

# The 7 Job Hunting Mistakes That Keep You Out of Work

Over the years, I have seen people make the same job hunting mistakes over and over. In good times they aren't too costly but in bad times they can greatly prolong or even scuttle your job hunt.

There are actually DOZENS of mistakes I see all the time. In fact, the HARDEST part about writing this report was limiting myself to ONLY 7 mistakes. These, I believe, are the worst.

Why are they the worse?

They are the worst because: 1) They are the most frequently committed mistakes even among experts (sometimes they are the WORST offenders). Some of these mistakes are committed virtually all the time (oftentimes the successful job hunter is simply the one who commits the LEAST mistakes)., 2) The consequences of these mistakes are often severe and 3) Virtually no one, even experts, ever talks about them so they tend to be committed again and again. A truly terrible combination of your job hunt.

## **Mistake #1: Answering questions when you aren't sure what they are asking.**

This one is **UNBELIEVABLY** deadly- and almost everyone does it. You can easily filter blow yourself out by doing this. You can inadvertently volunteer unnecessary information that gets you screened out. I can't count the number of times I have seen people do this.

One of the big things I teach is how to spot and deal with "killer questions". Just one of these questions, if not handled properly, can end an interview.

The simple truth is that RARELY is the question they initially ask the REAL question they want to ask. Most of the time, the interviewer really doesn't know what specific information he wants- or he/ she has a vague idea at best. I teach my clients ways to gently help the interviewer find the REAL question- "the question behind the question".

This approach has many advantages. By answering the real question you often have a huge advantage over everyone who answers the initial, superficial question. You also minimize the chances of screening yourself out. Further, you can often find out what you need to do to get the job.

**DO NOT TAKE THE INTERVIEWER'S QUESTIONS AT FACE VALUE!!** This is especially deadly on phone interviews. Don't assume you know what the interviewer is asking. You don't unless you are a mind reader.

This brings up another, related mistake: **Almost all job hunters talk WAY too much!!** Job hunters often talk themselves out of a job. In fact, if they would simply listen better they would often get the interviewer to "sell" them job- or at least to give you a clear roadmap as to what you would have to do to get the job. This is why I teach "strategic silence" along with various techniques to getting the other person to open up to you. So few people do this that it gives you a HUGE advantage.

## **Mistake #2: Job Begging not Job Hunting.**

No one wants to hire a beggar. If you are too compliant you can come off as a supplicant. People respect what you inspect. Ask good questions of them. Don't be so quick to volunteer information or to re-arrange your schedule for an interview. You will be respected more if you stand your ground.

Don't be so willing to accept the first interview time they offer. You are busy (even if you are not) and you need to check your schedule. Winners are busy, losers aren't. Winners aren't so quick to compromise, losers are.

Remember!! **Virtually everyone** wants a winner- especially in bad times. You must communicate in both subtle and obvious ways that you are a winner if you are going to get a job in a competitive environment. One of the big things I coach is how to come off as a winner.

There are literally dozens of ways you can subtly communicate that you are desperate (i.e., a loser)- and no one wants to hire a desperate person. This is why it is easier to get a job when you have a job.

One of the most important things is that you come off as calm and relaxed when talking with a prospective employer. When you are nervous you make them nervous- and the LAST thing they want to be is nervous. It is far easier to cull you out.

As you might REALLY be desperate I often give my clients a series of exercises to do so they don't come off as desperate. I also help them increase the number of prospective employers they have so they really aren't desperate.

## **Mistake #3: Making it hard on yourself/ not having fun.**

There is no law that says that job hunting has to be hard. A lot of people make it far harder than it has to be by not finding ways of enjoying it. As we tend to avoid doing things we don't like this leads to doing very little actual job hunting and lots of procrastination. Also, we tend to be ineffective at things we don't enjoy. A double whammy.

Believe it or not, job hunting can actually be fun (or at least not that painful).

How is that?

By focusing on activities that you enjoy that are effective for your job hunt you can be "enjoyably effective". If you focus on the right activities that you enjoy you can often speed up your job hunt immeasurably.

One of the most enjoyable things I do is help my clients see how that can have fun job hunting by working with their basic strengths and temperament. This way they not only do a lot more job hunting they are a lot more effective when they are hunting.

Think of it this way: a lot of people have a lot of fun at work (especially bosses!) and they want to hire people they can have fun with (along with being able to do the job, of course). If you don't believe me, [www.TheNoBSJobHuntingCoach.com](http://www.TheNoBSJobHuntingCoach.com) call (866) 757-7495 or email [info@TheNoBSJobHuntingCoach.com](mailto:info@TheNoBSJobHuntingCoach.com) to set up a free 30 minute job hunting coaching call; Copyright © 2009 by Roger North pg. 2 of 7

ask yourself: did the senior management at your last job look like they were often having fun? I bet they often did. Oftentimes you can hear them joking around during meetings (along with getting a lot of work done!). That is one of the reasons they rose to those positions in the first place.

The LAST thing that they want to do is hire a dull, boring person. This is where conventional job hunting advice is the worst because it teaches you to be dull and “play it safe” (just like everybody else). With few exceptions, no one wants to hire a dull person. It brings down the atmosphere of the work environment. After all, they have to work with the person they hire.

**Mistake #4: Not taking an inventory of all of your resources and using what you have; not CONSISTENTLY focusing on what they have.**

You have an amazing amount of resources at your disposal- **if only you will focus on them.** These include, but are not limited to- your skills, your contacts, your knowledge, and your network. Your job hunt, and thus your job, has to be tailored for who you are to really work for you for you to get the best result. To do this you have to focus on what you have, what you can easily get and on your strengths in general.

In other words, you need to play a winnable game.

My clients find that this is often their favorite step. They often find that they have far more resources than they ever knew. Furthermore, because they have it written down they can go about utilizing their resources in a most effective manner. In fact, when you realize all that you have it is invigorating.

The bottom line is you can only use what you acknowledge having. You have to be consciously aware of resources and opportunities to use them.

Because of this I have developed a series of tools to help my clients. For example, I have a series of work sheets that I provide are comprehensive they know that they have a systematic inventory of all of their resources. This can help them in other areas of their life.

You can only build from what you already have. You can only build from strengths. This is yet again another reason that doing an inventory is so important. It is also an unbelievable morale booster. It also makes you unbelievably appreciative of what you have.

**Mistake #5: Using only a few, badly overused methods to find a job; not using a variety of methods consistently.**

Most people only use a handful of old, tired job hunting methods.

Unfortunately, these are the same methods used by virtually everyone else. This guarantees you the maximum amount of competition and thus makes your life as hard as possible. In a bad economy this virtually guarantees a LONG job hunt.

Why would you want to do this to yourself?

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Using conventional methods is also a TERRIBLE idea in a bad economy.

It is also unnecessary as there are literally dozens, if not hundreds, of ways of getting a job that virtually no one uses. By using these methods you tap into the 85% of jobs that aren't advertised – the "hidden" job market. You eliminate most, if not all, of your competition. Plus, employers would rather hire people who use unconventional methods.

Why is that?

There are many reasons. These include: 1) employers hate having to hire using conventional methods of hiring as it is a major distraction from their operations and they are not sure of what they are getting when they do hire, 2) job hunters that use unconventional methods are showing a lot more initiative and intelligence than the vast majority of job hunters- qualities that almost all employers value, 3) these methods allow the prospective employer to get far more comfortable with you than conventional methods and 4) they show that they really want that job.

On top of that, some of them are FUN. I literally could write a book on all of the "secret" methods of job hunting I have learned over the years. In fact, one of the great breakthroughs that often occurs is when I find the right method or methods for them. You don't need dozens of unconventional methods- just one or two that you like. That can totally take your job hunt to the next level.

#### **Mistake #6: Going it alone.**

Job hunting is a marathon, not a sprint. You are making it hard on yourself by going it alone.

You need emotional support. You need objective feedback. Many people also need someone else to be accountable to so that they will stay on track. By being accountable to someone on an ongoing basis many people find that they are far more efficient.

This is one of the reasons that people are often far more effective on the job than when job hunting.

Also, having other people involved helps you to better structure your job hunt. In fact, one of my big functions is to help people structure their job hunt so they can be far more effective than they can be on their own. It can also help cut down on procrastination.

Further, you need individualized attention on an ongoing basis to keep you on track.

A lot of my clients say this is perhaps the greatest value add. It helps them to feel more in control because they have someone to talk to. They like being able to bounce ideas off of someone who has the experience and the expertise to really evaluate their ideas.

**Mistake #7: Not seeing yourself the way that a prospective employer does. Not focusing on your strengths. Not focusing on how you can solve the problems of your prospective employer.**

The simple reality is that to a prospective employer you are a provider of services. You are a product. You are there to solve some of their problems. In effect, your salary and benefits are “rent” that he or she pays for the privilege of using your services.

You need to be asking yourself: What problems do you solve for your prospective employer? How do you add the greatest value to their lives? How does the prospective employer see me?

It is very hard to be objective about yourself. One of the homework assignments I give my clients is to help them see themselves through their prospective employers eyes. One of my functions is to be that objective viewpoint on an ongoing basis.

Having that objective viewpoint helps in all types of interactions with prospective employers or with your contact- whether writing resumes, interviewing, talking to on the phone. Another great advantage is that you are better able to target your job hunt and talk in terms of the prospective employer’s interests. Prospective employers find this refreshing as most job hunters are very self absorbed. After all, who would you rather hire: a self absorbed person or one who understands your point of view?

Another advantage is that you get more flexible in your job hunt. You see that there are a variety of ways you can apply what you have. Especially in bad times, flexibility is power.

Also, you make money off of your strengths, not your weaknesses. This is why you need to spend the vast majority of your time focusing on your strengths. Besides, it is a lot more profitable to make your strengths stronger than trying to minimize your weaknesses- as long as they are not too egregious.

**Some other mistakes**

As there are literally dozens of other mistakes I see all the time, I wanted to briefly mention a couple of other mistakes I see all the time.

**Mistake: Not focusing on high value added tasks**

This was hinted at above but it bears repeating. You need to focus on the highest and best use of your time. The best way to determine that is by looking at your past results.

Part of my assessment process is helping my clients determine what is the highest and best use of their time. One of the things I see all the time is job hunters wasting an unbelievable amount of their time on low value or no value tasks. This greatly prolongs your job hunt. It also causes you to spend a lot of time on things that you probably don’t enjoy. In other words, you take a double loss.

This is why I have developed a whole series of tools to keep you on track, keep you focused on that which is the highest and best use of your time- based on your strengths and temperament. I want to make you “enjoyably effective” as much as possible.

### **Mistake: Playing it safe**

**Harsh reality: your real problem is not offending the interviewer but them forgetting about you.** After all, they are DELUGED with job hunters. And they don't remember the names of over 90% of job hunters they talk to.

The more competitive the environment the more dangerous it is to play it safe.

If you give the same tired, old, play-it- safe answers that everyone else does they will soon forget you. The same applies with resumes. **They are so busy telling you to play it safe that you are immediately forgotten.**

The reality is that you have to take some risks to succeed. The trick is to stand out without coming off as weird. This is where some objective advice can come in very helpful.

This is also another major area I help my clients work with. There is a fine art to coming off as a little bit different yet still coming off as a normal person (and a memorable one too!).

### **Mistake: Not focusing on what has worked in the past**

The best person to role model is yourself. Focus on what has worked for you in the past!! If you have gotten your last 3 jobs through friends maybe you shouldn't be spending too much time on want ads.

#### **Do what works for you.**

Oftentimes, just by helping my clients review past successful job hunts we quickly find ways that they can be far more effective than what they are doing now. They will often have something that they casually, "accidentally" or instinctively worked the best. Ironically, they often forget about their own far more effective methods until I coach them.

### **Need help with your job hunt?**

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Note: As these calls are scheduled on a "first come, first serve basis", I can't guarantee I can accommodate everyone.

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