



Alumni

How to Job Search During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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REEVALUATE AND STAY CONSISTENT

If you were a job seeker a month ago, you will need to reevaluate your job search strategy. While many companies are cancelling or delaying vacant positions and reducing staff, there are some industries that are increasing their recruiting efforts in order to fill critical positions. Now is a good time to make the most of a slow job market by thinking about what you are passionate about, what industries to consider and what kind of work would truly satisfy you. These tips will help you navigate the process during the pandemic and the associated economic slowdown.

Consider the Timing

If you are currently employed and are looking for a new job, it may make sense to wait out the pandemic, as securing a job may be tough at this time. If you do not currently have a job, your aim should not be about obtaining the perfect role, but instead, seek a promising role until the economy improves and you have better choices. Companies are still trying to figure out how they can do business virtually, but once they get a grasp on how they can better operate, many businesses will resume hiring.

Target Company List

This global pandemic will impact all of us moving forward. Businesses may consider reducing commercial office space and employing more remote work positions than ever before. As you continue your job search, drafting a target company, industry and position list will be crucial. What will be more useful is researching what target companies and industries will now be at risk and on the rise.

AT RISK (temporarily):

- Leisure, hospitality, restaurants, events, concerts/entertainment, travel, airlines, hotels, manufacturing, transportation, commercial real estate, retail, financial investments, etc.

ON THE RISE:

- Wellness and healthcare, pharmaceuticals, biotech, non-profit, social work, counseling, government, ecommerce, home fitness, home entertainment, gaming, communications (social media, internet, video conferencing), etc.

Increase Networking

Events and gatherings will be cancelled or postponed for some time, so we should all get comfortable with virtual networking. Putting yourself in networking situations will give you the opportunity to speak with people in the industry about trends, companies hiring and current openings. Look into professional organizations in the industry that you're interested in. Make yourself visible and join LinkedIn, forums or other social media platforms and ask about joining virtual events. Tell the LinkedIn community what you need help with. For instance, consider sharing that you are interested in a job or volunteer opportunity or that you own a business and want to promote your services. Find people who are alumni from your alma mater or the organization you want to work for and send a connection request. Since 85% of jobs get filled through employee referrals, we recommend searching the LinkedIn UCF page, clicking on "Alumni" and from there, you can see common regions where your fellow Knights live, what companies they work for and the industries in which they work. Staying connected with your friends, as well as current and past colleagues will be beneficial in the long run. You never know how you can help each other in the future!

BOOSTING YOUR SKILLS AND RESUME

Employers are now going to be more conscious about the skills needed for various roles. Working remote is not new but there will now be a bigger push for skills related to production, discipline, organization, motivation, self-management and technical proficiency.

Use the Time to Reflect

Now is a good time to reflect on your career and professional development, explore your interests, identify your skills gaps, and pursue potential growth opportunities. Instead of being anxious about finding the next job opportunity, think about what kind of role you really want to see yourself doing that will make better use of your skills and experience. You may have to consider some training, but you may also have transferable skills that can be utilized in a different capacity. Before you embark on any training, find out what skills you already have and which ones you need to acquire, which can be achieved by earning a degree or certification, doing an internship or taking online courses.

Boost Your Skills

Even in uncertainty, there are ways that you can take control, such as improving what you're able to offer employers. As the job market slows down, now is the perfect opportunity to gain new skills and qualifications. You can do this by analyzing various job descriptions and listing the required skills and experience needed for that role or industry. If you already have the necessary skills and experience, be sure to include that on your resume. If not, online-learning is becoming widely available. You can learn free or discounted informational content in just about any subject. [UCF Continuing Education](#) offers a variety of training programs in a cost-effective and flexible format, such as distance learning. You can receive trainings and certifications in human resources, project management, website design and coding. Another platform to look into is Skillshare. Skillshare is an online learning community with thousands of classes on topics including illustration, design, business, photography, video, freelancing and more.

Update Your Resume and Online Profiles

Now that you have the time, take this opportunity to review and update your resume. Make sure to tailor your resume based on the job you are applying for by including relevant skills and job experience. Show proof of your transferable skills by touting your past accomplishments with quantitative facts.

It is no longer enough just to present yourself on paper. You should also keep online profiles in mind. Online job search platforms such as LinkedIn, Glassdoor and Indeed are crucial job search resources. Your LinkedIn profile is a visual representation of your skills and qualifications and how they got you to where you are today. If you haven't already, consider creating a professional profile and familiarize yourself with [online networking strategies](#) on LinkedIn and other social media platforms. LinkedIn has a huge network of communities, groups and fellow alumni. These resources can provide professional advice and even job opportunities.

JOB INTERVIEWING: WHAT TO ANTICIPATE

Cancellations and Delays

Be prepared for organizations to suddenly put a hold on job openings or cancel them altogether. Not to worry. Many will open back up in the weeks or months to come, but some departments are probably trying to get things in order first. With all that is going on, supervisors may be trying to sort out details regarding the position, such as the way in which training will be completed, what onboarding will look like, or if the position can even be done remotely. This doesn't mean you should stop applying or following up. You still want to put your name in the hat because once an employer is ready to continue the job search, you want to be ready! Be patient and give a few more days for a response.

Increase in Two-Way Video Interviews

Given the circumstances, we all know that there will be an increase in both phone and video interviews. Many of us are probably already used to one-way video interviewing where the applicant is given prerecorded questions and has a set time in which they need to record their answer and submit. This has been an option that employers use to vet through candidates quickly and advance them to the next stage, usually consisting of a phone or in-person interview with the hiring manager. Since in-person interviewing is currently not a possibility, it is going to be very important for job seekers to get acquainted with participating in two-way interviewing where both the candidate and interviewer are live-streamed, and a true authentic conversation can occur.

Interviewing on camera may be a little harder than in-person because there are different aspects of this interview style that you need to prepare for. **Here are some important tips to consider:**

1. Have a clean, simple background
2. Lighting is extremely important. You can use natural lighting, a ring light or a lamp. Make sure the light is behind the camera to get the best shot.
3. Be sure to frame the camera. You do not want to be too close or too far from the lens. The interviewer should be able to see your face, neck and shoulders. Avoid having too much open space over your head.
4. Having direct eye contact is the same whether you are in person or on camera. If there are multiple interviewers involved, be sure you are looking into the camera lens frequently.
5. Be sure to watch demo videos or YouTube tutorials of the video software the employer is using. Zoom is a popular video communications platform that employers are using. You do not want to wait until the last minute to troubleshoot find out your computer is not compatible.

Questions to Ask Employers

Cultural fit is going to be more important than ever. Follow your target companies on social media to gain an idea of how they treat their employees. Do they offer an opportunity to work from home, or offer support in other ways? Take some time to come up with questions that you would like employers to answer regarding how they are handling the global pandemic. **For example:**

1. What surprised the organization the most? Where you ready to adapt? How?
2. How were you able to provide assistance for your employees during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Following Up

This is a very difficult time for both applicants and employers. Consider the situation and remember to go easy and not get too frustrated if you do not hear a response as soon as you would like. If you have been in contact with someone throughout the interview process before the pandemic, reach out to them to see if they have any updates for you. You will need to be consistent but give them about 7-10 days to respond. If you want to check in on a vacant position, research their HR department and provide as many details about the job posting such as the title, job number, your full name and the date you applied. Don't forget to include your resume as well, if you decide to email.

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