

THE 10 BIGGEST MISTAKES JOB SEEKERS MAKE



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Introduction

You are ready to launch your job search. Knowing where to start and what to focus on is key to your success. The booklet will help you save time, avoid faulty job search strategies, and improve your results. Ideally, you want to receive multiple offers that match your needs and priorities. So, let's not waste any time.

Here are the mistakes you must avoid:

Mistake #1: Lack of Focus

Mistake #2: Job Search Without a Plan

Mistake #3: Writing Your Resume First

Mistake #4: Calling People Before You do Your Research

Mistake #5: Jumping at the First Thing That Comes Along

Mistake #6: Not Following Up

Mistake #7: Taking a Break

Mistake #8: Being Disorganized

Mistake #9: Isolation

Mistake #10: Listening to the Wrong People

Mistake #1

Lack of Focus

The Problem:

You want to stay open to possibilities and hope employers will see where you fit into their organization. Your resume has a vague objective and lists your background without targeted achievements. You insist that you'll be an asset to anyone who hires you so you don't focus on a specific employment target. To the employer, you look like a job shopper and your search goes on for months.

The Solution:

Identify your target industry and function. This can be easier said than done. You will have to research your options and take stock of your natural talents. Consider the following ideas:

- Complete a self-assessment that offers a prioritization of your values, enjoyable skills, personality, and career-related interests.
- Work with a qualified career coach or utilize free resources in your community.
- Attend workshops, conferences, and networking events to learn about your options.
- Go after a few long shots, but make sure the majority of your time is spent on opportunities that match your abilities and talents.

Mistake #2

Job Search Without a Plan

The Problem: You wake up every morning and wonder--what am I going to do today to land a great job? It's overwhelming. You could look at online job sites, go to a local job fair, or call your best friend who always listens to you no matter what. Let's face it, you don't have a plan and your job search is going nowhere.

The Solution:

Once you have overcome mistake number one, the lack of focus, you can tackle number two. Here are some ways to get started:

- Set up job search systems including a desk or table designated as your hub, a schedule determining when and how long you will hunt every day, and a log/spreadsheet of your applications.
- Identify at least 20 or more organizations in your geographic area you'd love to work for. Then decide how you are going to let them know you are available.
- Send your cover letter/resume package even if there is no opening. Try to send it to someone you know or, at least, the person who would be most interested in your background.
- Use multiple avenues to reach potential employers. Do not rely on any single approach. Soon you will build momentum and be in the driver's seat of your job search.

Mistake #3

Writing Your Resume First

The Problem:

Here we go again...it all goes back to mistake number one. You can't write your resume until you know what you want to do. Perhaps you think you are getting off to a great start by hiring some flashy resume service. It's a waste of your time and money.

The Solution:

Recruiters can spot a professionally developed, generic resume. They want a well-thought-out resume that reflects your personality and talents. Start with these tips:

- Go to a large job-hunting site like [Indeed.com](https://www.indeed.com). Find postings that make your toes tingle. Use the job posting to help you construct your targeted resume.
- Be aware, that, frequently, your resume will initially be screened by robots or software, not a human being. That's why keywords are essential.
- Review your previous accomplishments and match them with the requirements of your target industry and function.
- Then write a resume that gets picked up quickly in the automated screening process.
- If you feel like you need some help with your resume, take a workshop or access the volumes of resume advice online.

Mistake #4

Calling People Before Doing Your Research

The Problem:

If you are like many job seekers, you scanned your contact list early in your job hunt. You dialed those numbers and asked about leads or openings. You hit up the few big decision-makers you knew before you did your research and got focused. Basically, you sounded needy and scattered. You burned your network. Now it's hard to go back to those people and get their attention again.

The Solution:

First, if you have not burned your network, you are in a good position. Do all your reading and online research first.

- Prepare a thirty-second statement that explains what you want to do and why you are qualified.
- Call the LEAST influential people first. Practice on them. Ask them to introduce you to other people you should be talking to.
- Work your way up to the best contacts you have. Be very prepared before you talk to the powerful people on your list.

Mistake #5

Jumping at the First Thing That Comes Along

The Problem:

Most job searches take too long. You swing between hopeful moments and frustration. Fear and anxiety mount as your savings dwindle. Finally, an offer comes along and you jump on it. You accept more travel than you want or a lower salary. Before you know it, another five years have gone by, and all you've got to show for it is more gray hair.

The Solution:

Let's face it, job hunting can be scary and can cause you to pull the trigger too fast. Here are some ways to curb impulsivity:

- If you need money right away, consider temporary employment or contract work in your field, but don't under-employ yourself.
- Fall back on a reliable, source of income. The gig economy offers an array of work that you can leave without burning any bridges.
- Hunker down and do what you can to pay the bills until the right opportunity comes along.

Keep reminding yourself that your career pays for everything else in your life. It's worth investing time in yourself and your livelihood.

Mistake #6

Not Following Up

The Problem:

A few months into your job search you have sent out applications, met with various contacts, and been turned down a few times. This erodes your self-esteem. It gets harder and harder to take the initiative in the face of possible rejection, so you stop following up.

The Solution:

Every letter, meeting, and interview will require timely, thoughtful follow-up. Consider the following strategies:

- Cookie-cutter letters or hasty e-mails may be worse than no follow-up at all. Take time to think about ways to bring up your positive attributes and polish your work.
- Show your good manners and excellent communication skills.
- Ask for another meeting, if it seems appropriate. Keep the door open and find ways to be helpful to everyone in your network.
- Let your warm leads know how you are doing in creative ways.

The emotional side of your job search can sabotage your efforts. The ups and downs of your transition cause friction. Grit is the substance that is generated in that friction. Harness your grit and keep going.

Mistake #7

Taking a Break

The Problem:

You are sick of your job search. All you want is a lounge chair on a beach in Hawaii. And, lo and behold, your best buddy is going next week and he asks you to join him. You head off and figure you'll pick up where you left off. What's the big deal? It's called momentum.

The Solution:

Keeping your eye on the prize gives you a competitive advantage. Follow this advice:

- If you are employed and conducting a search, plan to spend about ten hours every week on your job hunt. If you are unemployed, you should spend about thirty hours a week on your search. There are no breaks until you have a golden offer.
- Balance your job search with fun and relaxation daily so you don't burn out completely.
- Find an accountability partner or start a job-search group in person or online.
- Communicate your commitment to your search to family and friends. Other people in your life can eat up your time with their needs. Set boundaries and put your job search first.

Your job search takes courage and persistence. Stay strong through the whole process so you don't fall prey to interruptions.

Mistake #8

Being Disorganized

The Problem:

Searching for a job is messy. It involves lots of documents, appointments, and important information. The person who gets hired will be the one who answers the phone promptly, has a first-class Zoom room, and spells the hiring manager's name correctly.

The Solution:

It does not matter if you are naturally detail-oriented or not. Your job hunt is a big project and you are the project manager.

- Make a list every morning or evening of your job-search tasks for the next day. Determine the priority of each item and do them to the best of your ability.
- Invest in organizing tools that support you. There are several good productivity applications you can download for free.
- Find a place you can focus. It might be a coffee shop, a daily rental office, or a corner of your home.
- Put a professional message on your phone. Use it as an opportunity to project your positive energy.
- Notice if your stress level is impacting your impeccability. Those typos in your follow-up e-mails could be a reflection of your mental state. Calm down and take time to get it right.

Mistake #9

Isolation

The Problem:

It is easier to hide in your apartment or den than it is to face strangers at an evening networking event. Even if you are a social butterfly, the inevitable cold calls that go along with a job search can be intimidating. As a result, you find yourself spending too much time in front of the computer. You e-mail rather than call or you pick up a good book and check out altogether.

The Solution:

Pay attention to your mental state. Being out of a job can lead to depression. Don't let the blues turn into something more serious.

- Find a reason to meet with someone every day.
- Take up a volunteer job to keep you involved in your community. Research related to long-term unemployment finds that doing something for someone else is the best way to overcome job-related depression.
- Organize a job-hunting group and have them meet in your living room. Do whatever it takes to keep connecting.
- If you can't get emotionally "unstuck" on your own, consider a referral to a professional counselor. Depression, as you might imagine, slows down your search so prevention is the best medicine.

Mistake #10

Listening to the Wrong People

The Problem:

There are lots of negative people in the world and sometimes they are members of your own family. If you listen to people who are fearful or lack self-confidence, they will lay their insecurities on you.

They make remarks like, “Be satisfied with what you have.” “The grass is not always greener on the other side”. And, “There are no good jobs anymore these days”. Yikes, with that kind of input, you will never get the great job you deserve.

The Solution:

Don't be taken down by negativity:

- Hang out with your champions and your sparring partners. You will need encouragement and an occasional kick in the butt.
- Stay in touch with people who think highly of you. Yes, I'm referring to your super champions. They love you no matter what. If that's your pet(s), that's awesome!
- Seek out role models who offer motivation and inspiration. They might be your professional colleagues, well-known public figures, or members of your own family.
- Read inspirational books, and listen to uplifting podcasts or YouTube channels. There is so much awesome content out in the world to keep you positive.

Final Words of Encouragement

You are talented and you want to live up to your potential. There is no reason you cannot have the job you've always dreamed of. Now you are equipped to avoid the common mistakes that most people make on their way to a great future.

Resources

- Grab a copy of my book: [Elevate Your Career: Live a Life You're Truly Proud Of.](#) Enjoy the free Elevations career assessment that comes with the book.
- Get more tips and strategies at my [YouTube channel.](#)
- If you know you need support from a career coach, give me a call. [Set up a free 15-minute consultation.](#)

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