

F*** the Recession!

50+ Ways to Rev Up Your Job Search
... in Any Economy

A Rock Unemployment! e-book by Melanie Orndorff

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Introduction

“There are no jobs in this economy.”

“Everyone’s getting laid off, so I don’t have a chance.”

“I should have taken that boring job I was offered a couple of months ago... At least then I’d be working.”

“I’m not one of the lucky people. I can’t just get a job whenever I want.”

Screw that!

You CAN get a job when you want, and it’s not a matter of luck, or the economy, or even settling for a gig you don’t like. The problem most job seekers have is that they’re headed the same direction as everyone else. By making small adjustments to your search strategy, you CAN find the shortcut to your dream job and jump to the head of the hiring line.

This e-book presents 50+ ideas to help you make that job yours. Go get it. Now.

Résumés and Cover Letters

- Getting ready to write your résumé, but don't know where to start? Begin by listing your previous work experiences, then think about your best day at each job (the one that made you feel GREAT). On that day, what did you accomplish, create, or set in motion?
- What's your hook? What's the one thing only YOU could bring to a new employer that would revolutionize the way he does business? Maybe it's your gift for building client relationships, or maybe it's your outstanding ability to keep meetings running smoothly. Whatever the benefit, highlight it in your cover letter and make sure it stands out on your résumé. (Just don't pick something you hate to do!)
- Streamline your résumé... Take out that "Career Objectives" section! Like it or not, employers look at your CV to find out how you can help them, not how they can help you. Fill that space on the page with clear examples of what you can bring to the job, and you'll help them picture you as part of the team. (You can also remove "References available on request")
- Add a "Summary" section to the top of your résumé and list 2 or 3 of your top skills or qualities. Tailor these for each job application, so that you're focusing on what they're seeking. It'll help hiring managers get a quick sense of who you are and why they should call you.

- Keep it simple when designing your résumé. Stick to one or two professional-looking fonts and don't go crazy with the colors. Let your words bring your personality to the page.
- Unless you're an actor, don't put your picture on your résumé. It makes hiring managers nervous, because it could be used to prove discrimination.
- Show your résumé to some friends and ask for their honest feedback. They may be able to suggest "selling points" you've overlooked that could help you land your next gig.
- Where to start with your cover letter? Research your prospective employer. Try to find out about any upcoming changes, initiatives, or problems they face. In your cover letter, be sure to point out how you can contribute.

Online Presence

- Monitor what's being said about you online, without scouring the web. Set up a [Google Alert](#) for your name and get results as they happen in your email inbox or RSS reader. It's free and it only takes seconds to sign up!
- Like it or not, potential employers often check [Facebook](#) profiles as part of the hiring process. Go through your Facebook photos - both the pix you've posted and your friends' tagged photos - to make sure they're all interview worthy.
- Hiring managers use Google to research potential candidates. Make sure they find you - and the information you want them to see - by updating your Google public profile today. Go to <http://www.google.com/profiles/me> to get started.
- Have you registered your simplified Facebook username yet? If not, head over to [Facebook.com/username](#) to select one. It'll make it easier for potential employers to find you, and it'll look nicer on your résumé or business card.

- [LinkedIn](#) is a great resource for job seekers. They offer exclusive job listings, as well as opportunities to network and research companies & hiring managers. You can also promote your expertise and expand your network by answering questions there. Just go to the "Answers" section and browse topics in your field.

- Recommendations can strengthen your LinkedIn profile. Instead of asking friends and former co-workers for their words of support, leave your recommendations for THEM. They'll likely leave some of their own.

- If you'd like to establish your expertise and share your knowledge, consider writing a blog. Services like [Blogger](#), [TypePad](#), and [WordPress](#) offer free or inexpensive blogging platforms. You can be up and running within minutes!

- Add your blog to your Facebook profile. (Check out [these instructions](#) if you need help). One of your posts may spark a connection with a Facebook contact, and it could lead to new job opportunities.

- Do you have specialized knowledge in your field to share with people just starting out? Put together a PDF guide and post it online. If it's helpful to others, you may even consider charging for it.

Finding Jobs

- Automate your job searches! Many job listing sites provide RSS feeds for specific searches. Use an RSS feed reader, such as [Google Reader](#), to monitor their daily updates and save yourself some time every day.
- See a job that would be perfect for a friend? Pass it along! It's the nice thing to do, and your buddy will remember it when he spots a gig you'd love.
- Work begets work. If you're offered your dream job, but it's a short-term gig, take it. It could turn into a longer-term opportunity or introduce you to contacts that will help you land your next big thing.

Networking

- Call your mom. (No, she didn't pay me to write that.) Family can be a great networking resource, so don't be afraid to ask if Mom knows anyone in your field. You never know who her friends might know!
- Volunteering for a local professional association or networking group can provide you with great opportunities to make contacts and increase your standing in your industry. Look into the groups you're a part of and see how you can get more involved.
- Use your college education to your advantage. If you haven't already, join your local alumni group, or find them on Facebook or LinkedIn. Get in touch with group members in your industry... They're often excited to help a fellow grad move ahead.
- Take someone out to coffee today. Is there someone in your industry you'd like to get to know better, or an old colleague you haven't seen in a while? Treat him or her to coffee, and you could get the inside scoop on job openings or advice on landing the job of your dreams.
- Make friends at the local dog park. Today, grab your pup (or borrow one from a friend) and head down to the park. Pet owners always have something in common, and you may make a new friend or long-term business buddy.

- Business cards aren't just for big companies. If you're actively seeking a new job, you should always carry a few cards with your contact info. At the supermarket, the gym, a barbecue... you never know when you might meet the perfect career connection!

- Going in for a teeth cleaning? Why not ask your dentist to help you network? Service professionals often see many clients a day and hear about their businesses. You never know who might have been in for a root canal!

- Work on building your personal brand to get prospective employers coming to YOU. One way to grow your reputation is through public speaking. Is there a local trade group that could use your expertise? Contact them today and see if you can get involved.

- First impressions count the most! Have your friends evaluate you on your handshake, posture, and confidence entering a room.

Applying for Jobs

- Set up [Google Alerts](#) for all of the companies and hiring managers you're interested in reaching. You'll get insight into their businesses, which could come in handy in your cover letters or interviews.
- Want to apply for a position, but don't know anything about the company or person doing the hiring? Start your research on [LinkedIn](#). You can find out info about companies, people, and open positions, then learn about the people in your network who can connect you to the decision makers. You'll have an immediate advantage over the competition.
- Proofread your work! Run spell check on your résumé and cover letter before sending them out, then be sure to have a friend review your grammar.
- Does your résumé say "Robert", but you like to be called "Bob"? What about your email address, business cards, or cover letters? Be sure to use the same name for all of your job search correspondence. It's easier for hiring managers to track you when they don't have to remember 2 different names.

- What email address do you use for job applications? Does it sound professional? If not, set up a new account at your own domain (such as "john@johndoe.com") or create a new Gmail account in your name (like "john doe@gmail.com").

- When sending your résumé by email, be sure to label it clearly so it doesn't get lost on the hiring manager's desktop. Try something simple, like your first initial, last name, and "resume" (e.g. "JDoe resume.pdf").

- When prepping your job application email, don't enter the recipient's email address until AFTER you've spell-checked and reviewed the note. It'll keep you from inadvertently sending it out before you're ready!

- Whether or not you're applying for a writing job, employers will often ask for writing samples. Today, put together some examples of your best writing, so you're prepared for your next interview. Now's also a great time to check them for typos and grammatical errors.

Interviewing

- Get your interview skills in order. Call an unemployed friend and take turns asking questions. You'll both get prepared for your next callback, and you could gain pointers to improve your chances.
- Get your references ready in advance of your interview. Ask former employers, supervisors, or coworkers if they're willing to speak about you, so you don't have to scramble to get in touch with them when you're asked to list references.
- Print a couple of copies of your résumé as soon as you schedule your next interview. Nothing's worse than running late for a meeting and discovering you're out of printer ink or completely forgetting to bring your résumé. While you're at it, check to make sure you're got clean interview clothes ready, too!
- Decide on your desired salary range now, so that you're comfortable saying it out loud when you get to your interview. You can do research online to find out how much you can expect to earn. Start with a salary and review site like [Glassdoor.com](https://www.glassdoor.com).

- How to dress for your interview? Try to find an outfit that's one step nicer than the company's usual dress code. For instance, in some creative offices, jeans and t-shirts are standard. In this case, go for a polished look in ironed pants and a nice shirt, but leave the suit at home. Interviewing at a bank? Time to break out the tie!
- Don't go overboard with perfume, cologne, or makeup on your interview. A strong scent can offend your interviewer (or provoke her allergies!). Too much makeup can be off-putting.
- Good questions to ask on your job interview: How do you see this position contributing to the department in the next 6 months? What are your goals for this position, and how will you measure success?
- When you're in your interview, look around the office and interview room for visual cues you can use in your conversation. Be inquisitive about the things you see, and you'll prompt your interviewer to do more of the talking.
- Your best strategy for getting the job is to share your passion for your field. You don't have to jump on couches in your interview, but don't be afraid to get excited about what you do.

- After your interview, be sure to write a thank you note to the person (or people) you met. An email is a quick way to keep yourself "top of mind," but a handwritten note or card adds a special touch.

- Don't settle. If you get a gut feeling that the job's not right for you - and can afford to continue your job search - keep looking for the next opportunity.

Staying Motivated

- Having trouble sticking with your job search to-do list? Recruit an "accountability buddy" to keep you on track. Set a weekly check-in time with an unemployed friend, then meet up at a coffee shop or on the phone to discuss your accomplishments and goals.
- Set up a Monday morning coffee with a friend or mentor, and you'll be less tempted to sleep in and blow off your job search.
- Get a great start to your week. Pick your highest impact activity - whether it's updating your résumé or making a new connection at the company of your dreams - and really focus on that one thing.
- Plan vacation days away from your job search and spend the time relaxing. You'll be charged and ready to pick up the hunt!
- Choose a role model for your career and read about his or her rise to success.
- Finding it hard to make time for your job search? Schedule 30 minutes to tackle it at the start of your day, so that you don't put it off for tomorrow.

- ❑ Stop trying to apply everywhere and for every position (even if they don't meet your standards!). Set criteria and be ruthless in your evaluation of job opportunities.

Next Steps

Did you like this e-book? Share it with friends or visit Rock Unemployment for even more job search ideas!

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- [Visit the Rock Unemployment website](#) for articles, interviews, and inspiration to make unemployment a little bit sweeter.
- [Follow Rock Unemployment](#) on Twitter for daily job search tips and cheap fun ideas.
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About Rock Unemployment

RockUnemployment.com offers job search tips, cheap fun ideas, and inspirational articles & interviews for gigging creatives. Need more help landing your dream gig? [Email me!](#)

About Melanie

After leaving a career in marketing, I founded RockUnemployment.com, which helps creative freelancers go from “laid off” to “happy and hired.” A freelancer myself, I frequently consult on project management and web development for local agencies and private clients. I became a personal branding strategist by way of over 11 years in TV editing, web development, and high level online marketing for clients such as MTV, Paramount, Sony, Fox, and Jenny Craig.

When I’m not at my computer, I enjoy going for hikes, raiding the library, and taking photos of my crazy dog, Boomer.

Get in touch with me on [my personal website](#).

