

Remove Roadblocks to Career Success

Categories : [CANDIDATE CONNECTION](#)

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“I’ll send that résumé...tomorrow.”

Sound familiar? The truth is, most of us procrastinate occasionally. We’re all human, and we all let little things slide from time to time. It’s relatively harmless to skip a single workout or postpone organizing your garage. The gym will be open tomorrow, and that disorganized shelf of paint cans and tools will wait patiently for your attention.

When it comes to your career, however, failing to take action can have serious consequences. Putting off important phone calls or ignoring potential job leads in favor of doing something that’s more enjoyable or comfortable can seriously derail your job search. Over time, chronic career procrastination can lead to a guilty conscience, inefficiency – and most importantly – missed career opportunities.

The next time you’re tempted to put your job search activities on the back burner, try using one or more of these tactics to stay on-task, effectively manage your time and avoid the “procrastination trap”:

Visualize the completed task. In your mind’s eye, create a vivid image of what it would be like to have the job you really want. Imagine the benefits you would reap and the feeling of success you’d have. Then, back up a step to visualize yourself actually working on the activities that will get you there (whether it’s adding connections on LinkedIn, updating your résumé or reaching out to former business contacts). Merely visualizing what you want to accomplish can give you the motivation and focus you need to overcome the inertia you feel.

Evaluate your attitude. Do you think that the world is just too complicated? Are you the type who feels constantly hindered by everyone else’s incompetence? Do you tend to place blame elsewhere? These are self-defeating, avoidance-producing attitudes and beliefs. You must recognize them as such and try to move past them. Replace your negative attitude with one that is more productive and self-empowering. Instead of blaming somebody else for your employment situation, take responsibility for it yourself. Instead of focusing on all the jobs for which you’re unqualified, find out what you need to do (in terms of training or education) to prepare yourself for the job you really want.

Consider the consequences of NOT doing what you need to do. What will happen if your circumstances don’t change? Write it down and keep the list handy. When you feel yourself slipping, read the list. Remembering the problems that procrastinating can create may restore your

focus when you need it most.

Break your job search goals into smaller, more manageable tasks. Setting the goal of finding your “dream job” is admirable, but may also prove overwhelming. If you create a written action plan of simpler tasks, however, that will bring you closer to your goal, you’re much more likely to succeed. Determine what job search activities are most likely to yield the opportunities you desire and use this task list to help you stay on track.

Make a public commitment. It’s one thing to tell yourself that you’re going to schedule three informational interviews with potential employers. It’s another thing to tell your spouse that you’re going to do it. The fact is, we tend to improve our performance when we know we’re being watched. Find someone who will hold your feet to the fire and help ensure you stay on track with your job search goals.

Set a timer. If you face a particularly unpleasant task and are tempted to postpone it, try tackling it for a limited time period. Set a timer for 15 minutes and commit to working on the activity for that long, giving your best effort. Sometimes, just knowing that an end is in sight is enough to motivate you to do something you’d rather not.

Accept yourself. If you’re a chronic procrastinator, embrace the fact and give yourself time to change your ways. Remember, in general it takes at least 21 days of repetition to form a new habit. Forgive yourself if you backslide. Recognize your accomplishments, however small. Praise yourself for each job search task you complete. Most importantly, never give up!

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