INSIDE THE JOB MARKET

Making the most of spring's promise in the job market

- By Heather Boulger

After tidying up your physical and digital space, your mental focus will naturally refresh as well. Take short breaks throughout the day to reflect and reset, organize your thoughts, and focus on one thing at a time, rather than trying to solve every problem at once.

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Spring stands out as a season of growth, forward-thinking initiatives, and openness to new opportunities. Spring is a season of renewal, often marked by invigorating changes in weather, fresh blooms, and a collective sense of rejuvenation.

This transformative time of year makes it an ideal time to dust off the winter blues and spring clean your workspace and refresh your resume.

Spring cleaning at work accomplishes many of the same things it does in our homes. It makes us more organized, reduces stress and clutter, improves time management, and helps streamline processes, which makes us more productive. In fact, a recent study also indicates that for every hour a person spends cleaning, it boosts their overall happiness by 53 percent and who doesn't want more happiness in their life!

Here are a few tips that will help you "spring clean" your business and your career.

• Do a digital sweep. Many people complain about the sheer volume of daily email and what a struggle it is to keep up. From hard drives filled with photos, documents and spreadsheets to

email apps, digital clutter not only makes us less productive, but it also distracts us throughout the day. Go through your computer and get rid of any files that you don't need. Create folders to keep things organized on your computer, and unsubscribe from newsletters and blogs that distract you and waste time.

• Dust off and streamline processes. Review the processes that happen in your organization and determine if they could be completed in a more efficient manner. Review laws, regulations, employment records, and job descriptions to make sure you are prepared and current.

• Talk to your team. Ask your team for advice on streamlining operations and improving productivity and engagement. You may not be able to act on or change everything your team has issues with, but you will likely find some good ideas and advice. Plus, your team members will appreciate the open dialogue.

• Clean your office. Yes, physically. Make sure it is clean and inviting on both the inside and outside. If you don't have the time to clean, hire a crew. A clean place of business isn't just good for sales and employee morale; it's good for your health, too. Research now points to clutter as a stressor; and dust, mold and debris aggravate allergies, asthma and infections.

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If you're job searching, now is the time to dust off that resume and polish up your career plan. Here are a few ideas that may inspire you to rejuvenate your job search.

• Prepare your resume. Scrub out the typos, declutter the jargon, throw out what doesn't work anymore, and swipe on a new coat of paint. Be brief, be specific, be active, be selective and be honest! Look over your resume regularly to keep it fresh and current.

• Refresh your strategy. Stay up to date with online job sites, career blogs, and your social media accounts. Research workshops, training, volunteer work and job clubs to help you stay in the job game.

• Polish your networks. Experts say that 70 percent of people end up in their current position thanks to networking. Don't let your networks get stale. Take a few minutes each day to give your contacts a call or email or message on social media to find out what opportunities they might have caught wind of and ask them to keep you in mind if anything comes up. Also consider expanding your contacts through staffing firms or LinkedIn to help your network bloom.

• Spruce up your interview strategies. Be prepared and sell yourself both as an employee and as a solution. Do research on the company and the position you are applying for and identify some of their major challenges. Show them how you can help them achieve their goals with your skills and motivation. Do a practice session to help you answer top interviewing questions.

Your resume is a living document that will be edited and updated through the course of your job search and your entire career. Taking a good look at it this spring, and at the start of every season, will help you get more interviews, and ultimately, better job offers.

From accounting to construction, health care, and beyond, organizations seek talent to propel fresh initiatives, while professionals look to realign their careers with better opportunities. If you want to freshen your job search, make April the month you connect with a job counselor at the MassHire Berkshire Career Center and turn those April showers into new blooming job opportunities!

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