

Job Search Tips During A Pandemic



In the middle of an economic slowdown caused by a pandemic, it is important to think about the ways you still have control. You can improve what you are able to offer employers, and network online to build better professional relationships. When you begin to lay the groundwork, you will see all kinds of possible doors open once the situation improves.

If you were actively job searching, or maybe you are now, should you continue to send out resumes? Should you start now? Or is it smarter to suspend the activity? Career experts are of the opinion that it makes sense to continue to network and apply to open job opportunities. You do need to change the way you approach the application process, however, in acknowledgment of the uncertainties of the times. It is safe to assume many businesses will begin hiring again at some point, once the uncertainties start to clear up and when you keep up your relationship-building efforts, you're likely to be in a better position to be hired when hiring restarts.

Here are some tips on how to navigate the job search during a pandemic:

Think about how urgent it really is for you to find a new job.

If you do not have a job right now, your aim *should not* be to hold out for the perfect job, which is likely to be difficult. Instead, it would make sense to accept anything reasonably promising and to think of it as a stopgap job until the economy improves, and you have better choices.

Do your networking online.

Professional groups on Facebook and LinkedIn can be good places to start. Both platforms offer a wide range of options with groups for every profession. If you are an accounting or finance student/graduate, for instance, LinkedIn has the Super CFO Group that you could join. If you are more focused on tax, LinkedIn's Tax Professionals Group has more than 105,000 members. Marketing students/graduates have the Group for Global Marketing and Communications Professionals. No matter what your major or career goals are, there is a high probability that there is a group to match your interests. All you need to do is to join, post, read, comment, and stay visible.

It can also help to gain practice doing networking chats and virtual informational interviews with UCF Alumni, your OPD career coaches or even your friends for as long as it takes you to handle these processes well. Your

friends and career coaches could ask you questions, and give you feedback on what they think of your replies. Once you have learned how to ace these processes, you could invite your contacts on professional groups and forums to virtual meetings.

Stay in contact.

Perhaps you had a great interview recently, and it seemed as if there was a job offer in sight, but all of it evaporated with the current situation. You might be able to salvage it. It could help to get in touch with the hiring manager over email. It could also help to stay in touch over LinkedIn. Let the person know you understand it's difficult for the company to adjust to new realities in the midst of a pandemic, and tell them that you would be happy to learn more about how to contribute to the organization when the situation calms down.

Find out about the culture at different companies.

A pandemic in progress can give you unique windows into the cultures at different companies. When you follow companies on social media at these times, you gain an idea of how they treat their employees. For instance, do they lay off employees during a pandemic, give them the opportunity to work from home, or offer support in other creative ways? When you finally have a chance to interview at any one of these companies, you will be able to demonstrate that you are familiar with the challenges that the company faces.

Develop your skills.

When the job market slows down amid a pandemic, it can be the perfect opportunity to gain new skills and qualifications. It can help to look at job listings, find out what skills are called for in different roles you are interested in, and see if you can enroll in a course to gain them. LinkedIn Learning (which is free to you as a UCF student) is another great way to gain that knowledge. This site allows you to gain certificates after completing several learning modules within a specific content area. Udemy and Pluralsight are two additional sites that are similar to LinkedIn Learning, however you do have to pay a small amount for these services. Udemy and Pluralsight are recommended when you are looking for something less common that you may not find on the free sites, or if you no longer have free access to LinkedIn Learning.

Use various job search sites.

Create and update your profile on various job search websites (LinkedIn, ZipRecruiter, Glassdoor.com, SimplyHired etc.). Most of these job search sites have features for you to set your career interests, job search and notification preferences. Take advantage of those features so that you can receive daily or weekly notifications about job openings that fit your desired career interests.

For additional information on job searching thru the challenges of this job market, check out LinkedIn's Blog and videos: <https://blog.linkedin.com/2020/march/26/resources-to-help-you-navigate-the-challenges-of-todays-job-market>