

7 common job hunting hurdles and how to get over them

Job hunting can be a tough gig. It's a process with many steps: researching opportunities, creating a [great resumé](#), preparing for interviews, waiting for feedback. There's no wonder it can start to feel like a mental marathon.

If you're coming across hurdles in your job hunt, you're not alone. Research for SEEK shows the top hurdles for job seekers include:

- finding a job that matches their career goals
- bias and discrimination
- no mention of salary or benefits in the job ad
- waiting too long to hear back.

Plus, at the moment, there's fairly tough competition for jobs.

"The early part of the year is usually busy with people determined to find a new job after the holidays," explains career coach Leah Lambart from [Relaunch Me](#). "But with companies downsizing and redundancies happening, we're expecting the next few months to be even tougher."

But the good news is there are ways for you to prepare for and overcome these challenges.

Here some expert strategies to help you get past common hurdles and land the job you want.

Hurdle 1: Not knowing where to start

Job hunting without a clear focus can feel overwhelming. People often look for an escape from their current job rather than working out what they truly want, says people strategist and author of Meaningful Work, Nina Mapson Bone.

"This means they default to the same type of job in a different organisation, or they blame the job and look for something completely different."

Strategy: Do some self-assessment

Understanding what you find meaningful in work is critical, says Mapson Bone. She mentions four vital elements: the role itself, the organisation, personal skills and values, and societal influence (what your friends and family think). Lambart suggests talking to a friend, mentor or career coach to identify suitable roles.

"Think about your [interests](#), [strengths](#), [transferable skills and values](#). This will narrow down your search."

Also make use of job search filters and alerts on SEEK around keywords, location, salary range, and whether the job is contract, permanent or part-time, she adds.

Hurdle 2: No mention of salary in job ad

Applying for a job without know the salary of benefits can be tough. It's a lot of effort to go through without knowing for sure it's the right role for you. On the other hand, it could put you off applying for a role that could be perfect for you.

Strategy: Do some research

Have a look online to find similar roles with advertised salaries and use the salary filters when searching for jobs to narrow down the jobs that should fall into your desired range.

Otherwise, contact the hirer or recruiter to ask for a guide as to the expected salary range. Most recruiters should be happy to answer this question for you, if you can get hold of them. Recruiters are very busy people so unfortunately they are not always going to get back to you. Try not to take it personally!

Hurdle 3: Discrimination

While there's been progress, discrimination is still a real factor in the job market, Mapson Bone says. Many workers still face racial, sexual orientation or sex discrimination on a regular basis, and this can extend to job seekers as well.

Strategy: Market yourself the right way

She recommends leaving out details from your resumé that could potentially be used to discriminate against you.

"This includes your address, photos and where you went to school."

Craft your resumé [like a marketing document](#), adds Lambart.

"You want to look current, especially if you're worried about age discrimination. So it's great to show you're up to date with technology, and have an online profile.

"And if you get to interview, research what software and technology you may need to do the job so you can prove you're up to date."

Hurdle 4: Standing out from the crowd

When you submit a resumé, the employer or recruiter might use an Applicant Tracking System (ATS) to review it. This is technology that scans for keywords in resumé. It's becoming increasingly sophisticated, so making your resumé and application ATS-friendly could help you.

Strategy: Create an application that shines – but isn't too shiny

Make sure your resumé is keyword-optimised and tailored to the job.

Keyword optimisation is simpler than it sounds. "Look for the keywords in your job ad and pepper them throughout your resumé and cover letter," says Mapson Bone. "Even if it's not automated, you want the human being who's reading to see you're a match."

While you don't want your resumé to look dated, don't go for a template that's over-designed either, adds Lambart.

"If your resumé has lots of graphics, colour and photos, the software may not be able to read it. Use a resumé template that is fairly simple."

Also ensure that your resumé is really well-written, with no typos. You may consider outsourcing to a writer who's an expert in resumé, cover letters and online profiles. [These resumé templates](#) are also a good place to start.

Hurdle 5: Dealing with interviews

Whichever way you look at it, interviews are nerve-wracking. There's a lot on the line and often not a lot of room for slip ups. It's easy to feel that this is your one opportunity and so you've got to nail it.

Strategy: Be ready

Preparing ahead of time is key.

"Check out [interview resources on SEEK Career Advice](#), research typical interview questions and practice with family and friends," says Mapson Bone.

"Then when you meet somebody, make good eye contact, smile, offer a good handshake, be polite and friendly, ask good questions, and send a thank-you email afterwards."

Hurdle 6: Being rejected or ghosted

Being rejected or hearing nothing at all from recruiters or hiring managers is stressful and disheartening.

"You don't know what's going on, so you're left in 'no man's land'," says Lambart. "And if you don't have feedback, you don't know how to improve for next time."

Strategy: Politely persist and, maybe, rethink your methods

Lambart advises establishing early contact with potential employers and following up post-interview.

"Try to speak with someone on the phone rather than just sending a resumé. At the interview, ask when you can expect to hear from them and if they're happy for you to follow up and when."

But if you're simply not gaining traction, rethink your strategy.

"If you're making a career change or are a parent who's been out of the workforce for 15 years, consider applying directly or tapping into your personal network."

Hurdle 7: The drain on time and mental health

Scouring job listings, writing applications and attending interviews can feel like a full-time pursuit.

"Not knowing how long it will take to find a job can be stressful, especially if there's financial pressure," says Lambart.

Strategy: Get organised and be patient

Lambart suggests job seekers set aside time every week for the task and use filters and job alerts effectively.

And be patient, she adds.

"Realise that there's nothing you can do to change the situation.

"And in the meantime, find ways to feel energised and to keep your confidence levels up.

There's no doubt the job hunt can feel like a marathon, not a sprint. But by being aware of the hurdles that might be ahead, and trying these strategies to overcome them, you'll be closer to landing the right role.

Read More:

- [How having a professional profile can help you stand out](#)
- [How to write a follow up email for a job application: Templates and tips](#)
- [5 ways to look after your mental health while job hunting](#)