# How to Run a Job Search With a Simple Application Tracker

Work World · about 18 minutes · 2026-11-12

A practical 32-step guide to a calmer job search: define the target, build a tracker before applying, send small repeatable batches, keep momentum between replies, and review and close the search cleanly.

## Define What You Are Looking For

1. **Name two or three job titles you will search for**
   Name two or three job titles you will search for.
2. **List the non-negotiables separately from the nice-to-haves**
   List the non-negotiables separately from the nice-to-haves.
3. **Write one sentence on the kind of work you want more of**
   Write one sentence on the kind of work you want more of.
4. **Make one base document you can tailor quickly**
   Make one base document you can tailor quickly.
5. **Collect links to work you are allowed to show**
   Collect links to work you are allowed to show.
6. **Draft a short introduction you can adapt**
   Draft a short introduction you can adapt.

## Build the Tracker Before You Apply

7. **Use one table, in a tool you already check daily**
   Use one table, in a tool you already check daily.
8. **Keep the columns few and unambiguous**
   Keep the columns few and unambiguous.
9. **Agree a fixed vocabulary for the status column**
   Agree a fixed vocabulary for the status column.
10. **Give every row a next action and a date**
    Give every row a next action and a date.
11. **Keep the listing link in the row, not in your browser history**
    Keep the listing link in the row, not in your browser history.
12. **Record which version of your documents you sent**
    Record which version of your documents you sent.

## Apply in Small, Repeatable Batches

13. **Set two short search windows per week**
    Set two short search windows per week.
14. **Add every candidate to the tracker before applying**
    Add every candidate to the tracker before applying.

15. **Check the listing is current and legitimate**

    Check the listing is current and legitimate.

16. **Mark the three requirements the listing repeats**

    Mark the three requirements the listing repeats.

17. **Change the summary paragraph for each role**

    Change the summary paragraph for each role.

18. **Read the form fields before pasting anything**

    Read the form fields before pasting anything.

19. **Send a small batch, then stop and log it**

    Send a small batch, then stop and log it.

## Keep Momentum Between Replies

20. **Set a follow-up date that respects the listing**

    Set a follow-up date that respects the listing.

21. **Keep a follow-up short and factual**

    Keep a follow-up short and factual.

22. **Mark a role closed when the evidence says so**

    Mark a role closed when the evidence says so.

23. **Keep one page of notes per interview stage**

    Keep one page of notes per interview stage.

24. **Check the practical details in advance**

    Check the practical details in advance.

25. **Prepare questions that come from the notes**

    Prepare questions that come from the notes.

26. **Log every reply in the tracker on the same day**

    Log every reply in the tracker on the same day.

## Review, Adjust and Close the Search

27. **Once a week, count where rows are stuck**

    Once a week, count where rows are stuck.

28. **Change one variable, then watch the next two weeks**

    Change one variable, then watch the next two weeks.

29. **Keep a short list of what you learned**

    Keep a short list of what you learned.

30. **Close the remaining rows when you accept a role**

    Close the remaining rows when you accept a role.

31. **Archive the documents you used**

    Archive the documents you used.

32. **Write a short handover to your future self**

    Write a short handover to your future self.

## Sources


1. LinkedIn — career and job-search resources
   https://www.linkedin.com/
2. GOV.UK — official UK government services
   https://www.gov.uk/
3. Acas — workplace rights and employment guidance
   https://www.acas.org.uk/
4. Purdue OWL — writing and citation guide
   https://owl.purdue.edu/
5. Coursera — online courses
   https://www.coursera.org/
6. USA.gov — official U.S. government services
   https://www.usa.gov/
7. TED — talks and ideas
   https://www.ted.com/
8. American Psychological Association
   https://www.apa.org/
9. Khan Academy — free courses
   https://www.khanacademy.org/


Written as a checklist from https://www.howcompass.com/how-to/How-to-Run-a-Job-Search-With-a-Simple-Application-Tracker. Corrections: htt