

## Eight Surprising Rules That Will Get You The Job

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Bill Ellermeyer: Stop working on your résumé and quit looking for a job.

At 76 years old, Bill Ellermeyer is an elder statesman of the job search world. He founded an Irvine, Calif. outplacement firm in 1981, which he sold to staffing firm Adecco in 1990, then ran that office as a division of Adecco subsidiary Lee Hecht Harrison until going out on his own as an independent coach in 2004. He specializes in what he calls “career transitions” for people who have lost their jobs at the executive level, mostly from the c-suite or as vice presidents. Some of his clients have been out of work for more than a year when they come to him. He pushes them until they find a new position. After three decades in the career coaching business, he’s come up with eight rules, some counter-intuitive, that he says promise to land his clients a job.

### **1. Stop looking for a job.**

Too many unemployed people equate looking for a job with sending out a résumé or answering an ad on a job board. “If you send out 500 résumés to friends, family and companies, nobody is going to take the time to help you,” he says. The only time you should send a résumé is when you’ve established there is a real job at a company for which you’re being considered, or a headhunter is trying to fill an open position and requests one. Instead of presenting yourself as an out-of-work job seeker, come across as a resource.

Let people know you can solve problems. Approach your job hunt as a search for quality relationships. Instead hand out business cards that portray you as a consultant.

### **2. Stop working on your résumé.**

You need to have a printed résumé but increasing numbers of employers prefer to just look at your LinkedIn profile. Also many companies just want the basic facts about your career, rather than a long, carefully crafted story about you in the form of a C.V. I’m not

sure I agree with Ellermeier on this point, but I like his basic advice: Your résumé should be clean, clear, simple and no more than two pages. It makes sense to update it when you've made a major accomplishment, like increasing sales by 75% in your department or in journalism, writing a cover story. But you should be able to make those fixes in a few minutes. Do keep your [LinkedIn LNKD -1.07%](#) profile up to date.

### **3. Hold your elevator speech.**

"After 20 seconds, no one can remember your elevator speech," contends Ellermeier. Instead, he recommends telling a story about yourself that runs for 60-90 seconds. "People remember stories," he says. "Nobody wants to hear facts and figures." You should come up with a short, possibly humorous moniker for yourself. Ellermeier calls himself a "connector." One of his clients branded himself "rent-a-CFO," and then told a story about how he had gone from project to project over the last year, and how he had found success at each job. Other possible short-hand titles: IT Problem-Solver, Deal Finder, Resource Solution-Finder.

### **4. Don't talk about yourself.**

Instead of leading a conversation with the latest news about your life, says Ellermeier, "find out how you can serve other people." Be inquisitive about others and when you learn about them, try to suggest a book or article they may

want to read or an event they might want to attend. Many people think that networking requires that they list their accomplishments. But it can be much more effective to ask others about their interests and needs.

### **5. Don't go to networking events.**

Instead try hosting them yourself. Form your own breakfast group of eight or ten people. In other words, create your own network with people you hand-select. Though it's tempting to sit at your computer and meet virtually, make the effort to get together face-to-face.

### **6. Take breaks.**

The job search process can make us pretty emotional, especially when you go on the fifth interview and then you're told that the firm has hired someone else. "Don't take your downers to the outside world," advises Ellermeier. If you're having a bad day, do research or catch up on email. I agree with this piece of advice but I also have to acknowledge that it can be awfully tough to keep your spirits up if you've been job hunting for a long time with no success. A single day off may help but you might need to seek more support from family and friends.

### **7. Don't say you're unemployed.**

Instead of presenting yourself as an out-of-work executive, hand over a business card. Remember, you're not out of work. You're just between jobs.

## **8. Avoid headhunters.**

Headhunters only handle roughly 10% of the available jobs. Also, they're working for companies and

not for you. After you've made sure your résumé is in their database, move on.