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# Five key job-seeker blunders and how to avoid them

**S**earching for a job can be extremely time-consuming and frustrating. Reduce your stress, as well as make your time and effort productive, by avoiding these five job-seeker blunders:

1. Having your résumé read like a job description. Your résumé should represent key skills, experiences and accomplishments during the past 5-10 years that make the case for why you are a great fit for the targeted job, not 20 years' worth of work history with 20 bullets listed after each job. Ideally, you should have a maximum of six to eight bulleted statements with each position. I recently read a new study released by TheLadders, an online job search site, that mentioned it takes an average of six seconds to read a résumé. The study used "eye tracking" technology, which can measure exactly where recruiters' eyes look and how long they stay on that spot. Bottom line: Make your "six seconds" count.

2. Typing "References available upon request" at the end of your résumé. Writing that comment on your résumé has faded into the distant past. You should have a separate reference page with three to five individuals listed who know you well and will speak about your qualifications for the job you are pursuing. Make sure the person is someone with whom you have had recent contact and you have obtained their permission and provided them with a current copy of your résumé, as well as the job posting. The minimum information

listed on the reference page should include the person's name, job title, company, and preferably a direct office line or cell phone.

3. Dressing inappropriately for the interview. You may be skilled, determined, sincere and knowledgeable; however, if your personal appearance is inappropriate, an employer may take a quick look, say "no thanks" and then move on to another candidate. The reality of it all is we are judged by the first impression we create. So pay attention to your overall appearance and grooming. Your goal is to create a strong, positive first impression. Keep in mind what is appropriate is determined by your profession, industry, geographical location and position for which you are interviewing. Whatever you wear, your clothes should be clean, neat and pressed with shoes polished.

4. Thinking you can "wing it" at an interview. "Winging it" at an interview is considered one of the seven deadly sins of interviewing, according to Eve Tahmincioglu, an MSNBC.com contributor. As pointed out by Cynthia Measom, a freelance writer, "Even if you think you're well-prepared to ace the interview, you don't want to fall victim to the top ways to blow an interview. Things such as nervousness, unpreparedness, distractedness and unexpected events can all throw you off track and cause your interview to go awry." So, long story short: Prepare, prepare, prepare.

5. Neglecting to follow up after

an interview. In our digital, mobile world, it is discouraging how few individuals take the time to write a "thank you" note that can show thoughtfulness, help build relationships, make a lasting impression or give a competitive edge, especially after the interview process. Amy Segelin, president and co-owner of a national executive search firm, conducted a survey among different industries and was surprised to learn that more than 75 percent of those surveyed did not receive any kind of "thank you" note from most of the candidates they had interviewed. Some even mentioned that "no follow up [meant] no further steps for the candidate." Following up after a job interview gives you one more chance to make a good impression. So, I highly encourage you to email a well-written and carefully proof-read note within 24-48 hours after the interview. The impact can be amazing.

A lasting thought: "If you will pump long enough, hard enough, and enthusiastically enough, sooner or later the effort will bring forth the reward." — Zig Ziglar

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