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The 10 Best And Worst Ways To Look For A Job



Next Avenue, Contributor

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(This article about job hunting is adapted from [What Color Is Your Parachute? 2017 Edition](#) by Richard N. Bolles.)

Some of the 10 traditional job hunting methods that follow have a pretty good track record and will repay you for time spent pursuing them. But others have a really terrible track record and are a waste of your time and energy.

[The 25 Best-Paying Jobs For Women Right Now](#)

The success rate figures cited are a mash of studies I've seen, plus, where no studies have been done, my own impressions over the past 45 years of working with job hunters or career changers and writing *What Color Is Your Parachute?*:

1. Looking for employers' [job postings](#) on the Internet. This method apparently works just 4% of the time, on average.

The anecdotal evidence is sometimes impressive. You will hear stories of job hunters who've been tremendously successful in using the Internet to find a job. For example, there's the systems administrator in Taos, N.M., who wanted to move to San Francisco and posted his resumé at 10 p.m. on a Monday night on San Francisco's Craig's List site. By Wednesday morning, he had over 70 responses from employers.

(More: [The No. 1 Thing to Do When Job Hunting](#))

The question is: Are stories like this flukes or is his a universal experience? Sadly, it turns out that this job-search method actually doesn't work for very many who try it. One exception: if you are seeking a technical or computer-related job, an IT job or a job in engineering, finances or health care, the success rate rises to around 10%.

2. Posting, or mailing out, your resumé to employers.

This works at getting you a job (or, more accurately, at getting you an *interview* that leads to a job) only 7% of the time, apparently.



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And I'm being generous with that estimate. One study suggested that only 1 out of 1,470 resumé actually resulted in a job. Another found the figure to be even worse: 1 job offer for every 1,700 resumé floating around out there.

3. Answering local newspaper ads. This method works somewhere between 5 and 24% of the time. The range is due to the level of salary being sought. Job hunters looking for low-level salary jobs find this method works 24% of the time; those looking for a high salary find it works only 5% of the time.

([More: 6 Great Online Tools for Your Job Search](#))

4. Going to private employment agencies or search firms for help. These agencies used to place just office workers; now it's hard to think of a category of jobs they don't try to place, especially in large metropolitan areas. This method apparently works between 5% and 28% of the time.

The wide variation in the success rate is due to the fact that these agencies vary greatly in their staffing (ranging from extremely competent down to inept or running a scam). But, at their best, agencies are four times more effective than just depending on your resumé.

5. Answering ads in professional or trade journals, appropriate to your field. This method apparently works only 7% of the time. A directory of these associations and their journals can be found at Directoryofassociations.com.

6. "Job Clubs." There are hundreds of [job-hunting support groups](#) that call themselves "job clubs." Sorry, they are not. They tend to meet only once a week, and then for only a couple of hours. That's why their job-hunting success rate is usually around 10%, if that.

A true "job club" is something quite different. When the late Nathan Azrin coined the term, it meant that job hunting was a 9 to 5 job, Monday through Friday, every week, for group members. You met with other job hunters between 9 am and 12 pm each day. From 1 to 5, you went out and visited places individually, doing informational interviews or keeping appointments you'd set up. Before going out, you'd share with the group what kind of job you were looking for, so you had other eyes out looking for leads. These job clubs had success rate of 84%.

7. Going to the state or federal employment office. It could be the [unemployment service office](#) or one of the federal government's nationwide [CareerOneStop](#) business centers, now alternatively called [AmericanJobCenters](#) to get instructions on how to better job hunt and find leads. This method works 14% of the time.

8. Going to places where employers pick up workers. If you're a union member, particularly in the trades or construction, and you have access to a union hiring hall, this method will find you work, up to 22% of the time. But the job may last just a few days.

Moreover, this is not a method open to a large percentage of job hunters. Only about 7% of private sector employees are union members these days.

The modern-day version of "pickup work" is the so-called [sharing economy](#), where you can use, say, your home (Airbnb) or car (Uber or Lyft) to make extra money.

9. Asking for job leads. With this method, you ask family members, friends and people you know in the community (or on LinkedIn) if they know of any place where someone with your talents and background is being sought. It works 33% of the time.

By asking for job leads, you have an almost five times better chance of finding a job than if you had just sent out your resumé.

10, Knocking on the door of any employer, office or manufacturing plant. This method works 47% of the time and works best with small employers. Sometimes you blunder into a place where a vacancy has just developed.

By knocking on doors, you have an almost seven times better chance of finding a job than if you had just depended on your resumé.

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[8 Do's And Don'ts When You Apply For A Job Online](#)

[How To Get The Most Out of LinkedIn's New Features](#)

[The 4 Questions You Should Ask In A Job Interview](#)

[7 Ways To Avoid Job Search Burnout](#)

[The Richest Person In Every State](#)

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