

Job Search Tips: Everything You Need To Know

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A *job search* can be stressful and overwhelming, especially during this COVID 19 pandemic. With most companies not operating, some closing down, and retrenching, you may even question whether it makes sense to continue to apply for positions. Yet, the rapidly changing work environment may also bring about new opportunities. Whilst some may have put a halt on recruitment, some are searching for people to fill in vacant positions.

Job searching or job hunting is not easy, especially in Zimbabwe where almost 90% of the population is unemployed, meaning competition is stiff when it comes to the vacant positions. According to Forbes, the competition when you apply for a job has dramatically increased. A typical online job ad receives about 250 resumes, but magnet companies like Apple, Google, Amazon, Facebook can get over 1,000 applications per opening. In this article we are going to share some important tips that can assist you in the *search* for a *suitable job*:

1. Know your career goals and have a plan

Before you start the job search, you need to have a plan. First, identify what type of career you want. This is particularly important for people entering the workforce for the first time or changing careers. Get recommendations from family, professors, career coach, or former coworkers. Make sure you have a clear and realistic goal, determine how you plan to reach it, and note what qualifies you for that career path. These steps can help you narrow your job search to positions you are passionate about and will help you advance professionally. Organize yourself and your schedule to search for jobs more efficiently.

Without having a destination in mind, you will lack focus and won't know where to invest your time. A big mistake job seekers make is applying to every position they come across. Focus on quality over quantity. Rather than just dedicating a specific number of hours to your *job search*, develop measurable milestones. Consider establishing concrete commitments on a daily or weekly basis for tasks such as:

- Sending out X number of resumes
- Researching X companies of interest
- Reconnecting with X former colleagues

Take small steps and be consistent in your efforts.

2. Create a winning CV

With so much competition for jobs out there, you must make sure you stand out amongst the crowd. That being said your CV must be able to attract the attention of the recruiter as soon as they lay their eyes on it. When you apply for a job via an online application process, likely, your resume will first be screened by an applicant tracking system and then (assuming you make this first cut) move onto human eyeballs. Your CV must be simple enough for both the computer and the human to quickly connect their “Here’s what we’re looking for” to your “Here’s what you can walk through our doors and deliver.” [Here is the basic guide to creating a winning CV.](#)

Your CV must be evidence-based showing that you have the requisite skills required by the job. List your achievements, use facts and figures to outline your achievements. Employers believe if you have made significant accomplishments in the past, you are likely to do the same for them (Ryan, 2020). Pay attention to the job ad and highlight the specific skills and experience that the employer wants, use evidence to highlight your expertise in the required areas. Your CV has to evoke the desire to meet you! A typical recruiter spends just 20 - 30 seconds reviewing your CV and immediately decides if you qualify or not, so your CV has attracted the right attention. [Here are the words not to put into your CV.](#)

3. Network regularly

The job you want may not be advertised at all. Networking leads to information and job leads, often before a formal job description is created or a job announced. According to Forbes Magazine, networking has been and still is the best way to land a new job. 70% of all jobs are never advertised. Begin by making a list of people you can ask for help. Look

at friends, neighbors, colleagues, and LinkedIn connections. Next, know the job you want and reach out to your network, asking for help. Using your contacts to ask for referrals to hiring managers, HR, or a recruiter pays off. According to the Career Pivot, referrals have a 50% chance of getting an interview, whereas others with no connections have only a 3%. Referrals are only 7% of the applicants, but Jobvite reports that 40% of new hires come from the referral pool.

Professional networking opens many doors in the form of career advice, lasting relationships and even landing your dream role. “I had to get over the feeling that it would be self-centered and unseemly to put myself out there in the media. I realized that my visibility is good for my company and the image of women in the business world in general. Seeing my media presence as a way to support my colleagues and other professional women freed me to take action and embrace connections I didn’t formerly

cultivate.” Andrea Stairs, Managing Director of eBay Canada

4. Establish yourself on Social Media

Your social media accounts reveal a lot about you and prospective employers are likely to seek that information out, looking for clues about your qualifications for the job or your fit with the corporate culture based on what you post online. According to a national Harris Poll survey on behalf of CareerBuilder, nearly half of hiring managers who use social media to screen candidates have found something that caused them to take someone out of the running for a job. The worst social media offenses? Provocative or inappropriate photos, videos, or information (46 percent) and information about drinking or using drugs (43 percent). [Here are the things you should never do on social media if you want to land your dream job.](#)

So, should you just lock down your social media profile? No. The CareerBuilder survey also found that a third of hiring managers who screen using social media found something on social that caused them to hire a candidate. (Newberry, 2017)

5. Harness the power of LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a crucial component of any *job search*. About 95% of recruiters utilize LinkedIn as a primary sourcing tool to find top-tier talent. If you’re a professional, you need to not only be on LinkedIn, you need to be using it to your full advantage. LinkedIn is the best resource available today for career and *job search* networking, for finding people working at companies of interest, and for positioning yourself to be found by a recruiter who has a relevant job opening.

Everyone needs to have a completed LinkedIn profile as part of their career management. 98% of recruiters say that they are looking for talent on LinkedIn. That means you must have an up-to-date profile, current photograph, SEO-effective headline, the right information under experience that will market you to the employer. Personal branding is essential in creating your LinkedIn profile. LinkedIn can provide you with a lot of connections and possible referrals in your *job search*.

6. Apply for jobs outside your field

This pandemic has taught us the need to be creative and flexible. With the pandemic, we have come to realize that jobs materialize and can vanish seemingly overnight as our economy shifts towards a digital future. Now is a good time to consider how your career will evolve. Evaluate your current skill set, and identify any soft skills or technical proficiencies that might translate to positions in other industries or disciplines. Make a list of your transferable skills. Perhaps you can utilize them in a new industry. Some examples could include creative, leadership, problem-solving, or analytical skills. Another option could be starting a business or looking into non-profit work. You could also set yourself up as a freelancer or contractor. View this as a chance to finally find a purpose and a paycheck.

7. Expand your skills

As organizations are transforming, this is the time to advance your skills. Jobs are transforming, see what new skills are being required, and find ways to advance your current skills. If you are just entering the workforce or starting a new career, you might need more training or experience to get a job. Consider getting an internship or volunteering with an organization in your desired industry while applying for jobs. Use these opportunities to expand your network of contacts or advance to a full-time position. You might also take online courses or attend workshops to build certain skills or learn technologies and processes relevant to your industry. Update your resume as you gain more experience or accomplishments.

Hiring managers also say they have their eye out right now for people who are good at remote work. Skills that make people successful at remote work include “resourcefulness, autonomy, self-motivation, proactive collaboration, and written and verbal communication,” says the Society for Human Resource Management. “Demonstrating an understanding of emerging technologies and trends can be a good way to get noticed by potential employers or clients, no matter your industry or specialization. That said, it’s important that you can go ‘beyond the buzzwords’ of things like artificial intelligence, machine learning, or robotic process automation,” says Morel, CEO of custom software development and business innovation consulting firm Frogslayer. Morel believes that candidates with practical technical skills will always have an advantage over those without them.

Data analysis from the Pew Research Center shows that job categories requiring social, technical, and analytical skills are growing significantly faster than the average for all job categories.

8. Create a winning CV

With the current COVID 19 pandemic most interviews are now taking place online. Have work stories ready about your accomplishments. Many times employers are asking situational questions, and you will need these stories to answer them appropriately. Write out your answers to questions in advance so that you can be ready to answer when you’re staring at them online. Make use of the STAR (**situation, task, action, and result**) model when addressing behavioral and situational interview questions. This method will help you prepare clear and concise responses using real-life examples. Hiring managers ask behavioral interview questions to determine whether you are the right fit for a job.

By using the STAR strategy, you can make sure you are fully addressing the interviewer’s question while also demonstrating how you were able to overcome previous challenges and be successful. While you will not know the interview questions ahead of time, most behavioral interviews will focus on various work-related challenges that demonstrate critical thinking and problem solving, and situations that showcase leadership skills, conflict resolution, and performance under pressure.

9. Practice video interviewing:

Given the current climate, you will likely be interviewing via Zoom, Skype, or some other video conferencing software. Don’t underestimate how unpredictable technology can be. Look for a location where you can control your lighting and surroundings. Test your internet speed to be sure it’s fast enough. Consider using an external microphone and webcam for better quality and do a complete run-

through at least the day before your interview. The number one thing recruiters say they hate to see in a video interview is distractions, so take steps to remove interruptions. Remember to look into the camera, smile, and have a positive attitude (Castrillon, 2020). [Here is how to do well in a virtual interview.](#)

Remember, a recruiter can tell when a job seeker is just submitting their resume to "see what happens" or just taking chances versus someone who has done their homework and is genuinely excited about the position. So choose carefully. Apply for roles where you know you can knock it out of the park and add value. Do your research, organize your time, and, most importantly, don't give up!

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