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Most recruiters today advise their clients that the average search for a professional position lasts about 6 months. That figure can even be much longer for certain industries or older job seekers.

Dealing with such an extended period of uncertainty and rejection is hard on your self-esteem and peace of mind. You may also face financial pressure, especially if you're unemployed.

If your job search is taking longer than you expected, **it's important to find a way to stay motivated and persistent.**

Take a look at these tips for assessing your efforts and maintaining a positive attitude.

Evaluating Your Tactics

Your job search can stretch out even when you're working hard and making strategic choices. On the other hand, if you're not receiving responses to your applications or fielding job offers after interviewing, it could be time to upgrade your efforts.

Add to your efforts with these activities:

- 1. Network vigorously. Reaching out to your contacts and meeting new people is one of the most successful ways to find a new position.** Attend events related to your field and set a goal for inviting at least 3 contacts out to lunch each month.

2. **Target your approach.** You may benefit from being more selective. Try sending out fewer applications and spending more time customizing your cover letter and resume to match the qualifications.
3. **Follow up.** While some companies discourage phone calls, others might appreciate your interest. If appropriate, call the hiring manager to ask questions and express your enthusiasm. Send thank you messages after interviews too.
4. **Check your schedule.** How many hours are you spending on your job search? If you're unemployed, you might want to aim for a full 40-hour week.
5. **Rehearse your interviews.** Are you generating many first interviews but very few second ones? Ask someone you trust to rehearse with you or practice in front of a mirror. Pick up a book about interviewing, so you can **identify areas where you can make positive changes.**
6. **Be flexible.** You might find more opportunities if you're willing to consider exploring another field or moving to a different city. Taking a pay cut could be worthwhile if it helps you to advance your career in the long run.
7. **Consult a professional.** If you're unsure about what you want to do next, a career advisor may be able to give you some guidance. Check with your university career center or ask colleagues for a referral.

Keeping Up Your Morale

If you're running out of money or tired of hearing that another candidate was a better fit for the position, you may need to strengthen your belief in yourself and your future. Employers want to see confidence as well as a strong resume.

Increase your interviewing confidence with these ideas:

1. **Take care of yourself.** The stress of being unemployed can lead to drowning your troubles in too much TV and junk food. Keep yourself strong by working out regularly, eating a balanced diet, and sticking to a consistent bedtime.
2. **Reach out.** Ask your family and friends for the support you need. Talk with someone who can validate your feelings or help you brainstorm ways to expand your network.
3. **Review your budget.** You'll feel calmer if you make a financial plan. Cut back on discretionary spending like dining out or buying clothes. Look for ways to reduce your housing and transportation expenses.
4. **Stop and rest. Taking regular breaks while you're searching will give you more energy.** Enjoy free and inexpensive activities like community yoga or teaching yourself a foreign language using a complimentary app.

When a long job search is stirring up difficult emotions, remind yourself that this is temporary. Keep moving forward and exploring each opportunity until you find an employer who appreciates your talents and resilience.