
The Honest Job Search

What recruiters wish you knew — and what actually moves the needle

Whether you have been laid off, are pivoting careers, or simply ready for something different — navigating a job search is harder than most people admit. This guide gives you the honest version that most people never share. No filler. No false hope. Just what actually works.

01

Your resume should sound like you wrote it.

Two pages maximum. Every bullet point in your own voice — not copied from a job description and not polished beyond recognition by AI. When your resume and how you speak are completely different, that gap creates doubt. Authenticity is not a soft skill. It is a signal recruiters notice immediately.

Check this:

Read your resume out loud. If any sentence sounds like something you would never actually say, rewrite it. Your resume should feel like a conversation starter, not a formal document.

02

Your LinkedIn and your resume need to match.

Dates, titles, company names, the arc of your career. Discrepancies between the two — even small ones — create doubt. Some hiring managers compare them word for word before agreeing to interview anyone. This is not unusual. Now you know.

Check this:

Open both side by side right now. Every date, every title, every company name should be identical. Then make sure both sound like the same person wrote them — because they did.

03

When you apply, introduce yourself directly.

Applying through a job posting and saying nothing else is a missed opportunity. Recruiters and hiring managers notice when someone takes an extra step — not to chase or pressure, but to show genuine interest. Keep it short, specific, and human.

Try this:

"Hi [Name], I came across your posting for the [Role]. I applied directly but wanted to introduce myself. I am genuinely excited about the opportunity to learn more about [Company] and this role. Happy to connect if it makes sense." Specific, direct, no pressure.

04

AI is a tool. Use it — but don't hide behind it.

AI can help you draft, refine, and prepare. The key is knowing what to ask. A vague prompt gives you a generic answer. The more specific you are about the role, your background, and what you want to achieve, the more useful the output. I have been on both sides of this — I know what AI-written outreach looks like, and so does every recruiter reading it.

Watch for this:

On video interviews, eye contact with the camera matters — even when you are not in the room together. It is fine to have your resume nearby. Reading from a script is always noticeable. Use AI to prepare. Then close the tab and have the conversation.

05

Prepare like the job is already yours.

Read the full job description — not just the title. Go to the company website and understand what they actually do, what they stand for, and where they are headed. Look up your interviewer on LinkedIn before the call. You do not need to mention that you did — but knowing who you are speaking with changes how you show up.

Also prepare:

Have two or three genuine questions ready to ask. Know your own resume well enough to speak to every line without hesitation. And of course — test your tech in advance.

06

Know your number before the process starts.

Some jurisdictions require employers to post a salary range. Many companies still do not comply, and some are exempt. That means you may be three rounds deep before compensation ever comes up — and by then, everyone has invested time they cannot get back. There is a real difference between someone who

leads every conversation with salary and someone who wants to make sure the opportunity is a genuine fit before committing further. The second person is being professional, not difficult.

From a recruiter who has seen both sides:

Know your number before you start. You do not have to open with it, but bring it up early enough that nobody wastes time. A good recruiter will make space for that conversation. If they do not, that tells you something too.

07

Keep searching until you sign.

A good recruiter will keep you updated — even when the news is "nothing yet" or "the search has been paused." That is the standard. Not everyone meets it, and that is worth knowing. Silence does not always mean no. Sometimes roles get paused, budgets shift, or timelines change. But silence also cannot be your reason to stop.

Remember this:

Do not stop searching until you have a signed offer in hand. Keep your pipeline moving, keep your outreach going, and keep showing up. The process is imperfect on our end too. What is in your control is how consistently you show up in yours.

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