

Job Searching Over the Decades—Tips for Today’s Job Seeker

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Much has changed in the job search process over the span of our careers. Mature job seekers can no longer walk into a company, fill out a paper application, shake the employer’s hand, and begin work the next day. For those who have been in steady employment for decades, learning today’s application process has become a new challenge. Instead of paper applications, we complete online forms. Resumes now resemble marketing brochures. Networking is a daily task. And if you are absent from LinkedIn, recruiters are not calling.

However, older job seekers still provide solid skills, valuable experience, and maturity to an employer—factors that are critical in today’s workforce. Why, then, are seasoned job seekers having such a difficult time finding employment?

Just as our phones have changed, and computers have replaced typewriters, job-searching “tools” have changed. However, one long-standing measure of the job search process has not changed over time. Applicants can be successful when they remember that job searching is a formal process. Even when searching for a part-time position, realize there is only one opportunity to make a great first impression. Job seekers ignoring this important strategy will continue to struggle in their job search, or end up in positions that do not fulfill the need or provide satisfaction in their daily work.

Let’s review a few of the common missteps made by mature job seekers:

- **Be dedicated:** If you are job searching, keep a detailed record of your applications, conversations, and correspondence to refer back to when needed.
- **Show professionalism:** Not only should your resume be free of errors and in perfect shape, your email address and your voicemail message should be formal. If your email is “JoeSmith1952@gmail.com,” you are making a statement about your age rather than emphasizing your professionalism.
- **Know your skills:** Have a clear understanding of the type of work you desire and what you have been most successful at doing. When an employer interviews you, do not state, “I can do anything.” No one possesses every skill. Job seekers who are prepared to speak with employers can clearly list achievements and how their skills match the position the employer posted (transferable skills).
- **Practice interviewing:** Interviews can be a wonderful experience if you are prepared. The more you practice, the more comfortable—and more successful—the outcome. Appreciate the employer’s effort to get to know you; arrive on time, turn off your cell phone, have application materials ready, and dress for success. Even if the interview does not result in a job, it may lead to a future opportunity.

- **Networking is information sharing:** Many view networking as a difficult step in the application process. Treat networking as information sharing; many individuals generously help by providing information about their company, or other employers. Use the time to gain and share information.
- **Be willing to learn new skills:** Employers need qualified candidates who can perform the job immediately. Mature job seekers have incredible skills. However, if you have not kept skills up to date, or need new skills, training is often easily accessible at no or low cost, right in your community. Show employers you are willing to learn and perform new tasks.
- **Find assistance:** Central Ohio job seekers have many wonderful agencies ready to assist in their employment search. Use the various resources available to locate that job waiting for you!

Job seekers, check out "Can Volunteering Lead to Employment?" on page 12.

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