

How to Get the Job You Want – 3 Keys to Success ¹

Aina Aliieva

The job search process was always annoying to me. I hated adjusting my resume all the time and write a new cover letter. It takes so much time! I tried to create a unique resume by listing all my skills in one place to describe all my experience briefly and just keep sending it to different job postings. This approach didn't work well. I tried to figure out how to improve it and spend less time rewriting my resumes and cover letters until I realize a simple truth: I don't know what I want.

1. Know yourself

The job search might be very positive if you know what you want. But how to know this?

First, I listed all my skills and experience, volunteer work, certifications, blogs, education - everything might be related to my professional life. Then I started thinking about what types of jobs I am good at based on my experience. I did research looking at what job titles might need experience I already have. It shouldn't be a 100% match. I might need to expand my knowledge in some areas or have more years of experience but at least potentially it needs to be related to an experience I already have. After that instead of having one endless resume which matches all positions at once, I broke my list into 5 different resumes. Based on your personal experience you might have even more resumes. It is normal at this stage. The point is to identify your main areas of expertise and separate your experience. The recruiters will not dig into your endless resume trying to figure out how you can fit the firm. It is our job to make it clear for them. That's why we need separate resumes. Don't be afraid to skip some of your experience or certificates if it is unrelated to this specific position.

The next step I did is I wrote personal characteristics such as my temper, my values, what drives me, my ideal workplace and so on. Knowing my character and way of work helped me to understand that for example working for the government wouldn't be the best option for me. This step helped me to narrow my search and keep just 3 resumes.

2. Explore and work on feedback

Having in mind 3 different job positions, in my opinion, I might be good at I started exploring the market. I sent my resumes to all companies and recruiters I could found. The quantity has

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a meaning at this stage of the process. I had a table written in Exel where I had columns such as when I submitted my resume, what position, what company and if I had any feedback. You can use any other tool to keep tracking and any other titles for your columns.

This stage helped me to dig deeper into the responsibilities of each job offer, identify my knowledge gaps and what I need to learn. Also, it showed the interest from the other side. Which out of 3 resumes got more feedback and interview invitations, when I feel more excited during the screen calls, where I feel I can be a better fit.

So, at this moment I still explored myself based on the feedback from the others. After spending some time at this stage I understood what is the best position for me and left just ONE resume. I didn't care about other job offerings anymore because I knew what position will be ideal for me and didn't want to settle for less. I was ready to wait longer if needs but get what I really want because now I knew what it is.

Here are some questions you might have while reading my article:

What if there is no feedback and nobody replies to your resumes?

This means that something is still wrong. It might be you didn't adjust your resume enough, so recruiters still don't see how you fit into the position you post. Or you are looking at not the best job posting websites or magazines. It might be useful to copy-paste job description into your resume if you think that you are qualified to do what they asked. This will help recruiters to see right away that you have what they are looking for. Does this mean that you still need to adjust your resume before sending it? – yes! That's why knowing what you want is so important! Rather than work on 3 or more different resumes for different positions our goal is to have just one.

Having just one job title in mind limits us from other opportunities.

This is true but in our case QUALITY, not QUANTITY matters. Yes, we can apply for 100 different job postings per day and have 1 reply back. Is it what we want? Or we can apply to 5 job postings and receive 3 feedback. What is better? Also, applying to 100 posts per day we keep ourselves busy what makes us believe that we try so hard and there is no luck at this moment. Applying just to 5 job offers and be done in 1 hour makes us feel that we didn't try hard especially if the search lasts already for a long time. However, if we look at this from a different perspective and concentrate only on one position we can use this time to prepare better for the interviews, prepare stories, write some answers, to do some additional courses. And we will also have a unique answer to why we want this specific position.

A tip on how to increase the chances of getting feedback from the hiring companies:

We know that recommendations matter. Especially from people who already work for the organization we want to apply. But what if we don't know anyone working for our dream company? There is a solution. We can search these people and then connect with them online, for example on LinkedIn. We can be open and show the interest in the organization they already work for. When we connect, there is no harm to invite them for coffee by letting them choose the convenient time, day and place and ask questions about their role and organization overall.

Then, before applying to a job posting we can ask them if they don't mind if we mention their name in a Cover letter by saying that we know each other but never worked together. Most of the time people agree on this, so the last step is just to apply on the job posting.

3. Preparation

Just knowing what we want is not enough. The next step is to be ready to take it. It means we need to be prepared for the interview. There is a great article about preparation. I am not going to repeat it. <https://medium.com/better-humans/how-to-ace-a-job-interview-with-radical-preparation-3756a3f27ef8>

One more tip is to prepare your questions for HR or a person who is interviewing you. My favourite question is: "What is your biggest problem at this moment and how can I solve it?"

Many people hate interviews and I was one of these people. Every time I was very stressed. However, one day I changed my perspective. I started taking interviews as a gift because this experience showed me my professional gaps, uncomfortable questions made me understand more about myself, my desires and how my ideal workplace looks like. I became grateful for all the interviews and experience they gave me and started to look forward to them. This also helped me to be natural during the conversation which gave results immediately.

I know, it seems like I am asking you to do a Herculean effort for such a simple thing as a job search. Just prepare one resume with a list of all of your skills and experience and send it to everyone is easier.

However, our goal here is not to get any job as soon as possible, our goal is to get the job we want. And in this case, the result is definitely worth the effort!

About the Author



Aina Aliieva

Vancouver, BC, Canada



Aina Aliieva is a Scrum Master with 4 years of experience in Project Management and 4 years in an Agile environment. She is also CEO and instructor in Bee Agile Tutoring. She teaches Project Management, Agile and goal setting for organizations around the world. She has managed and consulted on projects for the technical, construction, and engineering disciplines.

Aina has a Masters's degree in electrical engineering and an MBA in technology. She has PMP and PMI-ACP certificates.

Aina is an active member of PMI CWCC (Canadian West Coast Chapter), PMI Ukraine Chapter and UAE PMI. She is also a Program Manager, Disciplined Agile in PMI CWCC.

Aina is an experienced public speaker and coach. She also helps in personal planning and setting up goals.

In her free time, Aina participates in different mentorship programs, speaks at webinars and interviews people for her personal blog.

She can be contacted at <https://www.linkedin.com/in/aina-aliieva/>