

USING HABIT TO YOUR ADVANTAGE IN THE JOB HUNT



One of the most disquieting aspects of losing your job is the disruption of habit. Research estimates that around 40 percent of our daily activities are **habit**: we don't have to think about them, we just more or less do them. For those who have realized the power of habit, that it makes doing hard things easier than not -- such as the person who wakes up at 6 every day to go to the gym, he is able to do so because he made a strict habit of it -- they can sculpt their day into being healthy and active. Habit works for us and works against us. When a habit is disrupted, as when our work habits are utterly overturned by losing a job, we may wonder to ourselves, "What exactly am I to *do*" with all my free time? There is, of course, the temptation to simply languish in it, to waste it, to search the internet and play solitaire, to drink a beer and watch television. Maybe you even need a day or two of that to absorb the shock of losing your job. But once you snap out of that mindset, remember that habit is your friend, and if you invariably do a thing, you always can, it will become easier each time, and eventually it will be hard not to. We tend to panic when we have too much freedom, too much uncertainty of what to do next. What you need to do is establish a new routine, plan it out, build an agenda for each day's activities. The stress of uncertainty comes from the self-accusing voice that says: "You should be doing something, yet you are doing nothing at all." Such a voice may paralyze us with anxiety. Better to **list** exactly what it's going to take to land that next job, the people you must talk to, the searches you must make, the markets you must study, etc. Do this, then. Wake up at the same time you would if you were still working. That habit works for you, you already got it. Do your normal routine, eat your normal breakfast, wear your normal work clothes. You are going to work at getting this new job, so keep professional. Get out of the house. Have a location where you work from in your job search, perhaps the library, but away from your home where everything is calling out to you to relax and do home stuff. In your new location, you will be able to focus on your plan on setting up what to do next. If you do this every weekday, with iron resolve, it will be a solid habit, a habit you've already had tucked into your normal work schedule. Use that habit to take you across the gulf of unemployment to your next job. This new job of **job-seeking** is a bit more stressful than a normal job, and of course it doesn't pay, but it is necessary to land you what you want: solid employment. Have Managerial Experience? Check out these **Jobs!**