

WHAT TO DO WHILE YOU ARE UNEMPLOYED

You know the saying, “Applying to jobs is a full-time job”? Don’t listen to it.

Applying to jobs you’re not qualified for (which 50% of job seekers reportedly do!) is counter-productive to your job search. Competition is too fierce. Even qualified applicants aren’t getting callbacks. So, stop applying to so many jobs and allocate time each week to becoming more hireable.

Here’s how...

Volunteer

Volunteering can increase your chances of being hired if you’re strategic about it. Unemployed teacher? Help out with after school programs or volunteer to be a coach’s assistant. Web designer? Find a local non-profit in desperate need of a re-design and offer your services pro bono. By volunteering somewhere relevant, you’ll keep your skills fresh while enhancing your resume.

Keep Your Skills Current

If you lack a skill commonly required for jobs you’re seeking, spend time each day building that skill. Take advantage of numerous free resources online, including tutorials, e-books, and how-to videos. If you’d rather have more of a class setup, look for free or affordable adult education classes in your area. Alternatively, if you already possess the necessary skills but haven’t been practicing, the do so. Skill atrophy is a huge concern for hiring managers, so practice and get yourself ready for pre-employment skills tests.

Network

There are two parts to networking: reconnecting with your old contacts and forming new ones. Depending on where you are in your career, reconnecting might mean contacting professors, college advisers, and internship supervisors, or it might mean getting in touch with old colleagues, bosses, and business acquaintances.

Find them, e-mail them; call them. Ask them to coffee. Ask how they are (networking is social, after all) and let them know the specifics of your job search (industry, location, etc.). See if they know of anything or anyone.

Most importantly, follow up!

At a temporary dead-end with your current contacts? Make new ones. Go to networking events sponsored by your university, industry, city, and so on. And look beyond traditional networking events. Consider going to lectures, neighborhood council meetings, even community bar crawls (go easy on the sauce). Each of these provides an opportunity to meet people with similar interests, and you can have fun in the process.

Again, follow up!

Freelance

Some job seekers are opposed to anything that's not a full-time job. If this sounds like you, it's time to change your mindset. Freelancing is a great way to boost your skills, resume, portfolio, professional network, income, and confidence. Search for freelance openings here.

Build an Online Presence

Get found online. Start a blog, spruce up your social network profiles, create an online portfolio to showcase your work. Find companies you're interested in working for, subscribe to their blogs, and follow them on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. Find decision-makers at those companies and follow them as well. Learn what they're talking about, do a little research, and then engage with them online. Impress them with your interest and insights.

Worst case scenario — you'll learn what's important to them and use this information to customize your application when a job opens up.

Better case scenario — you'll establish a rapport with someone who will recommend you for a position and/or tell you about unpublished openings.

Best case scenario — you'll impress someone so much over time that they'll create a job for you or bring you in for an exploratory interview.

What are you doing to become more hireable?

Are you sick of not landing job interviews?

Are you applying for jobs you feel you are more than qualified for, but not having any success?

Make Your Resume Stand Out – More Numbers, Less Words

More than likely, the problem has more to do with the way your resume is written than not having the right skill sets for the job.

Resume writing is an art form and in order to be successful your resume needs to pass four major rules:

1. Skills and qualifications are highlighted in order to make your resume instantly stand out. Reports suggest once a hiring manager or recruiter opens your resume you have between 10-20 seconds to make an impact. No impact, no interview, no job!
2. Strategic keywords to highlight your achievements and pass online screening software tools that are used to reduce the amount of candidate resumes that a business may receive for a certain role.
3. Formatted, structured and presented specifically to target your experience and industry
4. Presented in a professional manner using the correct font, bullet points, headings, length and most importantly error-free!

How can I make my resume stand out from the crowd?

Using numbers and quantitative evidence to highlight your achievements is key to standing out from the competition and presenting value added evidence about the type of behaviour a hiring manager can expect from you. If your position involves business development, for example, rather than including a generic description such as “Excellent communicator and relationship manager,” you can spice up this sentence and turn it into an “Accomplishment Statement” that will aid your resume in being noticed.

(Don’t forget to use strategic keywords!)

Example 1: Successful business development and account management helped to exceed annual sales target of \$X by 15% for the full financial year.

Example 2: Managed a team of 6 Sales Representatives in conducting product launches to increase new product penetration into the market leading to an overall increase of \$5 million over a 12 month period

Example 3: Part of the Project Management Team involved in the rollout of a 200 networks leading to a 10% increase in revenue and a further 20% in cost savings.

Proof and Evidence

Using numbers and evidence to back up your statements will aid your **resume application** and make your resume shine against other candidates. In the current economy where jobs are tough to get, you need to prove to the hiring manager you are the best candidate for the job and the best way to do this is to use numbers to back up your achievement statements.

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