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3 Ways COVID Has Changed Job Search

With millions of Americans out of work due to the pandemic, the competition for each and every open position has increased dramatically. As a result, the hiring process — *and, therefore, the job search process* — has transformed as well. In order to position yourself for success, here's what you need to know about job search during COVID-19 (and likely beyond).

- **Networking**

No doubt networking has *always* been the best way to find a job. And, in the age of COVID, *it still is*. To leverage your network, start by writing a list of people you know well — family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, past managers, and mentors. This is especially important in a competitive job market. After all, [research](#) shows candidates who are referred by an employee working in the company have a 50% chance of getting an interview and a 20% chance of getting hired! In contrast, applicants who are not referred by an employee have only a 3% chance of landing an interview and around a 1% chance of getting a job offer. That said, it pays off to reach out to your network. To get your application noticed, ask people in your network to pass your resume along to hiring managers in their organizations.

Needless to say, when it comes to job search, the bigger your network, the better. So continue to build and nurture your network to expand opportunities. And, because you never know where or when you'll meet professionals to connect with, prepare and perfect a 30-second networking pitch. Also known as an elevator speech, this is a short synopsis of your background, experience and skills. An effective networking pitch lets others know who you are, what you do, and — *if you're job hunting* — what you *want* to do.

(For more information: [How to Create an Elevator Pitch with Examples.](#))

- **Use of Social Media**

While networking continues to pay off in tough job market, COVID-19 has dramatically changed *how* we network. In light of social distance practices, in-person networking events are cancelled for the foreseeable future. Therefore, your *online networking strategy* is more important than ever before. Seek out like-minded professionals, join groups related to your occupational field and / or industry, and follow companies of interest on LinkedIn, Facebook, and other social media. Contribute to online



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conversations; post comments that demonstrate your knowledge and expertise; and share relevant information and articles of interest to the group. And, with 98% of recruiters reporting they look for talent on LinkedIn, be sure to keep your profile up-to-date and continue to grow your connections.

- **Interviews**

Not surprisingly, social distancing due to COVID-19 has led to changes in the interviewing process. Certainly, it has been common practice for employers to conduct *initial screening interviews* through Skype and in recent years. However, in the age of COVID-19, most (if not all) interviews are now conducted online using Zoom and other videoconferencing platforms.

Yet, while virtual interviews can be cost effective, efficient, and convenient, there are certainly some disadvantages. For example, hiring managers report that not being able to interact with candidates in-person has made hiring decisions more difficult. In turn, many companies have revamped their interviewing process.

For instance, some companies have introduced an initial one-way **interview question video response** as an initial screening tool. If the candidate's video response goes well, he/she will get an online interview with a hiring manager.

In addition, many employers have increased the *total number of interviews* in their hiring process. What's more, they've increased the use of **panel interviews** (during which a candidate answers questions posed by a group of people, rather than one interviewer). Both of these modifications (*i.e.*, more interviews; use of panel interviews) are designed to help employers make better hiring decisions while compensating for lack of in-person interviewing during the pandemic.

Practice Makes Progress

Want to be sure you're motivated and ready to network? Craft your networking pitch and practice it with a trusted friend who will give you constructive feedback. And, if it's been a while since you've interviewed for a job, participate in a mock interview. After all, practice makes progress.

(For more information: [Top 20 Common Job Interview Questions With Answers](#); [How to Answer Behavioral Interview Questions](#).)