

11 ways to help your job search in 5 minutes

By Susan Ricker, CareerBuilder writer

You may not think you have enough time to make progress in your job search. But if you've got five minutes, you can move your search forward with any of these 11 actions:

1. Replace the objective statement

"Replace the objective statement at the top of your résumé with a branded headline that conveys your value to the reader, i.e., 'Registered nurse committed to providing safe, effective patient care,'" says Laurie Berenson, certified master résumé writer and founder of [Sterling Career Concepts LLC](#).

2. Connect with your network

"Connect with one person from your network with whom you haven't spoken in at least one month," Berenson advises. "Pick up the phone, too -- don't rely on emailing."

3. Update your social profiles

"Update your LinkedIn profile content for two reasons: First, to keep it current, but also so the activity puts your name in front of every one of your contacts as a network update on their home page," Berenson says.

4. Conduct research

"A lack of basic understanding of the agency's mission and/or philosophy shows a lack of preparation and interest," says Natasha R.W. Eldridge, founding partner and director of human resources for [Eldridge Overton Educational Programs](#).

5. Make your voicemail more professional

"Remove ringtones and silly voicemail recordings from voicemail," Eldridge says. "I am not going to leave a professional message on the voicemail of an applicant that has music blasting as a ringtone. It shows me that job searching is not a priority."

6. Prepare for the interview

"Preparation is everything," says [Bruce A. Hurwitz](#), president and CEO of [Hurwitz Strategic Staffing Ltd.](#) "Make up a list of the questions you do not want to be asked; then answer them in the company of a friend. Tell the friend you want honest feedback to make certain that you are giving confident, credible and professional-sounding answers. Once you are comfortable with the difficult questions ... you will be more than prepared for the 'easy' questions."

7. Join industry associations

"Contact and join a local professional association," says Raina Kropp, HR talent partner at [Vistage International](#). "Sometimes you can get student or in-transition discounts. Don't be afraid to ask. These are the people you want to network with since they could be your future manager or colleague."

8. Clean up your résumé

"Remove irrelevant experience from your résumé," says Katie Niekrash, senior managing director of the

recruitment firm [Execu-Search](#). "While the summer after college that you spent scooping ice cream may have been the best [time] of your life, it doesn't really apply to a career in finance. Pick and choose your relevant experience, and tailor it to the job you're applying for."

9. Get your references ready

"Prepare your list of references before the interview," Niekrash says. "Once you have confirmed your two to three references, create a simple document that lists all the relevant information the employer would need to know about them -- name, title, contact info., etc. Bring this document with you to all your interviews, so this way, if the hiring manager asks you for your references, you'll be prepared and look organized."

10. Stay organized

"Create a master list for all the jobs you apply for. The key to a successful job search is organization," Niekrash says. "To do this, create an Excel spreadsheet that contains a row for each job you apply for, and include these columns: the date you applied; the company; the contact; the position for which you applied; how you applied; if, when and with whom you interviewed; when you should next follow up or what your next steps are; and the current status of the application. Creating this document should only take a few minutes, and updating it as you proactively apply for jobs should only take a few seconds."

11. Proofread your materials

"Read your LinkedIn profile, résumé and other job-search materials backward," says Karen Southall Watts, [business consultant, coach and speaker](#). "That's right -- read from the last sentence to the first sentence. This editing technique forces you to examine each sentence separately and keeps you from skipping over mistakes because you know what you meant to say next. By reading your materials backward, you can avoid those common typos and errors that plague all of us when our brains go faster than our typing skills."

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