

# How to Find a Job in Tough Times!

Written and edited by Kevin Donlin  
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Kevin Donlin owns and manages Guaranteed Résumés. Since 1995, he has provided resumes, cover letters and online job-search assistance to clients on five continents.

He's been interviewed by WCCO Radio, WLTE Radio and KMSP TV, among others. His articles have appeared in the *Wall Street Journal's National Business Employment Weekly*, *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, *Twin Cities Employment Weekly* and others.

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## Introduction

Friday, January 24, 2003  
6:35 a.m.

**Dear Friend,**

I have no idea how you found this ebook.

Maybe you read about it in some publication. Maybe a friend referred you to it. Perhaps you stumbled across it using a search engine.

But, however you got here, you have arrived at what may be one of the most valuable ebooks on the entire Internet!

Here's why: this ebook will share with you the best and most coveted secrets for finding a job during the tough economic times we're going through right now.

**You hold in your hands (or on your computer screen) a lifetime of job security!**

Because, while the rest of the world complains about downsizing, layoffs, right-sizing, or an all-around lack of good, rewarding jobs, you'll now be able to find, apply for – and get – the job you really want, any time you want, in any economy.

All you have to do is read and ACT ON the tips and tricks in this ebook.

After helping more than 2,377 clients in 47 states and 29 countries find high-paying, rewarding jobs, and compiling a 97% satisfaction rating since 1996, I can say with some confidence that the methods you're about to read do in fact work.

And now they're yours. Free. Enjoy!

Kevin Donlin  
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P.S. I would consider it a great privilege if you would share your comments, suggestions and success stories with me, to improve this and future editions! Please email yours to [kevin@gresumes.com](mailto:kevin@gresumes.com)

P.P.S. If you find this ebook useful, please pass it on to others!!!

## **“How to Beat the Recession and Get Hired ... Using Your Telephone!”**

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In my ongoing series of interviews with job search experts, I tracked down Marky Stein, a career coach in San Jose, Calif., who's perfected a strikingly innovative approach to finding a job fast – in any economy.

She's the author of "Fearless Interviewing: What to Do Before, During and After an Interview" (iUniverse.com Press, 2001). Her Web site is <http://www.markystein.com/>.

I questioned Marky to get her very best tips to help you access the “hidden job market,” where upwards of 70% of all jobs are filled. Here's our conversation ...

Kevin: “Let's cut to the chase -- what's the very best way people can uncover and apply for job openings right now, in this time of economic uncertainty?”

Marky: “Study after study and my own 10+ years of experience have proven that, hands down, cold calling employers is superior to all other methods.

“Now, before your readers say, ‘Yuck! I don't want to cold call anyone – I'm not a sales person,’ read the following facts.

“The firm JIST Works, in Philadelphia, trained 1,000 job seekers in cold calling during the last recession, in 1990. These 1,000 people were trained to devote 25 hours per week to their job search and cold call employers to ask for a face-to-face meeting. As a result, 66% of them were employed within 2.3 weeks and 90% of the rest were employed within 90 days.

“In my own study, from 1992 to 1998, I trained over 700 disabled job seekers to spend at least 17.5 hours per week cold calling employers. Of those I counseled during those six years, 90% found jobs within 90 days.

Kevin: “OK. So what is cold calling? How is it done?”

Marky: “It's simply direct contact to set up an interview. And it works for anyone, from entry-level job seekers to CEOs.

“To succeed, you must stop seeing yourself as a job seeker and think of yourself instead as a business person making a proposal. Instead of thinking ‘Please give me a job,’ think, ‘Here are all the good things I can do for you.’”

Kevin: “Who, specifically, should job seekers try to get on the phone?”

Marky: “Try to connect with a decision maker above your future boss. This is important.

“The person directly above you may, and often is, threatened by such a call. They may figure, “If this person is so assertive NOW, they may be after MY job in the future”.

“Also, a more senior person, such as your potential boss’ boss, has a more expansive view of the kinds of changes that could result in a new job being created or in someone being replaced.

“Third, executives often enjoy mentoring junior people, and those with a generous character can do wonders for job seekers, even if that means referring you to someone DOWN the ladder. If you get such a referral from an executive, other members of the team are likely to be open to meeting with you.”

Kevin: “Is there a script job seekers should use?”

Marky: “Yes, you can use the following example script to get started:

“Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I have \_\_\_\_\_ years’ experience as a \_\_\_\_\_, specializing in \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_. I have a (B.A., M.S., certificate) in \_\_\_\_\_ and I recently completed (name a recent successful project with a measurable result). When may I come for an interview?”

Kevin: “What can job seekers expect when they start calling employers?”

Marky: “Cold calling has about 1 in 20 success ratio, in general. Of course, 19 ‘Nos’ on the phone may hurt more than 1,000 rejection letters, but you’ll hear it less often. Just make those calls until you connect!”

To sum up, cold calling can dramatically shorten your job search, by putting you in direct contact with employers who can hire you. You’ll have no competition, because 99% of job seekers would rather answer classified ads and complain about the economy than be assertive and proactive.

What are you waiting for?

## **“Persistence Pays! This is How to Find a Job”**

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(I wrote the following article for my column in the [Minneapolis Star Tribune](#). It’s about a recent Guaranteed Résumés client who did everything right and found his dream job. If you’re not having any luck in your job search, read this. Then, do what Eugene did!!!)

Despite the tight labor market, you CAN stand out from the crowd and get the job you really want.

Consider Eugene, a software developer from Savage, MN.

After getting serious about his job search, he found his ideal job -- at a higher salary than he expected -- in just over six weeks.

Eugene hit the jackpot with some old-fashioned persistence and a little creativity. You can, too.

Here’s what he did ...

“I saw a job posted on the Internet that I really wanted,” says Eugene. “Like most people, I thought I would just email my resume and wait. But that approach had not produced any callbacks for three months, so I decided to try something different.”

Eugene picked up the phone and called the contact person listed in the job posting, after getting her phone number from the company switchboard.

“I asked if I could hand-deliver my resume. She said ‘No,’ but I struck up a conversation and learned enough about the position to write a very targeted cover letter, which I emailed with my resume,” says Eugene.

After that, Eugene made three follow-up calls, one week apart, to very politely ask if a decision had been made. Since he had already built a rapport with the hiring manager during his first call, she did not see this as an intrusion.

Between his second and third follow-up calls, Eugene employed a brilliant tactic that set him apart from every other candidate.

“During my second follow-up call, I offered to deliver a portfolio of additional material. I wanted to maximize my chances of getting that job!” he says. The hiring manager agreed.

So Eugene put together a collection of awards and descriptions of projects he had worked on. As he was dropping off this “brag book” with the receptionist, he met several employees in the lobby. “I asked about the four biggest problems they were facing on the job,” says Eugene. “I took notes, then went home to think up solutions.”

Finally, after four weeks, three follow-up phone calls and one hand-delivered portfolio, Eugene was called for an interview. He aced it, aced the interview that followed ... and got the job.

“After talking to employees and researching the company’s products and customers from their Web site, I was able to talk intelligently and make helpful suggestions. The interviewers were impressed by that,” says Eugene.

Does all this research and telephone follow-up sound like a lot of work to you? Not if you consider your job search to be a full-time job in itself. Eugene spent only a few hours total on this approach, but the pay-off was enormous.

“I start next week at a higher salary than before and with a great company. I’m really excited about this new position,” says Eugene.

Here’s hoping you will enjoy similar results!

## "4 Job Search Secrets From an HR Pro"

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In my ongoing series of interviews with career experts, I tracked down Bob Bowden, a former HR director, with over 20 years of recruiting experience in the finance industry.

During his career, Bob hired more than 2,370 employees, after reading and analyzing more than 22,000 resumes. (More about Bob at <http://www.finance-resumes.com/>).

I quizzed Bob for answers on four of the most frequently asked questions I'm hearing from job seekers these days ...

Question: What's the best way to follow up with hiring managers after an interview, to see if the job is still open?

Answer: A simple thank-you letter is a tremendous way to reaffirm your interest in a position. But they're rarely sent, surprisingly.

I interviewed nearly 1,200 candidates over 12 years at a major Japanese bank, and I saw fewer than 10 thank-you letters. So you can imagine how they help a candidate stand out!

I have absolutely seen close hiring decisions positively affected by thank-you letters!

They're much more appreciated than phone calls. I've been asked many times by hiring managers to return calls to candidates to get them off their backs -- you won't get hired by being a nuisance.

Question: What are your thoughts on functional resumes? Can they be an effective way to make a career switch?

Answer: To a recruiter or hiring manager, functional resumes raise a red flag. I immediately look to see why a person is using this format. I look for gaps in employment, too many short-term jobs or employment unrelated to the job for which the person is applying.

So, ironically, the deficiencies that candidate is trying to cover up are highlighted by a functional resume!



If you do have gaps in employment, they can be de-emphasized by leaving the months out of the dates. And some short-term jobs can be left off the resume entirely, if they won't create gaps.

If changing careers, use a Profile or Highlights section in your resume to emphasize transferable skills, while still following a chronological format. A recruiter wants to see your career progression, even if you have been employed in different fields.

Question: How do companies really hire? Do they look internally first, then go outside to place want ads and hire recruiting firms?

Answer: From the company's perspective, it's always best to remove as many unknowns as possible. That's why, if you can be referred by someone in the company you want to work for, you'll have an advantage in getting an interview.

Most hiring managers network with their peers at other companies when looking for employees. A tremendous number of candidates are sourced this way. It's always a plus when a candidate comes with good recommendations from friends in the industry.

That's why you should never stop networking. It's the very best way to find a job, but it doesn't happen overnight.

Question: Any other tips on finding the right job in this economy?

Answer: It's important to use all the tools at your disposal. You should network, respond to print ads, search the Internet and consult employment agencies.

When responding to ads, especially Internet ads, you must realize that recruiters get hundreds, if not thousands, of responses. So you better have a very appealing resume and cover letter to stand a chance.

One job ad I posted on an obscure Web site last year brought 150 responses in about 48 hours. But before I could read through them, our company chairman asked me to find one resume in that pile, from a woman who went to the same church as he did. She was hired -- another testament to the power of networking!

## **“3 Creative Job Search Secrets”**

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In my continuing series on job search tips for hard times, here are 3 ways to locate job openings using free resources at your disposal.

This week, I interviewed Bob Picha, founder of San-Diego-based Ideas At Work, a company dedicated to the release of human potential in individuals and organizations.

Based on 30 years of career-consulting experience, Bob’s insights are sure to surprise – and more importantly – help you find a job faster.

### **1) Read the paper, but not the want ads**

Research is your first step in ferreting out job openings. And since almost everyone gets a daily newspaper, why not start there? But don’t spend a lot of time on the want ads, advises Picha.

“I take an indirect approach in looking for companies that might be hiring. For example, I skimmed today’s Wall Street Journal and found these tidbits:

- “Toyota now wants 15% of global market share, which means they’ll be expanding worldwide and perhaps hiring locally;
- “China is buying \$1.2 billion in telecom equipment from Lucent and Motorola, which points to both firms needing new personnel;
- “Earnings for Cendant rose 19%, so they may be hiring ...

“The list goes on,” says Picha.

All it takes is a little digging to uncover these “jewels” that point you toward companies in need of new employees.

Two more ways to use the newspaper to uncover expanding businesses are:

- Monitor the business section for firms signing new commercial leases, a sure sign of a need for increased capacity, and
- Look for companies receiving venture capital -- since it’s so difficult to get these days, such firms are likely to have a viable business model ... and a need for new employees.

### **2) Consider temporary employment**

Temporary agencies can open the door to a wider range of jobs than you think – they’re not limited to office support or light factory work.

“Many savvy employers use temporary agencies as a screening device. It’s a chance to put temp workers through a trial period. And, if the employee is talented enough, a job can be created just for him or her,” says Picha.

In Southern California, some companies draw 33-50% of their staff from the temporary work force, according to Picha. Similar figures may apply to other parts of the country.

Temporary agencies are all around you, too.

“Just visit [www.google.com](http://www.google.com), search for ‘temporary employment,’ and you’ll find a huge number of temp agency listings. You can sort them by geography, industry -- whatever,” says Picha, who found 59 agencies listed for his Southern California region.

### **3) Network smarter, not harder**

I’ve said it before, I’ll say it again – networking is how 70-80% of the best jobs are filled. But in today’s economy, don’t expect a plum position to fall in your lap. You must network smartly and more creatively.

“Try calling on vendors and suppliers who know of companies that might be hiring. These include your local banker, CPA, lawyer and real estate agent. These people all have a great deal of knowledge,” says Picha.

Don’t forget associations – there’s one or more for every field of work. Use them to meet decision makers who can hire you. Call the reference desk at your public library for help finding associations.

When you call or meet networking contacts, ask for names of growing companies who could use someone with your experience. Ask for a contact person at the target employer(s), but avoid the HR department, since they often act as gatekeepers and may shun you.

So there you have it.

Three job search tips to help you use the newspaper, temp agencies and your network more creatively and effectively than before.

## **"3 More Creative Job Search Secrets"**

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In this, the tightest labor market in a decade, you need every possible advantage in your job search.

Without further ado, here are power networking tips, an email resume trick and scannable resume essentials!

### **1) Creatively title your resume document.**

When emailing resumes to employers, most people use a title like "resume.doc" or "lastname.doc" ... how about: "Jane Doe - Experienced Marketing Manager.doc"? Your resume attachment will stick out from the crowd before it's even read!

### **2) Often-overlooked way to network your way to a new position -- job clubs.**

Because most jobs are filled through personal contacts, a job club can be very effective in your search. And you'll find them all around you. Contact your local library, church, community groups and state employment agency for help in locating one or more that suit your needs.

If your city publishes a free employment weekly newspaper, be sure to check the announcements section to find job clubs. You may also find them listed in the phone book.

In a good job club, you'll meet regularly with 10-30 other people to share leads, provide support and practice such skills as interviewing and negotiating for salary. Job clubs are often free, so don't worry about high membership costs.

### **3) Scannable resumes and why you need one.**

Most larger companies use optical character recognition (OCR) software to scan resumes into computerized databases. Once scanned, hiring managers search through them for keywords to match applicants with jobs.

Create your scannable resume by changing the typeface to a sans serif font, such as Arial, for more accurate reading by the scanning computer. (Serif fonts, such as Times Roman, may not scan as clearly.) Use a single typeface throughout and a single font size. I recommend 10 or 11-point type.

Next, eliminate all underlining, bolding and italics, which can make your resume harder to scan.

After that, create a targeted keyword section to match your career goals. Keywords are the nouns an employer uses when searching a database of scanned resumes for candidates. If your scannable resume is rich in matching keywords, it's more likely to pop up in the search. And you'll be called for an interview.

Mail your scannable resume (printed on white paper) together with your traditional resume (on nice stationery).

Congratulations! You now have a leg up on the competition for your next job!

## **“Job Search Lessons From The School of Hard Knocks”**

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Have you been hit hard by the slow economy?

If you're 30 or younger, you've probably never experienced a recession as a member of the work force. And when compared to the go-go economy of the late 1990s, the current rash of job cuts and hiring freezes must seem especially frightening.

So I tracked down and interviewed James Adams, a 70-year-old former Minneapolis resident who's seen it all.

He's has held -- count 'em -- 107 jobs in his life. In fact, Adams became so skilled at getting jobs that the U.S. government hired him to teach his job search secrets to others!

Without further ado, here are three job hunting tactics for hard times, from the school of hard knocks.

### **1) Don't take every help-want ad at face value**

Some employment ads are written to prevent all but the most gung-ho job seekers from applying.

Reason? To prevent a flood of resumes that would take days to read, some employers purposely place ads that ask for unrealistic qualifications.

"I recall a help-wanted ad for a shipping clerk that read like a laundry list. They wanted someone with a college degree (master's preferred), able to lift 300 lbs., type 50+ words a minute -- it went on and on," says Adams.

So, how did Adams overcome this obstacle?

"I took the direct approach. I went down to the company and said, 'Here I am!' I told them that God himself couldn't meet all their qualifications, but if they wanted a top-notch shipping clerk, I was their man."

He got the job.

### **2) You may be more qualified than you think**

Adams once advised an applicant to talk about her hobby as a private pilot when interviewing for a position at a utility.

Why?

The job required a manager to oversee a plant delivering electricity to consumers across California. Making the wrong decision -- or no decision -- would put thousands of people in the dark.

As a private pilot, this woman had safely landed a crippled aircraft not once, but twice. Had she not made the right decisions fast, while focusing on a solution, she wouldn't have survived.

By proving her decision-making ability, which transferred easily from piloting to power plant management, she aced out dozens of other applicants -- and got the job.

### **3) Rejection letters can be a good thing**

Your response to a letter of rejection may, incredibly, get you the job.

Because, when a hiring panel interviews several applicants but still can't decide on one candidate, they may send out rejection letters to test the mettle of those job seekers.

"I was consulted by a woman who interviewed very well for a position, but still got a letter of rejection. Most people would have torn up the letter and gone on to other things," says Adams.

Instead, Adams told her to write a gracious reply, thanking the company for their time and reaffirming her strong desire to work for them.

Did it work?

"The top contender for the position had to relocate on short notice. The hiring panel remembered the letter they got from the really eager and pleasant woman who replied to their rejection letter. She got the job," says Adams.

So, take it from a job search pro who's been there and done that. You can do great things in your career if you exercise persistence, politeness and a little street smarts.

## **“3 Job Search Mistakes To Avoid”**

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Is your job search going nowhere?

You can blame the economy or the summer hiring slump. You'll have lots of company if you do.

Or ... you can look to yourself. Are you secretly sabotaging your job search?

You might be.

Let me tell you the story of “Tommy” (not his real name), who is managing to do almost everything **WRONG** in his job search. Learn from three of his career-killing mistakes, which can rob you of the salary and satisfaction you deserve!

Tommy first called me three weeks ago, asking if I could help him write a resume. He said he wanted a pharmaceutical sales job because his aunt and a cousin made good money at it, and he heard it was interesting work.

But he said nothing about actually **WANTING** to do this job. When I asked, he replied: “Everyone says I should give pharmaceutical sales a shot.”

### **Lesson #1: Find a job you WANT to do.**

Tommy is setting himself up for misery by pursuing a job based on the “helpful” advice of others.

Unless you're passionately committed to the job you seek, you won't pursue it with enough gusto to be successful in the long run.

Tommy wanted a new resume to apply for jobs he'd seen posted on the Internet. When I asked if he were also networking for a job, he answered: “Networking? How do you do that?”

### **Lesson #2: The best jobs are never advertised in the classified ads or online. They're filled by word of mouth -- people talking to other people.**



Tell every single person you know about the job you're after. Then ask them this magic question: "Who else do you know that I should be talking to?" This can double or triple the size of your network almost overnight. Try it!

After asking for my email address and promising to send his resume to me that afternoon for review, he hung up.

Six days later, his resume arrived by email. I sent him a reply and thought I might hear back from him in a day or two.

Another week passed.

Yesterday, Tommy called again and left a rambling message on my answering machine, asking nearly the same questions he had asked in our first conversation two weeks before.

### **Lesson #3: Take action in your job search. Now.**

Tommy wasted two weeks emailing and calling me with vague questions that we could have settled in five minutes. If this is how he's pursuing his next job ... he's in for a long, painful struggle.

You can supercharge your job search by learning what NOT to do. This will help you pursue a job you really want, uncover the hidden job market through networking, and take action -- now.

## **“Million Dollar Networking Secrets”**

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The best jobs -- as many as 70-80% according to some figures -- usually aren't advertised.

And the jobs that are advertised often trigger a flood of resumes, pitting you against hundreds of other candidates for a single opening.

Instead, you should focus most of your job search efforts on cracking the “hidden” job market. And the best way to do that is to expand your network of professional contacts.

“Networking for a job change or to get off unemployment is nearly essential, since people -- not computers -- hire other people,” says Matt Noah, CEO of Chanhassen, MN-based, NetSuds.com, a firm that helps professionals build and enhance their network of contacts.

Here are 5 ways you can network better and find your next job faster ...

### **1) Attend industry events**

No matter what you do, there's probably a regular event of some kind where potential employers in your industry gather. Identify events or venues that will most likely help your job search, then go there!

“Typically, the more focused the event, the better,” says Noah. “If you are a plumber, don't go to an electrician's trade show, for example. And size matters -- events are popular and well-attended if they provide value to the people in attendance.”

So, attend well-focused, popular events. You can find them advertised in trade journals, the business section of the Sunday paper, or search for them online at [www.google.com](http://www.google.com)

### **2) Join a job club**

These aren't very high-tech or exciting. Just plain effective.

In a good job club, you'll meet weekly or monthly with 10-30 other people to share leads, provide support and practice such skills as interviewing and negotiating for salary. Job clubs are usually free, so don't fret about membership costs.

You'll find job clubs all around you. Contact your local library, church, community groups and state employment agency for help in contacting one or more that suit your needs.

If your city publishes a free employment weekly newspaper, be sure to check the announcements section to find job clubs; you may also find them listed in your phone book.

### **3) Perfect your pitch**

No matter how you network, you'll eventually have to tell people what kind of job you're after. So develop a 20-30-second "pitch," describing who you are and what you do.

Focus on your unique combination of specific skills, knowledge and experience.

Example pitch: "I'm a tech support professional with five years of helpdesk experience. I've encountered and solved just about every problem imaginable. Before that, I completed officer's training as an ROTC student while earning my MIS degree. This gives me a broader range of technical, leadership and problem-solving skills than most folks."

According to marketing expert Larry Chase at [www.larrychase.com](http://www.larrychase.com), "I find people appreciate it when you can deliver your pitch in less time than they anticipated. It telegraphs that you are clearly focused and waste no time getting to the point."

### **4) Leverage your personal network**

This is still the most effective (and under-used) job search technique, in my view.

If your network is smaller than you'd like, think of it as a yeast cell, with the power to expand from its tiny origin until it produces something wonderful. In this case, a new job!

Tell everyone you know that you're looking for a job. Call or e-mail every single person in your address book. Now, here's the magic question -- at the end of every conversation, ask: "Do you know anyone else I should be talking to?"

This is how you expand your network by leaps and bounds! If everyone you talk to gives you two more names, and those people give you two more names, your network will explode like crabgrass in July -- try it and see!

Eventually, someone should be able to put you in touch with a decision maker who can hire you.

Even former employers can help. If you parted on good terms with your last boss, he or she might be able to refer you to hiring managers in other companies.

#### **5) Network with other job hunters**

Many cities have job clubs or support groups where people can meet, network and share tips. Don't forget the Internet -- there are loads of great Web sites with message boards and chat rooms devoted to networking.

# "How to Bounce Back From a Layoff"

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If you've been laid off -- or are facing the prospect -- you know how tough it can be to re-enter this job market.

So, how can you stand out and compete effectively for a new job?

Here are four ways, one of which will surprise you ...

## **1) Answering the \$64,000 question -- Why you?**

Your biggest challenge in finding a new job may be credibility, according to Rick Maurer, author, "Why Don't You Want What I Want?" ([www.beyondresistance.com](http://www.beyondresistance.com)).

"Why should I hire you when there are so many candidates with experience and credentials?" That's the question going through many employers' minds.

"My single best piece of advice is to put yourself in the shoes of the person who's hiring. What does the world look like through their eyes? What might they be afraid of if they hire you? Finding answers to these 'unasked' questions can lead to your next job," advises Maurer.

## **2) Build a "brag book"**

Any job will require you to submit a resume that's clear, concise and focused on results.

But don't stop there, according to Paul Richard DiModica, President of DigitalHatch, Inc., a sales training and consulting firm ([www.digitalhatch.com](http://www.digitalhatch.com)).

DiModica suggests you build an experience portfolio of what you have done and then bind it like a book to give to employers.

What to include? Try employer awards, technology certifications, articles written about you and examples your business successes.

This method has produced breakthrough results for years. The reason why is shockingly simple: very few job seekers take the time to assemble a knockout brag book. But when you're laid off, time is something you definitely do have ... so make the most of it!

## **3) Network smart**

When it comes to networking -- that most effective and over-looked of job search techniques -- it's crucial to first know what you want, according to Dr. Beverly Kaye, President of Scranton, Pa.-based Career Systems International.

“The starting point is having an objective -- a clear sense of what you are after. A scattered approach to networking will leave you with a pocketful of names and no clear plan of action,” says Kaye.

And be sure to observe the Golden Rule.

“All serious networking is reciprocal. People who devote time and energy to you deserve something in return, so you need to find ways to give back,” suggests Kaye.

Make an effort to pay others back for networking help. Because success in networking -- and in life -- is a two-way street.

#### **4) Throw a book at them**

You can set yourself apart from other job seekers by sending a \$30 book to the employers you want an interview with, according to DiModica.

“The business book you send -- preferably a best-seller -- should be based on the industry you want to work in. Inside the book, write: ‘I saw this and thought you might find it intriguing,’ then sign your name and telephone number. Call the recipient two days later, say that you’re the person who sent the book and ask to meet for 20 minutes,” advises DiModica.

This method works, if for no other reason than the book recipient feels a sense of obligation to you for the unexpected gift. And it’s the kind of creative, proactive job search tactic that just may be the ticket in this economy.

Here’s hoping these four tips help you recover quickly from a layoff, or avoid one altogether.

Next time, I’ll share expert advice aimed at recent college grads. Stay tuned!

## **“Want That Job? Follow up!”**

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Owner, Managing Editor – [Guaranteed Résumés](#)

Any job worth having is worth competing for. Which means the resume you just submitted was probably one of 100 or more the employer will read.

How can you stand out from the crowd?

Follow up!

If you're truly interested in a position, follow up persistently after submitting your resume and cover letter. Never sit by the phone and hope for a call.

Here's how it works. If you don't receive a response within five days of sending your resume and cover letter, send a follow-up letter with another copy of your resume.

While there's no letter that will work in every situation, you can use the one below as an example of how to "re-apply" for a job and restate your enthusiasm.

--

Dear Employer,

I am writing to ensure you received my resume, mailed on April 11, 2001. I am extremely impressed with your organization and want to re-emphasize my strong desire to work for you as a Store Manager.

In my present retail management position, I devised new procedures that cut training time for new hires by two days, while greatly increasing efficiency in our operations. This program, to be adopted regionally, will save our Detroit store \$45,000 this year.

My recently completed Associate's Degree in Retail Management, done while working full-time, gives me the academic training to bolster my five years of hands-on experience.

I look forward to hearing from you soon, and will call your office this Thursday to answer any questions you may have. Thank you for your time and consideration.

--

If you're especially gung ho, follow your follow-up letter with a phone call. But keep two things in mind:

- There's a fine line between showing strong interest in a position ... and stalking. Don't call every other day or show up unannounced in the lobby, to name two bad examples. One call per week will suffice until the company makes a decision.
- The hiring manager won't know you from Adam when you call -- he or she has just read 100 resumes, remember? Have a 15-second pitch ready that explains who you are, what job you're calling about and why you're so interested.

Remember -- no home run was ever hit with a checked swing. You can hit a home run in your job search if you swing hard, and that means following up with employers persistently.



## "How to Find and Work with a Recruiter"

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In this job market, you need every possible advantage. And a good recruiter could be one of them. But how do you find one? How much -- if anything -- should you pay for their services?

Here are answers to these and other questions.

### **1) Find a recruiter**

#### **a) Consult your network**

Start looking for a recruiter the same way you look for a dentist or barber -- ask people you know for referrals. You can save a lot of time and hassle this way, by learning from others.

This works online, too. Simply post messages at Web sites that serve your industry and ask for the names of good recruiters who work with people like you.

#### **b) Search the Web**

Go to [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) and type in "recruiter" and "FIELD" replacing FIELD with the type of work you do, such as sales, programming, training, etc. You can also search for "recruiting" or "recruitment" to generate new lists of potential Web sites.

### **2) Work with a recruiter**

When you contact a recruiting agency, be sure to ask who pays their fees -- you or the employer? Most recruiters won't charge you, because they're paid by employers to find and screen candidates. But, if you don't mind paying a fee (for what should be a MUCH higher level of service), be sure to contact at least three recruiters to get a feel for pricing in your field or geographic region.

Once you've found a suitable agency, get their fax number or e-mail address and send them your resume. Call to confirm that they received it.

Don't expect instant results, no matter what recruiter you work with. Matching a candidate with the right position at the right company can be like looking for a needle in a haystack. It's going to take time.

It's all right to call once to follow up after submitting your resume, but most recruiters are too busy to chat unless they have a suitable opening for you.

### **3) Don't let up**

In the meantime, pursue other avenues of job hunting, such as your network of personal and business contacts. In other words, think of a recruiter as just another tool in your job search toolbox. The more tools you have and the harder you work at it, the faster you can construct your ideal job.

## "Your Elevator Speech"

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“Why should I hire you?”

That's about the shortest -- and toughest -- question you might ever be asked in a job interview.

So ... what's your answer? Why should an employer hire you instead of someone else with similar skills and experience?

The more convincing your answer, the shorter your next job search is likely to be.

Here's a trick that will force you to develop a short, convincing 30-second commercial for yourself. It's called the Elevator Speech. And I've used it since 1996 to ferret out and create "unique selling propositions" for nearly 2,000 of my resume service clients.

Here's the scenario.

On the way to a job interview with ABC Company, you step on the elevator with ABC's owner. You introduce yourself and she recognizes you, asking: "Why should I hire you?" You have until the elevator reaches her floor to convince her. Try to answer in 30 seconds or less (about 150 words).

Avoid trite claims that anyone could make, such as: "I'm honest, hard-working and trustworthy." This makes you sound like a Boy Scout.

Instead, focus on YOUR unique combination of specific skills, knowledge and experience. Ideally, they'll all have something to do with the job you seek.

Example Elevator Speech: "During my five years of helpdesk experience, I've encountered and solved just about every problem imaginable, supporting more than 225 users on the same operating system your company uses -- Windows NT. I also saved \$23,000 by using pre-owned hardware for our latest upgrade. Before that, I completed officer's training as an ROTC student while earning my MIS degree. This gives me a broader range of technical, leadership and problem-solving skills than typical applicants."

According to marketing expert Larry Chase, (and what is a job search, after all, but a marketing campaign?): "I find people appreciate it when you respond in less time than they anticipated. It telegraphs that you are clearly focused and waste no time getting to the point."

So, get to the point in your next job interview. In 30 seconds, if you can. And you can if you develop a short, sharp elevator speech.

## "4 Common Job Interview Mistakes – And How To Avoid Them"

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“Many’s the slip twixt cup and lip,” said Shakespeare (if I remember my high school English correctly).

Translated to your job search, that phrase means: “Even the best resume in the world is worthless if you fluff the interview.” Unfortunately, it happens every day. Job seekers send out excellent resumes, get called for the interview ... and blow it.

So, to help you avoid the most common interview blunders, I consulted a nationally renowned expert on the subject, Carole Martin.

The following tips are from my conversation with Carole, the Job Interview Coach for Monster.com and the most capable interview expert I know, with 15 years of human resources management experience (<http://www.interviewcoach.com/>).

### **Blunder #1: Poor Non-Verbal Communication**

“Interviewing effectively is about demonstrating confidence. Things like standing straight, making eye contact, and connecting with a good, firm handshake are all vitally important,” says Martin.

Think of it like this: we humans have only been using words for the past 10,000 years or so, right? Before that, we communicated by grunting, posturing and clubbing each other over the head.

We humans have been paying attention to non-verbal cues for many thousands of years longer than we have verbal ones. It’s in our genes.

The person who interviews you is no different. That’s why your body language plays such a vital role in shaping the first impression you make. It can be a great beginning to your interview. Or a quick ending.

Practice accordingly.

### **Blunder #2: Failure to Listen Actively**

“From the moment you start talking, your interviewer is giving you information, either directly or indirectly. If you are not listening actively, you’re missing out on a major opportunity,” says Martin.

Make sure you take copious notes, jotting down every key phrase and idea that your interviewer uses. Doing so will demonstrate your enthusiasm for the job, your attention to detail ... and it will help you recall what is said. So you won't ask a question that's already been answered, for example.

Good communication skills include listening and letting the person know you heard what they said. Observe your interviewer and match their style and pace.

### **Blunder #3: Talking Too Much**

"Telling the interviewer more than they need to know can be a fatal mistake. Candidates who don't prepare ahead of time tend to ramble, sometimes talking themselves right out of the job," says Martin.

Remember that you're at the job interview to get information as much as you are to give it.

"Prepare for the interview by reading the job posting thoroughly. Try to focus on the skills you have that match the requirements of the position, and relate only that information," says Martin.

### **Blunder #4: Appearing Desperate**

This can be tough to avoid in the current job market. After all, you need a job! But you must rein in your emotions.

"As a rule, if you interview with a 'Please, please, hire me,' mind-set, you will appear less confident. Maintain the three Cs during your next interview: Cool, Calm, and Confident! You know you can do the job. Make sure the interviewer knows you can, too," says Martin.

## "Frequently Asked Questions"

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Here are four of the most commonly asked questions I'm hearing in late 2002, with answers based on my 13 years of writing and hiring experience ...

### **Q. The job posting asks for a salary history. Should I send one?**

A. No -- that's a job interview question.

This is a bit controversial, but I say "No."

Reason? Salary is a job interview question. Employers will ask you for a salary to see if you're overqualified (making too much) or under-qualified (not making enough). So answering this question will only put you OUT of the running for some jobs.

Although some employers may pitch your resume and cover letter if you don't answer their salary questions, those aren't companies you really want to work for, in my view.

If your resume paints a picture of you as someone who delivers tremendous value on the job, salary will become a secondary consideration to employers.

### **Q. How important is a cover letter? I normally don't include one when emailing resumes.**

A. Some hiring professionals place great emphasis on the cover letter and some don't. To be safe, it's a good idea to include a cover letter, whether you're e-mailing, faxing or using traditional mail to deliver your documents.

Your cover letter should quickly make it clear that you have the right skills and experience for the job, especially you're coming from another industry.

(Side note: if you're really hot for a job, consider sending your resume and cover letter by FedEx -- it's the only envelope in the history of the world that is ALWAYS opened by its intended recipient.)

### **Q. How can I e-mail my resume correctly?**

A. For best results, send your resume INSIDE and ATTACHED to your e-mail. That way, even if you have Windows and the employer has a Mac, for example, you're sure that your documents can be read.

Follow these steps before e-mailing your resume to employers:

1. copy and paste the text of your resume and cover letter into the body of an e-mail;
2. attach the document (in Word or WordPerfect) to the e-mail;
3. send a test message to yourself and a friend, to see how the whole thing will look and print -- if it's a mess, adjust and test until it works.

**Q. How long should my resume be? One page or two?**

A. There's no law against two-page resumes, especially for folks with 10 or more years of experience, or those in highly technical careers. I've done two-page resumes for recent college grads who had to list computer languages, certifications and other details.

But if your resume is two pages long, it should be a compelling read. Put your most valuable selling points near the top of page one. Summarize as needed and remember that you can always elaborate during a job interview.

There you have it! Four of the most commonly asked questions on resumes and cover letters in today's job market.



## **“How to Post Your Resume Online Like a Pro“**

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This week, I interviewed a fellow career professional to get the inside scoop on posting resumes online.

The rules for this seem to change almost daily. What can you expect when you post your resume on a job board like Monster.com? What should you avoid doing? And what about privacy?

I posed these and other questions to Rob Thomas, of Haas and Associates, an Urbana, IL-based career management firm ([www.haasrecruiting.com](http://www.haasrecruiting.com)). Here's the text of that interview ...

Kevin: What's the one mistake most people make when posting their resumes online?

Rob: Formatting is the primary issue. You must convert your resume to a plain text format first. If you're using MS Word, save the document as "text only," or copy and it into a text editor, such as Notepad. Don't center the text -- align it to the left margin.

Second, carefully proofread the plain text version, because some characters can show up as question marks. It's a good idea to replace bullet points with asterisks (\*), for example.

Kevin: Are there any other areas to watch out for?

Rob: Many resume sites will ask you about salary. Consider putting your requested salary at or even slightly below your present rate. Although everybody wants to make more money in their next job, don't knock yourself out of the running by asking for twice what you're making now. You can always negotiate that part later.

Kevin: What about privacy issues?

Rob: About 90% of resume Web sites let you control who sees your data. You can always use a fictitious name, omit your phone number or change the name of your company. But I've found that the more information you leave off, the lower your response will be. It's best to carefully investigate each site and its privacy policies before posting your resume.

Kevin: What kind of results should people expect from posting their resume online?

Rob: The more high-tech and in-demand your skills are, the more calls you'll get, of course. My research tells me about 30-35% of high-tech professionals find jobs online, while it's about 10% for most other people.

You can increase your response by offering to relocate. And try posting on a site that's specific to your industry -- I've found resume Web sites for almost every profession, and that can really make a difference.

# **“You, a Highly Paid Expert?”**

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## **Professional Tips For**

Today, more than ever, knowledge is power. Specifically, expert knowledge gives you the power to command a higher salary and enjoy greater job security.

Let me explain.

No matter what field you're in, experts make more money and are in more demand than non-experts. If you can make yourself into an expert and become recognized as such by your boss, you'll reap the benefits for years to come.

It's easier than you think. You can start today. Here are three ways.

### **1. Get smart**

One of the fastest ways to increase your value on the job is to keep learning. This can be as complex as getting your MBA or as easy as reading a book every week.

Whatever you do to increase your knowledge, make sure your boss knows about it! Completing a new degree or course, such as Microsoft's MCSE certification, will give you a lot more bargaining power the next time you ask for a raise.

If you don't have time to complete a formal training program, at least try to read heavily on work-related topics ... then share your new knowledge the next time you chat with your manager.

### **2. Find a problem and solve it**

The most valued employees in any company are the ones who solve problems. Obvious, right?

But problems are everywhere, waiting to be solved. If you're a neat freak, could you improve the office filing system? If you're good with words, could you come up with 2-3 new ideas for your corporate brochure?

Whatever problems you tackle, your employer will be pleasantly shocked by your initiative. Solve enough problems and you can't help but grow out of your current job ... and into a better, higher-paying one.

### **3. Get recognition**

This one takes a bit more time, but the long-term payoffs are enormous.

Look around your city and industry. What associations could you become active in? What trade journals might publish your letter to the editor? What Web sites could you post comments on?

The more widely recognized you become in your field, the more pride your employer will take in having you on staff. And the easier you'll find it to command a higher salary in your current or next job. It just makes sense.

People value experts highly. You can start increasing your expertise -- and paychecks -- today by increasing your knowledge, solving problems and becoming known in your industry.

## **"How to Write Letters of Resignation and Acceptance"**

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Owner, Managing Editor – [Guaranteed Résumés](#)

First and last impressions are important in your career. And you never get a second chance to make either!

If you resign gracefully from your current job, it can smooth the transition to your next one. Why burn bridges? If you leave on positive terms, you can maintain a network of ex-coworkers and managers to call on later for help at your next company.

Likewise, a well-written acceptance letter can help set a positive tone for your first day on the new job.

First, let's say goodbye.

In your resignation letter, emphasize the best parts of your employment. Include one or two achievements you were especially proud of. This will reinforce the value you created and help create a lasting, positive impression of you.

Language like this may help get you started quitting:

"Dear Steve,

This will confirm that I will leave ABC Company on October 1, 2001 to accept a position at XYZ, Inc. It's been a pleasure working with you on such projects as the Widget Deluxe roll-out and the Web site upgrade. I will be more than happy to assist you and my replacement in making this transition over the next two weeks and thereafter, so please feel free to contact me at XYZ should you have any questions."

Writing your acceptance letter can often be easier ... and more fun.

Here, your task is to reinforce the skills or expertise that made your employer want to hire you in the first place. You might follow this format:

"Dear Cindy,

I'm delighted to accept your offer for the position of Assistant Manager. I look forward to starting on the programs you and I discussed in our last interview, particularly your online marketing initiative, which will allow me to use the professional contacts and research skills I've developed over the last four years. I look forward to seeing you Monday morning, July 1."

The exact words aren't important. Just try to stay upbeat and positive in your letters. Do this and you'll enjoy a smooth transition from one successful job to the next, and the next, and the next ...

## **“5 Résumé Mistakes That Can Kill Your Career”**

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Owner, Managing Editor – [Guaranteed Résumés](#)

As a professional résumé writer with 13 years of writing, hiring and managing experience, I've seen the same mistakes time and again in résumés.

Mistakes in your résumé can damage or even kill your career. Because a sub-standard résumé can prevent you from ever being called for a job interview.

But don't worry! If your résumé isn't 100% perfect, you're not alone. And help is just below, in this article.

Here are the five mistakes that ruin most résumés (and what you can do to prevent them).

### **Mistake #1: No objective or summary**

By not describing what job or field you want to work in, you start your résumé off on the wrong foot. Why? You force the employer to read it all the way through to figure out what kind of job you're suited for. You create more work for your busy reader. This is the last thing you want to do!

If you know the exact job title you're applying for, say so! Start the résumé like this:

#### **OBJECTIVE**

Marketing Manager, where 10 years of sales, marketing and management experience will add value to operations.

What if you don't know the job title? Start your résumé like this:

#### **SUMMARY**

Seeking a position where 10 years of sales, marketing and management experience will add value to operations.

By starting your résumé with a clear objective or a focused summary, you tell the reader exactly what you want to do for him or her. This establishes a rapport and sets the stage for the résumé. Which will greatly improve your results.

### **Mistake #2: Focusing on you and your needs**

This is the worst mistake you can make. Unfortunately, it's also the most common. Look, no employer wants to hire you. Employers hate hiring! They only hire employees when they have problems to solve. And no employer wants to spend a lot of time hiring you, either, just as you wouldn't want to spend more time in a dentist's chair than you had to.

So, your résumé must quickly answer the one question that's on every employer's mind: "What can you do for me?"

Unfortunately, most résumés don't.

Most résumés start out like this: "Seeking a position where I can utilize my skills in an atmosphere with potential for career advancement ..." And so on. This sounds fine and logical to the person writing the résumé. But it completely alienates the person **READING** the résumé. Because this person -- your potential employer -- has his own problems. He could care less about your career aspirations or desire to make more money.

Instead, tell the employer how you can add value to his/her operations, or contribute to efficiency. Notice this opening summary again:

#### **SUMMARY**

Seeking a position where 10 years of sales, marketing and management experience will add value to operations.

Now, what employer wouldn't want to talk to someone like you, who's offered to add value to his operations? You could also say: "... will contribute to operations" or "... will add to profitability." The exact words don't matter. What does matter is your focus on helping the employer meet his goals. If you do that, your career will advance and you'll make more money.

#### **Mistake #3: Focusing on responsibilities instead of results**

While it's important to tell the reader what you've done at each job, it's far more important to spend most of your time talking about what you accomplished and how you made yourself valuable to past employers.

It's easy to do. Just think back on your daily duties. What good things happened when you did your job well? Write them down! Focus on results. The more specific, the better!

Instead of saying this: "Responsibilities included (but were not limited to) implementation of policies and procedures, training of new employees, interfacing with subordinates and vendors, and light correspondence duties."

Say this: "Worked with staff and vendors to increase product turnover by 15% and sales by 23% in five months. Also trained 14 new employees, five of whom were rapidly promoted."



**Mistake #4: Too many big words**

It's a shame how often a good résumé is ruined when the author utilizes a superabundance of polysyllabic terminology, or uses too many big words.

Don't hide behind your vocabulary. When your résumé is not clear and to the point, the reader gets bored, time is wasted and your résumé goes in the trash.

Simplify! Write as if you were talking to a class of sixth grade students. That's the reading level all journalists are trained to appeal to in their writing. If it works for America's newspapers, it ought to work for you.

Instead of saying "implemented," try "adopted" or "set up," for example.

Never "utilize" what you can simply "use."

Don't "interface" with people; "work" with them.

And never use "impact" as a verb. (Meteorites hitting the moon are about the only thing that should "impact.") Try "affect" instead.

**Mistake #5: Spelling/punctuation errors**

Your spell-checker is not enough! You must read through the résumé once for accuracy (numbers, dates, city names, etc.), once for missing/extra words, and once more for spelling.

Then, show your résumé to several friends and ask them to read it out loud. Listen to where they pause; this could mean you've written something confusing or inaccurate. After you get their feedback, revise the résumé so that it's 100% error-free.

## Top 3 Job Search Resources for Tough Times

Here's a job search technique with a nearly 100% success rate!

In this job market, I can't over-emphasize how *critical* it is for you to proactively go out and look for job leads. You can't simply wait for jobs to appear in the local newspaper or on Monster.com, though you should apply for those jobs, too.

Refer to <http://www.markystein.com> for excellent advice on cold-calling employers -- the best I've ever seen, actually. And if you'd like to work with her, mention my name (Kevin Donlin) for her best rate. She has a nearly 100% success rate because her methods are so effective -- and unusual.

These methods work for executives, recent college grads and everyone in between.

Marky (like me) has appeared in *The Wall Street Journal* and conducted numerous seminars. She tested her methods on 1,000 job seekers during the LAST recession, in 1990, and helped more than 900 of them find work within 90 days.

I give Marky my highest possible recommendation as a coach to assist you! To learn more, visit - <http://www.markystein.com/>

## Need help with your job interview skills?

Most folks do. And yet, most folks still try to “wing it” and walk into job interviews poorly prepared for one of the most important conversations of their lives.

That’s a receipt for humiliation, disaster ... and a prolonged job search.

So, in May of 2001, I started searching for the best job interview coach I could find.

After combing the Internet and Yellow Pages, I was bitterly disappointed by "experts" who didn't return phone calls, acted unprofessionally or were just plain incompetent.

NINE MONTHS later, after sifting through 92 Web sites, advertisements and Yellow Pages listings, making more than 13 phone calls, and interviewing a half dozen coaches by email and phone, I found ... the best job interview coach on the Internet.

How do I know?

She's the only one who stands behind her service with a Money-Back Guarantee. And she's been hand-picked by Monster.com to serve as their Job Interview expert -- you can't do that unless you're someone special.

Who is she?

Her name is Carole Martin. And I give her my highest possible recommendation as a coach to assist you! To learn more, visit - <http://www.interviewcoach.com/>

## FREE “3-Point Résumé Analysis”-- \$39.00 value

Your résumé is costing you money every time an employer fails to call you for an interview.

That can add up to a HUGE amount of lost or lower salary -- \$10,000? \$20,000? more? -- while you struggle to find your next job.

Want to find out if your résumé is holding you back? Quickly, confidentially and absolutely free?

To claim your “3-Point Résumé Analysis” at no cost or obligation, e-mail your résumé (in Word or WordPerfect format) to [kevin@gresumes.com](mailto:kevin@gresumes.com) today. Or fax it to 952.941.7258. I'll review your résumé free of charge and reply within 2-3 business days with at least 3 tips for improving it.

Kevin Donlin

Owner, Managing Editor – [Guaranteed Résumés](#)

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