



Job Tips for 50+ Workers

www.aarp.org/jobtips

Finding a Job Is a Job: Job Search Strategy for 50+ Workers

Having difficulty finding a job or making a career change? Perhaps your job search strategy needs some work.

An effective job search strategy will keep you grounded, less stressed, and ultimately more successful. If your search needs a boost, think like a journalist with yourself as the lead story. Focus on the Who, What, When, Where and How.

Who:

- Target a specific industry and position. Don't waste time searching or applying for jobs you don't really want.
- Identify the type of employer you think you'd be interested in—large, small, entrepreneurial, non-profit?
- Identify “age friendly” employers by visiting the AARP National Employer Team (www.aarp.org/employerteam).

What:

- Assess yourself. What are you looking for in a job? What are your “must-haves” and your “nice-to-haves”? What are the things that don't matter to you?
- Look at all options—types of jobs and industries; temporary, part time, contract or seasonal work.
- Know your skills and match them to the job you are seeking.
- Consider a job with less responsibility if you're changing careers.

When:

- If you have recently been laid off, take a couple of weeks if you can to get that experience behind you. Rather than jumping in and trying to get interviews, focus on developing your job search strategy. If you have to, consider a part-time job to generate needed cash.
- Carve out a specific time to begin and end your daily job search efforts.
- Spend about 4-6 hours a day on your search, but make sure you add some variety. For example, do industry research for an hour, research employers for an hour, then do some networking and follow up with contacts.
- Be sure to take time for yourself and your family. A balanced life is as important when you're looking for a job as when you're working.

Where:

- If you are conducting your search from home, make sure you have a “professional” set-up with phone, fax (if available), and computer.
- Find a quiet place where you won’t be interrupted or distracted by doing household chores or watching TV.
- Don’t stay glued to your computer screen. Attend networking events and career fairs. Contact your Alma Mater’s career center (many have alumni services).
- Visit the gym, take a walk, go for a run. Being out of work is one of the best times to get in shape. You’ll feel better about yourself and make a good impression during those important first moments with interviewers.

How:

- Have a “conservative” email address. For example yourname@gmail.com, not hothead@ratedx.com.
- Get a cell phone so you can respond to employers quickly.
- Network to find the hidden job market. Try to get interviews with hiring managers rather than focus only on HR.
- Be positive. Get help; build your support system; consider a career coach. Join the AARP Online Community at www.aarp.org/thewatercooler .
- If you feel that an employer is discriminating against you in the hiring process, move on to the next employer. Although you may be angry, you can do yourself more harm than good if you take time out of your job search to fight an employer.

Last Word

You may be tempted to think that all you need to do to get a job is to highlight your years of experience. Not so! Make sure you translate that experience into skills that are required for the job you are seeking. Target your search, manage your time, and always be networking.



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