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## 10 Tips for the Unemployed Job Seeker

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## 10 Tips for the Unemployed Job Seeker

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JULY 25, 2007

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Whether you're out of work by circumstance or by choice, there are several things you can learn from the job search experiences of others. Each of the job searchers featured in this article was out of work for at least 4 months. In fact, one participant hadn't had a paying job in over 20 years! Their search experiences are unique, yet have similar themes. You can learn from their successes as well as their blunders.

### 1. No Matter Your Timeline, Get Your Name Out.

When Christine, a technology consultant, was laid off, she decided to take the summer to enjoy some free time. But, she didn't want to miss any great opportunities, so she distributed her resume to recruiters that specialized in her field. This strategy worked to her advantage -- recruiters called her for interviews, and she was able to demonstrate her expertise without feeling pressured to pursue every position.

Donna, on the other hand, wishes she had done more in the early days of her search. Although she had 30-days notice before her medical research job was eliminated, she waited a bit before aggressively pursuing new opportunities. Donna only casually looked at job boards and didn't reach out to her network right away. "I thought it was going to be much

easier than it was," she says.

## 2. Stay Up to Date in Your Field.

Take courses that support your career goals and advance your skill set. Like Alexis, for example -- when she decided to re-enter the corporate world after taking several years off to raise her children, the first thing she did was sign up for real estate courses to obtain her real estate sales license. She realized just how much she no longer knew, so she also began reading real estate and business magazines to supplement her education. "The market changed drastically since my previous career as a relocation specialist," she shares. "I wanted to be sure I could establish credibility during interviews."

## 3. Keep Tabs on the Job Market.

Peruse job ads and talk with professionals on a regular basis. Our job seeker, Donna, was a bit surprised when she started her search. She didn't realize how specialized and small her field had become. Donna quickly discovered that she needed to expand her job search to get exposure and generate employers' interest in her area of expertise. Shortly after pursuing an expanded list of opportunities, she landed a job and is now enjoying her new challenges.

## 4. Get Expert Assistance.

Aligning yourself with a good recruiter is important, but giving them a professional resume and cover letter that immediately tells them what they need to know is absolutely vital. For this reason, consider working with an expert. Alexis found her functional resume prepared by a professional, worked well -- employers didn't even realize she'd been out of work for over 20 years. Daryl, a pharmaceutical sales representative out of work for two years to care for a sick family member, said, "My professionally written resume got me attention from employers, but I also used a coach to refine my interviewing skills."

## 5. Use Your Network.

Cultivating your network is instrumental throughout your career, not just in your time of need. Join networking groups, stay in touch with former managers, and reach out to associates in related fields regularly. Daryl landed three interviews by reaching out to his network, which included several former coworkers. These people knew his reputation and performance record so they happily introduced him to hiring managers.

## 6. Set Goals.

It takes time to seek out job opportunities, network with people, and write cover letters.

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Create daily and weekly performance plans to develop structure to your search and to keep your time focused. Donna found her daily to-do list helped keep her motivated and on track.

7. **Be Aggressive.**

Checking-in regularly (but appropriately) with hiring managers is a great way to keep your name in front of potential employers. Alexis was assertive. She recalls, "I called companies after submitting my resume to inquire about an interview and next steps." This strategy worked well; it demonstrated her follow up and cold-calling skills -- two strengths required in the real estate business -- and she is now doing well at a prestigious, boutique real estate firm.

8. **Don't Act on Fear.**

When faced with the choice of a "not so ideal" job and another month of unemployment, it is easy to give-in and accept a job that isn't really what you want. The problem is that you're probably not going to be happy, and then you'll just find yourself right back on the unemployment line.

Donna found herself in this very situation. Since her field was so competitive, she feared that the "ideal" job was never going to come along, even after she had broadened her search. At one point, she said, "I was tempted to accept a job that would have provided an income, but which I would have hated." After taking stock of her goals, she held out for the position that more closely matched her target. And this decision has made all the difference.

9. **Know When to Compromise.**

Christina had the finances she needed to sustain an extended job search, but she found that she soon had to adjust her idea of the perfect job. From the start of her search, she had a vision of her ideal job -- the position, industry, and pay scale. When she was offered a position that met the first two criteria but was less money than she wanted, she wondered if she should accept the job. She ultimately declined. The result? A month later, the same company came back to her with another position. This time she says, "The money was right and the industry was perfect; I compromised a little on the scope of work, but I am happy with my decision."

10. **Do What You Love.**

Daryl knows himself. He knows that he needs to feel passionate about the products offered by potential employers or he just won't perform well. When a job surfaced that required selling a line of products he was not familiar with -- nor had interest in -- he thought he could fake it, but ultimately cut things off. "I thanked the recruiter for her time and told her the company wasn't the right fit me," he says. A short while later, Daryl had an interview with a prestigious company he had always admired -- a position he found out about through a

former colleague -- and is now happily working for them!

Being out of work is terrifying for some people, but being miserable in a job you hate can be even worse. Follow our featured job seekers' advice, and you can be just as happy as they are. Best of luck!

Kimberly Schneiderman is owner of [City Career Services](#), a company that provides job search tools including [Resumes](#), [Cover Letters](#), and [Interview Workshops](#) to goal-oriented professionals at all levels and across all industries.

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