The average length of a job search is at an all-time high in America. For the unemployed, it’s now well over 7 months. What’s sad is that other studies show people give up looking after 5 months. That’s not good.

So, why is it taking so long to find a job? Five key factors actually determine the length of a job search. They are:

1. What you want to earn.

The salary you want plays a huge role in how quickly you find work. There are more lower-paying jobs that higher ones. Thus, you will need to work harder to find those precious opportunities in our price range. Add to that the fact many hiring managers see you as over-qualified when you apply to a lower-paid job, and the challenge to find work gets tougher. It takes real talent to convince a company you’ll be happy with less money. They are more likely to assume you’ll jump ship as soon as a better offer comes along. And candidly, they are usually right.

2. Where you want to live.

The total number of businesses in the commutable area of where you want to live plays a big factor in how fast you’ll secure a job. Fewer employers mean less job opportunities. It’s that simple.

3. Lack of job search knowledge.

When I start working with job seekers, they soon realize how little they really know about job search. I always tell them, “The reality is that school teaches us everything, except how to get the job.” Add to that all the bad advice out there and you see millions of people wasting hours of valuable time on job search tactics which yield zero results. Just ask anyone who has applied to hundreds of jobs on-line and yet to receive a response how good they feel about their job search abilities. Nothing is more demotivating. It’s no wonder people give up! Job search today requires a very proactive, focused approach. I can tell you for a fact, the majority of job seekers out there have no idea how to do this effectively – and that’s lengthening their job search considerably.


Similar to job search knowledge, knowing how to network effectively is vital to conducting a quick, effective job search. Everyone has heard the statistic that 80% of jobs are gotten via referral. To get referred, you need to network! Sadly, most people enjoy networking about as much as they enjoy a root canal without Novocain. That’s because they don’t understand how to do it well. Networking can actually be quite rewarding when we approach it with the proper mindset and expectations. The easiest way to look at the power of networking is to think of the concept of ‘six degrees of separation.’ Your next employer is just six connections away. The sooner you start networking, the sooner you meet that hiring manager!

5. Economic conditions in your local area.

You didn’t think I’d forget to state the obvious, did you? You need open positions to get hired. More importantly, you need to know about open positions that meet your criteria so you can apply to them. And when times are tough, those get harder to find. I’ve talked to many business leaders recently who have told me they have open jobs, but no longer bother to post them. Why? Because they get inundated with applications from unqualified people – and they don’t have the time to go through them all just to find the 1-2 ideal matches. Instead, they rely on referrals (go back and review factor #4), as a way to find the right talent. In short, there are more jobs available than what you see on the job boards. It’s called the “hidden job market” – and it takes a savvy job seeker to tap into it.