

# Getting Unstuck in Your Job Search: 30 Real Cases



Welcome!

Are you feeling stuck in your job search?

Recently, I offered job seekers who were feeling stuck the opportunity to write in and share the challenges they are facing. Below are ~30 of these messages and the replies I shared with each of them.

Review their notes and my replies for different strategies that you can take in your job search. Not all will apply. But some will. And these can give you a jumpstart to get you on track if you are feeling stuck.

To your success,  
Alan

PS. If you're feeling stuck and these examples don't cover your situation, please send an email. I or a member of my team will take the time to review your note and give you tips and advice to get you back on track.



C H started the conversation

Yes, I am looking for the right opportunity. The "hidden job market" is something I have experienced previously, but do not know how to approach it from the 'outside in'. As a Commercial Architectural Designer, securing an intermediate position working with a collaborative team would be my 'dream job'.

Thank you

Best Regards,  
C H

Hi C,  
Thanks for your note.

Many people who are job seeking, look at big corporations or big companies for jobs. According to the US Small Business Administration though, 64% of private sectors jobs today are coming from small businesses.

Small businesses work really well for the hidden job market. Because smaller companies have fewer gatekeepers, you can easily talk to the business owner or the person who is hiring.

Especially as an architect, small businesses are a great place to look for positions. You aren't going to be working on skyscrapers, but there are plenty of smaller projects where your skills could be well used.

One of the best places to look for small business leaders is to go to those places where they shop for business and connect with people.



You can attend local Chamber of Commerce events or Rotary Club events, where different local business owners meet up on a regular basis just to chat (and potentially find business opportunities). You can share why you are there, that you are trying to connect with more people in your area, and that you are a commercial architect trying to connect with other commercial architects.

You can also go to events related to economic development projects in your area or you can look at local conferences related to the building industry. You may find interior design firms or design-build firms, or even some developers, in addition to architects, who all may be interested in your skill set.

I hope that helps, but feel free to follow up with additional questions.

Best,  
Alan



A D started the conversation

Thank you for the email, after over a year being downsized from a huge company, then only working as a contractor for 9 months, finally found a job, with less pay but not what I really expected and promised. Turning 60 this year and all the same type of jobs posted have not changed in over a year. Sadly. I may have to change career in order to broaden my horizons. Not what I truly want. My goals of getting OSHA certifications is not an option for me at this time I am currently on LinkedIn. And need to update my current position

Hi A,

I'd encourage you to look beyond the job posts.

I am guessing there are a number of independent consultants who do OSHA related work. They might be individuals with their own companies, or they may have a small number of employees, but they may be looking for some help, and just not posting a job about it. So what I would do would be to ask, if I were hiring one of these consultants for my facility, how would I hire them or find them? And then I would contact them through whatever channel and just explain what you're up to. Another great way is to say that you are asking for advice and then explain what you are thinking about and ask for suggestions about what they would do in your shoes.

A benefit of leaving a big company is that you probably know a fair number of other people who have left at one point or another. I would reconnect with them, even if it's been a few years. Approach them from an asking for advice perspective, explain to them the problem



that you are trying to figure out, and see what suggestions they might have for you.

I would also talk to your current employer, and see if there is a way for you to do more of the type of work that you were promised. Sit down with your boss and ask if there are more opportunities to do x, y, and z, as this was something that you were excited about when you started. If there is another person inside the organization who does more x,y,z that you wanted to do, you can talk to this person directly and see if you can help them or support them more than what you are currently doing. In the short term, this would be extra work but may pay off to getting you back to where you want to be. Even if the current job doesn't change, it will help in your next job search.

I hope that helps A.



C L started the conversation

Hello,

I have worked retail my entire career, 25 years with one company. I recently received my Bachelor's in business management with HR concentration and have been looking to further my career in this field. I have been in the management field since 1998 and have much experience with HR. The team I would like to work with would be the team that allows the job to be done correctly and trust in the fact that constructive criticism is there for a reason. Even though I have the experience and the degree, the titles I have held show no experience.

Thank you,

C L.

Hi C,

Thanks for your note.

I don't think your resume would serve you well only listing the 25 years or you have worked in retail. Hiring, firing, training, retaining, coordinating time off, explaining all of the types of benefits that your employees have, etc will demonstrate that you already have many of the skills to do well in HR.

People love helping students and recent college graduates (Congratulations, by the way!), so you have the unique opportunity to say,



*Dear Christi,*

*Thanks for taking the time to read this note. I am a fellow alumna of xxxx. (or some other point of connection). I would be grateful if you could share a bit of advice with me.*

*I recently received my bachelor's in business management with an HR concentration. I am very interested in moving forward in my career in HR and am trying to learn more.*

*I was hoping you might be able to spend a few minutes sharing your experience.*

*Would it be possible for us to have a short call together or a cup of coffee?*

*Thanks,*

*-Alan*

Hope that helps!



E F started the conversation

Hi Alan:

Thank you for the newsletter. It guides me in my job search.

I worked at the same company for more than 15 years as the Account Manager, building relationships, growing businesses, and the company's revenue. That was a computer hardware company. Sunset industry as not many people are upgrading their PC memory anymore. Most people use tablets and smartphome.

I am trying to change the industry: from computer hardware to software (SaaS) or web services.

I usually have very good conversations with HR and 3rd party recruiters but once they pass on my resume to a hiring manager, there are always "candidates that match closer" .....

Please advise how to pivot the industry and work with hiring managers to showcase them transferable skills,  
that are plenty in sales.

Regards,  
E F

Hi E,

Thanks for your note. It seems like a smart idea to make a transition and so I have a couple of quick recommendations for you.

You've done an excellent job of building relationships for the past 15 years. How many of those people have made the same switch into Saas, web services, etc? I would reconnect with these folks and ask



for advice. Explain the transition that you are trying to make and see what suggestions they have for you in making this transition.

As someone who is adept at sales type work, I would apply these same tools for targeting prospects and building relationships and reach out to the people who would hire you from a sales approach. You may be more of a farmer than a hunter, and if that's the case, I'd ask a hunter that you know or have worked with to help guide you and advise you.

Another thing I would do would be to attend live events that are focused on SaaS and web services, where you can both learn more about these areas to become an expert, and where you can meet people who are hiring managers or who will know hiring managers. Do a google search for trade associations, conferences, local meetups (you can also look at Meetup.com for some such events).

Finally, the last thing I would do is pick some companies for whom you would be interested in working. Find their sales reps and reach out to them. Tell them that you can use their advice and that you're interested in learning more about their products and services and the work that they do. Their sales reps would be happy to talk with you, as sales reps love talking to people. Even if a couple turn you down, many others will want to talk with you.

I hope that helps. But feel free to reach out and ask for any clarification.

-Alan



P V started the conversation

Good morning Alan Carniol,

Thank you for your continued Daily Success Boost Email and insight information on the job market, it is very helpful.

The position that I am seeking is: Project Manager leading a team of 20-30 engineers, both in-house and outsourced based in Sydney Australia.

Yours sincerely,  
P V

Hi P,

Thanks for your note and in terms of getting hired to manage these development teams, there are two places I would go to.

First, I would try to connect with technology startup companies. Because these companies are likely to be growing and scaling fast and needing to hire someone like you.

There are going to be startup related events hosted with announcements on MeetUp.com or EventBrite, on the websites of other StartUp groups (General Assembly, Angels investor groups, or Google 'entrepreneur events sydney', 'startup events sydney'), and even at universities (NSW seems to have some).

I would go to these events and talk to the startup founders who are there about what you are trying to. Even firms who aren't hiring someone of your skillset are likely to know someone who could use your talents. Some of these firms will also possibly need your skills at



a future date. Sometimes at these events, companies will actually just announce that they are looking for people; usually, sales and engineering.

You can also talk to people who are organizers for such events and see what they suggest. I am guessing there is someone at NSW who has a full-time job related to helping startups and entrepreneurs, and they would be grateful to have someone like you in their contact list.

Next, make a list of outside software development companies (you can do a search for these in Sydney or even search for best software development companies in Australia, as most will have a Sydney office even if it's not their HQ. Reach out to people who work there and ask them to join you for coffee and talk shop with them. They may not have a job for you today. But they may have submitted a proposal that once accepted means they'll need someone like you on their team in a hurry, so you want to be on their list of people to call.

Hope that helps and feel free to reach out again.

-Alan



F R started the conversation

Dear Alan,

I truly enjoy your emails and webinars! Haven't had the funds to purchase your interview system yet.

For me, a dream job would be a career in social impact or socially responsible business. A job that utilizes both professional consulting skills and counseling psychology experience. Highly paid! ☐

Regards,

F R

Hi F,

Thanks for your note.

So what I would encourage you to do is not wait for job postings, but instead make a list of potential firms where you would be interested in working. Find someone who works there, regardless of their job title, and ask them to have a conversation with you about the firm and the work they do.

Tell them that you are trying to decide what you want to do next and right now, you are in a research-gathering stage, and would they be open to having a short conversation with you where you can learn more about what they do and about their firm? Ideally, try to connect with these folks via an introduction from someone you both know or if that's not possible, another point of connection. Maybe you went to the same school or maybe you are both interested in applying psychology to solve certain types of work-related challenges or you both have a



background in consulting. Mention that common connection as it shows you did research and that you are not complete strangers.

In terms of finding these companies, search BCorp certified companies at <https://bcorporation.net/>. Certified B Corporations are a new kind of business that balance purpose and profit. They are legally required to consider the impact of their decisions on their workers, customers, suppliers, community, and the environment."

You can also look at [NetImpact.org](http://NetImpact.org) - a nonprofit focused on responsible business, centered on MBAs. They have a job board, which you can use as a place to find socially responsible companies who are hiring. Reach out to those companies using the points mentioned above.

Hope that helps.

-Alan



J B started the conversation

My dream job is to continue my switch from a 50/50 sales/marketing guy to a full-time marketing guy. I'm taking certification courses to move towards being the Inbound Marketing guy, running email and content campaigns in a marketing automation platform like HubSpot or Marketo. I have the theory and marketing planning down, but not as much implementation experience as some of the better jobs want. Eventually, I want to be the Marketing Manager running the entire marketing plan.

J B

Hi J,  
Thanks for your note. It seems like you're preparing yourself well for the switch and are on a good path.

Something else you can do to sharpen your marketing skill set might be to take on some private clients on the side to also strengthen your implementation skills and your resume.

Related, and even easier to do, you can find someone who runs a small marketing consulting business and is looking for say 5-10 hours of help per week to take some of the stress and work off their plate. You get paid to learn and don't have to acquire clients. There are many such consultants/small agencies who, if you reach out to them and explain what you are trying to do, they would likely be interested in having a call with you to learn more about you and see if it's a fit.

In terms of full-time options, a couple of other alternatives would be finding a firm that's growing, so that you can grow with them in this



area or take on a slightly more junior role or a bit smaller of a company, where you can learn the ropes and then switch to a more expansive job from there.

I hope that helps.

-Alan



P W started the conversation

Hello Alan,

My Dream job is working in a hot rod shop as their go-to mechanical engineer and mechanic/technician. I have 14 years as an aerospace mechanical engineer and a lifetime of experience working on cars, trucks and hot rods.

Can you help me?

Thanks for your consistent efforts.

Regards

P W

Hi P,

Thanks for the note. One of the best ways to land a job is to have a portfolio of your work or at least some sample work.

I think your best bet would be to make a list of shops in your area, then I would take a car that you are proud of, that is, in essence, a sample of the work that you do, and I would drive to each of them in this car.

Then just talk shop with them. You could ask them for advice on a detail or customization that you are thinking about if you need an excuse to start a conversation.

Besides showing a sample of your work, something else valuable to do for any job is demonstrate your skills at solving the exact problem that they would hire you to solve.



After you start a conversation, you can explain that you are an engineer who loves cars and ask them about any interesting challenges in this area they have been dealing with. You can problem solve, and some of them will want to keep in touch potentially even be looking for someone of your talents. You can even ask them for an introduction or referral at the end of the conversation.

If there are many such shops, you can also look for a listing of shops that are the fastest growing or that have gotten awards for innovative work that require some engineering know-how. As these firms are going to be even more interested in hiring you, than the average one.

I would guess that many shops may want to have someone like you act as a consultant on certain projects even if they wouldn't want your help full time. So you may be able to create a job that way with a book of clients all your own.

If there is anyone whom you worked with on your cars over the years, I would start by talking to them first. It's always easiest to start with people who already know you and like you, even if you can visibly display your skills.



B A started the conversation

My dream job is writing, helping people and traveling the world as a speaker who informs and inspires others.

B A

Hi B,

Thanks for your note. You have many channels open to you: becoming a professional speaker, working for a global nonprofit or for-profit that can use your skills in different locations, getting a job as a writer that is not location dependent, so you can just travel with your laptop in hand.

I'd encourage you to get even clearer on what that dream job looks like as that will make it easier to end up where you want to go.



S J started the conversation

Thanks for sending Alan. I'm interested in learning other techniques on getting in front of hiring managers. I'm trying to get a position in web development, I have 2 years experience. My dream job would include solid mentorship, a sense of ownership/entrepreneurialism and a position that promotes growth.

Kind regards,

S J

Hi S,

Thanks for your note, with two years of experience, you have proven that you are reliable, and yet you are still flexible in terms of what you can learn how to do.

Web development is huge. You can work for any company with a significant web presence, for an agency specialized in web development, or for freelancers who need help getting big projects done that exceed their personal capacity. You can also work for yourself.

Create a portfolio of your work. What's great about web development is that it's easy for others to be able to see what you can do. If you're working is all property of your employer, then I would make a test project that is all your own. You could even bring on a nonprofit client where you do the work for free as long as you can use it as a sample and demonstrate certain skills that you have.

Next, you need a list of targets.



There are two ways to create a target list.: create a list of target companies. or create a list of target people.

A great place to start for a list of target companies might be the Inc5000. You can also look for local businesses and designers who are growing by connecting through locally based organizations. You can look at the San Diego Chamber of Commerce. You can also look for San Diego based BNI (business networking circles that have different specialists).

You can also see who you know who might know people and just have a conversation with them about what you are up to and what you're thinking about doing, and they should be able to connect you to others.

There are also a ton of live events you can go to where people are looking for web developers. Any startup related event works great. Any business related event works. Look on meetup.com or EventBright or search "startup events San Diego".

Something else you can do is look for online forums for web developers. These are conversation groups where developers are talking about challenges that they are facing, and one of those challenges is, of course, figuring out what jobs to do.

If people meet you and they like you, and then you can share a sample of what you can do, it's very easy for them to refer you or bring you in for a job.

In terms of the traditional job search methods, being someone in a technical field, like web development, and having just a few years of experience, you are in the sweet spot for finding opportunities that way.



You can look at Dice.com for job listings. If you see a job for a company that doesn't fit, but the company would be interesting, you can dig up contact information for someone who works there or find a point of connection for an introduction and reach out to them about what they do. Chances are if they are hiring for one job in web development, they will soon need to hire for another one, and they would be interested in someone of your profile.

I hope that helps.

Best,  
Alan



D N started the conversation

Hi Alan,

I would like to "fall" into a medical device engineering role. My preference would be to work with a small team of engineers, technicians and/ or scientists supporting a development or advanced manufacturing project for Class II or Class III medical devices.

Regards,

D

Hi D,

Is there a certain field of interest? For example, are you interested in cardiac devices?

There are a few approaches you can take.

First, you can look for startup companies that are going through the development process. You can look for healthcare device incubators. Chances are all of the large drug makers and medical device manufacturers fund companies developing these devices at early stages so that they can buy them out later on. You can also look for press releases related to financing rounds being closed. There is probably a whole startup ecosystem related to medical devices with email newsletters and conferences that you can go to, listings on the FDA website or devices currently under review. You can request information to get such a list. Usually, information about how the government is spending tax dollars is something you can ask them to



provide you with - though it may take a few requests to get there. You can call the FDA to ask if you can't find it otherwise published.

These will give you a list of prospect companies that you can contact or people at these companies via direct outreach (find an email or a phone number) or via an introduction which you might find as a point of connection through LinkedIn. You can also find events where these companies will be live (conferences for example).

Finally, let's say you wanted to get into cardiac devices. You can go to a conference for cardiologists or cardiac surgeons. There will be a large number of people who are promoting their products. Some will be developing new devices or growing and need your help. You'd simply walk around to the various vendors and ask.

I hope that helps.

Alan

D N replied

Hi Alan,

Thanks for your ideas on medical device companies and incubators. I am interested in active medical devices, preferably implantable [not limited to a single category such as cardiac devices (which I have prior experience and interest in)]. I have worked for 2 startup companies previously. In both cases, they provided an exciting and intense work environment, yet neither one survived in the end due to (lack of) funding issues.



Regards ,

D N

Hi D,

That's great. You could attend multiple different conferences for medical specialists or where there would be vendors with implantable devices. I would also suggest reaching out to the people you worked with at these startups to see where they ended up. Chances are at least one of them is working at a place where you might want to work. Working that closely and intensely, I am sure they know your capabilities and would be excited to work with you again.

Best,

Alan



L H started the conversation

Hi Alan,

I just read this, maybe next time you can help me.

I would like to work as a QC Documentation clerk/Internal Auditor

I love this kind of work Auditing, doing correction, checking on specs. and all the and scanning/e filing. I loved this kind of work.

L H

Hi L,

Thanks for reaching out. What's great about what you enjoy doing is that it can be done from basically any location. So you can look for firms anywhere that might be willing to hire remotely.

Make a list of firms that you would be most excited about, and see if you can schedule a call and if they would be interested in bringing you on board.

The other thing that's happening a lot is outsourcing work. There are specialty firms that hire people like you to help on a project basis or on a part-time basis. So you can pick up the phone and call them if you do come across them.

Another thing I would do would be to make a profile of the company that you would like to work and see what fits. If you worked for a law firm and know who their competitors are, you could reach out to these firms.

I hope this helps.

Alan



Dr. M B started the conversation

I am looking for a position in Higher-ed. A remote position such as a full-time faculty member would be ideal.

Hi M,  
Thanks for your note. Does this feel like it would be a bit of a change from your current role?

What I would suggest would be to start out by finding some people who are already doing what you would like to do, and ask them for advice. Ask them how they ended up where they are now- ask them if they were in your shoes what they would do. You'll have to have a fair number of these conversations; if you do, you will be able to end up in the right place.

One of these people will know someone who is hiring (usually about one in ten on initial outreaches, higher numbers when you've been referred from a previous conversation).

You can find people doing what you'd like to do by looking on LinkedIn. Additionally, if there are universities that are of interest or higher likelihood of being a match, you can look on the faculty pages and see if you can find someone on a similar path.

I hope this helps.

Best,  
Alan



A.T. started the conversation

I am seriously searching for a job in supply chain and financial management. Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

A.T.

Hi A,

I would search for people who are already working in this area that you know, and ask them for a quick conversation. Tell them you are looking for advice and you would appreciate their perspective. Explain to them what you are trying to do, and ask what suggestions they might have for you. Always, towards the end of the conversation, ask them for suggestions of people you should talk to for additional advice because these additional conversations are most likely going to lead to a job.

I hope this helps.

Alan



P.V. started the conversation

Hello Alan,

I'm looking for a finance role with operations and client contact.

I have 20+ years of corporate and operations experience in top to bottom finance and business development in Sr Director/VP roles. I have great references but cannot get in the door for an interview through the online applications. When I do get an interview, their response is generally "We like you but are looking for someone 'longer term'". Any advice you have would be appreciated.

P.V.

Hi P,

Online applications don't work that well, and the higher up the totem pole you are, the less effective they are at hiring.

If you have great references, then these individuals should be open to giving you warm introductions to people who might want your skillset. The best way to get a job is through someone who already knows, likes, and trusts you. With your background in business development, you probably have made contact with a lot of people in your career. Many of these folks probably still like you and trust you- reconnect with these individuals as well. Even if you haven't spoken to someone in several years, if you had a good relationship with them, they would be willing to have a call with you.



Please note, that with both of these groups, you shouldn't ask them to send along your resume.

Invest the time in each person to have a conversation with them. Explain that you are looking for some advice and perspective. You're thinking about what you'd like to do as the next step in your career and you would appreciate their thoughts.

By the end of the conversation, after you explain what you've been up to, the kinds of problems that you are particularly good at, what you are looking to do next, ask them for suggestions of people you should talk to for additional leads.

This would be the best place to start.

Alan



N.P. started the conversation

Accounting role,  
Civil engineer - project manager

Thanks for the great information.

Alan Carniol replied

Thanks for the quick reply N. Please feel free to send along any details.

I would search for people who are already working in this area that you know or that have a point of connection with you (for example, from the same university or employer as you), and ask them for a quick conversation.

Tell them you are looking for advice and you would appreciate their perspective. Explain to them what you are trying to do, and ask what suggestions they might have for you. Always, towards the end of the conversation, ask them for suggestions of people you should talk to for additional leads because these additional conversations are most likely going to lead to a job.

I hope this helps.  
Alan



W M started the conversation

Looking for Collaboration/Voice Solution Architect  
or Engineer.

Hi W,  
Thanks for the note.

What's great about what you want to do is how specific a specialty you have chosen- this makes it much easier to find the right opportunities.

I would search for people who are already working in this area that you know or that have a point of connection with you (for example, from the same university or employer as you), and ask them for a quick conversation.

You can also look at firms that you admire and see if there are people working in the role that you want to work. Because you are so specialized these individuals are going to be even more interested and excited to connect with someone like you. Then again, you could just make a cold outreach or see if you know someone in common who can make you an introduction.

Tell them you are looking for advice and you would appreciate their perspective. Explain to them what you are trying to do, and ask what suggestions they might have for you.

Always, towards the end of the conversation, ask them for suggestions of people you should talk to for additional leads because these additional conversations are most likely going to lead to a job.

I hope this helps.  
Alan



A Y started the conversation

Hi - a couple of years ago I struck up a conversation with a woman over the hors d'oeuvres at a civic event. She linked me to a contract nonprofit job within a week, and when it ended, suddenly hired me to help her launch her new nonprofit venture. We worked happily together until the seed money ran out and the operation naturally downsized.

I want to step in and help nonprofits grow and thrive, in the assistant/associate/coordinator capacities, for the next 10 years until I retire. Let the young and ambitious cover budgets and strategies and personnel and let them shine and ascend the ladders to top management; I'll get the work done at the ground level.

Sunny Seattle regards,

A Y

Hi A,

It sounds like a wonderful vision for the next decade. I am sure people would love to have your help.

If you had this success at a civic event ten years ago, then I would encourage you to attend similar events to make additional contacts. If you still have a good relationship with your last employer, I would ask them to be your advocate and to introduce you to other organizations or people in the area where you may be a good fit. Look for other organizations that are supported by the same funders as your last



nonprofit or find local funders or foundations that support many nonprofits in your area.

When I lived in New Haven, CT, there was a great local foundation helping local nonprofits of many flavors called the William Caspar Graustein Funds. This funder may have a list of the organizations they back on their website. You could reach out to this funder and its program officer, and share the wonderful pitch that you put together for me in the last paragraph of your message and see if they could suggest anyone.

Besides funders, there may be other types of organizations or people who are connectors to many local organizations. This is especially true in the world of nonprofits. For example, maybe there is a firm that does nonprofit accounting or fundraising or websites. For their business to thrive they need to be well-connected locally to the types of people who would want to hire you. I would try to find these folks and talk with them. If there are already are connectors, then they may see you as a valuable future potential client or source of referral and should be warm and welcoming.

I hope that helps.

Alan



G N started the conversation

Pharmaceutical Sales  
Consumer Sales

Alan Carniol replied

Hi G,

I'd encourage you to narrow your search as much as you can to just one type of sales specialty. This will allow you to mine deeply in one area for potential connections and leads and ultimately jobs. Even though a wider net feels like it will work better, you come across as more of a generalist and therefore less valuable than an expert specialist.

I hope that helps as a place to start.

-Alan



R A started the conversation

My son is a recent college graduate, a BME degree  
from the University of Minnesota

A large or midsize company preferred

As a design engineer or process engineer

Limited experience, engineer intern at a sheet metal  
fabrication company

Thank you!

Alan Carniol replied

Hi R,

As a recent graduate, what I would suggest is for him to go through the alumni database and make a list of graduates who are working where he might want to work or intern. He can then reach out to these folks, share that he is a recent graduate and trying to understand sheet metal fabrication as a profession and ask if they would be interested in speaking with him. Then he can ask about their careers and what they did to get started. He can also go and talk to all of his professors - even the ones where he was in a 300 person lecture.

I hope that helps. Please let me know how this goes for him.

-Alan



J F started the conversation

Hello Alan. I am actively on the market and looking for a senior leadership position in a small to medium size company I a software, Cybersecurity or other technology-oriented company. I have had several positions ranging from VP of Sales to SVP, and COO over the last 20+ years. I would also consider a senior level individual contributor role in sales or customer service.

Thank you,

J F

Alan Carniol replied

Hi J,

I would suggest that you narrow your focus on just a single area. If that area of focus doesn't work out, you can always move on to the next one, but being more focused will help you present a stronger message and will help other people point you in the right direction.

Cybersecurity is such a strong field right now, that I would likely head there first. Ultimately it's up to you in terms of where you feel the most connected and most excited. Given the breadth of experiences that you've had, I would think that you have worked with a number of different people in your career. I would start by reconnecting with all those people who already know your abilities.

Outside of your network, there are a few ways where you can find companies of interest.



First would be that you attend a conference related to cybersecurity, as this will be full of people and firms that are focused on your field. Many are growing or in transition and need leadership to help. Look at past conferences that you didn't attend or upcoming conferences and look at their speaker list. The speakers are people who are looking for recognition and therefore are trying to grow what they do- they are great to reach out to outside of a conference.

You can also find private equity, venture capital, or consulting firms that are focused supporting companies in the cybersecurity space and who may be looking for leadership talent like yourself to help them step in.

Find companies that are growing rapidly and as a result, do not have the senior staff to handle this growth. You can do a search for fast-growing cybersecurity firms or venture-backed cybersecurity firms.

Hope that helps.

-Alan



B P started the conversation

Hi Alan --

I enjoy your emails.

I'd like to find a job as a features/art entertainment editor at a newspaper in the 12,000 to 15,000 circulation range.

In this position, I'd manage and produce features and arts coverage while working with a graphic designer on section fronts and page design.

How would I go about landing that kind of position in the "hidden job market"?

Thank you,

B P

Alan Carniol replied

Hi B,

We shared your question with the community today since it was such a good one. Here's what I wrote.

Here are four possible strategies that he (and you) could follow:

#### Strategy #1

Use the internet to make a list of newspapers in your city/county that has a large enough circulation. For a lot of areas, Google or Wikipedia will show a list of newspapers sorted by level of circulation.



You can also visit the "media buyers" or "advertisers" page of their website to find out their circulation. Pick up the phone and call the editor, or, if you prefer, send an email. Introduce yourself in a few sentences, explain how you can help them, and ask them if they would like to see some examples of your work. If they respond with a "Yes", they have effectively raised their hand and told you they are interested. You can put them on a "warm" list and follow up.

This is the most direct way to generate job leads.

### Strategy #2

Using the same list, check around on each newspaper's news or press release page, and find out which conferences their editors/management attend. You should attend these as well — with the aim of "bumping into" these same editors, so you can introduce yourself and get on their radar. Make sure you bring sample work to show them.

### Strategy #3

Search on LinkedIn for each of the newspapers on your "dream employer" list, and track down the profiles of the editorial or management staff. Send them an email if you can find an address, or a LinkedIn message, introducing yourself. If you know someone in common, ask this common connection to introduce you through email. Again, explain your background, how you can help them, and ask if they would like to see some of your work. Make your message short and sweet.

### Strategy #4

Take yourself out to your favorite "thinking spot" (e.g. a coffee shop or a quiet spot on the beach). Bring a notepad and pen. For the next hour or so, make a list of every connection you have in the industry, whether they are someone you have worked within a previous role, or someone you met once or twice at a conference, or perhaps a colleague in another organization. Call each of them, in



turn, to catch up — or reconnect. In my experience, old acquaintances are often delighted to hear from you and are enthusiastic about reconnecting and seeing how you can both help one another. You might be surprised to learn what's new with them too. When you jump on the phone, tell them about the dream job you're searching for, what you can offer, and ask them if they know someone who can help.

Best of luck,

-Alan



M N started the conversation

I would prefer a social worker position that addresses the needs of elderly and disabled clients and work with competent and ethical staff.

M N.

Hi M,

In terms of the hidden job market, the best thing that a professional can do to find opportunities is to find other professionals who are in private practice and have conversations with them.

It's possible that these practices are considering hiring but simply have not posted the job. It's possible that the people running it just feel so busy that they can use a hand. It's also possible that the people running the practice have been enjoying the work for some time, but are looking to slow down or retire and are looking for someone else to step in. The best way to find these individuals would be to do a search for these types of practices in this area as a prospective client might, and then reach out to the practitioners who show up.

Besides these private practices, you may want to also look for who are the people who are most likely to be directing clients to social workers. So this could be a family court, a community based nonprofit focused on the elderly or disabled, a veterans services organization, a local food bank or soup kitchen, or an umbrella organization like the UnitedWay. You want to talk with the people there about what you are trying to do and ask them for recommendations of the best practices or organizations that you should consider joining. Then you can reach out and tell the organization that you were referred by their important referral partner.



I would also encourage you to reach out to other people you have worked with in your career or any instructors from your time in training who might be able to point you to people in the right direction. See if they will introduce you, and even if they don't send an email on your behalf, you can still say you were recommended by them when you reach out yourself.

I hope this helps.

-Alan



Hi Alan,

I'm looking for a role where I can use my unique skill set and mindset to help improve healthcare delivery either within a health system or via related industries such as insurance and biotech.

I am a physician who is Epic certified and has spent the last 3 years working on improving workflows and efficiencies using my clinical knowledge and business intelligence tools. My work relies on understanding the capabilities of both the human and technology aspects of healthcare. My background provides me the latitude to speak intelligently with both groups of professionals. The work we do is within the Agile environment structure and is in support of the 'Quadruple Aim' as outlined by the IHI.

I have attached my resume. Thank you.

Regards,  
A P

Alan Carniol replied

Hi A,

It seems like you have a wonderful skill set. I would strongly encourage you to look for consulting firms, be they just one person or a fair bit larger that specialize in this type of work. As consulting firms, they are always on the lookout for new clients. That means that they need to make their contact information readily available. You can look for this contact information and you can reach out directly. If they don't



reach out on your first attempt, try to follow up twice more (with about a week in between for them to have a chance to reply to you).

Alternatively, based on all of the experience that you have to date, there may be people you have worked with who believe in what you can do and can refer you or recommend you. This is a great place to start.

I hope that helps.

-Alan



A started the conversation

Hello Alan,

Yes, I am seeking a clerical position that pays decently. I don't need a high paying job, just a decent paying job.

I am very much a team player so I am looking for a company that is very much team-oriented. I am very interested in a company that values its employees.

Please share with me how to tap the hidden job market.

Thank you,

A

Hi A,  
Thanks for your note.

For a clerical position, there are some very new places to look for jobs and some that have been around for a while.

In terms of what's been around for a while, you can approach a variety of agencies that help people get placed into jobs. These are your government employment office (you can look at [careeronestop.org](http://careeronestop.org)), nonprofit employment offices such as Jewish Vocational Services (you don't need to be Jewish), and other for-profit temporary and full-time employment services in your area- a google search should yield many results. You can also look for jobs with companies that are outsourced



providers of clerical services, such as FedEx/Kinkos, UPS. You can also walk into their storefronts and ask about their hiring options. You can also talk to people in your community and tell them what you are looking to do and see if they have any advice about positions that you should explore. You can reach out to people who are connectors, be they the faith leader in your religious congregation, or someone who is a leader at your local school's Parent Teachers Association (PTA) or that neighbor who is friends with everyone.

There are also a number of newer sources of clerical jobs that come through the Gig economy.

If you do an online search for Gig economy jobs, you'll see listings come up for organizations such as Freelancer.com, Upwork.com, Fiverr.com, TaskRabbit.com, and some others. Many of these are marketplaces where people post jobs that you could do. Some contracts on these websites can last for years, though many are short term. You can list yourself as a virtual assistant (clerical work for people who are working remotely) and create a book of clients.

You can also look for agencies that hire virtual assistants full-time or on a more regular basis. There's a website called Fancy Hands that has all US-based virtual assistants and is hiring here:

<https://www.fancyhands.com/jobs>.

I hope that helps.

-Alan



J H started the conversation

Yes, I'm looking for a new position as an Engagement Manager, VP Operations or a Project Manager. I've listed these positions in my order of preference.

I need to stay in the NYC/NJ/CT metro area since I have a daughter in High School.

I should mention that I have over 25-30 years of experience in these positions in the IT industry, so I guess I'm well seasoned, to say the least.

Thanks,  
J H

Hi J H,  
We are going to share a simplified version of your situation with our job seeker community.

Here's what we are sharing with them today:

First, you need to put yourself into the shoes of your dream hiring manager and try to see the world through their eyes. If a company suddenly needed to hire one or more IT Project Managers, what would be the reason for that? What kind of change, event, or transition would they be going through?

Growth.

When companies start growing, start scaling, they need to invest in their IT infrastructure. Especially if they are a relatively young company. What's more, when a company is growing rapidly, the last



thing management wants is to be bogged down by the HR protocol or hiring formalities. They want to find someone who has the skills they need and hire them. They need to make a list of fast-growing companies in the NYC/NJ/CT metro area — companies that are likely to need considerable IT infrastructure.

How do they do that?

There's an easy way and a hard way.

The easy way: search the internet for terms like, "fastest growing companies in New York". You will often find business magazines that already track this.

If that doesn't bear fruit?

Try the harder way. Trawl through LinkedIn or other business directories for companies that look as if they match the above criteria. Then, visit their website and look in the media or press release section, or search for online news stories any funding rounds that have closed. If a young and growing company (that will almost certainly require solid IT) just closed on a funding round, they have the cash to burn — and you can bet your bottom dollar, or theirs, that they are already thinking about hiring.

All the best,  
-Alan



J P started the conversation

Alan, I spent 27 years with one company, the last 18 of those years as a district manager. November they decided for whatever the reason(I did nothing wrong), to release me. I've been looking for work since then. Hardly getting an interview or response. Very frustrating to say the least. I'd like to have an opportunity to work for a company that will give me a chance. I've been in food service/hospitality all my life. Never seen it this crazy.

Thanks.

J

Hi J,

So I apologize, but there are many possibilities based on the information that you shared- this a bit of a shotgun approach of places to consider that you might not otherwise think about.

Many restaurant franchises have local owners. These individuals may need someone to help them manage multiple restaurants and locations, and this may match what you are looking for. You may also find an owner of restaurants in multiple locations who is trying to figure out how to manage their properties better and could see you as a big help.

There are also different types of institutions that have food service that require high levels of management. These include universities, hotels, hospitals, and senior care facilities (especially those that have multiple locations). Something else to consider would be anyone who is a supplier of goods or services to restaurants that you may have worked



with in the past. They may know your abilities and be excited to bring on.

Hi J,

So the two things I might think about would be:

- What is a slightly different kind of place to use my talents?
- How do I connect directly with the person in charge?

In food service, there is often a place where you can walk in the door and talk to someone, which can always help.

Best

-Alan

Alan,

Great points. It eases my confidence as I have done everything you mentioned and even applied twice when I was turned down ( no interview mind you. Only a phone interview not once but twice with the same company and recruiter). I question why some companies ask on their application what year the candidate graduated high school. You see I'm 60. I will keep plugging away and looking for different avenues. Thanks for replying.

J

Hi J,



The big question is how do you skip the applications? How do you connect with the people who would be in a position to hire you (not HR, but the person above HR) before they have decided to formally post the job, or even after they do post a job? How do you reach out to them directly and bypass the application?

Often times, just picking up the phone and giving a call is all you need to do - once you figure out who you actually need to talk to. If you know someone who can introduce you, that is always helpful as well. If you can walk in the door, that works well too.

Anyway, hope that helps a bit.

-Alan



D P started the conversation

Hello Alan,

Question 1:

Yes, I am looking for a position at the present time. I am a former hospital and healthcare facility CEO and COO. I am willing to do either role, work as an interim, or work full-time. There are not many positions for these roles in the northeast, where I live. I have applied to positions, gone on interviews, etc., only to learn that an inside candidate will be promoted or to learn that the position will not be replaced due to monetary considerations. I come ever so close each time.

I have received knowledge of these positions mostly through my professional network and networking on my own. One has come through a recruiter, and the interim work initially comes from recruiters. Many of the interim assignments are different from how the recruiters present them. Usually, the problems are worse than they appear. I am used to that and expect that as the norm. Unfortunately, there are not as many CEO and COO interim positions being offered due to the expense of providing transportation, housing, and compensation to the recruitment firm and candidate. I have used your Interview Success Formula interviewing techniques and profile documents. They are excellent and have helped me polish my interview skills and presentation. I get callbacks and get close to getting a position, but things seem to disintegrate for a variety of reasons.



## Question 2:

I want to work for a team that wants to be challenged, to become better at what they do, and to make a difference in healthcare. I don't want to work in an organization that is fearful of competent people joining them. These types of cultures in healthcare are hard to find.

I am looking forward to learning more from you about landing a job through the "hidden job market."

Thank you for the work that you do, for your insights, and for staying in touch with candidates. Having you and your company for a resource are things that have made a difference to me. You have helped me with the following:

- remain confident
- keep a positive outlook during this difficult time of job hunting
- motivate me to keep trying different tactics
- value my professional network
- and value my ongoing networking activities.

With best regards - D P

Hi D,

It seems like you are already doing a very good job in your search. The more senior level of your position, the longer it can take to find the right job. Just know that the process you are going through, while frustrating, is normal. A CEO job also tends to be a bit more public of a process, which can make it a little harder in the hidden job market.



So here are a few things to consider:

If you know of other CEOs who may be leaving or are considering retiring, they may be looking for a successor and want to bring someone in and groom them. You could look for COO roles or executive VP roles (which are basically transitional support roles). I would also think about how you can try to get your foot in the door before a recruiter gets brought in. By that time, many things are already in motion.

What that means is you can start asking questions. How can you expand your network to get information earlier about different hospitals and organizations? Are there conferences you can attend? Do you have people in your network who can introduce you to people in their network and who can introduce you to people in their network? They don't need to have a job already posted for you to have a conversation. What you want to do is basically build a bigger web of connections so that when people are still in the "thinking about what's next" stage, they will want to reach out and talk to you.

Another thing to look at is to try to find a different kind of firm. Are there any outpatient facilities or a multi-specialty medical practice that have gotten large or will go through a merger and get large? There may be medical practice management companies who do these roll-ups who are looking for people like you (perhaps a company like McKesson?).

Then the other thing to look for is influencers. There are outside consultants that hospitals and other healthcare facilities bring in to fix various problems, be they patient complications, patient satisfaction, efficiency, and supply chain. Connect with these firms/people because it's their livelihood to know what hospitals are facing challenges that would benefit from having someone like you there to step in and help from a leadership perspective.



I hope that helps a bit.

-Alan

Hello Alan,

Thank you for the response. I started doing some of the things you suggested below. It is good feedback, and I have only to gain by pursuing these tactics.

I appreciate your feedback and advice.

Best regards - D P

Sure thing D. Please keep me posted on how it turns out.

-Alan



D S started the conversation

I'm looking for a Senior Sales Management position in Enterprise Software Sales. I've done both domestic and international positions.

Hi D,

Where are the members of the teams that you've supported/managed? What are the other products that your previous clients are using that you appreciate? I think the best approach, especially if you work in sales, is to reach out directly to these contacts and have conversations with them.

Let me once you've given that a shot what the results are.

-Alan



G started the conversation

Hi Alan,

I've been actively looking for a job for the past 18 months and I still haven't landed one. I'm looking for a Senior Brand Manager or Director of Marketing role ideally with a small or medium size consumer packaged goods company in the Greater Los Angeles area. I'd like to work with a small, collaborative, close-knit team.

By the way, I didn't receive your email today so can someone please resend it to me as I'm eager to learn more about the hidden job market.

Best regards,  
G C

Hi G,  
Have you made a list of CPG companies that are headquartered in LA or have their brand management/marketing based in LA?

I just did a google search, and it gave me a partial list.

The second step would be to find potential contacts at these companies. Connect with these contacts informally. Ask for advice about what you should be considering next. Don't ask for a job- ask for recommendations for other people you can talk to and get advice from. Keep your contacts looped into your further outreaches and efforts. If you shake a few trees you'll get more fruit than just waiting for a piece to drop.



Let me know how that goes.

-Alan



T D started the conversation

My ideal position is either in data management or administration.

I work well alone and on a team.

I have supported teams before and was a database administrator.

Good company culture.

Alan Carniol replied

Hi T,

Thanks for the note.

How can you find out about the company culture before you start working there? What would be the best sources of information?

What I'd suggest is approaching your job search from this perspective. Think about how you can focus on talking to people and connecting with people and learning the exact right culture for you.

When you find companies with the right culture for you, because you've talked to the people there, they'll see the fit too, and they'll want to hire you. Not all of them will be able to bring you on, but if you find a handful, at least one of them will make a spot for you.

Best,

-Alan



J started the conversation

Hi Alan.

I am looking for an Administrative Assistant opportunity within a corporate setting.

I have 15+ years experience but am finding it difficult not only locating a match on the job boards but also getting the attention of the hiring managers... let alone landing an interview.

PLEASE HELP!

Regards,

J

Hi J

If there were no job boards or job postings, how would you find this job?

Knock on doors? Talk to people you know? Talk to people you used to work with? Make a call or email?

Since the job board approach isn't working for you, why don't you take the next couple of weeks and try this approach - finding a job without looking at job boards or postings?

Let me know if that makes sense, and let me know what happens.

-Alan

