

Job Search Checklist

An average job search time can take up to 6 months, and the average number of applicants per job may be in the hundreds. Some positions take longer to find or fill.

Your preparation, planning, and follow up are crucial. Being in control at each step can help you decrease the search time and proactively build new connections, even if you do not get a particular job.

Focus on getting the maximum value out of your job search: networking, learning about your industry, discovering interesting companies and colleagues, and planning your career development better.

Prepare the following:

- A list of 30-50 target employers
- A list of 50+ past and recent colleagues with whom you have a positive relationship
- A list of professional associations in your industry
- A list of your [differentiators](#) / accomplishments
- Your [elevator pitch](#) and practice interview questions
- Recent performance reviews, kudos, and recommendation letters

Set up the tools for job search:

- A professional email address
- A professional email signature (*WiseStamp, for example*)
- An updated and keyword-optimized LinkedIn profile
- A list of your target job titles
- Networking email templates
- Templates for requesting LinkedIn recommendations
- Targeted resume and cover letter for each target role

Block time every day for the following activities:

- Review your list of 30-50 target employers and research them.

Follow their decision-makers on LinkedIn, comment on their posts, and send introductory messages. Check the Careers pages on these companies' websites. Sign up for their newsletters; check their YouTube channels for the latest news. Do your salary research. Contact past employees to learn more about the company culture, application process, and to confirm if your salary research is correct. Set the company's name as a keyword in your Indeed email alerts.

- Reach out to 50+ colleagues on your list and let them know what roles you are looking for. Tell them about your latest successful projects and ask about theirs.
- Review professional association websites, their job boards, conference announcements, and lists of conference sponsors. Choose one or two new associations to join. Reach out to the association leaders and introduce yourself. Make the best of your membership by engaging actively with the association to learn new information and meet new people. Contribute your expertise as a volunteer (write a blog post, present a webinar, attend a welcome session for new members, etc.).
- Update your LinkedIn profile in line with your career goals. Highlight the most pertinent, recent achievements. Review your About section. Connect with recruiters specializing in your industry and introduce yourself. Ask your colleagues to write you a recommendation on LinkedIn.
- Sign up for industry Listservs to get direct access to job announcements.
- Make a list of conferences, webinars, and local chamber of commerce events to attend.
- Explore various job search tools: general job boards (Indeed), LinkedIn Jobs, niche job boards in your industry, association job boards (usually available to members), specialized recruiters in your industry or executive search companies, professional Facebook groups, and small mastermind groups you can create with several colleagues.

Develop career documents that set you apart from the competitors:

- list specific, quantifiable examples of your success
- update your resume to highlight specific results and relevant skills
- tailor the top part of your resume (career summary and areas of expertise) for each target role
- use the requirements from each job description to draft a customized cover letter
- know your unique value proposition and your top differentiators

Track your progress:

- Create a system for tracking your job applications, company research, and salary data.
- Note any red flags you discover about employers.
- Mark companies to follow up with after applying.
- Keep a list of new professional contacts for future follow-up.

Follow up:

- Follow up within 5 business days by email, phone, or via LinkedIn.
 - Identify decision-makers on LinkedIn and send an introductory message, mention your top (2-3) differentiators that are most relevant to the target role.
 - In your short message to the hiring manager, aim to be helpful in the hiring process – suggest a short phone conversation or propose sending additional documents the company may need (your references sheet, for example).

Prepare for the interview:

- Understand the employer's requirements and expectations based on the job description and additional company research (Glassdoor, past employees, etc.).
- Understand the format of the interview and prepare accordingly (number and roles of the interviewers, technologies used, commonly asked questions).

- Pay attention to your appearance and remove all the potential distractions in your environment if interviewing on video. Candidates are judged on appearance, confidence, communication, competency, professionalism, attitude, and honesty.
 - Positive qualities to embody: loyalty, integrity, sincerity, adaptability, kindness, patience, emotional intelligence, tolerance, and open-mindedness.

- At the end of the initial interview(s), ask about the next steps.
- At the end of the final interview, express your interest in the role verbally and/or ask if you may follow up, when, and how (by email or phone).
- Ask for the interviewers' business cards or contact information.

Send thank you notes right away:

- Immediately after the interview send a thank you note. You may highlight one or two specific points that were discussed during the interview. Express your enthusiasm for the role.
- If you feel that you missed a chance to add some important information, use the thank you note to add it, briefly.

Reward yourself:

- Maintain a positive mindset and practice self-care (gratitude, curiosity, physical exercise, etc.)
- Connect with the supportive colleagues and/or other people in your life.
- Allocate time for your favorite activities to recharge.