

What's Your Weakest Link?

There are three critical links in your job search chain. Consider each of them carefully to determine your weakest link, then work to strengthen that link.

Link #1: Resume and Cover Letter

If your resume and cover letter aren't attracting attention and generating interviews, this may be your weakest link. A quality resume should:

- Sell your best transferable skills
- Support those skills with bottom-line impacts and achievements
- Be easy to understand at a glance, without dense reading
- Have an easy-to-read format with a clear outline
- Not typecast you into an industry or job you are trying to leave
- Focus on only one career objective

An effective cover letter should:

- Support—but not repeat—the resume
- Not sound like a form letter
- Not start every sentence with “I,” “Me,” or “My”
- Focus on the hiring motives of the reader

If your weakest link is your resume and cover letter, you may want to consider investing in a professional resume writer. Many of them have experience in Human Resources and recruiting, so they know what hiring managers are looking for and the best way to present that information.

Link #2: Resume Exposure

Even the best resume will fail to generate interviews if it doesn't reach a wide enough target audience. To a certain degree, generating interviews is a numbers game. If the resume is effective to begin with, then the more resumes you send out, the more interviews you will win.

How much exposure is enough for your resume? The answer is subjective, but you'll definitely increase your exposure by using the following methods and online tools:

- Post your resume on numerous job boards (i.e., more than two or three)
- Distribute your resumes using a reputable online resume distribution service
- Proactively mass-target your resume to prospective employers
- Proactively send your resume to a wide audience of recruiters
- Identify numerous job boards that target your specific industry or occupation (again, more than two or three)
- Use job board profile options to have job postings emailed to you on a regular basis
- Utilize your existing network or build a stronger network of industry and occupational contacts to uncover job leads

If resume exposure is your weakest link, then you might benefit from the expertise of a career coach to help guide you in better job search strategies. A career coach can assist you in building a campaign to gain maximum exposure for your resume.

Link #3: Interview Skills

If your resume is fine and you are getting plenty of first interviews—but no second ones—then your interview skills may be your weakest link.

To analyze the strength of your interview skills, ask yourself the following:

- Have I adequately researched this company prior to the interview?
- Am I prepared to answer tough questions?
- Do I know what questions they might ask, or do I find myself stumped by questions I didn't expect?
- Do I know what kinds of questions to ask in order to gain insight into important hiring motives?
- Do I know how to uncover any concerns that might prevent a job offer?
- Am I a good interview “closer”?

If interview skills are your weakest link, you'll receive more job offers by investing in interview coaching with a career expert.

By strengthening each link of your job-search chain, you'll avoid months of frustrating, ineffective effort. With each link strong enough to support your career objective you'll win your dream job with confidence.

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