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# Ten typical job search mistakes to avoid

If you're currently in the job market, how's your search progressing? Perhaps this column will shed a bit of light in your tunnel. In my experience as a career coach, résumé writer, LinkedIn profile developer and consultant, I have witnessed a myriad of mistakes job seekers make. Below are 10 of the most typical ones I've observed, coupled with some guidelines for successful navigation:

- **Lack of commitment** — Searching for a job is a job in itself. Applying for a job here and there while hoping for the best is not a winning formula. You need to commit a certain number of hours to doing something every day, i.e., connecting with someone in your network, searching online job boards, researching companies in your industry, or following up on emailed résumés when you have contact information. Most importantly, make a concerted effort to stay positive throughout the process.

- **Failure to network** — Do you think that contacting others is a burden to them? Generally, people want to help. Friends, acquaintances, colleagues and others you may know can help you develop job leads. You never know when someone will have that perfect lead just for you.

- **Poorly written résumé and cover letter** — If your documents are missing the mark, you will not get a callback. Your cover letter should highlight your skillset and competencies that show you are an ideal fit

for the position. The résumé should be results-oriented, and show key responsibilities and accomplishments that tune into the position you are applying for.

- **One-size-fits-all résumé strategy** — Avoid creating one generic résumé for targeting multiple objectives. In today's job market, it is not uncommon to have several résumés and cover letters, each customized to a specific position and highlighting the respective accomplishments and key responsibilities.

- **No diversity in your job search** — Restricting yourself to online job boards can be a huge mistake. Consider other effective strategies such as networking, recruiters, job fairs, LinkedIn and calling employers. Keep in mind that the old-fashioned method of simply visiting a prospective employer is still a viable option in some industries.

- **Lack of planning and focus** — When you fail to plan, you plan to fail. In addition, with a lack of focus, you may have a difficult time finding a job. Liken the job search to a marketing campaign with you as the product. Focus on the types of jobs you are interested in and qualified for, and then develop a game plan that will guide you to achieving your goals.

- **Nonexistent monitoring system** — Not having a system to track your efforts can cause lots of wasted time. Keep a log of when résumés were sent, dates of follow-up, callbacks,

etc. This process will enable you to observe how your job search is progressing and to make adjustments as necessary.

- **Ineffective online presence** — Are you using Facebook or LinkedIn? If so, how are they working? To enable these social networking websites to work for you in the job search process, make sure your information is professional with relevant material about your competencies and accomplishments in your areas of expertise.

- **Résumé posted on too many job sites** — This strategy can be self-defeating because you are unable to customize and target your résumé for a specific job opportunity. Your chances of being called for an interview can be greatly reduced. It's helpful to find "niche" sites that directly relate to your profession/industry.

- **Failure to send a follow-up note after interview** — Maintain your professional brand and put your name in front of the interviewer again by emailing a well-written follow-up note within 24 hours of the interview.

Searching for a job is generally never easy, regardless of your experience. Yet, knowing some of the mistakes to avoid can help you move in the right direction to conducting a search that can be both successful and rewarding.

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