

5 ways to get out of a job hunting rut

It's surprisingly common to fall into a bit of a rut when job hunting. Not receiving replies, facing rejection, and having to repeat the whole process can be incredibly frustrating.

But there is a way forward. When searching for a job becomes like a full-time job without the rewards, here are some strategies you can use to turn things around.

Signs you may be stuck in a rut

If you're not sure if the grind of job searching is impacting you, Donna Currie, Managing Director at [Niche 212](#) says there are clear signs you can look for.

"When they're stuck in a rut, job seekers typically start to lose confidence in their ability and start to doubt their self-worth," she says, "They can feel worn down, deflated and disheartened."

Currie warns this can start to show in your applications.

"The scattergun approach is a telltale sign," she explains. "This is when job seekers experience a loss of focus on the specific type of role they're looking for. They start to become a serial applier to jobs that are either not relevant, [out of the skillset and experience](#), or they're over or underqualified for."

"Job seekers can also become sloppy in their [cover letters](#) or CV, not bothering to tailor their applications for the job they are applying for. They start to lose their eye for detail, and a lethargy starts to show."

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1. Diversify your search

If you're tired of seeing the same results, it's time to rethink the way you search. Expand your net by experimenting with new search terms.

Matt Chambers, Partner and Co-founder of [Pony Express](#), suggests trying the 'semantic search' technique.

"If you want a job related to project management, don't just enter 'project manager' into the search bar," he explains. "Instead, think about and search for commonly used terms such as 'statement of work', 'change request', 'sprint planning' and so on.

"Also, consider searching for roles that require specific technologies or certifications you have experience with. Using the Project Manager example, this could be Jira, CSPO, or PMBOK."

2. **Connect with your network**

Now is a great time to reach out to your community and use those connections you've made along the way. Your network can include not only past and present coworkers, but tertiary educators, contacts on social media and even friends and family. You can [keep track of your network with SEEK's free template](#).

Currie emphasises the importance of staying connected, however informal this may be.

"You can reach out to old contacts just for a coffee or a quick hello on the phone," she advises. "Stay engaged with the people in your industry through associations, social media and Meetup groups."

Keep your professional online profiles up-to-date and active to make sure your finger stays on the pulse for your industry. Check out [how to write a standout SEEK profile](#) to make sure yours is garnering the right attention.

It's also good to attend as many industry events as you can to meet new contacts and stay front of mind for existing ones.

3. **Research your industry and companies you're interested in**

Bolster your approach with industry research. Being well-informed of what's happening in a company can help you spot or create opportunities to join.

A great way to do this is following companies you're interested in, to stay on top of upcoming projects or trends that might lead to new hires, says Chambers.

"For example, if tech company ABC has just raised money, send a personalised message to someone on the leadership team along the lines of, 'I was excited to read about your successful raise, and I'd love to be on your radar for any current or future roles.'"

4. **Set goals**

“Action creates action – it is the universal law!” says Currie. “Harness this power by keeping yourself physically active and setting yourself fresh [goals](#) every week.”

It’s important to recognise even small achievements and your ongoing perseverance. To do this, Chambers recommends changing the way you measure success.

“If securing an interview is challenging, consider reframing progress as something smaller, such as establishing a connection with someone at the company you are applying to,” they suggest. “You can do this through industry research as mentioned above, mutual connections, or simply by being persistent.”

5. **Stay positive**

Although it can be challenging, try to keep your spirits up and give each application the effort it deserves. Currie emphasises that your outlook when applying for a role can heavily impact the outcome.

“It’s important to present yourself with the passion and commitment for the role you are going for with energy and enthusiasm at all times,” she says.

Chambers adds that bringing authenticity to your applications can help you stay upbeat.

“Try to have fun and be real,” he says. “Job searching can be boring and frustrating – lighten it up by using humour, honesty, or anything else that makes you feel like you, not just some faceless application.

“The job market is tough right now. Some days, it just doesn't happen. Go for a walk, sit in the sun. And above all, be kind to yourself.”

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- [I don't have all the requirements, should I still apply?](#)
- [Looking for work? 5 ways to stay safe when job hunting online](#)