

**Seven Disastrous Mistakes  
Job Seekers Make  
When Transitioning Out of Retail  
And How to Avoid Them**

**These mistakes can stop a job search cold.**

**GetOutofRetail.com**  
P.O. Box 391  
Sugar Land, Texas 77487  
1-877-478-4999  
info@GetOutofRetail.com  
www.GetOutofRetail.com

## **JOB SEARCH MISTAKES HAPPEN OFTEN**

Lots of people make critical job search mistakes and never even know it. By learning the key job search mistakes and how to avoid them, you will gain a distinct competitive advantage over other job seekers. Let's meet one of those "other" job seekers. See if you can identify his job search mistakes:

Tom is stuck in a "big box" retail sales job at Super McDepot Mart where he is underpaid, under-challenged, and hassled by an incompetent supervisor. His job is unbearable. For over a year, Tom has been sending out resumes with virtually no response. His self-esteem is now dropping and in recent weeks, his job performance has started slipping. He can't afford to quit Super McDepot Mart because he desperately needs the money!

### **Here is Tom's job search process:**

1. He procrastinated for months because of fear of change, lack of a college degree, and a perceived lack of transferable skills.
2. After a particularly bad day at work, he finally decided he had to get out of retail, so he went home and typed out his resume.
3. On his resume, Tom used a broad objective that left his options open for many different types of jobs.
4. Tom used his computer's "spell check" tool to be sure there were no spelling errors on the resume.
5. He searched Monster.com and the local newspaper for job openings. Then he forwarded his generic resume to many different types of jobs.
6. Tom waited for a response from prospective employers.
7. Tom went on a few interviews. He told the interviewers how terrible things were at Super McDepot Mart and how much he wanted to work for the new employer instead.
8. He waited to hear back after the interviews.
9. Tom came in late for work and called in sick frequently. After all, he wouldn't be working at Super McDepot Mart much longer.
10. He threw away rejection letters in disgust.

How many job search mistakes did you find in Tom's process? There are hundreds of mistakes that can be made by job seekers in any career field, including retail. Here are seven of the most common and disastrous ones:

### **MISTAKE # 1: WISHING AND NOT TAKING ACTION**

*Why it's a mistake:*

Life is too short and you spend too many hours at work to be unhappy in your job. The sooner you get started on your job search, the sooner you will be giving your two-week notice to your current employer and moving on to a more satisfying career.

*How to avoid it:*

Face whatever fear or perceived obstacle is stopping you from taking action. Take the first step! What is the first step? Identify your job target: what do you want to do next?

Job Search steps:

- ✓ Identify job target(s).
- ✓ Identify ideal job specifications. (What will your ideal employer/job be like? Where will the company be located? What will your compensation be?)
- ✓ Identify the transferable skills that are suited to your new job target.
- ✓ Craft a resume around those skills.
- ✓ Locate job opportunities using a wide variety of resources.
- ✓ Customize and distribute your resume in a targeted manner.
- ✓ Follow up on resume sending.
- ✓ Prepare for interviews.
- ✓ Ace interviews.
- ✓ Follow up on interviews.

As a retail worker, the specific obstacles you face may include: an ineffective resume, a perceived lack of transferable skills, lack of a degree, or lack of "corporate world" experience. Strategies on how to overcome these obstacles are covered in the e-Book *Escape Retail Hell* ([www.getoutofretail.com](http://www.getoutofretail.com)).

**MISTAKE #2:  
JOB TARGET AND RESUME ARE NOT FOCUSED;  
LEAVING YOURSELF “OPEN” FOR MANY TYPES OF JOBS**

*Why it's a mistake:*

- At first glance, it might make sense to avoid narrowing yourself to a specific job target. However, using a vague objective such as “a challenging position with opportunity for advancement” has stopped many a job search in its tracks. When employers look at your resume, they don't want to have to figure out what type of position you should fill next or where you fit into their organization.
- Focused candidates are much more attractive to employers. An unfocused job seeker will lose when competing with a focused job seeker.
- Generic resumes and cover letters are a waste of time -- both yours and the employer's. Your career documents must be focused and able to shine under the “ten-second scan” potential employers will give them.

*How to avoid it:*

- ✓ Identify what you want to do next and focus your job search on that job title or industry.
- ✓ Customize each resume you send out. Tweak your “summary of qualifications” to show that you possess all or most of the skills outlined in the job requirements.
- ✓ Write down specifications for your next job in the areas of satisfaction, growth and advancement, environment, company culture, location, and compensation.
- ✓ Make a commitment to get what you want. Don't settle for less. BUT, be willing to accept a less than ideal job if it is a temporary stepping stone to the dream job.

The types of jobs you might consider -- jobs that are especially suited to ex-retail workers – are covered in the e-Book [Escape Retail Hell](#).

The topic of choosing a career path can fill entire books and is beyond the scope of this report. So if you're unsure about your focus, get some competent help before beginning your job search. **See the Resources section at the end of this report for recommended Career Coaches and books.**

### **MISTAKE #3: ERRORS OR UNTRUTHS ON YOUR RESUME**

*Why it's a mistake:*

- Errors on a resume are consistently the biggest turnoff to employers and recruiters. In nearly every survey and conference panel, Human Resource representatives and recruiters state that spelling and grammar errors cause a resume to be disqualified. Employers will question the quality of work you will do for them as their employee if you cannot turn in a high quality, error-free resume for an important job opportunity.
- More and more employers are checking facts on resumes before or after making an offer of employment. If you are dishonest on your resume, there is a high likelihood it will be discovered. This could lead to your disqualification or termination.

*How to avoid it:*

- ✓ Double and triple check your resume for spelling and grammar errors. Have other people proofread it as well. Don't rely on your computer's "spell check" alone.
- ✓ Be truthful, but do it with a marketing flair. Highlight transferable skills.
- ✓ Consider hiring a professional resume writer if you are unsure of how to market yourself on paper.

Proven methods for crafting your resume to make it appealing to employers in industries outside of retail are covered in the e-Book, [\*Escape Retail Hell\*](#).

**See the Resources section at the end of this report for professional resume writing associations and resume books.** Look for a *certified* resume writer (CPRW, NCRW, MRW).

## **MISTAKE #4: USING ONLY MONSTER AND/OR NEWSPAPER CLASSIFIEDS**

*Why it's a mistake:*

- You have probably heard it before: “The **best jobs** are never advertised.” (At least not on the huge job boards or in newspaper classifieds.)
- You’ll have MUCH more competition for jobs advertised on the big boards and newspapers than you’ll have with niche sites and other resources.
- You’ll miss out on many great opportunities. You must dig deeper for the **best jobs**.

*How to avoid it:*

In addition to using newspaper classifieds and the large internet job boards to locate job openings:

- ✓ Use niche job boards by field.
- ✓ Use niche job boards by geography.
- ✓ Use employment agencies.
- ✓ Use trade publications and industry association websites.
- ✓ Use college and trade school placement offices.
- ✓ Use community-based and state-funded career offices.
- ✓ Check out the “Careers” or “Human Resources” section of employer websites, particularly employers you really want to work for.
- ✓ Explore local Chamber of Commerce websites to find member companies that have job openings.
- ✓ Network! Tell everyone you know (except maybe your current employer) that you are looking for a new opportunity; be specific about what type of opportunity. Don’t beg; just mention it.

**See the Resources section at the end of this report for job search tools, including an excellent free website listing niche job boards.**

## **MISTAKE #5: NOT FOLLOWING UP**

*Why it's a mistake:*

- Employers may receive hundreds or even thousands of resumes for each job opening. In an ideal world, every employer would acknowledge receipt of every resume, but few actually do. Your resume or application may have been lost in the mail/email or overlooked.
- Your competition may be following up.

*How to avoid it:*

- ✓ If you do not receive a response within two weeks of sending a resume, follow up with a phone call. Following up by phone gives you a chance to stand out and connect with the employer. Don't take up a lot of their time or become a stalker. Just place a quick call to inquire if your resume was received.
- ✓ Follow up each interview with a short thank you note. Take this opportunity to restate why you feel you are qualified for the job and briefly clarify any answers you may have flubbed in the interview.
- ✓ Respond to any rejection letters with a thank you note and a new copy of your resume. Ask the employer to keep your resume on file for any future opportunities. If they made a poor hiring decision, you could be next in line when the candidate they chose doesn't work out.

## **MISTAKE #6: NOT PREPARING WELL ENOUGH FOR JOB INTERVIEWS AND/OR BADMOUTHING CURRENT EMPLOYER IN INTERVIEWS**

*Why it's a mistake:*

- The most qualified person doesn't always get the job. That's right. The candidate with the **best interviewing skills** or inside contacts usually gets the job. No, it's not fair, but it's the reality of the job search process.
- Speaking negatively about your current or former employers will almost always disqualify you. No one wants to hire a disgruntled employee. After all, you might badmouth your new employer too!

Interviewing takes preparation and practice – even if you ARE a people person and a good talker. Do you know what to say when an employer says “Tell me about yourself”? You don’t want to stumble on that one.

Other questions a prospective employer will ask include:

**What do you know about our company?**

**Why do you want to work here?**

**Why do you want to leave your current position?**

**Why should we consider you for this position?**

What they *really* want to know but *can’t* or *don’t know how* to ask:

**What’s wrong with you anyway? Why are you looking for a job?**

**Will you be able to get along with others in the department?**

**Can you handle all aspects of the job?**

**What can you do to solve our department’s problems?**

*How to avoid it:*

Don’t try to wing it! Prepare!

- ✓ Research the company in advance
- ✓ Know your strengths and accomplishments
- ✓ Rehearse
- ✓ Work with an interview coach if you’re not getting job offers after several interviews
- ✓ Be prepared with a list of your own questions to ask the employer
- ✓ Don’t badmouth your current employer!

**See the Resources section at the end of this report for interviewing help and a great tool for researching prospective employers, including their culture and interviewing styles.**

Sample interview answers are covered in the e-Book, [\*Escape Retail Hell\*](#).

**MISTAKE #7:  
BURNING BRIDGES WITH YOUR CURRENT EMPLOYER BY SLACKING OFF  
DURING YOUR JOB SEARCH**

*Why it's a mistake:*

- You may need your current employer for a reference.
- You need to avoid getting terminated before lining up another job.

You may think you can slack off at your current job since you are leaving soon anyway and you aren't using your current employer as a reference. Not so fast. What if things don't work out at your next employer? What if a better opportunity comes along? There is a good probability that any subsequent potential employers will check with your current employer.

*How to avoid it:*

- ✓ This is simple. Show up on time and keep doing an excellent job.
- ✓ Smile through the pain while envisioning the day when you give your two-week notice!

That's it! Now you know seven of the most disastrous mistakes a job seeker can make when transitioning out of retail and how to avoid them. Don't feel bad if you made any of these mistakes! No one teaches this stuff in school. After reading this report, you're way ahead of the competition!

The upcoming e-Book *Escape Retail Hell* will outline several more mistakes you might be making and how to avoid them. As owner of this report, you will receive priority email notification when the book is available.

**TOM'S HAPPY ENDING**

After investing in a few sessions with a career coach, Tom identifies the job target he would most like to pursue: outside sales for a consumer goods manufacturer. The coach also helps him prepare for interviews and create a job search plan that includes a wealth of resources for locating opportunities in his chosen field. Next, Tom invests in a professional resume writer to craft a targeted resume that highlights his unique qualifications for his job target.

Within days of sending out his new targeted resume, he begins receiving calls for interviews. After fielding several offers, he selects a job at a Super McDepot Mart supplier that is recognized as one of the best companies to work for by a leading business magazine. In Tom's new position, his salary is 20% higher and he enjoys the use of a company car. Tom wishes he had invested in professional job search assistance much earlier in the process. It would have saved him months of frustration and wasted time.

What will your new job be like?

**Resources:**

Find niche job boards by location or field: [Job-Hunt.org](http://Job-Hunt.org)

Job aggregator (collects job openings from all over the internet): [Indeed.com](http://Indeed.com)

Salary information by job title and location: [Salary.com](http://Salary.com)

Targeted resume distribution: [ResumeSpider.com](http://ResumeSpider.com)

Reference checking service: [Allison & Taylor, Inc.](http://Allison & Taylor, Inc.)

Interviewing help: [Job-Interview.net](http://Job-Interview.net)

Interviewing DVD: [10 Steps to Interviewing With Confidence](http://10 Steps to Interviewing With Confidence)

Company research: [Vault.com](http://Vault.com)

Find a resume writer, interview coach and/or career coach:

[Career Masters Institute](http://Career Masters Institute) (www.cminstitute.com)

[Professional Association of Resume Writers & Career Coaches](http://Professional Association of Resume Writers & Career Coaches) (www.parw.com)

[National Resume Writers' Association](http://National Resume Writers' Association) (www.nrwa.com)

Recommended reading:

*The Career Change Resume* (Kim Isaacs and Karen Hofferber)

*I Could Do Anything if I Only Knew What it Was* (Barbara Sher)

*How to Turn an Interview Into a Job* (Jeffrey G. Allen)

*Negotiating Your Salary: How to Make \$1,000 a Minute* (Jack Chapman)

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Kelley Smith is a Certified Professional Resume Writer (CPRW) and owner of Advantage Resume Services, Resume GhostWriter, FortBendJobs.com, and GetOutofRetail.com. Ms. Smith develops winning resumes for executives and professionals in all industries and fields, particularly retail, corporate finance and financial services. Samples of her work have been published in numerous resume “how to” books, including Resumes That Knock ‘Em Dead, by Martin Yate; Professional Resumes for Accounting, Tax, Finance, and Law, by David Noble, Ph.D.; and several of the “Expert Resumes” series of books by Wendy Enelow and Louise Kursmark. Ms. Smith earned a BBA degree in Finance from the University of Houston and is an active member of leading employment industry associations, including Career Masters Institute, Professional Association of Resume Writers and Career Coaches, and National Resume Writers’ Association. But most importantly, she Got the Heck Out of Retail!