

# Why Your Job Search Isn't Working

**6 mistakes you're probably making and how to fix them**

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**I**t's easy to think that your lack of success in finding a new job has nothing to do with you. After all, this is a tough economy and everyone is struggling, right?

Actually no. Even in this terrible economy, there are people who don't have a hard time finding a new job - people who get calls for interviews and job offers within just a few weeks of starting their search.

If you're not one of them, the truth is you're probably making some fundamental mistakes. Don't worry - you're not alone. Most people get the job search process all wrong.

I'm Louise Fletcher and I co-founded Blue Sky Resumes. I've been involved in the recruitment process in one way or another for over 20 years – first as an HR executive and then as a professional resume writer.

During that time I've seen people make the same mistakes over and over again. Actually, that's one of the reasons I started my company and it's the main reason I love my work. Because once we teach people what they're doing wrong and show them how to fix it, their lives change.

Instead of feeling dispirited and demoralized by the job search process, they feel energized and excited. It sounds odd to say that learning you're doing everything wrong is a positive experience, but it really is! Because once you understand your mistakes, you also realize that simple changes will make a huge difference to the results you're seeing.

There are many ways to go wrong in a job search, but for this free report I've chosen a few of the ones I come across regularly. I've also suggested some fixes that I hope you'll try out because I know you'll be amazed at the results. And when we're done, I'll suggest some great resources that can help you take things to the next level and get a huge edge over your competition.

So here are six of the most common mistakes I see.

## Mistake #1: Applying for jobs

Wait ... how can it be a mistake to apply for jobs? Isn't that what a job search is all about?

Well let me ask you this ... did you know that some surveys show that up to 80% of vacant jobs are filled without ever being advertised?

These jobs are filled by professional recruiters or through an employee/customer referral or from the company's existing database of candidates or by an internal employee or even by a complete stranger whose resume simply arrived at the perfect time.



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Hiring via advertising is a costly and time-consuming process that most companies prefer to avoid if they can. So if the perfect candidate is available without the hassle of going through a lengthy search, that person is often hired right away – without anyone else ever hearing about that job.

Think about it. While you are spending time trawling through job listings on Monster.com, people are getting hired all around you, many of them in jobs you would have been able to do just as well.

It would be a much more effective use of time to step away from the online job boards and do some research yourself on the types of companies who might hire someone with your skills.

## To Do:

Make a list of companies you would like to work for and then simply write them a letter or email explaining why with a copy of your resume. This strategy is always much more effective if you can reach the decision-makers within the company rather than the HR department and often some good internet research skills can turn up these names.

For example, LinkedIn's "companies" pages are an amazing research tool. You can search companies on LinkedIn using all kinds of criteria such as location, company size, industry etc., and even find the names of people who might be able to hire you.

And if you have good Google skills, try running searches for executives within the types of companies you'd like to work for.

## Mistake #2: Setting Out Without a Map

In the 1990s, I lived in Canada for a while and my family used to come and visit from the UK. My dad and brother would always embark on long drives to somewhere in Canada or America and they never took a map. They always said it was much more interesting to just drive and see what they came across.

The problem was that they often missed whole cities just because they didn't know how to get to them. It became a running joke in our family to list the places they had driven by without stopping (Boston, Montreal and Quebec were three of the biggest).

Well, looking for a job is similar to going out on a long drive. As Lewis Carroll once said "if you don't know where you're going, any road will get you there."

### **"But I need a job ... any job!"**

For most people, the extent of their thinking about what to do next is "I need a job."

If 'a job' is your only defined goal, it's really tough to conduct an effective search. Everything you do will be reactive rather than proactive. You won't be able to develop a plan. You won't know where to look for possible vacancies. And you won't know how to write a resume that appeals to your target employers (how can you target something you haven't even defined?).

This doesn't mean you have to have only one destination – perhaps you have several career goals, all attainable because of varied prior experience. If so, define those various goals before you start and then work towards each of them, using a different resume for each and sourcing opportunities in different places.

But just as getting in a car and just driving is unlikely to take you to a great destination, just starting a job search without defining the type of job you want to be doing isn't going to get you a job you love.


### To Do:

As you define your perfect job, think about more than just the title. What kind of work will you be doing? What kind of people will you be working with? What is the company culture like? How far is it from your home? The more specific you are, the easier it will be to conduct an effective search.

## Mistake #3: Writing a 'cookie cutter' resume

Is your resume truly compelling? Does it set you apart? Does it communicate exactly why an employer should interview you and nobody else? Has it been tailored to suit the types of positions you're targeting?

If you didn't answer "yes" to this question, you honestly are not ready for a job search. After all, you wouldn't go to a job interview without dressing up in your best clothes so why send out a resume that isn't making you look your very best?



A bad resume is  
the most common  
mistake of all

But if your resume isn't great, you are definitely not alone. I think a bad resume is possibly the most common job seeker mistake of them all. I've seen thousands of resumes over the years and very few of them were impressive enough to excite a recruiter.

And if the recruiter doesn't look at your resume and feel excited to meet you, why would he or she make the effort to call?

To understand how important your resume is, you have to put yourself in the shoes of the busy recruiter or manager looking to fill a position. She receives hundreds of responses to her advertisement and she barely has time to review them because she is so busy with a million other demands on her time. When she finally does find ten minutes to sit down and look at the influx of emailed resumes in her inbox, she is usually only half-paying attention (if you've ever hired someone, you can probably recognize yourself in this description). Because time is tight, she spends no more than 10 to 20 seconds on each one. If something grabs her attention, it goes in the 'maybe' bucket for further review. If it doesn't, it most likely gets deleted.

You can be the best-qualified person in the world, but if your resume doesn't say this clearly and powerfully in the first 20 seconds, you'll never get a chance to prove it.

### To Do:

Before doing anything else, do yourself a favor and sign up for my [free resume writing and job search tips](#). Over 12 days, I'll send you 12 of my best tips completely free of charge. The whole first half of the course is about resume development and I know you'll find it helpful. Just making these changes will change your response rate, even if you do nothing else.

## Mistake #4: Missing Out on LinkedIn

If I had a dime for every time someone without a LinkedIn profile told me that they're getting nowhere with their search despite doing *everything possible*, I'd be rich.

But the truth is that if you're not on LinkedIn, not only are you not doing "everything possible," you're not even doing the bare minimum.

LinkedIn is the #1 business-networking site in the world and it's a primary source of candidates for recruiters. They are scouring the site looking for people just like you. If you're not there, they'll find someone else.

Once of my friends resisted setting up a LinkedIn profile for months. He's in the UK and he told me "we just don't use LinkedIn here the way you do there." Finally he got tired of my nagging and he let me write his profile. Within two weeks he heard from a former colleague (I'm not exaggerating). This person had since moved to another company and earned a promotion. He was now looking to hire someone to work for him, but needed a

very specific skill set. The note he wrote my friend said ‘thank goodness I found you. I have the perfect opportunity for you and I’d like to see if you’re interested.’

If that story sounds too good to be true, it’s not. It happens all the time to people who create a powerful profile.

And the benefits of LinkedIn go far beyond having your profile discovered by a recruiter. You can track down old colleagues and reconnect, giving you access to lots more potential job opportunities. You can join groups to meet people in your industry. You can make connections with industry thought leaders. You can research potential employers to prepare for interviews ... the list goes on.

You owe it to yourself to set up the best possible LinkedIn profile you can (fully optimized for search), to make as many good connections as possible, and to fully utilize all the available job search tools.

#### **To Do:**

For some solid tips on writing an excellent LinkedIn profile, check out [this article](#) and then get to work!

## **Mistake #5: Using the Web Reactively rather than Proactively**

LinkedIn is fabulous, but if you want the best results, it’s only part of your online story.

We’ve already discussed why Internet job boards are a waste of time. But that doesn’t mean time spent on the web is a waste of time.

There are a growing number of people who secured their jobs via new media. People who built a reputation for their professional knowledge by writing a blog. People who made lots of connections using tools like Twitter. And people who showcased their work using free sites like VisualCV or Flickr.

If you’re already familiar with blogging and social media, this may already be making a lot of sense to you. But if you’re not involved in any of those sites right now, trust me you should be.

One of the most powerful strategies I know for building a successful career is what I call the ‘expert strategy.’

This strategy can be used by anyone – from entry-level to senior executive – to showcase your professional skills and knowledge. The idea is simple: Use free and easy web tools to share your knowledge with others. Over time you will make good professional connections and build a following.

Your well-read blog, or popular Twitter page will result in people approaching you with opportunities rather than the other way around. And on those occasions when you are pursuing a position, you will be able to point the hiring manager or recruiter to your blog so that he can see your knowledge, passion and commitment.

### To Do:

To learn more about how social media can help you find your next job, check out [this article](#).

## Mistake #6: Not Using (or under-using) Professional Recruiters

Some job seekers look upon professional recruiters negatively. Others don't understand the important role they play. And some people feel that knowing one recruiter is enough.

All of these beliefs are mistaken, and all cost people jobs. That's because recruiters (also known as headhunters or recruiting agencies) have access to job opportunities that are not available anywhere else. They

are hired by companies to fill positions that the company can't fill any other way.



Understanding how recruiters work will help you understand how to work with them to get what you need.

Recruiters are hired and paid by the employer. There are two types of recruiters: Retained recruiters are paid 30% upfront, 30% in the middle of the search, and 30% at the end. Contingency recruiters are paid nothing upfront and only earn their fee when

their candidate accepts a position. But either way, the recruiter's loyalty is to the employer who is paying him.

This means he doesn't really care about you. He isn't going to 'help you find a job' – he's going to look at your resume and see if it would be a match for any of the vacant positions he has been hired to fill. If it is, he will call you. If it's not he won't.

This is entirely understandable. He has to earn a living and he can't do that unless he pleases his clients. Therefore, you mustn't take it personally or get angry when a recruiter isn't interested in you. It's not a reflection on your skills or your experience – it's simply a reflection on what he is looking for at that moment.

And you also mustn't limit your contact to one or two recruiters, because each recruiter is trying to fill different vacancies. To access all the vacancies available to you, you would need to reach every single recruiter in the country.

Most recruiters specialize in a specific field or industry (for example, they hire only sales people, or they work only within the retail industry) and they are therefore not interested in candidates who don't work in that field or industry.

This means that a key element in a successful search is identifying all the recruiters who may be looking for someone just like you, and making sure they receive a copy of your resume.

### **To Do:**

Set aside some time to research and find recruiters using sites such as [My Resume Agent](#) or [searchfirm.com](#) Find as many as you can who specialize in your field and then make contact, either by sending an email copy of your resume, or by networking to get to know them.

Work on this diligently every chance you get. These connections will pay off for years.



## Don't suffer from Reactive Job Search Syndrome!

Each of these 6 mistakes falls under what I call "Reactive Job Search Syndrome." Perhaps out of lack of knowledge, perhaps out of laziness, or perhaps because she has become dispirited, the average job seeker reacts to circumstances when looking for a job, rather than proactively taking control and making things happen.

But realizing that you don't have to follow the same rules as everyone else can be incredibly freeing. All of a sudden you have new options and can take positive steps to change the results you've been getting.

That's why I said at the start of this report that finding out you've been doing things the wrong way is a GOOD thing. Because now you can start doing them the right way.

## Do you need more help?

If all of this sounds positive but a little bit overwhelming, don't worry.

I'm the author of a unique series of job search guides designed for those job seekers who want to kick their job search into a new gear and take control of their careers.

The guides don't include any of the generic job search advice you find in a thousand other places. Instead they offer comprehensive, step-by-step systems filled with real-world examples and common sense advice.

There are three guides currently (with more on the way) and I stand by them all with a no-questions-asked money back guarantee. They are:

- [The Blue Sky Guide to Resume Writing](#)  
*Everything you need to give your resume the boost it needs to inspire hiring managers to call you – and call you first.*
- [The Blue Sky Guide to LinkedIn](#)  
*How to increase your visibility, find the best jobs, and set up a profile that attracts the attention of recruiters and hiring managers.*

- [The Blue Sky Guide to Job Search](#)

*How to find – and win – the best jobs, often before anyone else knows about them!*

The guides are based on the way we work with our Blue Sky Resumes clients. They outline straightforward strategies that have worked for thousands of people and, if you follow the step-by-step instructions, they will work for you too.

And of course, if you need professional help with any aspect of your job search, don't hesitate to contact us at [info@blueskyresumes.com](mailto:info@blueskyresumes.com), or 914-595-1905.

I hope this free report has been helpful and I wish you nothing but success in your search.

Warm regards,

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