

# A Guide To Getting Back in the Job Market

By Janine Griffiths

July 12, 2021 Career Tips, News

If you've been out of the job market due to the pandemic, you're not alone in your Post-pandemic job search. Now, as unemployment programs begin to wind down, many professionals are getting back out and looking for work. That means plenty of competition for the best jobs. There's no time to waste in getting your career back on track after an absence.

## Refresh Your Marketing Materials (Resume, Cover Letter, LinkedIn)

The first thing you should do is review your resume, cover letter template, LinkedIn account, and any other social media that you use professionally. In today's market, with the ability to change your resume and cover letter on the fly, consider both more of the template than a final document. Customize them from a base for every job search. It can take a little bit of a time investment, but it's worth the effort if it puts you at the front of the line as a candidate for top jobs.

### Check that your resume is accurate and relevant.

In most fields, you'll only want to include information from the last ten to fifteen years. If you have a more extensive career history than that, you can summarize some of those skills in a list. Your old resume may have an objective at the top, which is not really favored by employers anymore. Pretty much any company knows your objective is to get a job. Instead, use that valuable top-of-the-page real estate to list your most relevant skills. It's easy to customize this hot spot to each job.

Make it simpler by creating another document for your own reference that lists all your skills for you to choose from as needed. Match the terminology in the job posting if you can. It will increase the chance of your resume making it through the resume processing software. No matter what field you work in, there is specific terminology, and jargon insiders know. Whether you work in finance & accounting, engineering, manufacturing, construction, match your resume to the post. A human reader looking at similar terms would have the common sense to understand it's the same skill, but don't add any speed bumps to the process if you don't have to.

### It seems that everyone hates cover letters.

It's understandable because it can be kind of hard to come up with a fresh approach for every job. Make it easier by creating a template with some information filled out, such as a greeting and closing. The body of the letter can be customized to the company, opportunity, and person if you happen to know them. A cover letter is one of your most important marketing materials because it gives you the chance to draw a straight line between the job requirements and your experience. It's possible that a hiring manager would look at your resume and not be able to tell how you would fit into the position or company. A good cover letter can be your secret weapon. A lot of people don't put time into them; sending a cover letter that says little more than "enclosed please find my resume," which is a waste of everyone's time.

### When you update your LinkedIn profile, examine your network.

Do you need to clean up your network or reach out to friends of friends? Most people will accept a connect invitation, so don't hesitate to ask. The worst that can happen is they say no. Follow some of your favorite companies to know when they're hiring and to get to know their culture a little better. Don't hesitate to participate in groups, start conversations, share relevant posts, and comment on others' posts. Remember that LinkedIn is a professional forum. It's not Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, or Twitter. Put your best professional face forward. Stay positive. Don't complain. Don't talk about politics. Treat LinkedIn like a job interview or professional networking meeting. Be professional. Be relevant. Be courteous.

## Consider Temp Work to Ease Back In

If you've never considered temp work, this might be the perfect time. Temporary jobs can help you close employment gaps build new skills. If you have continuing family obligations, you can work around them in some positions. Use temporary work as an opportunity to try something new. Of course, you'll still need to right skills to get the job, but you might be able to try a role in a slightly different industry from what you're accustomed to.

For example, if you are an administrative professional, virtually every company requires your skills. You can work anywhere from a construction site to an executive's corner office. Temporary work gives you the chance to try out a few different opportunities to figure out where you are the most comfortable. Also, if an employer has some hesitation to hiring you because of your extended absence, they get a chance to see you on the job to see for themselves that you have the work ethic you said you did.

## Network; Get the Word Out that You're Job Hunting

Don't be shy about telling people you're looking for work. You never know where an opportunity will turn up. It's a no-brainer to tell your family and your former work colleagues you're in the market for a new job, but don't be afraid to discuss your search more broadly. For example, if you casually mention to the Barista that you're job searching when picking up your coffee, you might be surprised who they know. People stop for coffee on the way to work or even conduct business in the coffee shop. Another customer might be looking to fill a job. Don't be embarrassed to be out of work. Lots of people are right now and are trying to get back on their feet post-pandemic. Unplanned opportunities like this show why it's essential to practice your elevator pitch — a quick overview of what you do, what you're looking for, and what sets you apart. It can help you to respond confidently if you encounter someone who could provide a job lead.

## Build Hard Skills

If you lack any skills in demand in your industry, this is a great time to build them. You can achieve this goal through temporary work, going back to school, or taking a certification class. Always look at relevant jobs that are posted, even if they're a little bit out of your range. Examine the requirements to see what companies are seeking, then acquire those skills for future opportunities. If you haven't looked for a job in a while, your skills might be out of date. There's no reason that you can't get up to speed quickly with a little effort.

## Earn Certifications that Will Help you Stand Out

Certifications in your field can be a great way to set yourself apart from other candidates. Job posts are a great resource to find out what employers are looking for. In addition, you can check out your local university or community college to see what they offer. If you belong to a professional organization, check if they offer any certifications. You might even be able to find online certifications appropriate to your field.

## Take Refresher Courses

Speaking of universities and community colleges, see what courses they offer that could update your skills. Even if you have a degree, it may already be outdated if it's ten or more years old. In some fields, there have been many advances in recent years. A refresher course might be just what you need to build confidence and present yourself as a valuable potential employee.

## Update Resume with any Freelance Work You've Done

If you're like the many people who were out of work over the pandemic but took the time to do some freelance work, be sure to include it on your resume. You can put "Freelance" as your most recent employer on your resume and list some of the work you've done. Include links to your work where appropriate.

## Volunteer

If you volunteered during the pandemic, list it on your resume as well. Even if you didn't, you still have time to do so while you're looking for work. It will keep your skills sharp and prevent you from spending too much time worrying about finding a job. Volunteer work can keep you active and engaged while building your resume. People from all walks of life volunteer; you never know who you'll meet.

## Research Who is Hiring & What They're Offering

Hiring is a two-way street. Both you and the employer have to decide if you're a match. Keep this in mind as you come up with questions to ask during an interview. Consider what you liked and what you didn't in previous employers. Ask probing questions to find out what a job is really like. If an employer says they have a fast-paced environment, that's valid if it's an emergency room, which you will obviously be prepared for. But some companies claim a fast-paced environment because they're understaffed. If you can figure that out before you get into the job, you'll be much happier in the long run.

Follow your favorite companies or industries on social media and in the news to learn what new projects they are working on and if they're growing or laying off. Check out their reviews on Glassdoor or Google to find out what employees think of working there. Don't be alarmed by one or two terrible reviews if the rest are okay to good. There are people who will be unhappy no matter where they are, so don't be dismayed. Look for trends. If most of the reviews are middle of the road, you'll know they're probably accurate. It may be a red flag if all the complaints are about the same thing that goes unresolved for a long period. You also don't want to see nothing but extremely glowing reviews. It could be the employer pressured their staff to add positive reviews to attempt to offset lower rankings.

Glassdoor is a great resource to find out how much companies pay, you can also get an idea of competitive compensation in your industry with sites like [salary.com](#) or the [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#).

## Use a Staffing Agency

If you want to get to work fast, one of your best options is through a staffing agency. They offer a wide range of job types, such as temporary, temp-to-hire, and direct-hire. You can take a temporary position while you're looking for a full-time role. Temp-to-hire jobs give you a chance to make a great impression on an employer while earning a salary. You can take the job if the employer offers it. You can make an informed decision because you can see firsthand what it's like to work there. You'll know if they micromanage or have unrealistic expectations. You'll also see for yourself if it's a place that feels like the right fit where you'd love to be a part of the team.

Staffing agencies are also great for job seekers because they keep you updated and provide feedback you are unlikely to get directly from an employer who may be more cautious about what they share. Staffing companies will tell you what to expect before the interview and can provide detailed information after. If you don't get the job, they share the employer's thoughts and suggest what you can improve to do better next time.

## Start Your Search As Soon As Possible!

Don't waste any time when it comes to starting your search. Right now, it's a buyer's market for candidates. There are more jobs right now than there are candidates looking for them, but the economy is cyclical and bound to change. If you want a shot at the best jobs, now is the time to get going.

If you are looking for jobs in the Pacific Northwest, we can help. We place talented people in jobs in finance & accounting, engineering, manufacturing, construction, and more. [Opti Staffing](#) can help you in your post-pandemic job search or share proven job-hunting tips. [Give us a call today](#) to get started.

Facebook
Twitter
LinkedIn
Email

PREVIOUS
➤

[Culture Creation: Why Leadership N...](#)

[Summer Safety: Resources for Stayin...](#)

- Career Tips
- HR and Workforce Trends
- Management Best Practices
- News
- Opti Staffing News
- Real Success
- Recruiting Strategies
- Safety in the workplace
- Uncategorized

## Sign up for our newsletter

Email Address

[Sign Up](#)

### Our Locations

- Anchorage, Alaska
- Lake Oswego, Oregon
- Portland, Oregon
- Seattle, Washington
- Tacoma, Washington
- Vancouver, Washington

### Connect With Us



© 2022 Opti Staffing Group  
[Privacy](#) [Site Credits](#)