

## **Tiger Job Seekers**

There's been a lot of debate recently about the phenomenon of "tiger moms." While the call for tougher parenting may be controversial, however, it does raise an interesting idea. In this job market, in this economy, maybe what we need is tougher job seeking. Maybe, the key to success is to refashion ourselves as tiger job seekers.

A tiger mom believes that she is teaching her kids critical life skills and values. While much of the media has focused on her instructional methods – the punishments and deprivations – it's the knowledge and habits she's conveying that are important to her. They are, she is convinced, the keys to a meaningful and rewarding life in the demanding new culture of 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Tiger job seekers don't teach others these skills and values, but instead, adopt them as their own. Their goal, however, is identical to that of tiger moms. They don't expect to use their expertise once or twice – the conventional view of job search techniques. Instead, they believe these skills and values are the keys to a successful career in the ever changing economy of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

What are the habits and values of a tiger mom? There are more than a few, but among the most important are:

- A belief in the importance of hard work;
- An expectation of excellence in every pursuit;
- A commitment to personal responsibility; and
- The conviction that learning is critically important and never stops.

Let's look at each of these and see how they might apply to the tiger job seeker.

### **The Importance of Hard Work**

A tiger mom believes success is only achieved with determined effort. A tiger job seeker invests the same commitment in their job search. For example, just as a tiger mom expects their child to forego play until their homework is done, the tiger job seeker considers their job search a full time job. They work relentlessly to make and leverage contacts, research employers and uncover employment opportunities, apply for openings and build their personal brand. They stay at it when they're tired as well as when they're fresh, when they're discouraged as well as when they're up, and on weekends and holidays as well as during the normal business day.

### **An Expectation of Excellence in Every Pursuit**

A tiger mom holds her kids to a very high standard in everything they do. A tiger job seeker holds themselves to a similar benchmark in the way they practice their job search. For example, just as a tiger mom expects her child to practice a piano piece until it's perfect, the tiger job seeker practices the art of networking until they master it. Whether they're an introvert or an

extrovert, they work continuously to perfect their ability to build professional relationships both with their peers and prospective bosses. They learn the best practices for expanding and reinforcing their contacts and use them effectively at both meetings in the real world and in discussion forums on the Web.

### **A Commitment to Personal Responsibility**

A tiger mom encourages her kids to take responsibility for achieving their dreams. A tiger job seeker believes it's up to them to determine the outcome of their job search. For example, just as a tiger mom will get a tutor for their child but expect the child to do their homework, a tiger job seeker is proactive about acquiring the assistance of counselors and colleagues, but accepts that it's their job to put themselves back to work. Hard as it is to do in this economy, they hold themselves accountable for the outcome of their effort and will make whatever adjustments they must to optimize their chances of success. If that means moving outside their comfort zone or making a change in what they've always done to find a job, that's exactly what they'll do.

### **The Conviction That Learning is Critically Important and Never Stops**

A tiger mom expects her kids to acquire the habit of learning and practice it continuously. A tiger job seeker sees it as their job to transform themselves into someone employers always want to hire. For example, just as a tiger mom urges her child to explore music or the arts to express their talent, a tiger job seeker constantly strives both to increase the depth of their knowledge in their profession, craft or trade and to add ancillary skills that will enable them to use that core expertise in a wide range of situations and circumstances. They are the person whose resume details a track record of continuous development and an entry which indicates that, even while they are in transition, they are still acquiring new skills or refreshing old ones.

Regardless of what you think of a tiger mom's approach parenting, the skills and values she inculcates in her kids will go a long way toward helping them overcome challenges and succeed in life. To overcome challenges and succeed in today's job market, those in transition would do well to adopt the same skills and values and transform themselves into tiger job seekers.

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