



If your job search has stalled, it may not be the economy or job market or the lack of new jobs in your area, profession or industry. Entrepreneur magazine reported that companies are beginning to hire again. Companies are hiring, but they might just not be hiring you.

An article in Learnvest.com, “6 Subtle Ways You’re Sabotaging Your Job Hunt,” suggests that job seekers do things, consciously or subconsciously, that can turn off a prospective employer. Or, they don’t do the things that can help them the most. You may be spending a lot of time networking, but all your efforts may be working against you. It’s one thing to attend a networking event, work the crowd and hand out as many business cards as you can. You may feel good at the end of the event, but how many real connections have you made? As the article suggests, you need to make friends--not just connections--with people at your dream company or those who have some real influence with the company’s hiring managers. Having a prominent insider pass your resume to a manager or bring up your name in a conversation is golden. An unsolicited recommendation is even better

Another self-sabotage is applying for jobs you’re not qualified for. The best way to ruin your chances is to apply for just any job at your dream company. What’s worse is applying for several at the same time, or in quick succession. It makes you look desperate or careless, two impressions to avoid. You’re wasting an opportunity and the HR manager’s time.

Reading the want ads and checking career sites like Beyond.com are good ways to find job leads. But you can’t overlook a more proactive approach. Many of the best jobs are never advertised. They get snapped up by insiders or aggressive job seekers who let employers know what they are looking for. Those are the jobs you learn about from friendly connections you’ve been cultivating

How would you answer the question, “What do you do?” Would you recite your job title or would you have a concise, compelling 30-second synopsis of what you do and the affect it has on an organization? A memorable “elevator speech” can make a quick impression that lasts for a long time. Spoken with poise and confidence, elevator speeches sum up what you do and the value to an organization. **Sooner or later**, you’ll have to answer the dreaded question, “What are your salary expectations?” Be careful. You can price yourself out of a job if you don’t do your homework. There are many sources of salary information. Do some research. Ask around. Be realistic. Consider your experience, skills, the industry and the local job market. Sure, you want the most you can get, but it’s better to be at mid- or slightly above mid-range than at the top of the scale. You can get top dollar, but lose out on raises or upward mobility. **Before you apply for any job**, put aside the job boards and ads and put together your elevator speech. Figure out who you are, what you have to offer, and why you want the job. What are your “must-haves?” The “nice-to-haves?” What is your bottom figure? Work out your finances, crunch some numbers and know your true salary requirements. No sense taking a job if you can’t pay your bills or live the life you want or one you’re willing to settle for in order to get where you want to go. Stop putting roadblocks up between you and your next dream job and start building bridges instead.

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