



ASK THE EXPERTS

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JOB SEARCH

I feel stuck in my job search. What can I do to move forward?

Job searching is more than a checklist, it's a journey of personal growth. It can feel frustrating to put in the work but not see progress. These periods of feeling stalled often become a catalyst for reflection, clarity, and reinvention.

Here are five common reasons job seekers lose momentum, along with actionable steps to help you grow through the process, build confidence, and position yourself for your next opportunity.

1. Lack of Focus and Strategy

One of the most significant mistakes a job seeker can make is applying everywhere without a clear plan. This scattered approach wastes valuable time and energy while diluting your impact. Research shows that targeted job searches are significantly more effective than mass applications. [1]

Action Step: Identify your core skills, values, and career aspirations. Create a focused list of 10–15 target companies and specific roles that align with your goals. Dive deep into each organization's mission, recent news, and current challenges. Once you find a role at a targeted company, customize your resume and cover letter to demonstrate how you uniquely can contribute to the company's success in the role.

2. Lack of Consistency and Follow-Up

Job searching is a marathon, not a sprint. Without a consistent routine, it can be easy to lose momentum and feel overwhelmed. Maintaining steady, manageable daily activities helps sustain motivation and effectiveness throughout your search.

Action Step: Set realistic daily and weekly goals that align with your energy patterns and other commitments. Use spreadsheets, job search apps, or CRM systems to track applications, networking conversations, and follow-up communications. Consistency builds momentum and helps you identify patterns in your progress, allowing you to adjust your strategy as needed.

3. Weak Personal Branding

Employers won't recognize your unique value proposition if you can't clearly articulate what sets you apart from other candidates. In today's competitive market, a strong, consistent personal brand dramatically increases your visibility and your opportunities for job interviews.

Action Step: Refresh your LinkedIn About section to authentically tell your professional story and share your career aspirations. Develop a clear personal brand statement you can confidently deliver while networking and interviewing. Actively engage with relevant industry content by commenting thoughtfully and sharing insights to boost your visibility and establish credibility. Don't forget to ask former colleagues and managers for LinkedIn recommendations that showcase your skills and work style.

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4. Underutilizing Your Network

Here's a striking statistic: between 70% and 85% of jobs are filled through networking rather than traditional job applications or postings [2]. Yet many job seekers focus almost exclusively on online applications while neglecting the power of human connections. Remember: people hire people.

Action Step: Make networking a cornerstone of your job search strategy. Reconnect with former colleagues, join professional associations in your field, volunteer for causes you care about, and actively seek informational interviews. These meaningful connections often unlock opportunities that never reach public job boards. Attend virtual and in-person industry events to expand your reach and stay current with trends in your field.

5. Not Learning from Setbacks

Rejection is inevitable in job searching, but making repeated mistakes without reflection leads to frustration and stagnation. The most successful job seekers treat each setback as a learning opportunity and continuously refine their approach based on feedback.

Action Step: After each rejection or unsuccessful interview, refocus your energy and ask what you can learn from the experience. Keep a "lessons learned" journal to track patterns and celebrate progress. Remember, every setback is setting you up for a stronger comeback.

Moving Forward with Confidence

Job searching requires patience, persistence, and strategic thinking. Addressing these five common roadblocks will transform your approach from reactive to proactive. Clear these obstacles, nurture your professional growth, and watch your job search bloom with renewed energy and purpose. Stay persistent, keep learning from each experience, and celebrate small wins along the way — your next opportunity is closer than you think.

References

1. BioSpace, "[Benefits of a Targeted Job Search and How to Get Started](#)," October 2019
2. Forbes, "[Networking: It's Not What You Think](#)," October 2020

Career Experts Group "Your Career > Your Future" Newsletter Articles:

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