

AN ADVERTISING SUPPLEMENT TO THE WASHINGTON POST

How to make your job search less stressful

If you're like most job seekers, chances are you're stressed out. Statistics indicate 73 percent of job seekers are anxious about finding a new job.

While it's natural to feel stressed, it does create a conundrum because the tension you are, the more likely the anxiety you have will spill over into communications with a potential employer. If this happens, it could negatively impact the status of your candidacy.

To increase the probability you'll ace your interviews and boost your chances of getting the job, you'll want to find ways to combat the pressure associated with job searches. Here are four ways to make your job search less stressful this week.

Set realistic goals

Job searching is essentially a full-time job and, like any other job, you want to give it your best. Don't put expectations on yourself to send out a dozen resumes and applications every day. Instead, set realistic goals and focus on applying to the jobs you want most. Once you select your preferred jobs, place your full attention on perfecting your applications for these positions.

Aside from unrealistic goals creating high stress levels, setting your bar too high increases the chances of making mistakes. Since a resume, cover letter, and application are the first steps in connecting with a prospective employer, there is no room for error—you want to make yourself shine. Setting realistic goals for the week will help you get this accomplished.

Don't take rejection to heart

No one likes receiving the dreaded, "thanks but no thanks" email. When these make their way into your inbox, don't take it to heart. Statistically speaking, only about 2 percent of applicants are called for interviews and even fewer are hired.

- Not everyone is the right fit for a company's culture, even if the position seems perfect.
- Another candidate had more experience or possessed a sought skillset (remember, you have your own unique qualities another employer will be seeking!)
- Chances are it's not your fault or anything you did—sometimes employers already have someone in mind.
- You didn't pass the ATS—use this as an opportunity on how to nail down integrating the right keywords into your resume so it makes its way onto someone's desk instead of being kicked out by the automated system.

Rejection stinks. Don't let it shake you. Instead, be proactive and move on to the next position on your list.

Develop a search strategy

You can decrease job-search-related stress by breaking tasks down into chunks to make the process less overwhelming. A smart strategy



helps too.

- Set a schedule outlining your daily goals and objectives.
- Keep your search focused on jobs you're truly interested in.
- Customize your resume and cover letter to fit each job you apply to.
- Work on strengthening and broadening your professional network.
- Clean up your Internet presence—be sure your online reputation shines (employers are looking!)

A good job search strategy helps set the table for the successful landing of a job. If you run into hurdles, remind yourself not to focus too much on the problem—identify it, and immediately shift your attention to finding a solution.

Schedule in some time off

Everyone needs a break. To make the most of your job search time, be sure to schedule in time off to exercise, have some fun, or simply do something for yourself. Like any other job, penciling in downtime will increase your productivity and efficiency when it comes to applying for jobs. If you reach the point of burnout, you'll make it more difficult to succeed in your job search.

Being unemployed is stressful, no doubt about it. Successfully decrease your stress and you'll better position yourself to find that coveted job sooner than later.

This special advertising section was prepared by independent writer Leigh Goessl. The production of this section did not involve the news or editorial staff of The Washington Post.