

July 2016

The Six Month Question

Research on landing a job faster



Despite over five million open jobs, the average job seeker remains unemployed over six months¹ and over one third of unemployment insurance claimants are still exhausting all of their benefits, often at six months, without landing a job.² This is costly for employers and job seekers alike. The average claim against an employer's unemployment account is over \$5,000³ and, for job seekers who are parents, a six month or greater spell of unemployment nearly tripled the rate of poverty, according to a 2012 study.⁴

Promising Research One reason for such a high duration of unemployment may be that workers often rate their job search skills at a C- or worse.⁵ Fortunately, research reveals many proven and measurable ways job seekers can return to work faster.

A 2014 review of 47 studies on how to help job seekers find work found that on average "the odds of obtaining employment were 2.67 times higher for job seekers participating in job search interventions compared to job seekers in the control group."⁶ The study identified promoting proactivity as the top tactic. Examples of proactivity include considering positions that differ from the job seeker's former work and contacting employers for jobs or referrals.

The second most impactful strategy is goal-setting, such as setting a target for weekly job search activities and meeting regularly with a job coach to review progress and plans. Third is enlisting social support, e.g., when peers, family and friends provide emotional support, give job leads, review resumes or offer help with babysitting.

Overall, the research can be grouped into two broad types of job search assistance that are particularly impactful: motivation and skill development. Notably, job search help that included only motivation or only skill development had no significant impact. Including both had strong impacts. This may suggest that a work search requirement should include education in job search skills and trackable / motivating activities and messaging.

What About Speed? Other studies have measured exactly how much faster job seekers land jobs when given various types of search assistance. Speed is important to employers because laid off employees who obtain unemployment benefits average over \$300 in weekly charges against the employer's account.⁷

About a decade ago, the Upjohn Institute surveyed the speed question. It profiled impacts from job search assistance to placement assistance and unemployment reductions ranged from one to 24 weeks.⁸

Five Factors in Landing a Job ⁶

- 1 Being Proactive
- 2 Setting Goals
- 3 Enlisting Social Support
- 4 Improving Self Presentation
- 5 Learning Job Search Skills

A 2011 study of a limited Nevada state program found that a one-time meeting with a job coach plus a referral to the right government resources reduced unemployment insurance claim duration by nearly three weeks and over \$800.⁹

Outplacement Impact Historically, the outplacement industry rarely measured reemployment speed. Equifax Reemployment, provided by NextJob, however, has led the industry by measuring speed in two ways.

NextJob also coordinated a study in 2013 of laid-off University of Texas employees receiving NextJob outplacement assistance. The study found job seekers unemployment insurance **claims dropped by six weeks**, producing significant cost savings to the University of Texas System.¹⁰ NextJob also surveyed its job seekers receiving help, and they estimated their speed of returning to work has increased by an average of 65%.¹¹

In sum, while the economy can help, there's much more we can do to improve re-employment rates. Like many other endeavors, job search can be improved substantially with the right motivation and the right skills.

If you're interested in helping your laid-off employees return to work faster while reducing your unemployment costs, contact us at info@nextjob.com or 877-290-7888.

For more insights, visit us at <http://www.nextjob.com> or follow us on twitter [@nextjobthoughts](https://twitter.com/nextjobthoughts) or LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/company/next-job>.

¹ The US Bureau of Labor Statistics, May 2016, <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/empst112.htm>.
² US Dept. of Labor ETA, exhaustion rates, May 2016 <http://www.oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/5159report.asp>
³ US DOL ETA, Q1 2016 http://oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/content/data_stats/datasum16/DataSum_2016_1.pdf
⁴ Zedlewski, Sheila, and Austin Nichols. 2012. "What Happens to Families' Income and Poverty after Unemployment?" <http://www.urban.org/publications/412650.html>.
⁵ Utah Case Study, NextJob, 2012, <http://www.nextjob.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/NextJob-Case-Study-UJ-Utah1.pdf>
⁶ "Effectiveness of Job Search Interventions: A Meta-Analytic Review", Psychological Bulletin, Liu, Songqi; Huang, Jason L.; Wang, Mo 2014 http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2632318

⁷ US DOL ETA, Q1 2016 http://oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/content/data_stats/datasum16/DataSum_2016_1.pdf
⁸ Do Job Search Rules and Reemployment Services Reduce Insured Unemployment? O'Leary and Wandner, 2005 http://research.upjohn.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1129&context=up_workingpapers_table_5_page_23
⁹ Impact of the Reemployment and Eligibility Assessment (REA) Initiative in Nevada, Michaelides, Poe-Yamgata, Benus and Tirumalasetti, Jan. 2012, https://wdr.doleta.gov/research/FullText_Documents/ETAOP_2012_08_REA_Nevada_Follow_up_Report.pdf
¹⁰ Utah Case Study, NextJob, 2012; <http://www.nextjob.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/EFX-Reempl-Services-Case-Study-Univ-Tx-Health-Final-CONVERTED.pdf>
¹¹ NextJob, Inc. internal survey of job seekers, July-November 2015.