

Managing Job Search Anxiety

Looking for a new job can be fun and exciting, but it's not uncommon to have some job search anxiety. Remember, it takes an average of 6-8 months after graduation to find a job. You are not alone, and Careerspace is here to help. No matter your job search scenario, you can overcome job search anxiety and find your path to success by following a few suggestions.

1. Maintain Your Perspective

Your job search may take a little longer in uncertain economic times, but it won't last forever. If you stick with it, eventually, you will find a job that puts some pep in your step and makes you happy. Perspective is a buzzword these days and with good reason. Try to see your job hunt for what it is (a temporary situation) and be patient and use the resources you have immediately available.

2. Stay Positive

Staying positive is essential when looking for a job, even if it feels hard. Try to hang in there and make the most of your job searching time by finding ways to make it exciting or fun.

Set up a job search routine with a schedule of when you'll look for jobs at a set time every day. Enjoy the challenge of discovering new positions to apply for, and reward yourself when you're done by engaging in the activities that make you happy.

Volunteering is rewarding not only for yourself but also within the community. This is a great way to keep yourself engaged in the community, build your skills, gain references, and even land a job.

3. Make a Plan

Create a job search plan to help you break your big goal into smaller, more manageable ones.

For example, start by writing down your highlights and "wins" in each of your positions, then plan to update your resume and cover letter accordingly. From there, you can update your LinkedIn profile, too, or find a way to reflect on what would make you happy in a job.

The Careerspace website does have tip sheets to help you create your resume, cover letters and LinkedIn profile, and even team members to go through all the information with you.

4. Do Some Homework

If your concerns center on feeling unprepared, take action to reduce those negative thoughts. Spend time researching the kind of position you want and the career path you hope to follow.

Search for companies that offer the jobs and cultures that are a good fit for you (i.e., remote jobs in customer service), then learn all you can about those businesses and the people you would potentially work with and for. The more knowledgeable and prepared you feel in your job search, the more confidence will replace doubt in your mind. You'll also save time because you know exactly what you want and only apply to jobs that are a good match for you and your skills.

5. Remind Yourself It's a Process

Finding a new job doesn't happen overnight. If you don't get an interview for the first job you apply for, that's fine. Reflect on your application materials to see what works and doesn't, then update your resume and cover letter accordingly.

Remember that recruiters have a lot to balance, too. For every job posting, they may get as many as 250 applications. It may take some time for employers to get back to you.

6. Give Yourself a Pep Talk

It's easy to get down when searching for a job without success. And that's when negative self-talk can happen.

That negative self-talk generally decreases your motivation and performance. However, if you use positive self-talk ("I'm going to do great in this interview!"), you'll perform—and feel—better. So, do what you can to stay upbeat during your job search. Employers will notice!

7. Savor Your Wins

Job search anxiety can arise when you only look ahead and not backward. From time to time, reflect on how far you've already come in your job search.

You might have had a few successful interviews, even if you didn't get the job. Or perhaps you've learned how to answer those troublesome interview questions that can trip up any job seeker.

Don't forget to occasionally stop and smell the roses and reward yourself for all the hard work you've already put in. It can give you some much-needed confidence to help carry you through the rest of your job search—sans anxiety.

8. Decide What Has to be Done—and What Doesn't

You've tasked yourself with every imaginable to-do to expedite your job search. But here's something to consider: You might not have to do it all. Sure, many things have to get done when you are job searching, but trying to do them all (and all simultaneously) will only stress you out.

A better option would be to determine how often something—say, updating your social media channels with breaking news industry info—truly needs to be done. You might discover that you're overdoing it when it comes to your job search and that you can take it a little easier on yourself.

9. Take a Day Off

Our jobs are a big part of our identity, but we are much more than just our jobs. We are family, friends, mentors, and volunteers, to name a few.

If the job search has you down, take a break. Grab a coffee with a friend, go to the park, or walk the dog. You can always practice coping mechanisms like deep breathing, switching up your scenery, talking to a friend or family member, or even learning to be more mindful. A stroll through Trent Nature trails, or a walk (or swim) along the Otonabee can help you feel more grounded and refreshed.

Moving Past Job Search Anxiety

While searching for a new job can present challenges, remember that you can succeed. If you're prepared, organized, patient, and positive, you may even find joy in your journey toward a position that will be an excellent fit for you and your career aspirations.

If you're looking for help with your job search, consider meeting with a Careerspace Counsellor, Advisor or Career Peer. They can help you find your footing and gain traction in your job search.