

# FLASHPOINT CHICAGO

## A CAMPUS OF COLUMBIA COLLEGE HOLLYWOOD

### Five Big Reasons for Extended Job Search Times

#### 1. Assuming You'll Figure Out What Job You Want During the Search.

The complex, high-stakes marketplace you're entering as a job seeker is a nightmare for strategic planning. Which is why you need to know exactly what roles you're targeting, and how you stack up against the competition, before starting the search. This will save you huge amounts of time and wasted effort.

Study LinkedIn Profiles of competitors with similar backgrounds to yourself. What types of roles do they currently have? What qualities are they highlighting? All of this is valuable information to narrow down your search parameters.

Collect a set of job postings, at least 5-8, that you'd be a great fit for. What skills are being called out time and time again? What's their "image" of an ideal candidate? The goal here is to reverse engineer how you come across in order to fit that image within your résumé, cover letter, LinkedIn presence and other materials. Better fit = more opportunities.

Set up informational interviews with people who currently have the job you want, or those who regularly do business with them. This is a great way to understand the details of what you'll be doing on a day-to-day basis, as well as figure out what training/experience is essential and what's just nice to have.

#### 2. Relying On A "Jack of All Trades" Résumé for Multiple Job Targets.

The more generalized your résumé is, the less effective it will be. While it's perfectly fine to have more than one major job target, each will require a customized résumé that brands you effectively, contains relevant industry keywords in order to pass scanning by Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS), highlights the most relevant aspects of your background (while minimizing non-relevant details) and perhaps most importantly, is chock-full of accomplishments.

Taking the time to create separate résumé versions is a fantastic way to stand out from the pack and start generating more interviews. Review the Career Services' **Targeting Your Résumé** resource.

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### **3. Not Having an “Professional Summary.”**

When someone asks what you’re bringing to the table, you need a confident answer. Preferably somewhere around 30-45 seconds tops.

#### **You can structure it as follows:**

One sentence branding statement - For example: I’m a Digital Media Expert with 4 years of experience in launching new product lines, transforming ecommerce strategies and elevating social media outreach.

Choose three relevant accomplishments or personal qualities to elaborate on. This is to add credibility to your branding statement.

Wrap up with one sentence that clearly identifies your job target and where you want to go next.

Practice constantly! You need to know this inside and out, and improvise on-the-fly as the situation dictates. Try recording yourself on video to see how you’re coming across. A polished professional summary is a powerful job search tool.

### **4. Asking About Salary and Benefits During the First Interview.**

You want to avoid the perception of being a WIIFM (What’s In It For Me?) candidate. Of course you want to know how much you’ll be getting paid and how many weeks of vacation you can count on, but this comes later in the process. Focus on how you’ll be delivering the most value, establish your expertise beyond all question, and you’ll naturally create a stronger impression in the mind of an employer. Stronger impression = potential higher initial salary offer.

### **5. Not Explicitly Stating Your Passion for The Job.**

Did you know that employers cite “lack of enthusiasm” as a major reason for passing over candidates? Take a moment early in the hiring process to share why you’re excited about this job, and how you’re truly invested in landing it. It can make a big difference.