



COVID-19 and Your Job Search

Use this time of social distancing to your career advantage.

The current pandemic has sidelined many job search and career plans. Job offers have been placed on hold, internships moved online, and in-person interviews replaced with video chats. Yet, despite economic uncertainties, employers are still hiring and opportunities do exist. So, don't stagnate in your setback. Use this time of social distancing to refine your job search skills, materials, and candidacy as the world works toward a new normal.

Job search basics still apply.

With remote working and greater business reliance on video, email, and phone calls, communication and other interpersonal skills remain top job search priorities, from résumé to interview to follow up.

Update your résumé and cover letters: include skills and experience acquired during the crisis that add value, enhance your candidacy, and help set you apart. Ex: organized a volunteer PPE drive; mentored senior workers new to remote working; learned new programming skills. Watch for typos and grammar.

Network and build contacts: continue to reach out to friends, acquaintances, faculty, alumni, and others; join online industry groups; or volunteer as new outlets arise for meeting new people. Networking is a core element of job searches. Just don't be pushy. Relationships take time to build and work in both directions; focus first on giving rather than on getting.

Research organizations and the industry: as companies pivot to adapt, follow the news and trends. Where is an organization likely to head in the weeks/months ahead? Use informational interviews to learn from experts: will the company continue remote working or expand its operations? If social responsibility is important, has the organization of interest contributed to crisis relief? Having facts can help you determine if it's the company for you. Additionally, veterans can maximize their military transferable skills and offer logistic services a business may not have thought of, but could use.

Expand your competencies: boost your hard and soft skills. Take online courses; many are offered for free by corporations and educational institutions. Apply what you learn; you'll enhance your résumé and have more real-life examples for interviews.

Use social media wisely: update your online profile, let others know where your strengths lie; include new experiences and key skills that keep you relevant. Follow organizations of interest online and share their posts to get on their radar.

Consider options: in life, adaptability is key to survival. While some businesses experience hiring freezes, others are seeing hiring surges as they retool to offer different products and revamp customer and delivery services. Be flexible as well—temp jobs, side gigs, and volunteering with organizations outside your original career plans can all provide potential résumé material.

Practice Emotional Intelligence (EQ): this is a time to be both proactive and patient. Career counselors, HR, prospective employers, references, etc. are all dealing with transition challenges, including heavier workloads and work/life balance. Be thoughtful and polite if they don't respond as quickly as you'd like; never convey desperation. Remote working also requires good communication: employees want guidance and employers want to know workers are being productive. If your job or internship has been moved online, use your supervisor's preferred means of contact to check in; documenting your progress and accomplishments helps assess and support your value to the company as things move ahead.

Maintain your health: to combat stress and the uncertain road ahead, be disciplined in your job search, track your progress, exercise, get plenty of rest and emotional support, and stay positive.

The world is changing. Adapt.

Crises can be transformative and usher in both changes and opportunities in technology and socioeconomics. So stay motivated and ready to prove at any time the value you bring, both during the crisis and once it passes.



i n a nutshell:

Hiring needs and job competition don't disappear as organizations respond to then recover from crises:

- **Update your résumé and cover letters with relevant new skills and experiences; nail down video and phone interviews**
- **Network to build contacts and relationships; conduct online informational interviews; offer virtual assistance; volunteer**
- **Research to stay current, relevant, and creative**
- **Be focused but flexible, persistent but patient; use EQ**
- **Expand your skills; show employers you bring value**
- **Stay positive; take care of yourself, inside and out**

Time waits for no one and this too shall pass. When it does, you'll be more than ready to deliver results.