

Make Looking for a Job Your Full-Time Job



By Caroline Levchuck

Looking for a job is a challenge -- especially right now.

And out-of-work job seekers face another challenge all their own: Managing their time wisely and resisting the temptations found at home, such as sleeping, watching television or simply slacking off.

Poor time management leads to poor job search results. So to keep your search moving, you need to treat it like a job itself.

Be Your Own Boss

Think you're unemployed? Think again.

You've got a full-time job: Your job search. You've just become your own boss and your job is to land your next paid position.

Looking for work is serious work, so it's important to give it all the attention it deserves. First, decide what hours you'll devote to your search and commit to keeping that schedule just as though you were reporting to a "real" job.

Then, try tailoring your schedule even more. Allot time each day to specific tasks, such as networking, responding to job ads, and researching companies. Doing so will help you avoid distractions and stay on track throughout the day.

Get Organized

An organized job search can be crucial to your success.

Start with your office space. Even if you don't have an actual office, designate your work area, complete with computer, phone and filing space if you can. Every time you sit in your "office," you'll feel like you're on the job.

Next, create a system to keep track of your leads, the job ads to which you've responded and the companies you're interested in. Having this information at your fingertips is especially helpful if you've tailored your resume or cover letter to suit a certain position. When a recruiter calls, you'll know instantly and precisely how to respond.

Set Goals

The ultimate goal is to find the job of your dreams.

But until that happens -- and to help it happen -- set small weekly goals for yourself. Agree to send out a certain number of resumes each week. Promise to make five follow-up phone calls a week. Vow to set up at least one interview -- informational or otherwise -- every week.

Whatever your goals are, make sure they're realistic. That way, you'll be more likely to keep them. Write them down and keep the list where you can see it. Cross items off as you go for a feeling of instant accomplishment.

Also, if you need some support, ask for it. Find a friend in a similar situation and share your success at fulfilling your weekly job search goals.

Take a Day Off

All work and no job can make anyone cranky.

Take a day off. In fact, take two. You've earned it. And you might not get the chance again once you land your next job.

See a movie. Sleep in. Visit an old friend. Clean out your closets. Or just relax.

You might even consider limiting your job search to four days a week -- or even three. Use the rest of your time to do the things you never had time to do. Exercise on a regular basis. Volunteer in your community. Spend more time with your family.

Do whatever makes you feel good because a positive outlook will sustain you as you're hard at work looking for work.