meetings, postage, etc.; if not, be sure to factor them into your fees.

Contract work or freelancing can be a gateway to future full-time work at a company. You might juggle two or three contract assignments for different companies. If a part-time or full-time staff position opens up and you want it, you may have an advantage in that the company already knows your work.

ADD UP THE PROS AND CONS

Among the obvious advantages of part-time work is the reduction in hours. That can be especially valuable if you're going through chemo or other fatiguing treatments, or are on your way to recovery but not quite back to 100%.

If you plan to apply for a couple of part-time jobs, consider the total hours as well as the total pay. Do they add up to as much time and money as if you were working one full-time job? Can you handle that much work right now? If both jobs are on-site, that's not only full-time hours but two different commutes, which might be an added strain.

Getting back to work, especially if it's a part-time job in which you're on-site and have human contact, can lift your spirits. That's hard to assign a dollar value to.

On the other hand, if your money situation is the paramount issue right now, you should figure in the cost savings of working from home in terms of things like commuting, lunches out and dry cleaning.

Remember that if you are transitioning from a full-time job at a company to a part-time position at the same company, and you had a group healthcare plan available only to full-time employees, you may

qualify for COBRA. COBRA is a federal law that allows you to continue your group health benefits for a limited period of time. There are key things you need to do to ensure you can avail yourself of COBRA. For more information, visit www.dol.gov.

The 2010 passage of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) has also made it easier for people who don't qualify for health insurance through their jobs to buy a plan through the federal or their state's marketplaces, even if they have a pre-existing condition. For more information on these marketplaces, see page 52.

Switching to a part-time job (or jobs) from full-time work can stall your career progress — but not always. Some moms and dads wind down work hours while raising young children, then return to full-time; so the concept of a freelance or part-time interlude in a serious career is not as foreign to employers as it used to be.

Before accepting several part-time assignments, consider whether you will be able to multi-task. You may have several to-do lists, depending on what job you have at the moment. Part-timers are often used as fill-in people, so you could find yourself working for more than one boss. You might also be switched to different assignments as other workers go on leave or depart the company.

Multi-tasking on its own is challenging for many people, but coupled with treatment side effects, multi-tasking can be complicated even for a master. “Chemo brain,” in particular, can cause memory lapses and difficulty concentrating, which can result in problems remembering names or the spelling of common words, a temporary inability to think as fast as you once did, or difficulty recalling the steps of tasks you once performed easily. Under these circumstances, a role that requires a lot of multi-tasking can seem overwhelming. There are things you can do to stay organized, such as writing down everything in one notebook instead of in multiple places; prioritizing to-do lists; doing one thing at a time; etc. But you should think about whether multiple jobs will require too much multi-tasking.

FINDING A FLEXIBLE JOB AFTER CANCER

Now is a better time than ever to consider work flexibility, because there are multiple trends pushing for it in the workplace — things such as health and work-life balance, economic and environmental benefits, and many others. The important thing is that, thanks to these combined factors, employers across the board are finally beginning to listen to calls/demands for greater flexibility.

This doesn't mean every company is keen on flexibility (at least not yet), but it does mean that more and more are realizing that nontraditional positions involving telecommuting and part-time and flexible schedules can save them money while benefiting employees. Flexible jobs are more widespread than most people think.

FLEXIBLE WORK

WORK FROM HOME

Working from home does have many advantages. It usually allows you to set a reasonable schedule without the added time of a commute. It may allow you to work for a firm at a considerable distance from your home without having to relocate. It could help you land a job requiring special skills you have that are not needed in your local job market but are in great demand in another city. It provides an opportunity for tax deductions for equipment and supplies you use on the job (as long as the employer does not pick up the tab for those items). You may even be able to take an itemized home-office deduction. (To thoroughly understand your tax benefits as a freelance or home-based worker, you should consult with an accountant.) Most important, it usually gives you the flexibility you may need while in treatment and recovery from a serious illness such as cancer.

What types of work can be easily adapted to telecommuting or working from home? In the U.S. economy today, knowledge workers (i.e., those who rely on intellectual skills and activity rather than on their hands to generate a product) are particularly suited for telecommuting. The federal government is even getting into the act, encouraging telecommuting as a retention tool for its current workforce and as a recruiting benefit for new employees. Telecommuting is used by many employers to boost productivity, reduce employees' commute time, and cut down on greenhouse-gas emissions caused by commuter traffic. Even traditional face-to-face jobs have expanded into the virtual world.

When considering the virtual option as a solution to juggling treatment or recovery and work, keep the following principles in mind:

WORKING FROM HOME IS STILL WORK. It requires discipline, motivation, the right equipment, and a flexible and committed employer to sustain a work-from-home situation.

YOUR CURRENT EMPLOYER MAY BE YOUR FIRST AND BEST OPTION FOR A TELECOMMUTING JOB. If you have already proven yourself to be a valuable member of the team, your boss is more apt to allow and support your proposal to telecommute. If you plan to broach the subject with your current employer, create a proposal or plan showing how you will continue to contribute daily to the organization's work without regular face time. Approach this proposal from the perspective of the benefits it affords your employer, such as continuity of work and productivity gained by eliminating commute time. Being ready to compromise by committing to attend on-site meetings or visit customer sites as needed can help you persuade your current employer to embrace the concept. Also worth noting: Many companies offer telecommuting options, so first check your employee manual or policies and procedures document to see if anything exists at your organization. In addition, depending on the circumstances, telecommuting might be a possible reasonable accommodation request under the ADA. For more on reasonable accommodations, see page 51.

TO LAND YOUR NEW WORK-FROM-HOME JOB, YOU MAY HAVE TO APPLY YOUR SKILLS IN NEW WAYS. Examine your skills and capabilities, then carefully match them to work-from-home opportunities you find. You may have to research skills most in demand by firms seeking virtual or telecommuting workers, then revise your resume/cover letter to highlight the ones you possess.

BEWARE OF WORK-FROM-HOME INTERNET SCAMS! Horror stories abound about such scams. It's important to know that a legitimate employer will never charge you a fee to work or ask you to do anything that is legally questionable. If an online job seems too good to be true, it probably is. Always check a potential employer's references, just as an employer would check yours. See page 44 for organizations and websites to get you started.

GET THE RIGHT EQUIPMENT FOR THE JOB AND SET UP YOUR WORKPLACE IN A PROFESSIONAL MANNER. Ideally a home office or spare room with a door is best if you plan to establish a boundary between your work life and home life. Use a high-speed Internet connection, a separate telephone line dedicated to your work, and a telephone headset. Be sure to record a professional voice-mail message on your work line, one that warmly greets customers and coworkers who call while you are unavailable. You may want to check out free conference-call bridge lines and Web-based meeting tools and sign up for Skype, to support the collaborative efforts your job may require. Create a work space that does not mingle your personal and professional papers, and you'll find you are much more productive and less stressed during your workday.

ESTABLISH GROUND RULES AND BOUNDARIES WITH YOUR FAMILY, FRIENDS, AND EVEN PETS REGARDING YOUR WORK. Pre-determine your work hours, if possible, and let people know when you are not to be disturbed. If you are working with young children in the home, think ahead and schedule conference calls and virtual meetings while they are sleeping or occupied with a favorite TV show or game, or when there is someone else there to watch them. Dog owners will also have to arrange phone call options so that they are not interrupted by barking. And be aware that email and typed proposals can easily be erased by little cat paws strolling across the computer keys.

SET LIMITS ON YOUR WORK TIME. Many of the consultants who work virtually have difficulty separating their home life from their work life. They find themselves checking email at 11:00 PM or logging into the network and composing emails and proposals in the middle of the night when they can't sleep. Guard against this "work-time creep" at all costs. There is nothing healing about working from home if you are doing it 24/7.

PLAN SOCIAL TIME AWAY FROM WORK. Working from home is an exciting option, but it can be more isolating than you'd imagine. Maintaining your social connections is vital to your recovery, so don't neglect your friends, regardless of how seductive that computer can be.

FLEXIBLE WORK

If working virtually seems like the best option for you, you may want to check out one or two of the following websites to learn more. These sites offer articles, suggestions, products and job listings for the telecommuting/home-based worker.

FlexJobs.com: Find telecommuting and other great flexible jobs, such as part-time jobs and freelance work. FlexJobs is an innovative, professional job service designed to help you find the best flexible jobs on the market. Every job posted is hand-screened and legitimate. To receive a 50% discount on their services, enter the code **CANCER** at checkout.

HomeWorkers.org: In addition to advice articles for home-based workers, this site features a home-employment database with more than 1,500 job listings.

Bizymoms.com: This site was founded by home-based moms who wanted to keep a hand in the workforce. Although much of its content is written from the perspective of a mother with small children, the site offers hundreds of home-business ideas.

TelCoo.org: This is the home site of the international Telework Coalition. Content includes information on telework scams, networking links, white papers on trends, and a rich database of home-based job opportunities.

Freelancer.com: If you are a software, hardware or database specialist, this site may be for you. Job postings feature multiple opportunities for developers, designers, project managers and help desk-tech support staff.

Upwork.com: This site matches online freelancers with job and project requests.

Guru.com: Provides businesses with the tools to find and hire talented freelancers all over the world and offers freelancers the opportunity to market sought-after skills to a global audience at minimal cost.

RatRaceRebellion.com: Posts new leads on work-from-home jobs every day.

Sites for virtual call centers: If you would like to try your hand at customer service, call-center work or virtual concierge work, log on to one of the following sites:

Arise.com

LiveOps.com

AspireLifestyles.com

WorkingSolutions.com

Approach your search for a work-from-home position with the same dedication and commitment you would apply in a traditional job search, and soon you will find yourself working in an entirely new way.

FINDING MEANINGFUL WORK

As you start pulling together the pieces of your job search, it's important to take a step back and think about the kind of work that is meaningful to you. The search for meaning in a job or career can be particularly pressing for cancer survivors. No matter what your prognosis, a brush with mortality can make you acutely aware of how precious your time is. The difficulty lies in trying to figure out exactly what kind of work would truly fulfill you as an individual. (It is far easier to recognize what isn't meaningful than what is.) Meaning is defined as something that is significant. Remember, too, that what is significant for one person may not be for another. Many people assume that a meaningful job or career must involve helping the less advantaged or working for a charitable cause. This is true for some people, but there are other kinds of meaning.

BELOW IS A LIST OF 10 WAYS A JOB CAN GIVE SPECIAL MEANING* TO YOUR LIFE

- It challenges you with new opportunities, money or recognition.
- It places you in an especially intriguing, attractive, or energizing field or industry.
- It allows you to express or live by certain standards, principles or values.
- It provides an opportunity to give back, share, change, or improve something in a way that makes a difference either internally or externally.
- It allows you to exercise your talent for solving problems or answering complex questions.
- It changes, modifies, or alters your lifestyle, priorities or relationships.
- It involves you in something you feel passionate about.
- It gives you the opportunity to contribute your time, resources or expertise to a cause you believe in; advocate for social or political change; or promote the mission of a social or political group or movement.
- It lets you innovate or create, that is, introduce, produce, or imagine something new or original.
- It enables you to gain knowledge, understanding or expertise through experience or study.

*Based on an excerpt from *I Don't Know What I Want, But I Know It's Not This: A Step-by-Step Guide for Finding Gratifying Work*, by Julie Jansen, Penguin Books.

Which kinds of meaning resonate with you? Which have been absent from your current or recent positions? Which have you discovered since your cancer diagnosis?

Once you have a better understanding of what your brand of meaning is, make a list of all the obstacles you feel may be preventing you from having a job or career that provides it. Common barriers are often

FINDING MEANINGFUL WORK

practical: Work with meaning may not bring in enough money; you may not have enough time or energy; you may currently lack the right knowledge or credentials. Others have to do with attitude: fear of change; worry that your opportunities will be less because of your cancer history; a perception that it is too late to do what you need to do to find meaning. Most of these barriers — even the “practical” ones — aren’t as real as you may think. The first step is to approach several people who have found the kind of meaning you are looking for and ask them for advice. Next, put a simple action plan together, with a timeline, that spells out what you need in order to reach your goal — such as take a class, make a budget, do research or hire a coach. Finally, and this is key, do the things you’ve written down. Anyone who has found meaning in his or her work will tell you that the effort it takes to get there is well worth it!

WORKING FOR A CAUSE THAT IS IMPORTANT TO YOU

It is common for cancer survivors to want work that is more meaningful to them and offers more flexibility.

Unfortunately, simply mailing your resume and a cover letter blindly to an organization is unlikely to reap results. Finding a job in this market requires ingenuity and networking through others. The first thing to do is create a list of organizations that you would like to work for (called a target list). Then take the list and send it to your contacts, asking for the names of anyone they know at any of the organizations. You can approach your LinkedIn groups the same way, and also use the site to search for people among your LinkedIn connections who may work at these companies.

Do not limit yourself to cancer organizations: Find for-profit and nonprofit companies whose causes interest you and network into all of them. Once again, it is much more likely that you will get interviews through people who know you and can make an introduction.

For example, if working for a cancer advocacy organization is what you want, do not give up on that as an ultimate goal. At the same time, realize that in today’s work world no one has the luxury of being too specific in their job search, and that, especially if financial solvency is your number-one goal right now, you will have to broaden your search.

FINDING WORK IN ANOTHER STATE

Researching jobs out of state is much the same as doing it in state. Job boards and headhunters always list out-of-state jobs, and there are also job boards that focus on openings in one particular state. Create a target list of companies in the state where you want to work and reach out to your network for possible contacts and referrals. Contact the local chapter of your professional association and ask if they post jobs. Finally, look at the website for each of the companies on your target list to see what jobs they’re recruiting for.

Frankly, the challenge isn’t finding the out-of-state jobs, it’s being able to go on the interviews, particularly if you work full-time where you live now. If this is a dilemma, then taking a few personal or vacation

days and lining up as many networking meetings and interviews as possible within that period makes sense.

JUMP-START YOUR JOB SATISFACTION

Cancer has a way of putting a different spin on things. But before you walk out the door in search of something new, it's helpful to remind yourself of what you like about your existing job. Then, delve into what's missing and what gives you a feeling of satisfaction. Answering the following questions will help you develop a better sense of what you are looking for.

1. WHAT'S RIGHT ABOUT YOUR JOB?

Figuring out what's been good about your work situation can make it easier to identify the one or two things you've really been missing. Perhaps your company's support and flexibility during your treatment has made you see them through new eyes. Maybe your job has given you the chance to exercise the skills that you enjoy using the most. It may be that your lifestyle is just what you want it to be. Or perhaps you get satisfaction from learning new things and your job gives you that opportunity. Ask yourself the same questions about past jobs.

Write down whatever it is that gives you fulfillment and is important to you.

2. WHAT'S MISSING?

Once you've identified what has worked for you in your past jobs, consider what's been missing. Just because you are good at something doesn't necessarily mean you want to go on doing it forever. Perhaps surviving cancer has made you want to do something that you think is more meaningful. Maybe your work-life balance is out of whack. Or you might feel stuck in the same old rut.

The most important thing is for you to raise your awareness of what you don't have or haven't had in your job(s). When you know what that is, it is much easier to make decisions and do something about it.

Now create a second list, of things you haven't liked about your job. Once that's done, you'll have a document that reflects your preferences and the things you'd like to avoid.

FINDING MEANINGFUL WORK

3. CAN YOU GET WHAT YOU WANT RIGHT WHERE YOU ARE?

Before you start looking for another job, determine whether it's possible to incorporate what you're missing into your current job. Let's say you haven't learned anything new in several years. Is there an aspect of your company or industry that is growing and that you'd like to learn more about? Are there specific skills that other people within your organization have that you think you'd enjoy using or learning? What about improving a weak skill, like public speaking, personnel training, financial management or marketing?

If you really like what you do but feel you need a change, why not get involved in a special project that focuses on improving your employer's business? Identify an area within your company that needs help, think through the details of how you can improve it, and put together a brief proposal to present to your boss.

Or how about getting more involved in your industry's key association? This is also a great way to meet new people in your field who tend to be decision makers, especially if you've been out of the loop for a while as a result of your illness.

Note the possibilities of working with resources and opportunities within your current company.

4. WILL YOU HAVE TO GET IT ELSEWHERE?

If you've taken a hard look at your existing job and company and determined that you just can't create a situation or do work that satisfies you there, then it makes sense to start looking for opportunities at other companies or in other industries. Even companies that are laying off employees are still interested in hiring talented people.

Now is the time to start networking with as many people as possible. To keep track of your networking contacts, use the Networking Tracker, on page 13. You may not find a new opportunity as quickly as you'd like, but you will be planting seeds. Keep your master list of what is important to you close by to remind yourself of what you need and want from work. Use both lists to create questions you'll ask in networking meetings or interviews. Identifying what's missing in your work can get you started in the right direction for job satisfaction — and give you a new refrain to sing when you're back at work.

Identify companies to research here:

Like many cancer survivors, you may now think of your life in terms of “before cancer” and “after cancer.” Once you’ve coped with cancer, things may not be the same. Survivors talk about major and minor overhauls of their lives — from taking another look at their family and other relationships to switching jobs, changing careers or pursuing new leisure activities.

IS WANTING A CAREER CHANGE TYPICAL?

No one says, “I’m glad I got cancer.” But many people say, “It changed the way I look at my life, the way I handle relationships, my career, everything.” Your reaction is very typical if you are talking about your need to do something more meaningful on the job or off the job, such as spending more time with family or volunteering for a worthy cause. Your reaction is typical if you find yourself thinking, “Life is precious and significant. How can I make changes in my work life that will support the changes I want to make in my personal life?” Mental health experts who work with cancer survivors say it’s common for people to seek out more creative, meaningful avenues of work or leisure. For many people, when trying to shift to a more fulfilling job or career, money becomes secondary, despite the fact that the medical bills may be overwhelming. On the other hand, if you have been living hand-to-mouth, you may decide you need to get more education or go after a better-paying job. If you are under-stimulated at work, you may be even more likely to think about change.

TYPICAL CAREER STRATEGIES

Sometimes, finances get in the way of your search for more satisfying work. For instance, you may say you want to leave your low-paying, unexciting job and go work with underprivileged kids — but such work may pay even less. You may be forced to create short-term and long-term plans to realize your goal of finding work that feels more substantive. In the short term, you may need to stay at a less-than-satisfying job to pay down your medical debt, before you can enjoy pursuing your plans for long-term job change.

GEARING UP FOR CHANGE

Although it’s normal to want to charge into change, mental health experts advise people to look before they leap. Research your options, look around, get a lot of opinions. Don’t impulsively switch jobs; instead, see if you can “shadow” someone in your coveted career, at least for a day or so. Internships have become an increasingly popular way for people of all ages to learn about a new career at minimal cost to the company. Change at a pace you’re comfortable with, but know that your first urge may be to go too quickly.

HOW TO EASE INTO CHANGE

It’s typical for survivors to want to do volunteer work, especially at hospitals or with support groups. Some mental health experts advise that it’s better to delay engaging in that experience. You need some time to process and digest what you went through before you can help others effectively.

LEGAL RIGHTS

The final section of this toolkit provides you with key information about your legal rights as a cancer survivor looking for work. It is important to understand these rights as you go about your job search, to ensure that you are not discriminated against at any point in the process.

When you are looking for a new job, it is natural to be concerned about what potential employers might ask. Knowing what they are prohibited from asking is important in terms of quelling some of those fears. During the application process, an employer may not ask if you have a disability; nor can they ask about the nature or severity of any already-known or visible disability.

Employers may, however, ask about your ability to perform job-related functions, as long as their questions are not designed to elicit any other disability-related information. For example, a potential employer may not ask you if you took FMLA leave or sick time at a previous job, or how much time you took off. If you choose to disclose that you had or have a disability, potential employers can only ask whether you will need an accommodation to perform the essential functions of the job.

Please note that the information on the following pages is designed to provide general information on the topics presented. It is provided with the understanding that Cancer and Careers is not engaged in rendering any legal or professional services through the information contained herein. The information provided should not be used as a substitute for professional services. Cancer and Careers recommends seeking appropriate professional counsel for any questions about a specific situation.

CANCER AND THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal law that most people have heard of but usually don't think has anything to do with a disease like cancer. However, the ADA can be very helpful to job holders or candidates who are coping with cancer. They must be qualified for the job; the job must be with a private firm with 15 or more employees or with a local or state government employer; and they must have a "disability," which is defined under the ADA as "a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity." With cancer patients, oftentimes it is not the disease itself that creates the disability but, rather, the side effects of the treatment (e.g., nausea, cognitive difficulties, fatigue, neuropathy and/or depression).

A major life activity is anything that the average person in the general population can perform with little or no difficulty. Walking, talking, breathing, eating, sleeping, thinking, communicating and performing basic bodily functions are all considered major life activities.

The ADA prohibits all types of discrimination based on:

- An actual disability
- A history of a disability

- A perceived disability (i.e., being regarded as having a disability)
- An association with a person with a disability (for example, being a caregiver).

If you have or have had cancer, this law

- 1) protects you from discrimination in all phases of employment (hiring, firing, benefits, etc.) and
- 2) may entitle you to “reasonable accommodations.”

Reasonable accommodations are adjustments in the workplace that help employees work or continue to work. These may include modified work schedules, reassignment of an employee to a less-physically-taxing position, or even a more comfortable chair. Keep in mind that only individuals who currently have a disability or those who have a history of a disability and are still experiencing some difficulties are entitled to reasonable accommodations.

Reasonable accommodations will depend on the nature of your disability and your job. If you are unsure what adjustments may work for your situation, contact the Job Accommodation Network (JAN), a program of the U.S. Department of Labor. JAN offers a Searchable Online Accommodation Resource (SOAR) system that allows people to explore various accommodation options for different types of medical conditions in particular workplace settings (see www.askJAN.org).

An employer may not refuse reasonable accommodations for a person with a disability unless these would cause the employer undue hardship. To be considered an undue hardship, the accommodation must involve significant difficulty or expense for the employer.

You can request a reasonable accommodation during the hiring process or at any point during your employment. However, it may be in your best interests to ask for a reasonable accommodation as soon as a problem or an issue becomes known and before your work performance suffers.

If you have questions about the ADA or reasonable accommodations, go to www.eeoc.gov/policy/ada.html. Portions excerpted from *When Serious Illness Strikes: Everything Else You Need to Know*, 2013, © Triage Cancer.

THE FEDERAL REHABILITATION ACT

Like the ADA, the Federal Rehabilitation Act prohibits employers from discriminating against employees because they have cancer. This act, however, applies only to employees of the federal government and to private and other public employers who receive federal funds.

For more information on the Federal Rehabilitation Act, contact the Access Unit, Civil Rights Division, Department of Justice at www.justice.gov/crt/contact-office.

LEGAL RIGHTS

There also may be regulations specific to your state or municipality that deal with workplace discrimination. For more information, contact your state attorney general's office.

HEALTH INSURANCE REFORM: WHAT WORKERS AND JOB-SEEKERS NEED TO KNOW

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) was signed into law on March 23, 2010. Many of the provisions of this law have already gone into effect. The law was designed to be phased in, with implementation completed in 2020. However, following the outcome of the 2016 presidential election, numerous potential changes to the ACA have been proposed and the future of the law remains unclear. Below, we've outlined the key points to know about the ACA, which were in place as of November 2017.

We have also provided links to resources for staying up-to-date on any legislative changes.

HELP FOR THOSE WITH PRE-EXISTING CONDITIONS

As of January 1, 2014, insurance companies can't refuse to sell coverage or renew policies to persons with pre-existing conditions. Furthermore, women, as well as anyone with a pre-existing condition, can no longer be charged higher premiums for their health insurance.

BUYING INSURANCE FROM THE MARKETPLACE

Since October 1, 2013, you can buy health insurance from a state marketplace (otherwise known as an exchange). This is good news if you're currently unemployed or if you are employed but your employer offers no health insurance or offers unaffordable or inadequate insurance.

The state health insurance marketplaces offer a choice of competitive health plans that must meet certain benefits and cost standards and be affordable. The marketplaces are competitive and open to individuals and small businesses (i.e., those with fewer than 50 employees).

The ACA also limits how much marketplace plans may require consumers to pay out-of-pocket for medical expenses in addition to their premiums. These caps will help keep out-of-pocket costs down and stem the tide of bankruptcies caused by medical bills.

Marketplaces vary state by state. States that run their own have websites you can visit directly to learn more, or you can visit www.HealthCare.gov to find information on your health insurance options in any state.

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

As of March 31, 2014, everyone who can afford basic health insurance must obtain it; the alternative is to pay a fine to help offset the cost of care for Americans without insurance. There are a few exceptions to this rule, including cases where affordable coverage is not available.

PREVENTATIVE CARE

All new health plans sold on or after September 23, 2010, or those that renew after that date, must cover certain preventative health services, such as mammograms, flu shots, colonoscopies, and cholesterol checks, free of charge, without a co-pay, deductible or other cost sharing. Which other services are covered depends on the type of health care plan as well as factors such as your age. For the complete list of covered services, visit www.healthcare.gov/preventive-care-benefits.

APPEALING DECISIONS

All health insurance companies must now have an internal appeals process and all states must now have an external process for consumers to appeal health insurance companies' decisions. For example, if your insurance company denies a claim based on the basis that the procedure was experimental, you now have the right, in any state, to appeal that decision and show why it was not experimental. Those enrolled in a health plan must be provided with a notice about available internal and external appeals processes and be told of the availability of assistance to help complete the process. More information about this right can be found at www.healthcare.gov/using-marketplace-coverage/appealing-insurance-company-decisions/.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

When you apply for a health insurance plan in the marketplace, you will be asked to include some of your financial information, whether or not you are employed and whether your employer currently offers you coverage. Based on this information, the marketplace can determine if you are eligible for any financial assistance options.

If you can't afford the coverage offered by your employer, you may be able to take the funds your employer would have contributed toward your company plan and use them to obtain a plan from the exchange.

TAX CREDITS AND SUBSIDIES

People who buy plans in the marketplaces may also qualify for financial assistance to help them pay for their health insurance. This financial assistance is based on income level and family size. These subsidies will reduce the cost of healthcare expenses an individual or family must pay when they receive medical care — for example, by lowering the co-payment required when visiting the doctor's office.

To keep up with healthcare reform as it unfolds, visit www.healthcare.gov.

LEGAL RIGHTS

MORE RESOURCES

When seeking legal assistance, think local, not national. Bar associations, especially in larger cities, typically coordinate pro bono work. Start by calling your local bar association or getting the contact information for your region online or through the telephone directory. State your issue precisely and ask for a referral.

LEGAL ASSISTANCE

National Cancer Legal Services Network: www.NCLSN.org

Law Help: www.lawhelp.org

Lawyer Referral Service: www.apps.americanbar.org/legalservices/Iris/directory

EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission: www.EEOC.gov

Job Accommodation Network: www.AskJan.org

U.S. Department of Labor (COBRA): www.dol.gov/EBSA

U.S. Department of Labor (FMLA): www.DOL.gov/WHD

Workplace Fairness: www.workplacefairness.org

DISABILITY INSURANCE OPTIONS

Social Security Administration: www.SSA.gov

National Organization of Social Security Claimant's Representatives (NOSSCR):
www.nosscr.org

HEALTH INSURANCE OPTIONS

Health Insurance Options: www.HealthCare.gov

TRIAGE CANCER

Education Blog: www.TriageCancer.org/Blog

State Resources: www.TriageCancer.org/Resources/StateResources

Quick Guides: www.TriageCancer.org/Resources/Quickguides



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