



**STAND OUT**

Get your resume noticed  
and book the interviews  
you want-fast!

# 13 SECRETS

THAT EVERY JOB-SEEKER

NEEDS TO KNOW

BY LAKRISHA DAVIS

# Hey there, superstar!

I'M LAKRISHA DAVIS

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Career Coach, Success Mentor, Speaker,  
and CEO of NextUp Resume.

Today, I help ambitious job seekers navigate the broken hiring system to land their dream careers.

But back then, I was working in HR, recruiting, and compliance supporting Fortune 500 clients like **Fiat Chrysler, RR Donnelley & Sons, Groupon, Deere & Company, Sears Holding Co., Mercedes-Benz, Discover Card Services, Bank of America, and Allstate.**

From obtaining an MBA in Human Resources Management; to getting a bird's eye view into the hiring climate; to leveraging the strategies and philosophies acquired through my corporate career; and networking and connecting with successful women – I've mentored and coached hundreds of professionals out of unfulfilling jobs and into the careers they love.

**I want to share 13 secrets on how I do it.**





## Secret #1

You are capable of finding your dream job.

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Know that your unemployment (or lack of fulfilling employment) won't last forever, and eventually the offer you want will come.

Doubting your powers will only give power to your doubt. With the right attitude, you'll undoubtedly achieve success in your search.

While there are no guarantees with regards to the length of your job search, it's imperative that you stay positive and never give up.

First, make the full commitment *right now* to finding your dream new career. Then follow a strategic job-search plan to achieve the best results.



## Secret #2

You need a real plan.

Searching for your dream career is a full-time job. It's going to require **real work**.

Before you begin applying for jobs, it's critical to decide on the specific role(s) you want to target in your search. This will help you determine whether it's necessary to create more than one resume, as well as how to set yourself up for a tailored job search.

What's most critical to the job search process is the strategy: your plan to manage job-search activity; determining how frequently you're going to send out on a weekly basis; and the specific times you are able to focus on your search.

Although a frustrating process, you'll experience less of a headache by having the right plan to guide you through the process.



## Secret #3

We live in a candidate-driven job market.

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Interestingly, the paradigm has shifted from the era when people felt thankful simply for having a job, to job seekers now wanting to call the shots when it comes to their careers. You don't necessarily need to settle, take a pay cut, etc.

You are very valuable in today's job market—maybe even more than you think. As much as you're searching for the perfect job, companies are, too, looking for the best fit people to match up with their positions. Why else do companies compete to secure spots on accolades such as The 100 Best Places to Work? The simplest answer is that they recognize that the most important resource to its business operations is this their people, so they compete to attract and retain the best talent in their industries in order to gain competitive advantage. Not only concerned about who makes the best skills match, businesses also hope to find the perfect fit for their corporate culture, for example, or a candidate who is less likely to drive turnover.

Consequently, in addition to offering competitive salaries, companies know that other incentives might influence your job decisions, so they [as in the good companies] continuously reinvent ways to increase job satisfaction among employees.

In today's market, job seekers should also interview companies to make sure they are a good move for their future.



*Secret #4*

## Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) exist.

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ATS assists with the electronic handling of recruitment needs, which allows companies to more quickly source for the top qualified applicants for positions based on keywords, qualifications, etc. Research is key when constructing your resume because you'll need to anticipate the keywords recruiters will be trying to find in the system.

One thing with ATS, though, is that it's flawed because it can also eliminate people who actually meet the job qualifications. In fact, some resumes never make it through the system due to formatting reasons.

For example, you should avoid submitting your resume in a PDF because it's most misinterpreted by applicant tracking systems. Try submitting your resume each time using DOC or TXT format. You should also avoid using a format with tables, images or graphics. Make it clean by using a professional-looking, simple text format to ensure you pass ATS. (Once you're setting interviews, you can bring along a better visual presentation if you'd like.)



## *Secret #5*

You should alter your resume frequently, or, the recommended, create multiple versions.

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You can increase your chances of job search success not by creating a one-fits-all type of resume that merely reflects your experience, but by laser focusing your resume to the specific jobs at hand.

Obviously, job descriptions are created by individual companies, so it's no surprise that they'll markedly differ. The responsibilities of, let's say, a Project Manager will differ from another Project Manager at a different or smaller or larger company. So, even if your resume is already tailored for project management positions, you may still need to tweak your resume to make sure that you've addressed all of the specific skills qualifications necessary for the position at that particular company.



## *Secret #6*

Applying for jobs you're obviously significantly under-qualified for isn't ambitious; it's just a waste of time.

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We can all have high ambitions, but try not to get overly ambitious and skip over all of the "low tier" jobs and aim strictly for the top positions. One of the reasons why networking is important, unless you have a connection sometimes you likely can't avoid getting rejected for certain jobs if you don't possess the required experience level. Targeting jobs completely outside of your realm of experience is just futile.

Make the most use out of your time and apply to jobs you're most likely to get or qualified for. Or, spend your time finding ways to fill those competency, skills or education gaps in order to get you the job that you truly want.



## Secret #7

Your industry may have a 'type.'

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No matter your level of experience or education, chief among things that matter for your candidature is the message your personal brand sends, and how well it's perceived by the decision maker. So in addition to meeting the job qualifications, you also need to make sure you're a good character fit for the job, too.

To illustrate, it's probably acceptable for, for example, an accountant to have introverted tendencies, but, alternatively, this individual might not work in a sales position because salespeople typically are more outgoing and good conversation starters. It could really serve you well to find out the personal attributes most useful, challenging or relevant to that industry.

During interviews, try not to get caught up in proving yourself and allow your quirks and personality to show. Not only do they want to see your personality, but also hiring managers love it when candidates make the interview process easier for them by getting to establish a connection and conduct the interview in a conversational rather than Q&A fashion.



## *Secret #8*

LinkedIn helps if you make the most out of it.

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When used correctly, LinkedIn could really serve as a great resource and marketing tool.

For example, upgrading your LinkedIn subscription to the Job Seekers' Premium allows for insight into the kinds of competition you're facing for the jobs you're going after, and it also gives you access to the job posters of many positions so that you could follow up with them via InMail.

It's also important to stay as active as possible on LinkedIn in order to increase your visibility. You could simply share, 'like' or comment on posts that interests you, and that alone will generate more network requests and headhunters stalking your profile.

Companies increasingly use LinkedIn as a screening tool, so note that if your background piques their interest after receiving your profile, the company might view your LinkedIn page before calling you for an interview to see what you're about. So, in addition to increasing your activity, be sure to also keep your profile up-to-date to eliminate any confusion about your career path or background.



## Secret #9

Recruiters make excellent resources, but they aren't to be solely relied on to complete your job search.

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Many job seekers hold negative perceptions about recruiters because they feel like recruiters are only in the business of wasting vulnerable job seekers' time, or worse, that a recruiter is meant to solve all of their problems. But the truth is, recruiters, who are really salespeople, care just as much about their business as you do your livelihood, so believe me they would love to call if they had a reason to.

There's a method to the madness. Agencies are fighting amongst one another to win the client's business, so they stay closest to the dollar. Meaning, several agencies work hard to fill the exact same positions, so it's really about who's representing the most favorable candidate at the time, if the company is really open to using an agency, and other factors. In lots of cases, companies don't care to deal with agencies because they want to avoid agency conversion fees, but for the perfect fit they will hire the person.

Start thinking of recruiters as resources and try not to intensify the contact with demands or desperation. If you allow a genuine connection to evolve, you might be the first to call when something solid actually does come across the desk. Remember, recruiters do not work for you; they are in business to make money.



## *Secret #10*

You can't fall in love with one lead.

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You were feeling pretty confident that you qualified for the job, but after not receiving the call back you've lost faith again because you've allowed one good lead to get your hopes all up. You can allow yourself to feel the emotions, but only for a short time because, remember, breaks are certainly not helpful. You should really never stop searching until you get a formal, written offer from a company. This is how you can stay in control of your situation and not get distracted by interviews, recruiters, or friends who say they could hook you up.



## *Secret # 11*

You don't need to specify salary requirements.

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It's definitely too early in the process to allow yourself to be identified by a specific salary demand. You don't want to give employers too much information too soon because they often use this inquiry as a screening device. You don't want to get eliminated from the pool because your number is just too high. Or, you certainly don't want to underquote what they might've already had in mind.

Try to say "open" or "negotiable" whenever possible. If they demand this information, simply conduct some research about the salary range history for that position, or you can really get technical by looking at ranges for the that specific company if available online.

This can also serve as a screening question for you. If you feel you offered a realistic number that truly speaks to your value and you do not get the call back, this is good so that you can focus your time on the opportunities that better suit your needs.



## *Secret #12*

No response,  
doesn't always mean 'no.'

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Sometimes, it could be a matter of the hiring manager not having gone through resumes yet. In any event, you could try and outdo other applicants by reaching out to the job poster if you haven't heard back on your application within a week. Try sending a follow-up note asking about the status of the role through email or LinkedIn.

By following up before the hiring manager gets to reach out to you, you basically pull your profile from the pile. Since you're all in their face, they shouldn't resist looking you up.



## *Secret #13*

Limiting yourself to online applications can prolong your job search.

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Because 80% of jobs do not actually get published, if you're only applying to jobs online then you're only making yourself available to 20% of the job market. To that end, sometimes it really is about who you know and not what you know.

You never know what someone could do for you unless you ask. You want to accelerate this thing? Think outside of the box. Attend networking events. Do some cold marketing. Join professional organizations. Use social media to let your network know that you're looking for work.

The bottom line - study the field you're looking to move into and endear yourself to some people who could help you get your foot in the door.

# That's a wrap!

Ready to go even further?

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*Uncover your dream career path- and create the roadmap you need to get there- step by step.*

*Learn how to get your resume to top of the "yes" pile- without using worn-out tactics from 1987.*

*Get the confidence you need to go for the positions you want.*

