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JOB SEARCH ROADBLOCKS AND HOW TO OVERCOME THEM

Has your job search come to a screeching halt?

Sputtering like a car engine with a loose spark plug?

If you answered yes to question 2 also above, then you are behind the times. Most cars today do not have spark plugs!

You're not in Kansas--or the 1970s--anymore.

Cars today don't have distributors or distributor caps or spark plug wires anymore.

*Okay, some do. But a lot don't. So, how **do** they get the sparks to travel from the ignition coil to the plugs? How do the plugs know when they are supposed to fire? Where are the plugs, anyway? And the plug wires? And what does this analogy have to do with your job search?*

If you've been applying to jobs for a while without receiving any offers, then maybe it is time to look under the hood of your job search and see what is wrong.

Most of us start thinking It may be because of our accent, age, religion, height, weight, and you can add all the other thoughts that come to your mind. Thoughts like, "Is it something I said? Something I did? Or didn't say or do? Where am I going wrong?" are very common for almost all job seekers. The trick is being able to answer these questions honestly and change your tactics to improve your chances. Easier said than done, right?

At CFSS we put a lot of emphasis on organizing and planning. Here is a simple checklist to help you determine where you may be hitting a brick wall in your job search.

See how many of these questions you can honestly answer "yes" to. If you can answer yes to most (or all!) of the questions below, you're doing the right things and should keep at it.

If you answer "no" or "not really" or "kind of," to most of the questions, it may be time to look



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for intervention from an expert and sign up for our personal coaching or group boot camp program. Visit www.cfss.us/bootcamp.

You have applied for a lot jobs but are not getting any callbacks or job interviews:

- ___ Have you tailored every resume and cover letter you send out to be specific for each job posting/company?
- ___ Did you follow the formatting instructions outlined in our resume section? Visit <http://cfss.us/resume> to learn more.
- ___ Are you targeting your job search to specific jobs/careers that you are a good fit for?
___ Have you made a list of large and small companies which are currently posting job openings?
- ___ Have you connected with friends, colleagues, and other professionals to learn more about possible job openings?
- ___ Do you fill out online applications completely and with information and answers that will “beat” the application tracking systems? Read how to Master Application Tracking Systems at cfss.us/ats
- ___ Have you proofread your application materials for grammar and spelling, and have you asked others to proofread them too?
- ___ Are you following up on applications to make sure employers have received them (either on line, by email or phone)? And to reiterate your interest?
- ___ Are you active in professional associations or other networking groups?
- ___ Have you asked people in your connections list, if they work for a company you’ve applied to, or know someone at a company you want to work for, to put in a good word for you and walk your resume internally to a hiring managers desk?
- ___ Have you had your resume reviewed by a professional?



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- ___ Are you sending a cover letter (or cover email) with every application?
- ___ Are your application materials free from sounding angry, frustrated, desperate, or otherwise negative?
- ___ Rather than applying to everything you are qualified for, are you spending time on jobs that you truly want, crafting unique resumes and cover letters for each?
- ___ Is your phone's voicemail box able to accept messages and is your voicemail greeting professional?
- ___ Is your email box able to receive new messages?
- ___ Is your email address professional and does it contain your name?
- ___ Are your social media profiles (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) private so employers cannot see them, or have you made them completely professional-looking?
- ___ Do you have any professional online presence such as a LinkedIn profile or a professional portfolio?
- ___ Have you optimized your social media profiles for job search?
- ___ Are you applying to jobs as soon as they are posted rather than waiting days or weeks to apply?
- ___ Do you follow job application instructions explicitly?

If you are getting phone (or first-round) interviews, but not second-round invitations:

- ___ Are you enthusiastic and upbeat with your responses?
- ___ Have you practiced phone interviewing?
- ___ Do you demonstrate that you've researched the company by speaking about what you've learned?
- ___ Are you giving more than short, one-or-two-word answers?



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- ___ Do you make it clear what your biggest strengths are and how you'll be an asset to the company?
- ___ Do you have a dedicated space (Home office) where you are free from interruption and background noise to conduct your phone interview?
- ___ Have you researched the company to learn as much as you can before the interview?
- ___ Do you practice answering job interview questions out-loud?
- ___ Are you smiling while speaking over the phone?
- ___ Are you standing up while talking on the phone?
- ___ Are you keeping your answers positive and refraining from speaking ill of past employers, coworkers, companies, or experiences?
- ___ Are you inquiring about the interview process moving forward, and when you can expect to hear from them again?
- ___ Are you sending a thank-you email or note right after the interview, no matter how short the interview was?
- ___ Are you not only talking about what you've done, but what you can and will do for the company if awarded the job?
- ___ If asked about salary, do you give them an appropriate range and let them know that you're flexible as to the exact number? And how you came up with number?
- ___ Is your phone connection strong and do you sound clear on the other end of the phone?
- ___ Are you comfortable with silence and able to stop yourself from talking on and on?

If you are getting final-round interviews, but not getting offers:

- ___ Do you send a thank-you email or note to everyone who interviewed you immediately after the interview is over?



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- ___ In your thank-you, do you reiterate your qualifications for the position and clear up anything that didn't come out right during the interview?
- ___ Do you prepare a few examples of ideas you have for the position and talk about them during the interview?
- ___ Are you enthusiastic and upbeat with your responses?
- ___ Do you try to differentiate yourself from other candidates?
- ___ Do you demonstrate what you've learned by researching the company in your answers?
- ___ Can you tell the interviewer(s) specifically why you want to work for their company?
- ___ When answering questions like, "Where do you see yourself in five years?", do you give the impression that you want to work for their company?
- ___ Have you prepared specific examples of how you can contribute?
- ___ When speaking about your weaknesses, are you choosing a real weakness and telling them how you are already working to correct it?
- ___ Are you making regular eye contact and smiling during the interview?
- ___ Have you prepared (and asked) thoughtful questions about the company, your potential coworkers, and your potential responsibilities?
- ___ Do you ask if there is anything else they'd like to know about you before the interview is over?
- ___ Do you bring extra copies of a "for human eyes formatted" copy of your resume to hand out to multiple interviewers?
- ___ Are you letting your personality come through in your responses, body language, and intonation?
- ___ Are you inquiring about the interview process moving forward, and when you can expect to hear from them again?
- ___ If possible, are you bringing examples of your work with you to show to interviewers?



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- ___ Do you bring a list of at least three references who can speak well about you as a professional and employee and leave it with the interviewers?
- ___ Do you ask your references for their help ahead of time, and send them a copy of the job description so they know what you're applying for?
- ___ Do you provide your references with a copy of your resume and give them specific ideas of what to talk about should they be called by a potential employer?
- ___ Have you asked your references if they've heard from potential employers yet?