Finding the right job opportunities—and standing out in a competitive market—is tough. Fortunately, there are plenty of tools and hacks out there that are built to help you find your dream job, more quickly and easily than ever. From an app that helps you optimize your resume for applicant tracking systems to a site that will keep all your applications in order, here are 10 tools and tips you’ve probably never heard about that can give your job search a serious boost.

1. Create a Twitter Job Search List to Track Job Listings From Thousands of Sources
   Every day, recruiters are tweeting jobs they need to interview candidates for—making Twitter a seriously untapped resource for job seekers. To make sure you’re in the know about these leads, create a Twitter job search list that includes recruiters, hiring managers, company hiring handles, and job search websites. Then, review their tweets daily for potential opportunities.

2. Use JibberJobber to Keep Track of Information You Collect During Your Job Search
   It’s easy to get disorganized during a job hunt. So, use a free tool such as JibberJobber to keep tabs on everything that’s going on. You can track the companies that you apply to, note each specific job that you apply for, and log the status of each application (date of first interview, date thank you letter sent, and so on).

3. Use LinkedIn Resume Builder to Create an Updated Resume Fast
   If you’re like me, your LinkedIn profile is much more up to date than your actual resume. But if you need to update your resume fast for an available opportunity, don’t spend hours on your computer. Instead, export your LinkedIn profile into a classy looking resume using LinkedIn’s Resume Builder.

4. Put a Short and Unique LinkedIn URL on Your Resume to Stand Out to Recruiters
   Instead of using the URL that LinkedIn assigns you with letters and numbers, customize it so it contains your name and the career field or job title you want to go into. (You can do this by clicking “edit profile” and clicking “edit” next to your LinkedIn URL.) This extra keyword will help when recruiters are searching for you, and sticking the URL on your resume will encourage recruiters to head to LinkedIn to learn more about you.

5. Use Resunate to See How Your Resume Scores on an Applicant Tracking System
   Sick of not knowing if a human being is even reviewing the resume you worked so hard on? Resunate is web-based software that shows you how your resume would score on the applicant tracking system—and helps you improve it for every job you apply for.

6. Use SocialMention to Manage Your Online Reputation
   While job searching, it’s important to keep your reputation crystal clear. To monitor what’s being said about you online, check out Social Mention, a social media search and analysis platform that aggregates user-generated content from across the universe into a single stream of information. It allows you to easily track and measure what people are saying about you across the web’s social media landscape in real-time.

7. Use LinkedIn Groups to Contact Someone You Don’t Have an Email For
   If you want to contact someone at your dream company but can’t find the right contact information anywhere, check out the person’s public LinkedIn profile and see what groups he or she is part of. Then, join the group where you share a mutual interest. Once you are in the same group, you can send a message through LinkedIn. Just make sure you include something about your common interest in your message—it’ll make you seem like a networker, not a stalker.
8. Use Insightly to Manage and Organize Business Cards You Collect
Insightly is a free CRM system that helps you manage your key contacts and relationships—and it’s a great tool for your job search. After you meet someone, put his or her contact information in this system, and write down important information you learned from your conversation. Then, create a reminder in the system to follow up on a certain date in the future.

9. Use Contactually to Create an Automatic Follow-up System
A big job search mistake is to only focus on meeting new people and forgetting about the people you already know. In fact, it’s extremely important to keep up with your current relationships! Contactually helps you consistently reengage with the most important people in your network by sending you automatic reminders to email people you haven’t talked to in a while.

10. Update Your LinkedIn Status Daily to Stay Top of Mind
This will make sure that you’ll stay on the radar of everyone you know—read: that they’ll remember you when an available opportunity opens up. How to do this without being annoying? Share an article, a quote, or a project you’re working on. Other ways of showing up in the LinkedIn news feed are by getting recommended, by adding a new connection, by joining a group, or by changing your photo.

Put these simple things into practice, and you’ll quickly see an improvement in your job search results. Meaning: You’ll land that dream job oh-so-much faster.
It's that time of year when hopeful undergrads send out their resumes to the investment banks they for some reason want to work for. But one guy's bombastic cover letter has made him the laughingstock of Wall Street. A tipster forwarded us this cover letter, from an NYU student named Mark to J.P. Morgan, with the note, “this has been circling around the Street.” Marvel at how a single fitness boast transforms what would have been simply a very terrible cover letter to something demanding to be forwarded to everyone on your contacts list.

1/23/2012
J.P. Morgan

Dear Sir or Madame:

I am an ambitious undergraduate at NYU triple majoring in Mathematics, Economics, and Computer Science. I am a punctual, personable, and shrewd individual, yet I have a quality which I pride myself on more than any of these.

I am unequivocally the most unflaggingly hard worker I know, and I love self-improvement. I have always felt that my time should be spent wisely, so I continuously challenge myself; I left Villanova because the work was too easy. Once I realized I could achieve a perfect GPA while holding a part-time job at NYU, I decided to redouble my effort by placing out of two classes, taking two honors classes, and holding two part-time jobs. That semester I achieved a 3.93, and in the same time I managed to bench double my bodyweight and do 35 pull-ups.

I say these things only because solid evidence is more convincing than unverifiable statements, and I want to demonstrate that I am a hard worker. J.P. Morgan is a firm with a reputation that precedes itself and employees who represent only the best and rightest in finance. I know that the employees in this firm will push me to excellence, especially within the Investment Banking division. In fact, one of the supporting reasons I chose Investment Banking over any other division was that I know it is difficult. I hope to augment my character by diligently working for the professionals at Morgan Stanley, and I feel I have much to offer in return.

I am proficient in several programming languages, and I can pick up a new one very quickly. For instance, I learned a years worth of Java from NYU in 27 days on my own; this is how I placed out of two including: Money and Banking, Analysis, Game Theory, Probability and Statistics. Even further, I am taking Machine Learning and Probabilistic Graphical Modeling currently, two programming courses offered by Stanford, so that I may truly offer the most if I am accepted. I am proficient with Bloomberg terminals, excellent with excel, and can perform basic office functions with terrifying efficiency. I have plenty of experience in the professional world through my internship at Merrill Lynch, and my research assistant position at NYU. In fact, my most recent employer has found me so useful that he promoted me to a Research Assistant and an official CTED intern. This role is usually reserved for Masters students, but my employer gave the title to me so that he could give me more work.

Please realize that I am not a braggart or conceited, I just want to outline my usefulness. Egos can be a huge liability, and I try not to have one.

Thank you so much for your time, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Best,
Mark

When reached by phone yesterday, Mark was well aware of the furor surrounding his letter, and that he'd overplayed his hand. When asked if he'd gotten a job at J.P. Morgan, he laughed. “No, not at all. Didn’t you see my letter?” Cheer up, Mark. You don’t really want to be an investment banker, anyway.
A resume has only one purpose: to help you get an interview.

1. Do not rely on spellcheck to be correct with spelling, grammar, or punctuation.
2. Always include references, even if the job announcement does not request them. Include 3 or 4 (no relatives). References are always the last section of a resume. Change who you ask to provide a reference based on the job for which you are applying. Use the people who can describe your skills and experiences related to the specific job. Include name, title, department/unit, organization/company name, street address, city, state, zip code, office phone number, cell phone number, and email address.

   Sara Smith  
   Director  
   Product Development  
   Jones Corporation  
   1234 Salmon Street  
   Portland, OR 97293  
   Office: 503.789-4567  
   Cell: 503-987-7654  
   sara.smith@jonescorp.com
3. Print your resume before emailing it to anyone.
4. Photocopy your resume to ensure it reproduces clearly and cleanly.
5. If using color, print in B/W to ensure it reproduces clearly and cleanly.
6. Email your resume and attachments to yourself and someone outside your school or organization.
7. Be prepared for the consequences if you choose to include protected personal information, religious affiliation, or political affiliation.
8. Let go of high school.
9. Use a sans serif font that is easy to read.
10. If more than 1 page, include "Page 1 of 2", your name and cell phone number at the top of the second (and any subsequent) page(s).
11. Be consistent throughout with format, font, dates, etc.
12. "Flash" test for white space and balance.
13. Include GPA only if there is a good reason to do so.
14. Clearly define the sections (Experience – Education – References – etc.).
15. Avoid splitting a section onto 2 pages, if possible. If not possible, make the split logical.
16. Only use a career objective if required by the job announcement – and customize it for every job.
17. Use bullet points to separate and emphasize.
18. Have several people proofread your resume.
19. Have several people review your resume for content and descriptions to ensure it reflects you: your skills, your experiences, your activities, your education.
20. Ensure your resume reflects YOU – with an emphasis on the “professional” you.
As a job seeker, it’s easy to see hiring managers as big, bad obstacles that need to be overcome. They’re the gatekeepers, after all. But, this kind of thinking actually leads to weaker job applications.

Think about it this way: Hiring managers read a ton of resumes—to the point at which their eyes cross. More importantly, hiring managers are just people. With this in mind, the only thing you really need to do to stand out is to have the one resume that actually lets them breathe a sigh of relief during this painful process. Here are four ways you can do just that.

1. Make the First Thing on Your Resume Immediately Relevant
There’s nothing worse for a hiring manager than having to dig through a resume to find what, exactly, an applicant’s relevant experience entails. Don’t make this harder than it needs to be for the person who will be reading your resume, and make sure the first thing on your resume is something you know he or she wants.

Are you applying to a sales position? Titling the first section of your resume “Sales Experience” might be a good way to start. Throwing your hat in for a position that requires specific training or certifications? Make that section number one. Go ahead. Make that hiring manager’s day, and actually start your resume with something that makes sense for the position.

2. Don’t Slap Your Reader in the Face With Text
So, you’ve managed to fit your resume all on one page with some efficient formatting and size eight font. Well, let me stop you right there. No hiring manager is going to see that resume and think, “Well, it’s still technically one page, so I better give it my full attention.” He or she will either read it while developing an impression that you’re already a burdensome job candidate, or he or she won’t even bother with the eye strain and just toss it.

Be kind to your resume reviewer. Leave plenty of white space on that page, and use a reasonable size font—even if it means you have to cut some details. No big blocks of text. Favor bullets that don’t exceed two lines of text over paragraphs when describing your experience. And, of course, think about what you can do to make your resume easier to skim overall.

3. Cut the Resume Speak and Get to the Point
Does your resume have phrases like “utilized innovative social media techniques” to describe how you posted to the company’s Twitter account every once in awhile? If so, you might be guilty of resume speak. Not only can hiring managers usually see right through this, but worse, resume speak often obscures what your real experience actually is.

There is no way your resume can make a strong case for your skills and experiences if the language you use is imprecise, fluffy, or hard to comprehend. Be concise and specific when describing your past experience (in the example above, perhaps, “Posted weekly Twitter updates and grew followers by 200%”). The hiring manager will thank you—and maybe even call you.

4. Just Be Thoughtful
I can’t stress this point enough. The person who will (eventually) be reading your resume is a human being. If you’re thoughtful, it won’t go unnoticed.

What does that mean? To start, save your resume as your first and last name plus “resume,” make your job titles more descriptive for easier scanning (for example, “Viral Marketing Intern” instead of just “Intern”), and actually send a cover letter that is tailored to the position.

Beyond that, put yourselves in the shoes of the hiring manager and consider what would make his or her job easier when it comes to evaluating job candidates. No need for gimmicks, inflated descriptions, or corporate jargon. Try to get your experiences across as precisely and succinctly as
possible, and emphasize the parts that are the most relevant by pulling them out into their own section and placing that section at the top of your resume.

Yes, your resume might go through an applicant tracking system before it ever gets to a human being, but if you’re a good fit, it will eventually get in front of a hiring manager. When that happens, it’ll be these little things that you do that make the difference between being just another job candidate and one who actually makes a hiring manager smile.

Lily Zhang serves as a Career Development Specialist at MIT where she works with a range of students from undergraduates to PhDs on how to reach their career aspirations.
Most employers will tell you that job seekers routinely make obvious, painful errors on their resumes that cost them the job. And while there are online tools that will help you avoid making some of these mistakes, such as punctuation errors, most tools won’t catch these four major blunders.

**Subjective Text**

When you fill your resume with lavish self-praise, like “dedicated self-starter,” “exceptional communication skills,” and “hard-working professional,” you’re just stating your own opinion. This kind of language is like nails on a chalkboard to recruiters. Why? You’re not stating facts. Don’t tell them how you see yourself. Prove it by listing quantifiable accomplishments. Let the recruiter decide if you’re actually a self-starter.

**Too Much Info**

Many people assume they should list everything they have ever done at every job. It makes them feel like they’re proving they’ve got valuable experience. Well, in reality, it detracts from your core message and strengths. Information overload to a recruiter is not a way to stand out. It’s actually the fastest way to get in the ‘no’ pile. That’s because, when they see you’ve listed everything, they look for every single skill they need. And, if even one skill is missing, they assume you don’t have it.

The better approach is to simplify the resume to list only the key skills you want to leverage. Then you will be implying that you have a lot more to offer -- but the recruiters need to contact you to find out. Less is more. If the hiring managers like what they see, they’ll contact you for a phone screen to get more details. And that’s exactly what you want the resume to do: Make the phone ring!

**Weak Top-Fold**

The first third of our resume is known as the “top-fold” -- it’s where the eye goes when someone sees your resume for the first time. Most studies say a hiring manager’s mind is made up about the candidate within six to 13 seconds of reading the resume. Which means the top-fold is determining whether you even get considered for the job. Text-intensive top-folds that aren’t well-formatted and don’t present key skill sets lose the reader’s attention. It’s that simple.

**Fancy Fonts**

Curly-tailed fonts (aka fancy fonts) are harder to read. That translates into the reader absorbing less of what’s been written. When you use script fonts as a way to make your resume look “classier,” you are only making it harder for the hiring manager to retain what you are all about. Skip the script font and go with something clean-lined, like Arial or Calibri. While that may look more basic, the hiring manager will at least take in more -and that can lead to the phone call you want.

Keep in mind: Your resume is your marketing document. Paying attention to these minor details can help you get a better response to your marketing message. Which is: “I’m worth talking to about this job!”