

**THE EIGHT MISTAKES THAT  
ALL JOB HUNTERS MAKE**

## **The Eight Mistakes That All Job Hunters Make...**

**1. There are no jobs.** The unemployment rate in America, at the time of writing this book, is 6.2 percent. According to the U.S. Labor Department, nearly half a million people simply stopped looking for jobs in July 2003, because they were "**discouraged**" over job prospects. Is it really that bad?

On a plane en route to Minneapolis, Minnesota, someone saw me reading this lengthy manuscript and asked, "What's it about?" Marketing in the name always gets attention - I wonder why? I ended up having a fascinating conversation with the young man sitting next to me. He said that over the last month he had received three job offers of double his existing salary! The one, he finally accepted paid about \$100,000, and he was traveling to start his new job in the Midwest.

I asked him why he thought he received three job offers, when most people in today's economy struggle to get one offer. He said he was at a time in his life where he had developed the expertise people wanted. He also told me he was a college dropout, but he had managed to gain experience in a highly specific area. He said he worked for an environmental management company, and his area of expertise was wireless radiation systems to check sewers.

I told him I believed he had no problem finding a job and had multiple offers because he had developed highly specialized skills in a high-demand area. In summary, he had the necessary skill sets to solve people's problems. He had made himself a valuable (**marketable**) individual. So recruiters came looking for him!

One cannot make the claim that there are no jobs. People change jobs, move from company to company, get transferred, retire and die. The corporate world is never static or stationary.

***Pick up any newspaper in the U.S. There are plenty of jobs! If 6.2 percent of Americans are unemployed, that means 93.8 percent of Americans are still employed! Is the glass half empty or half full?***

Look on the Internet, and there are plenty of postings. Look around at all the office buildings. There are plenty of people working in them, or the rent would not be paid.

According to Kaplan College, the financial planning industry at the time of this writing is booming, with an anticipated 35 – 40 percent job growth over the next few years. The average income off financial planners is \$185,000, and we are supposed to be in a recession!

**So never say, “I can’t find a job,” or “there are no jobs.” Say instead, “I can’t find a problem to solve, a problem that fits my specific skill sets.” This is not only a more accurate and appropriate definition, but also the truth. Most importantly, it will put you in the right frame of mind to go about your search and ultimately lead to success.**

**The key to ensure you are always employable is to make sure your skills, not necessarily your resume, are up to date. What skills do you need to develop to be marketable?**

If there were no jobs, the streets would be empty and it would be like a nuclear holocaust had occurred. The staffing companies in America would be out of business. Pick up your local yellow pages, look under the employment section and you will find plenty of staffing companies in any major U.S. city. Most of them have beautiful offices in nice locations. They pay a sizeable amount in rent, and find jobs for people regardless of economic conditions.

**If you want to make job hunting easy, simply find out what skill sets you have and where they fit, and stop making excuses!**

One of the secrets to job hunting is to figure out how your skill sets relate to the opportunities offered, by doing both internal and external market analysis. Look within yourself at your skills, interests and desires, then look at the outside world to see who could potentially use them. Develop a value proposition, and approach them with it! Sounds simple? It is, trust me.

Go into any city, and you will see a mixture of businesses. All the businesses hire only people that fit their specific needs! There are jobs, plenty of them. What you need to do is to find a home for your skill sets. There are people out there looking for people like you! You need to find and convince them you can add value!

**2. I am selling myself versus I am selling my skill sets.** Every salesperson needs a product to sell, plus they also need to know the value of what they are selling. These are the fundamental rules of sales. **In job hunting, your product is called skill sets.**

When I do job hunting classes, I look at my audience. I just don't see a group of people, but an array of skill sets. The room is full of some amazing talents. My job is simply to get them to dig within themselves and help them define their own value, and then to present it to someone who wants to listen.

**3. You should not approach people directly.** This is so far from the truth, and probably the number one reason why people struggle to find a job. They simply fail to connect with the person who has the authority to hire them. Don't forget the first thing a hiring manager says when a new employee is hired is,

**"What a good find!"**

This statement implies they had to work hard to find the human capital they needed to solve their problem. If we understand it, why not turn the statement around and say,

**“I am the person you are looking for!”**

All executives say there is room for good people, always! They understand something you need to understand to be successful in your job search:

*Good people don't cost companies anything. They actually make them money!*

They are a so-called investment spend. Companies spend to invest in future growth. **Similarly, good salespeople are zero-cost people.** They pay for themselves out of the sales they make!

A headhunter will do nothing more than screen you to understand what value you can add. Then the value is matched to a company that needs it. Why don't you do it yourself? I agree it takes a lot of effort, but...

**...who knows you better than you, and who is more interested in finding you a job, and managing your own career progression? U must Market U! Because no one else will!**

If company managers are not interested in hearing from you, they are not doing their job. Managers need to always be on the lookout for quality people. After all, a company is no more than a collection of people performing a series of tasks.

***It's no secret the best companies simply have the best people!***

When I teach job hunting classes, the most common comment I hear is, "I don't want to bother or pester people." With that statement, many job candidates are really saying they don't believe they have something of value to offer the marketplace, and consequently cannot do good marketing.

They have adopted a mindset that they should not call people who have the authority to hire them. In fact, hiring managers are actually eager and waiting to hear from people who can solve their problems.

Have you ever had your car break down? What happens when the repair truck appears? You are excited that this person has the ability to solve your problems. What if your dishwasher breaks down, and you have a sink full of stinky dishes that need to be washed? It's a feeling of relief when someone with the necessary skill to solve your problem arrives.

If you need a service done around your house, such as TV repair, pest control or painting, you have no problem calling the vendor and telling them exactly what you need. The vendor is happy to listen and returns your call. The vendor is able to make money from you. It's of value to him or her and to you.

The same concept applies to job hunting. Turn the tables around for a second and ask, **"Who can I help with my skill set?"** Then put it in the form of a value proposition and approach them directly.

I promise you they will be more than happy to hear from you, assuming:

1. You have developed a well-thought-out value proposition (VP)
2. You get the person's attention (this takes sales skill)

Do you feel hesitant to call a mortgage broker who has for the last two months been sending you literature in the mail on how they can help (notice that they are out to solve your problem!) refinance your house? Of course not, because you know they will welcome your call. The same goes for job hunting (problem hunting). Who do you think would welcome your call? Can you educate and provide exceptional value to that person?

**When I was really desperate to find a job, it finally boiled down to “Who would be really excited to hear from me if I called?”**

Maybe I know something they want to know: technology, product, market knowledge, etc. How can I add value to their day?

**At the end of the day, when you do get a job, it will be because someone somewhere has accepted your value proposition.**

The trick is to be proactive and use a catalyst (something that speeds up the process) called marketing. It moves the process on as quickly as possible.

**Let me remind you one more time that people do want to hear from you if you have something valuable to them!**

Don't waste people's time, do your internal homework. Find out what you have to offer and why they would be interested!

**4. Resumes get you a job.** Resumes start life as plain pieces of paper that you have added value to by putting on a summary of your skill sets. But people don't hire pieces of paper. Although the world thinks that resumes get you a job, they are no more than a sales tool aimed at getting you an interview. Use resumes for what they are: a sales tool at best. You can get an

interview without using a resume if you are able to make a powerful verbal value proposition. The resume is a one-dimensional document. It tells people nothing about your personality, ***and people have to work with you, not your resume!***

Resume is the French word for summary. But do people really want to know about the summary of your life (if you were the captain of the school hockey team, for example), or do they want someone who can solve their problems immediately?

To me, a resume is a post-mortem document, it's too late, it's already happened! To be successful, you need to be continually trying to develop new skills that make you marketable and a valuable person. If you are in a company, make sure you are always taking training courses, both internally and externally. Get involved in as many different types of projects as you can, and continue to expand and broaden your skill base. Overall, try to make yourself a more valuable person (do good marketing!)

Resumes, as we know them today, actually first appeared in the 1950's as a replacement for applications for positions. However, it was not until the 1980's that we started to see the plethora of books on resume writing, offering expert advice on writing the perfect resume. Today if you are an actor, engineer, teacher, mortgage banker, or federal worker, there seems to be a book available on how to write a resume for your specialized industry.

Resumes have risen in popularity in the last decade and are still considered to be the number one marketing tool for job hunters. I believe this is more due to ignorance than anything else. Why do we have resumes? What is their purpose?

**Resumes have one purpose and one purpose alone: to get you an interview.**

The way they do this is by showing how you can apply your skills

to solve someone's problem.

**A quality resume should not be a summary of your work history, but instead should show how you can apply your skills to solve someone's problems.**

Statistics are not in your favor. They show the average employer usually spends less than twenty seconds reviewing a resume – they just cannot afford to spend any more time. Think about it, that's three resumes per minute or 180 resumes per hour if they do it full time. But at most companies, people may only spend a maximum of an hour a day looking at resumes. Compare this to the number of resumes they receive each day. An hour a day reading resumes is enough to put anyone to sleep! So how effective are they as sales tools?

**5. Human resources make hiring decisions.** I know that all ads tell you to respond to human resources. Companies, like banks, use the "central clearing house system." They have all the resumes come into one central location and then distribute the resumes to the person making the hiring decision. Unless you are applying for a job in human resources, human resources will never make a hiring decision.

***One of the most common mistakes job hunters make is sending their resume to human resources. They end up marketing to the wrong person!***

Job hunters need to create value for the person who is going to actually hire them - the line or hiring manager. However, please do not approach them until you have a very well-thought-out value proposition – a very compelling reason they should hire you. This means doing a lot of market research to determine and understand the needs or requirements of the hiring/line manager. Then show how you can solve these using your specialized skill sets.

The way to contact the hiring manager (who is usually the decision maker and also your new boss), is to send an e-mail first, followed by a phone call. The most important point to remember when contacting hiring managers is to be very professional at all times.

**6. Direct marketing versus network marketing.** Most people who say they are looking for a job are using a marketing tool called direct marketing, but they don't know it. We talked about direct marketing in marketing for sales. It's the process of sending marketing collateral directly to potential consumers of your product.

However, the only way you can win the direct marketing game is by playing big! My view **is if you can't play big, don't play.** It's a waste of time and money, so leave it to the major catalogue companies.

Instead, use the "Federal Express" of our industry - network marketing. It's a much higher level and refined approach to marketing. It has the potential to deliver your message or value proposition as quickly as possible to the key decision maker. Please review the networking part of the sales chapter to remind you how powerful networking really is.

**7. Luck versus careful and meticulous planning.** People prefer to leave their job hunting fate to the outside world, hoping that someday someone will turn up and offer them an ideal job. Wishful thinking is good, but it won't pay the rent. I prefer to plan for success versus wishing.

***Remember, unless you have already created enough value for yourself in the marketplace, people will not come looking for you!***

You need to be proactive and go out to convince the world you have value to offer. The world is meant to go after. You will only be hired if someone sees value in what you are offering. So the goal is simple. Start by looking at yourself and all the things you

have done and how these reflect in terms of adding value to others. Create maximum value for yourself! Then go out and deliver as necessary

8. Me versus You. The final reason I believe that people struggle is they are inward-focused rather than outward-focused. They think a job is a paycheck and something that can cover their financial needs. They have the "Me" attitude, instead of "You" ("this is the value that I can add to you"). They forget one of the very fundamental laws of job hunting:

Job hunting is not about me, it's about you, and what value I can bring to you!

As you can see, so many false beliefs surround job hunting. And there are so many "recipes" for finding a job. Just look at the number of new books that are published, including this one! Have you heard the saying, "a confused mind always says no"? Well now you know why people say "no" when it comes to job hunting!

The only people who are really qualified to teach job hunting are marketing professionals, as it all ultimately comes down to marketing (bringing value to the marketplace)!

When I start a seminar on job hunting, I often ask how many people think that job hunting success is luck, instead of being based on a well-thought-out and systematic marketing plan. If they think it's based on luck, I tell them not to waste their time and money, because I am not a magician! Certainly, there may be a little bit of luck involved along the way, because it is a game. But to win any game you need a strategy!

But most people have never had formal marketing training. Why should they? It's not compulsory in any school or college. Consequently, most people go about job hunting in a totally unstructured and haphazard fashion. They ultimately get frustrated, and many give up. What they need is a marketing

plan that addresses fundamental marketing issues:

- Define the product you are selling (skill set analysis).
- Define who can use your product through comprehensive market research (needs assessment).
- Develop a reason to buy – the value proposition.
- Throw out bait – advertising (cover letter, resume, calls, networking).
- Bring in the fish– manage the sales process.
- Close the sale – get the job!

I think people hate job hunting because it involves the final component of marketing called sales (the messenger and convincing of value), and most people just hate the word sales, because they don't like rejection.

**People don't reject you; they reject your value proposition!**

They may actually like you very much! It's just that they don't like the value you bring to them! For example, if you tried to sell your friend a really poor product, they would perhaps laugh and reject it, but they remain a friend. Never confuse these two things.

The specific reason I put the sales section ahead of the job hunting section in this book is that I want you in the right frame of mind as a professional salesperson before I set you loose to go job hunting!

Do you think professional salespeople need to look for jobs? No, they usually have well- established networks, and they can pretty much decide when and where they want to move. So who is left? Those who have never had any formal training in sales, and now are faced with having to sell for the first time!

It's like having your first driving lesson one hour prior to entering a major racing tournament. You know what is going to happen – you're likely to crash!

Many job hunters go to job hunting classes, but end up learning the wrong thing.

**Job hunting classes should be marketing classes, but turn out to be career counseling.**

People come to the revelation that they have been pursuing the wrong career for the last ten years, and now is the time for a change! Many of these classes, with all due respect, are taught by people who have probably never been in professional sales, hate the word sales, never read a sales book and are not paid commission for the people they help to find jobs. Their role is to criticize resumes. Many of them probably majored in English. They are always able to find something wrong with your resume.

You now know resumes do not get you a job. The biggest problem is to get people to even read them! Most people don't see value in them, and only read resumes of people referred to them. Resumes have one purpose and one purpose only: to get an interview, period. In most cases you can get an interview without a resume. If you are focused on resumes you are "barking up the wrong tree."

One of my mentors taught me this principle:

***If you want to learn something; find the very best person that has mastered the subject and learn from them. If you can't get access to them, at least read their books, but don't settle for second best! You will only ever be as good as your best mentor. The question is who is yours?***

We are talking about HOPE (**H**aving **O**ther **P**eople's **E**xperience). If someone already has what I am trying to achieve, I would prefer to learn from them rather than having to reinvent the wheel. The way I learned a lot of my marketing tactics was through my own practical experience (mistakes), and from other very successful marketing professionals.

***When it comes to job hunting, I kid you not, I am a successful failure! I failed my way to figuring out a successful system!***

Believe me; I have done everything wrong, from simply asking people to hire me out of sheer desperation, making spelling mistakes on my resume, and waiting for the phone to ring after sending out tons of resumes! It was a very lonely experience. In the early days I would often sit all day at the computer typing cover letters and resumes, rather than getting on the phone and making value propositions to decision makers who could hire me.

Ever since I graduated, I've seen people who never had a problem finding a job. In fact, jobs came looking for them! What were they doing right? These were masters, my type of people.

They actually laughed at me because I just did not get it. I learned they had created a tremendous amount of value for themselves in the marketplace.

***They had acquired the right skill sets and knowledge that put them in the driver's seat.***

So jobs came looking for them. Many of them simply let the right people know they were in the market with a very powerful value proposition. They **created value for themselves** and their skill sets. What they did was quality marketing.

***When life is your teacher, the tuition fees are high. When HOPE, (having other people's experience) is your teacher, it's like getting a scholarship to Harvard.***

I live for HOPE; if you are smart, you should too.