

Covering career advice, recruitment trends and delivering the area's newest jobs. We are D.C.'s #1 source for employment news.

AN ADVERTISING SUPPLEMENT TO THE WASHINGTON POST

How to stay organized during your job search

Job hunting, especially during a recession, is a numbers game. To use a baseball analogy, you're going to swing and miss a certain percentage of the time—and you probably won't hit a home run the first time at bat. This means you'll need to track multiple opportunities. Try these time-tested tips for staying organized during your job search.

Start a spreadsheet

A spreadsheet—whether in Excel or on Google Drive—is an easy way to track when and where you've applied for jobs. Create columns to log such data as company name, the link to each job posting, the date you applied, the hiring manager's name, any contacts you have there, etc. (If you're truly averse to spreadsheets, you could achieve a similar tracking system using a Word table, but you won't have the ability to sort by various fields.)

Use a project management tool

If you're feeling fancy, manage your job search

using an online project management tool such as Trello, Asana, or Airtable, all of which offer free versions for individual users. For instance, with Trello, you could create a "card" for each job opportunity, and then add related tasks and due dates. You could even upload relevant files, such as the specific cover letter and resume you submitted. The cards can be moved between lists correlating to each phase of your search.

Employ good file naming conventions

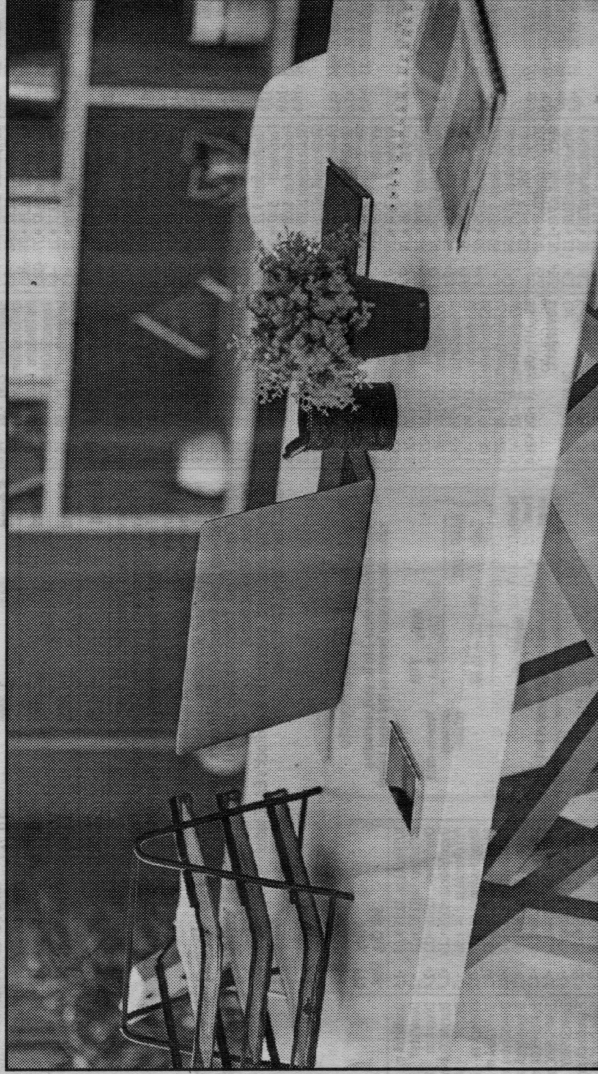
This isn't the time to be sloppy with how you name your files. Establish a sound file-naming convention and stick with it so that it will be easy to search and sort. Remember, in today's job market, you'll need to tailor your resume and cover letter to include specific keywords in job postings. This means you'll potentially create dozens of versions of your cover letter and resume. Save yourself time by making them easy to find later.

Rely on the cloud

You never know when you might need to access your resume—or who is going to tip you off to an opportunity for which you need to act quickly. Storing your career-related files in a cloud service such as Google Drive or Dropbox ensures you have access to them on the go. It also provides peace of mind: You don't want to lose all of your records to a hard drive crash.

Organize your email inbox

A few folders and filters can keep your inbox from getting out of control. If you've set up job alerts from job search websites, filter those to specific folders so they don't get lost



among marketing emails. Keep them unread until you've reviewed that day's opportunities. Move alerts that interest you into another folder to process later. You could also set up folders tied to specific companies or phases of the search.

Some job-hunters might want to use a specific email address for their search—one that isn't tied to any promotional emails or social media alerts. Just make sure your email handle is professional and name based.

Keep your calendar up to date

If you're job-hunting while unemployed, you might feel safe ditching your calendar—but resist the temptation. It is too easy to mess up the date and time of a scheduled interview.

Plus, scheduling blocks of time for activities such as perusing job sites, reaching out to your network, etc. is a proven productivity tip. Using a digital calendar also allows you to set up alerts and task reminders.

No matter how you choose to stay organized during your job search, don't let developing your system take over the process. It's easy to feel productive when all you are doing is creating a super-complicated system for yourself. The only way to land a job is send out your resume, reach out to your contacts, and keep swinging.

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