

The Career Artisan SERIES

INTERVIEW FOLLOW UP

Tips, Scripts & Letter Templates

- *Cold calls* • *Follow ups* • *Thank you letters*
- *Networking* • *Recruiters*

Guide For The *Perplexed*

Are you getting initial interviews and interest—only to hear nothing back? Finally, secrets from a top job search coach that will increase employers' interest in you: phone scripts and letter templates for following up after sending a resume, post-interview follow ups, following up on networking leads, with recruiters, what to say in your thank-you letters, and much more!

These follow up tips are proven to impress, will make following up easy and much less stressful, and will ultimately aid in increasing employers' interest so you can win more job offers!

Dedicated to Your Job Search Success

Also by Mary Elizabeth Bradford

Secrets of the Hidden Job Market . . . Revealed!

Phone Networking Secrets Revealed!

Copyright ©2008-2017 by Mary Elizabeth Bradford

The Career Artisan Series—Guide for the Perplexed.

All rights reserved. No part of this report may be reproduced or transmitted in any form by any means, electronically or mechanically, including photocopying, recording, retrieval system, without prior written permission from the author, except for the inclusion of brief quotes in a review.

Limit of Liability/Disclaimer of Warranty: While the author and publisher have used their best efforts in preparing this book, they make no representations or warranties with respect to the accuracy or completeness of the contents and specifically disclaim any implied warranties. The advice and strategies contained herein may not be suitable for your situation. You should consult with a professional where appropriate. The author and publisher shall not be liable for any loss of profit or any other commercial damages, including but not limited to special, incidental, consequential, or other damages.

Book Cover Design by Killer Covers

ISBN: 978-0-9834249-2-5

Requests for permission to make copies of any part of this book can be made to:

Mary Elizabeth Bradford

The Career Artisan ✦ PO Box 298 ✦ Boerne, Texas 78006

830-331-9398 ✦ www.maryelizabethbradford.com

Table of Contents

- **Introduction**
- **Follow Up Calls—10 Critical Tips**
- **Communicating with Potential Employers—Email vs. Hard Mail . . . Which is Best?**
- **Following Up Post-Interview: A Powerful Thank-You Letter Template and Tips**
- **Follow Up Secrets: Endorsements, Testimonials, and References . . . Your Secret Weapons**
- **Endorsement Page Example**
- **Follow Up Phone Calls: What to Say**
 - o *After sending a job application.*
 - o *After sending a resume in response to a job ad.*
 - o *After sending a resume when no job was posted.*
 - o *To get past the gatekeeper.*
 - o *When you leave a voice mail.*
 - o *When leaving a second message.*
 - o *When talking to human resources.*
 - o *And do if no one is calling you back.*
- **Networking: How to Network without Asking for a Job**
- **10 Things You Must Never Say when Networking or Following Up**
- **Working with Recruiters**
- **BONUS: 5 Tips to Ace Your Telephone Interviews**
- **BONUS: How to Become a Job Offer Magnet**
- **BONUS: What Motivates Companies to Hire You**
- **BONUS: 5 Secrets to Using LinkedIn to Find Your Dream Job**
- **BONUS: What to Do when Companies Aren't Saying Yes**
- **About the Author**

Introduction

It's hard to find comprehensive information on the subject of job search follow up phone scripts and letter templates. I believe the reason is because it's a thorny topic that lacks subject matter experts.

Thankfully my background of experience qualifies me to discuss this subject in depth and give you rock solid strategies that you can apply to your job search immediately and improve your results.

Back in the 90's I was an executive recruiter with my own successful firm. I cold-called thousands of potential clients and candidates and fine-tuned the art of "getting past the gatekeeper."

After that, I was recruited and trained to be an executive-level job search coach. I've coached over 600 executives through every step of their job search—believe me, I know what works and what doesn't in great detail. Especially when it comes to following up.

I am also an internationally certified advanced resume writer and have written nearly 1,000 resumes for clients in dozens of different industries.

Here are a few "take aways" from this combination of knowledge that I will share in greater detail with you here:

- Less is more when it comes to the written word. Be it long-winded cover letters, resumes with big blocks of text to read through, or follow up letters—keep things short, simple, and to the point if you want your document to get read.
- Focus on your quantifiable results—the results a company can expect to enjoy when they hire you. Most always this is in a form of your making or saving them money, so you must learn to speak this language versus "what you do"—you need to focus on what happens when you do it.
- Follow up phone calls and the dance of the interview process is often a cause for anxiety. The information in this book will empower you with some simple, common-sense knowledge and techniques that will only educate you to what works, but will help you to stay in a confident place of leadership and control without veering too much one way or the other in your communications. Be it in the form of overcompensating by being too aggressive and assertive or struggling with a lack of confidence—both tend to show up in verbal and written communication.

When you are in a job search you are marketing yourself. The best experts on this subject are marketers. I am a resume writer and job search coach, yes. But my true value to you is that I am first and foremost a marketer. I like to market and I like to show other people how to market themselves with success.

I hope you will use this information as a guide that you can refer to again and again to make those rather anxiety-producing follow up phone calls much easier and more enjoyable, make networking an exciting and results-filled exchange (versus feeling like you are hat in hand begging for a job), and make the process of what to say in your follow up letters as simple and foolproof as 1, 2, 3. I am going to give you the templates and the system for how to do that. And this information is proven and time tested. All you have to do is use it.

Follow Up Phone Calls—10 Critical Tips



Have you sent your resume to HR or a key decision maker in a company? Now you need to make that “dreaded” follow up phone call.

What drives the fear of “telephone networking” is two-fold. There is that “potential” for personal rejection and the trepidation of calling a company . . . a stranger, for the first time.

To make the BEST first impression and ease into a positive conversation with your contact, follow these 10 critical tips:

1. Prepare Yourself

Preparing yourself assures you have a script you can use as a foundation in your conversation. This foundation serves to boost your confidence. Here's how to do it:

- Create a script or modify one you obtain from an outside source.
- Practice with your career coach, a loved one, a friend, or a trusted colleague. Using a tape recorder is also very useful.
- Practice as you make the calls you need to make! You will feel relieved it is not as hard as you might have anticipated!

2. Make Your Follow Up Calls

Practice as you go . . . remembering that progress, not perfection, is the order of the day. This is the kind of attitude that will keep you and your career search moving forward. That uncomfortable feeling of being out of your comfort zone is also a sign that you are taking positive action toward your goals.

3. Sell Yourself

Your contact at the other end of the line is going to want to know why he or she should talk to you! Have a value proposition statement ready to say such as: “Hi, my name is _____. Perhaps my name sounds familiar, as I just sent you my resume. I specialize in driving revenue in mid-size technology companies and I am currently in the process of initiating a career transition. I am interested in XYZ company because”

4. Don't Tell the Gatekeeper You are Calling to Follow Up on the Resume You Sent

Stating to the gatekeeper you are following up on a resume or looking for a job will get you at best a voice mail or detoured to human resources. I am assuming you, the reader, are connecting with other networks besides HR. If so, here's what to say instead: “Hi this is ____ from ____ calling for Mr. Brown please?”

If you are asked what the nature of the call is simply state you are working on a project. A networking project if they push. Though the gatekeeper will usually attempt to compel you to spill the beans, your strongest position is to maintain control of the conversation and resist. You can even say it's personal. Which it is, of course, to you.

5. Don't Leave a Long, Rambling Voice Mail

Why give your key decision maker a reason to roll their eyes and click “delete” on your message? And while we're on the subject, don't tell your contact that you will call him or her back if you don't hear from them. This is a perfect excuse for them to wait for that to happen.

Here's an example of compelling voice mail you can leave:

“Hi Mr. Brown, this is _____ from _____. It's Wednesday morning and I am calling because I am following up with you as promised per my correspondence. I will be in the office all day today; my number is 212-555-1212. Thanks and I really look forward to speaking with you.

It's not sneaky sounding like “Hi, this is Sam, my number is 212-555-1212.” Click.

And it's not too long. I never ever recommend leaving someone you don't know or barely know a long message. Maybe not even for people you do know!

6. Be Polite

If you sent your resume unsolicited (tapping the hidden job market) to a key decision maker and you are calling to follow up—you don't want to start your conversation with, “Is this a good time?” It will never be a good time in this scenario. However, when you are following up after a telephone call or first or second interview, then it's appropriate to ask, “Is this a good time?”

If it is not a good time, simply ask when a better time might be to call them back. Be sure to try to get an actual time—(i.e. Thursday at 10 am central) because chances of you actually having the conversation become much better than if your key contact tells you “can you call me next week?” It's a good excuse to keep putting you off.

7. Know Your Talking Points

No matter what the circumstance—be it an actual cold call or trying to follow up after an interview—you want to have a few key points jotted down that you are intent on communicating. In most cases, you will do well to start thinking of your value to a potential employer in terms of dollars or percentages—and communicate that. Most people will talk about being a team player, a go-getter, hard worker, loyal, etc., . . . but a key decision maker is primarily interested in what happens when you do those things.

8. Be Persistent—but Don't Pester

You can call multiple times to follow up—but you don't have to leave a message each time. I honestly think 3 or 4 is an appropriate number in a 10-day time frame. If you are having trouble reaching someone—try calling during lunch, early in the morning, or late in the afternoon.

9. Be Proactive

If you are following up after a phone or job interview the last question you should ALWAYS ask is “Where do we go from here?” Find out when they plan on contacting you again. If they say next Wednesday and Wednesday comes and goes with no phone call, then you call them Thursday morning. This alleviates a lot of stress. I can't tell you how many job seekers share with me that they had a great interview with a recruiter or company—only to never hear back. It's very frustrating to say the least. Being proactive is one way you can avoid this.

10. Stand Up and Smile!

When you are talking on the phone, you can raise your energy level by standing up and smiling while you are talking. It truly works and your interviewer can “hear” the raised energy. It makes a difference and in a job search, every little edge you can give yourself the better. Especially a no-brainer like this one. It's easy, and everyone can do it.

Communicating with Potential Employers—Hard Mail or Email—Which is Best?



It would perhaps seem counterintuitive to send hard mail in this age of technology. However, the studies myself and my colleagues have conducted in the recent years shows that hard mail is hands down more effective than email when it comes to a job search.

If you think about it, the typical executive isn't inundated with hundreds of letters each day (unless its fan mail because they are famous). But they are inundated with hundreds of emails.

Emails are more impersonal; emails get caught in spam filters. Emails are easy to delete.

People might argue that hard mail is antiquated.

My response would be—are birthday cards antiquated? Would you prefer a birthday email or a birthday tweet? No—those who CARE about us send us the ever-thoughtful birthday card. What I am sharing with you is loosely based on the same principal.

Let me give you a more succinct breakdown as to what I have seen work and is working today:

Hard Mail Direct to Decision Makers

A letter or letter/resume combination direct to the key decision maker. I coach my clients to send what is called a “value proposition letter” but that’s content for another book. 😊

A letter that then directs the reader to your linked in profile or website. In this case you wouldn't send a resume, and I have found this strategy works great because the letter gets to the decision

maker very easily versus a letter/resume combination that might get rerouted to HR via the gatekeeper.

Follow Up Emails

You can use email to follow up, but I would ask permission during your interview if you may email them. Again, this is a little pre-planning that can really open the lines of communication and pay off. It's very difficult to go back post-interview and try to figure out what the guidelines are, when they are planning to follow up with you, etc. Handle all these things during your first interview (be it via phone or in person).

Following Up Post-Interview: A Powerful Thank-You Letter Template and Tips

The Mirroring Technique

The best way I have found to write powerful thank-you/after-interview letters is to use the mirroring technique. Essentially, you mirror, match, and repeat back a summary of key points you discussed in the interview.

To do this right, you will want to be taking short notes during your interview. The primary things you want to pick up are:

- What their main challenges are.
- The kind of person they are looking for.
- Anything positive they shared about you and your potential candidacy.

So your thank-you letter should consist of short points on problems you can solve, confirmation of matching strengths, and enthusiasm for your next meeting.

Another critical point for thank-you letters, and essentially all marketing collateral having to do with your job search correspondence is: shorter is better. Less is more. State the most important points in a simple, informal (me to you) style using as few words as possible.

Conversely, letters that are a full page and packed out with text cause your reader's eyes to glaze over and they quickly lose interest. You can compound this by using a lot of three-dollar words and "word salad." Please don't fall into the trap of looking like you are trying too hard. Simple is better—no matter to whom you address your letter. The more simple and clear you can make your message, the stronger the connection you will naturally forge between you and your reader.

Three Key Thank-You Letter Tips

Do you know what always gets read in a letter? The P.S. or post script. If you have occasion to write one, it's a good idea. Just be sure what your P.S. says is meaningful enough. No soft statements like P.S. Did I mention I am a team player? I have given a couple examples below.

Regarding your signature—if your letter is hard mailed then be sure to sign it in blue ink. Most marketers believe this is the most memorable color.

Finally, if you are sending an email—create a signature line with your name and phone number for easy reference. Anything you can do to make it quicker and easier for someone to reach out to you is key.

Sample Thank-You Letter

Expected Mailing Date

<<FullName>>
<<Title>>
<<BusName>>
<<Street>>
<<CSZ>>

Dear _____

I enjoyed our discussion on _____(date). Thank you for meeting with me.

Here is a brief summary I came up with after our initial discussion:

- You need a proven manager who can reorganize your _____ and increase revenue substantially over last year's numbers.
- There are product development issues that need correcting immediately to keep your new clients satisfied.
- You need to focus on cost control measures for your new division.

As we discussed, I recently reorganized XYZ company's sales team, driving revenue by \$8.5 million in 24 months. As a past product development director, I have a long history of solving product development issues and the cost control measures I put in place during my last position saved the company over \$700,000 annually.

We seem to share common ground in product vision and company philosophy. I am excited about this opportunity to help you solve all the challenges we discussed. What is our next step?

Sincerely,

Your name

P.S. You also stated that you wanted someone with an MBA—which I received in 2005 from the University of Texas.

Alternative P.S.:

P.S. I have attached/enclosed a few business associate endorsements for your consideration.

Follow Up Secrets

Endorsements, Testimonials, and References—Your Secret Weapons



There is nothing like a third-party endorsement to earn someone’s trust and respect.

You must remember that when meeting people for the first time, the people you meet are at a disadvantage. They haven’t had the pleasure of knowing you, your skills, your work habits, your strengths, and your history. When you meet with a potential employer you are, in effect, painting a picture with your marketing collateral—and it’s up to you how that picture looks to someone else.

References, endorsements, and testimonials most always have a greater impact than any other piece of information we can give a potential employer because it comes from a third party perspective, which legitimizes you and authenticates what you are probably communicating with them yourself. It builds trust very rapidly—more rapidly than any other way that I know. Suffice it to say—having a page of testimonials you can use as a “leave behind” or attach with a post-interview thank-you letter is one of THE WISEST moves you can make in your job search.

But you have to do it right.

You *don’t* want to attach letters of recommendation (too long). You *do* want to create one or two pages of short quotes from people who have worked with you in the recent past.

Use LinkedIn to Get Endorsements

If you are a professional, I strongly recommend having a LinkedIn profile. You should invite to your list of connections (everyone connected to your career history with the exception of your current employer that is—if you want to keep your job search a secret).

Once you have invited your past bosses, vendors, clients, and associates to connect through LinkedIn, then begin to write them unsolicited endorsements. Your contacts will appreciate this and LinkedIn will automatically ask them if they wish to reciprocate—which many of them will. This is the quickest way to garner endorsements using LinkedIn.

A Few More Tips on Gathering References

Marketing yourself may not be your first love. But making sure your references back up your achievements with their endorsements is critical. Here are some additional tips to getting them.

Become a “Reference Collector”

From here on out, consider “collecting” references and testimonials well before you think you might need them, or to set a goal of obtaining two or three testimonials or references each year no matter what. You can accomplish this by simply telling your potential references that you are gathering testimonials as you go . . . as part of your long-term strategic career goals.

Widen Your Pool of Potential References

Do you know that many other people other than your immediate boss can be a highly compelling reference? You can get references from colleagues, people that work for you or with you, clients, vendors, and even co-members of associations or boards on which you serve. You can simply ask them to focus on giving a reference from their particular vantage point (how you are as a boss, what you are like to work with in a volunteer capacity, etc.)

Ask for a Written Reference

Why not ask for powerful, short performance statements in lieu of the more typical “letter of reference”? I put together a one to two page document for my clients filled with short statements from all sorts of credible references speaking from their unique vantage points (see below).

The result is a reference page that reads like a list of 5-star book reviews! You simply ask your references for a short quote and share that you are looking for short, substantive information—how you solved a problem, helped a company grow, saved \$ or increased productivity or profits.

You may even offer to write the reference FOR them and then simply get their OK. Though this can be a little uncomfortable at first you will end up with some very powerful reference statements that convey exactly the message you want to get across. References that say “Jim is a great guy—I would definitely refer him to others—is vague and unimpressive. If you get a reference like that, you might go back to your contact and ask if they wouldn’t mind inserting a little more detail . . . something like this:

“Jim helped us close a \$140 million healthcare construction project that opened the door to a new industry segment for us. In addition, he also happens to be a positive influence and a great person to work with.”

Additional Ways to Help Your References Help You

You will do well to take an active role in developing a powerful reference topic or topics. Simply give potential references two or three things to focus on. Of course those two or three things should be in sync with the kind of position you are focused on. Let’s say in your next position you want to target a Senior VP Operations role. You could coach your references to comment on the following strengths:

1. My abilities as a leader—taking a company global.
2. My capabilities on the new technology integration task force.
3. My abilities to analyze current operations and pioneer long-term growth plans.

Using these easy and powerful tips you will soon have an abundance of highly targeted and compelling references that will have potential employers taking notice!



SAMPLE ENDORSEMENT PAGE

PROFESSIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS & ENDORSEMENTS

“xxxx demonstrates a rare blend of honesty, creativity, and negotiation skills. I was especially amazed by his ability to come into a difficult situation with an ex-customer, demonstrate that past issues had been resolved, and then obtain a purchase order that equaled in volume the largest purchase order issued by this customer.”

Name, Title, Company ■ State & Country

“I am primarily a technologist and have worked with a number of marketing consultants over my career; xxxx is the best person I have ever worked with when it comes to building convincing cost models around technology insertion that customers can get their arms around. He is exceptionally creative, while at the same time relentlessly pursuing important details, and without him we would not have been able to identify several significant opportunities.”

Name, Title, Company ■ State & Country

“xxxx is a high energy, positive and inquisitive guy who certainly knows his way around the global xxxx industry. For example, he played a particularly important role in xxxx fledgling M&A practice, introducing xxxx as a client—which resulted in a \$650M sell-side transaction—and attracted key investors during our cash raise for xxxx.

Name, Title, Company ■ State & Country

“I have become extremely impressed with xxxx’s deep understanding of company financing as well as his ability to deal with all projects with discipline and creativity. He also has the gift of quickly establishing valuable relationships within the xxxx industry.”

Name, Title, Company ■ State & Country

“I have met and worked with many marketing executives. I have yet to meet a marketing executive with xxxx's depth. He thinks strategically, acts tactically, and never loses sight of continuously analyzing new data to adjust his tactics. Someday, I hope to reach xxxx’s level.”

Name, Title, Company ■ State & Country

Follow Up Phone Calls: What to Say When

Making dazzling introductions and follow up phone calls *is EASY* if you know what to say! Any time we call anyone, I believe the soft sell is the best. It makes you look professional and diplomatic and relaxes the person you are calling. So say it in the most respectful way possible and watch what happens . . .

SCRIPT #1

Following up after a submitting your resume for a job application or posted job:

“Hi, my name is ____ and I am calling to introduce myself personally and follow up on the submission of my job application. My skills match your requirements almost perfectly, so I am excited to learn more about the position and the kind of person you are looking for.”

SCRIPT #2

Following up after a submitting an unsolicited resume to a company you are interested in:

“Hi, my name is _____. Perhaps my name sounds familiar as I just sent you my resume. I specialize in driving revenue in mid-size technology companies and I am currently in the process of initiating a career transition. I am interested in XYZ company because . . .”

SCRIPT #3

Networking with friends and associates:

This is easy when you exude confidence, enthusiasm, and know what to say. Here is how to clearly convey that you know who you are and where you are going:

I have stepped back and looked at my career for the past six months and I have determined a few industries I believe would be a good fit for me. They are ____ and _____. Model organizations that probably fit here are _____, _____, and _____. Do you know anyone I could talk with for a few minutes to get some mentoring as I continue to gather information on these industries?

SCRIPT #4

Informational interviews—calling a company:

Hi _____ this is _____ (use your full name, title and company you are with). I am calling because I am confidentially researching two industries right now to gather research on a potential future career transition. Would you be open to setting a 10 minute meeting where I could garner your expertise on the ____ industry?

How to Get Past the Gatekeeper



As you network, you will at some point inevitably be faced with a “gatekeeper,” an administrative assistant whose job is to screen people that call their boss.

Some of these secretaries and administrators are REALLY good at what they do! Here are some tried and true tactics for getting PAST them FAST.

Front-Load Your Introduction

Gatekeepers are used to a certain pace in their phone conversations. It creates what I call an “autopilot” response.

However, if that script is changed, they have to go off autopilot and many times it takes them off point for a second. If you are confident, you can use this to get by them.

Front-loading your introduction to break the autopilot response:

The Gatekeeper: Hello, Mr. Smith's office.

You: Hello, this is Mark Jackson from Ciley Corporation calling for Mr. Smith please.

The Gatekeeper: Um, who may I say is calling again, sorry?

You: Again, this is Mark Jackson from Ciley Corporation calling for Mr. Smith, please.

Getting past the gatekeeper:

You: Hi! This is ___ from ___, may I speak with Mr. Smith please?"

The Gatekeeper: "May I tell him what it is regarding?"

You: "It's regarding a project I am working on."

The Gatekeeper: "What kind of project?"

You: "A networking project."

As the past owner and operator of my own successful recruiting firm, I used this technique for more than seven years after trying dozens of other approaches. This truly works 90% of the time. Most gatekeepers at this point *will* put you through to your targeted person.

Using the name of your company (if you are able to do so without jeopardizing your current job situation) and an impressive title (if you have one) helps even more. The "gatekeeper" does not know who you are and does not want to rub you the wrong way.

If you have already sent your key contact your resume or value proposition letter, you can simply state you are following up with your correspondence as promised.

If the gatekeeper asks what your correspondence is regarding simply say, "It's private." Or say, "Its sensitive information." Said nicely, this works great.

Befriend the Gatekeeper?

Some career consultants give advice to befriend the gatekeeper. Personally, I don't have that kind of time and I assume you don't either. There are always exceptions and certainly it's profitable to discern each situation and act accordingly.

The bottom line is your main goal is to get to the decision maker with whom you wish to speak. And that's where you want to invest your time.

A Third Approach to Getting Past the Gatekeeper

Using associations and/or trade journals, you can take a different angle on your introductory approach by stating you are calling regarding an association you may know your contact is a member of.

Here is an example:

Using associations to get past the gatekeeper:

The Gatekeeper: "Can I tell him what this call is regarding?"

You: "Certainly. It's regarding the Texas Chapter of the Associated General Contractors."

You can even add: "I understand he is president and I am contacting him regarding membership and my relocation to the Chicago area."

The Gatekeeper: "Okay! Hold on one moment, please"

Favorable article follow up:

Here is another highly effective technique. Let's say you just read an article in a trade journal about a company that is developing green technology, perhaps wind farms, in various locations throughout the US. Here's what you would say:

Using articles to get past the gatekeeper:

The Gatekeeper: "Can I tell her what this is regarding?"

You: "Yes, it's regarding the new wind farm project in North Texas."

The Gatekeeper: "What about it?" (Only a small minority will push the envelope like this)

You: "I am working on a project and I would like to talk to her about it."

You see? And to add some rocket fuel to that, you would be wise to integrate something you saw or read into a compliment once you are talking to the contact:

You: "And by the way, I was really impressed to read about your focus and dedication to research technologies."

Your Contact: "Oh, well thank you!"

What if, despite all, I can't get past the gatekeeper?

If, despite all, the gatekeeper will not put you through, you can try saying this:

You: "Does she have voicemail?"

or . . .

You: "I'm sorry, it sounds like there is a problem. May I leave her a message on her voicemail at least?"

What to Say when You Leave a Voice Mail

I advise leaving messages when appropriate. "Appropriate" means you want to demonstrate you are following up appropriately with your contact.

If the contact is a really important one to you, then it makes sense that you are going to invest more time trying to connect with them.

If you call 5 times or even 10 times and don't hear back, it's really important to remain emotionally neutral about it. It's rarely personal. People are busy and it's our responsibility to follow up consistently on our best leads.

When I am attempting to get an article published or I am asking a company to donate something for a non-profit I may be volunteering for, I usually have to call my contacts at least a half a dozen times before I am able to talk with them. It's typical. Knowing that takes the sting out of it for me . . . how about you?

How Many Messages to Leave

I am often asked how many messages to leave. It depends, of course, but I would say at least 3 within 7 to 10 days shows appropriate follow up.

I would also call your contact additional times within that 7 to 10 day time frame; just refrain from leaving a voicemail message.

So just what kind of message do you leave? Personally, I like the middle of the road message—not too short, not too long. It goes something like this:

Leaving a Message

“Hi Mr. Smith, this is Shane Beck from Hill Country Investments. It's Tuesday morning and I am calling because I am working on a project I would really like to garner your expertise on. I will be in the office all day today. My number is 212-555-1212. Thanks, and I really look forward to speaking with you.”

It's not sneaky-sounding like, “Hi, this is Shane, my number is 212-555-1212.” Click. And it's not too long. I never, ever recommend leaving a long message. It's time-consuming for your listener and can be taken as presumptuous and unprofessional.

If you are leaving a second message, use the same diplomatic and friendly approach. Avoid sounding irritated that your phone call has yet to be returned:

Leaving a Second Message

“Hi Mr. Smith, this is Shane Beck from Hill Country Investments.

I reached out to you early last week but just wanted to leave another short message. It's Monday morning and I will be in the office all day today. My number is 212-555-1212. Thanks and, once again, I really look forward to speaking with you.”



Things You Must Know about Human Resources

If you are following up on a posted ad and have a contact in human resources, then you absolutely want to follow their guidelines and to connect with HR.

You may ALSO want to send your resume to a key decision-maker in that company and follow up with him/her, too!

If the gatekeeper wants to send you to HR, though, you have probably said something like the following:

“I am calling because I would like to send Mr. Smith my resume.”

“I am calling because I am doing some networking on my career campaign.”

“I am calling because I would like to talk to Mr. Smith about employment.”

These types of statements very rarely work to get you through or start any kind of profitable conversations—avoid them at all costs.

The bottom line is that the best way to avoid human resources is to learn how to tap into the hidden job market. Go directly to the key decision maker versus waiting for the perfect job to pop up on LinkedIn or for a friend to tell you about a fantastic job that is perfect for you. Both those scenarios sound nice but the strategy is too passive for any tangible, consistent activity to take place in your job search.

General Tips for Working with HR:

- Be polite.
- Treat HR conversations as you would treat an interview with a key decision maker.
- After every email exchange, phone call, and/or meeting, be sure to ask what the next step is—including dates and times. How many times do you have a great email exchange or phone conversation—and then you are faced with many days (or weeks) of silence? At the end of every exchange ask “Where do we go from here?” or “Specifically, what is the next step?” This way, if they say they will call you by Wednesday—you can confidently call them back Thursday morning if you haven’t heard from them yet.

What to Do if No One is Calling You Back

There are a few things you can do if no one is calling you back. But before I get into that, let’s go over a few things you must NEVER do if you aren’t hearing back from a potential employer:

1. Never get defensive in any way.
2. Never show you are agitated or irritated with their lag time or lack of response to you.

One would think the above points are just common sense; however, I feel compelled to list them after working with many talented and qualified professionals who found themselves in situations where they were waiting on responses that were slow to come and they in turn lashed out in the above-described fashion.

No matter how justified or qualified you may be—your graciousness, positive attitude and polite follow up messages and conversations are going to get you farther than anything else. In fact, a potential employer looks at a negative or defensive response from you as an indicator of how you handle stress—so be careful with what you say and write!

Of course, each situation is unique and the way you respond is largely dependent on the foundation of your relationship with the potential employer and whom you have made connections with. Internal and external recruiters and human resources are generally swamped with applicants. When you conduct your job search using traditional job search methods and going through these “traditional” channels, you are more apt to find yourself up against stiff competition and several layers of “gatekeepers” that don’t seem to want to return your phone calls.

Having said that, let’s say that is your predicament. First – I think the statement “the best offense is a good defense” applies here. If, after your phone or live interview you remember to ask “where do we go from here?” (so many job seekers forget to do this!) then you will most likely have a date and/or time that they have committed to getting back with you. This helps tremendously. If you don’t ask you will really feel in the dark about whether you are in the running and how often to follow up with them.

Second method of defense is to create and send a good thank you letter, which we have already gone over. Third you absolutely want to use your endorsement and testimonials page as your secret weapon. You can attach it to a follow up email, use it as a leave behind in interviews or even attach it to your thank you letter. I can’t emphasize how important...how impactful.. this document is going to be to you. It is often the marketing piece that tips the scales in your favor – especially if you have competition. Remember to keep it short too! In other words, form your testimonials just like the example I have given you in the previous chapter. Please don’t try to use past job reviews, long letters from past employers or anything similar. It doesn’t have the same effect. In fact the split second reaction to such documentation is secretly something along the lines of “does he/she really expect me to *read* all this?”

If all else fails you can follow up consistently with all your key contacts, be they key decision makers, hiring managers, human resources or recruiters. You can follow up simultaneously with all of them. But don’t call at 11 AM each day or anything too aggressive or that might be seen as “a little socially unacceptable”. There is a fine line between ambition, a positive attitude and “over the top” – the latter disqualifying you from consideration.

Also, each time you call, you don’t need to leave a message. I think you are probably safe to call an individual 2 to 3 times a week.

If you have other opportunities on the table you may want to very gently and very diplomatically let your potential employer know. You might state something like this:

“Hi _____, its _____ and its (day of the week) at (time of day). I am following up on our initial meeting and very excited to connect back with you. I also wanted to let you know - because I think it would be unfair of me not to mention it, that I do have a (pending offer or a round of second interviews next week) etc..” I hope you will forgive my sense of urgency in getting back in touch with you but of all the fantastic opportunities, you are my 1st choice and I can really see myself working at_____.”

Following Up By Email or Phone?

I am not sold on one or the other in post interview follow ups. You will probably notice that each individual has a personal preference and I would follow their lead. At the end of the day – the greatest impact is face to face, followed by voice to voice, followed by written correspondence (i.e.: email).

It’s also good to bear in mind that often times – companies will have a lot of red tape to get through in the hiring process. People drag their feet, meetings get delayed, job descriptions change or are “frozen” and the more people that are involved, generally the longer it takes. This is why after 16 years in the careers industry I am an advocate of tapping the hidden job market to go direct. Time and time again this proves to be the fastest way to offers that I have ever seen and the process eliminates 85% of your general competition. If you would like to learn more about this, please check out my other books in this series.

At some point you must decide if the opportunity is worth the investment of your time to follow up. Some will be and some wont. You might not like the “vibe” you get from the company at this point. I mean after all, do you really want to work for a company that is completely unresponsive to its potential future star employees? You may be tempted to write them a letter to stay as much but I would encourage you to take the high road and never let them see or believe that they have offended you.

You can, if you wish alert them that you are taking another offer and thank them deeply and genuinely for their time. This is a smart play. Management changes, companies get bought and sold and you never know when they are going to call you again and try to recruit you to their team. These types of scenarios are so much easier on you as a job seeker anyway – it’s worth biting your tongue to give yourself this added advantage and you will look great while the potential employer will know they dropped the ball on a star candidate...even if they don’t admit it to you. I have seen clients of mine get fantastic job offers out of the above scenarios so I hope you take my advice on this one.

Networking: How to Network without Ever Asking for a Job

Networking is one of those dreaded and feared activities that each job seeker must face throughout their career. However, it's also well known that networking has distinct benefits when it comes to your career and especially your job search.

I have found that the most successful networking techniques are carried out in a diplomatic way that puts the focus of interest on the person you are talking to. This is primarily true when meeting someone for the first time, but is also true when asking for mentoring from someone in an industry you wish to get into.

Along those same lines, you will find your friends and associates are much more likely to be of help when you approach them in a way that does not involve asking them if they know of any companies that are hiring.

Instead, when you are networking with your friends and associates in order to gather information, be sure to ask only if they know of anyone in your industry of interest who may be able to give you some guidance. This takes the pressure off and increases your positive responses. If you show up, so to speak, the job interviews will come.

Step 1: Have a Focus of Direction

If you are generalizing in your job search you won't be able to ask specific enough questions to your network to garner information on a particular industry or position.

You should be clear on what you are looking for—in order to clearly communicate your focus. This includes knowing what industry, position, company size, and geographic location you are looking for. You don't necessarily have to communicate all those points but you do have to know these basic points in order to communicate confidently and clearly.

Step 2: Write out a List of Everyone You Know

Notice I didn't say write out a list of everyone you think can help you in your job search . . . that would most likely be a much shorter list. The list you need to create is broad—and can include everyone you know and everyone you can think of.

The only consideration is where you are looking for a job. If you want to move across the nation, you may have less success asking for information in your home town—however, interestingly enough, it’s a small world and I have seen this work too. Your list can include friends, alumni, past colleagues, clients, vendors, bosses, associates, family, people you worship with, and people with whom you do business—such as your banker, CPA, or realtor. People I do business with are my favorite networks because I am their customer (so they want to help and keep me happy) and people in service industries completely understand the benefits of networking.

Step three is connecting via phone or in person, preferably to ask them if they have any information on your industry of choice. Here is a phone script you can use:

Calling a networking contact—someone you know

“I have stepped back and looked at my career for the past six months and I have determined a few industries I believe would be a good fit for me. They are _____ and _____.

Do you know anyone in those industries I could talk with for a few minutes to get some mentoring as I continue to research these industries?”

Calling a networking contact—someone you don’t know

“Hi _____, this is _____ (use your full name, title, and company you are with if you can).

I am calling because I am confidentially researching two industries right now for a potential future career transition.

Would you be open to setting a 10-minute meeting where I could garner your expertise on the ___ industry?”

At this point your networking contact will most likely give you one of three answers:

“Yes I know a couple of people in that industry actually”

If they say this—then great! You are on your way to collecting a great list of names!

“No, I can’t think of anyone right now”

If no one comes to mind—no worries. Smile and say thank you. Not everyone will be able to help. On to the next contact!

“I don’t know anyone that is looking to hire right now”

If they say this—they don’t understand your question—which is very typical because most people are asked in a soft-sell kind of way if they know anyone who might be hiring. Simply say this:

“Oh, I didn’t think you would—I am not wanting to connect to ask for a job—I want to get a few minutes of mentoring on the ___ industry. I am just doing a little due diligence before I take the next step and begin my job search.”

Now, of course to carry this networking strategy through in your job search, then you really do need to use your networking contacts to gather information on your industry of choice. However, this tactic has multiple benefits to you, including:

- Your networking calls will be much easier to make and will go much more smoothly.
- Your contacts will be better positioned to help you.
- You will be able to get in to talk with key people and tap into a portal of individuals who can probably directly assist you in your job search by giving you great industry information, other industry contacts, or they may be interested in hiring you themselves.

To use this networking strategy, you need to learn and be willing to conduct what are called “informational interviews.” Done correctly, these interviews can help you in amazing ways and the best part is you will never have to feel like you are hat in hand asking for a job. You set it up so that the jobs and the decision makers come after you!

If you want to learn more about this technique just check out my e-book on informational interviews in my Career Artisan Series.

General Tips for Networking

Right approach:

- Friendly
- Informal
- Don’t over-talk
- Speak peer to peer or executive to executive
- Network: Can you help me? May I “interview you” as an expert in your industry?

10 Things You Never Want to Say or Do when Networking or Following Up

1. Act or sound abrasive (possibly frustrated) or act with a sense of entitlement or arrogance.
2. Act hurt or offended if someone cannot help you.
3. Talk about money. The only appropriate time to bring up money is after you have received a formal job offer. If you need help on this, please read my other books in this series on interviewing and negotiating.
4. Act overly sensitive—as if you are putting upon or inconveniencing the person you are talking to.
5. Say you are looking for a job.
6. Ask if your contact knows anyone who is hiring.
7. Say things that make it hard to decipher your real intentions like: I am looking at hiring trends and want to talk with you.
8. Generalize with a sense of urgency: I can do anything, I am just looking for a job—any job.
9. Over-talk about your skills, your abilities, or your personal life. Ask questions and keep your calls and meetings short and sweet. Always ask for permission to continue the conversation or meeting if it has gone on longer than planned or seems like the person is giving you a generous amount of their time and attention.
10. Wing it. Networking involves a little planning and preparation. Use a simple script; get your game plan down so you can communicate your intentions clearly.

Tips on Working with Recruiters

A recruiter is usually an independent agent who works for companies to find them great talent. A recruiter is typically given a project, scouts for talent, lines up the interviews for the company, and helps to negotiate the offer. They may also be responsible for checking references and doing background checks.

Larger companies also may have an internal recruiting department that recruit on behalf of the company and work in conjunction with human resources.

What can a recruiter do for you? External recruiters work hard and are paid handsomely by their clients, who send them out to find that person who exactly fits their requirements. If you are looking to build on your previously industry experience, you have a solid job history, quantifiable achievements, and a good academic background, you may be a very attractive prospect to a recruiter!

A recruiter generally cannot send you into an interview for a position that does not match your background. For example, if you are a VP of Technology looking to get into commercial construction or architecture, you can pretty much sidestep the process of working through a recruiter to make your job transition.

Here are a few points on how to manage your communications and recruiter relationships.

Make a Great Impression

A recruiter's impression of your personality can be a critical factor if you want to earn the right to have the recruiter tell his/her client “you are going to love talking to this candidate!” How you present yourself over the phone, both in courtesy and ability to articulate, is critical.

Get Focused

Don't tell the recruiter you don't know what you wish to do or that you can do anything! Ask what the job is, and once you have a basic understanding, relay those skills of yours that apply. Just like an interview.

Know Who You are Talking To

Treat the recruiter just like a potential employer. Recruiters can “sell you” on your behalf. It's their job to gush to their clients, “I just found the perfect guy (or gal) for you! Just listen to these credentials . . . !” So, in this way, a recruiter can be a strong ally for you.

Persistence is Key!

Have you sent your resume to a great recruiting firm but no one called you? Be persistent! If you feel that particular firm can be a great help to you, it's worth a phone call. Ask for the recruiter who specializes in your background. Introduce yourself, share with him what you are targeting, and ask what searches he currently has. Make sure you get a copy of your qualifications to the person with whom you spoke. If the recruiter sounds positive, keep checking back with him. If he is interested in you, you will generally get the kind of feedback that will hopefully culminate in landing that dream job!

Phone Call Follow Up

Treat your internal or external recruiting contacts just like any other key decision maker with a potential employer. If you have sent your resume, follow up and leave a gracious, short message. If anything, it will help the recruiter put a voice to the resume, so to speak.

When I was an executive recruiter, I used to receive several resumes each day. However only 5% of job seekers who would send me their resumes would ever follow up with a phone call. It left me with an impression that those who didn't follow up with a phone call were displaying an odd sense of entitlement—intentionally or unintentionally. So please don't be tempted to feel you are “bothering” the recruiter by following up. You are demonstrating your professionalism when you take the time to follow up. Here is something simple you can say:

“Hi _____, this is _____. I recently sent you my resume (by hard mail or email) and wanted to follow up personally to introduce myself and see if you have any searches you believe I might be a fit for. I can be reached at _____. Thank you, and I look forward to hearing from you.”

BONUS #1

Five Tips to Ace Your Telephone Interviews

Do you have a telephone interview coming up? If you are unsure about how to prepare then read these 5 simple and easy tips for preparing and acing your “virtual meeting!”

Tip One: Focus on Them

It’s wise to study the company’s website and latest press releases as well as the job description prior to your phone interview.

Tip Two: Job Description Technique

A GREAT inside tip to using the job description to your ultimate advantage is to highlight all the keywords and phrases in it that match your background of experience. Include transferable skills in this as well. Then weave these exact keywords and phrases into your conversation. Simple solution, profound results.

Tip Three: Show Your Positive Enthusiasm

Isn’t it true that we all like happy and likeable people? And what’s more, you will make a great impression on your interviewer if you share with him or her how excited you are about the position, about the company, or a combination of both! They want to hire people who want to work with them!

Tip Four: Be Wisely Proactive

Ask questions (at the appropriate times, of course) that show your intellect and your enthusiasm for the position. Examples include questions about future projects, biggest challenges, and asking (if you were hired) what are the first things you could do to make a positive impact in the position.

Tip Five: Awareness of Your Environment

You want to conduct your end of the interview in a peaceful, quiet place you feel good in . . . free of disturbances, including barking dogs, call waiting, planes, trains, autos, and other people. This will help you focus and heighten your calm and confidence!

Bonus Tip: Politeness

Your clear, deliberate speaking, avoidance of talking over the top of your interviewer, show of appropriate respect (please, thank you, etc.) and your awareness of a balanced conversation will serve you well!

BONUS #2:

How to Become a Job Offer Magnet

Do you think selling yourself in a job interview is “selling out?”

I hear this from clients from time to time. They tell me: “I hate the idea of marketing or selling myself to prospective clients. I am just myself. I shouldn’t have to ‘sell myself’ to get a job!”

I think the problem is that our definition of selling conjures up feelings of going against our authentic selves. After all, if someone doesn’t like us for who we are, then the job probably isn’t right for us anyway, right?

Wrong!

Let me offer another perspective on what selling yourself to a potential employer is: when you are able to communicate your strengths in a way that compels others, you are doing yourself and them a great favor.

After all, you can't help a company that doesn't hire you.

To boost your know-like-and-trust factor in your job interviews it's vital you know how to encourage potential employers to hire you . . . in a way that's ethical, full of integrity, and authentically you.

What this means for you is that the more you learn and understand how to truly “sell” yourself, you will attract the interest of more employers, receive bigger and better job offers, and feel confident in the way you're communicating the multiple ways you can help potential employers get the results they want . . . and that only you can deliver.

Here are three tips use can use in your very next job interview:

Tip One: Ask what the Potential Employer is Looking for in a Star Candidate . . . at the Beginning of the Interview

As you casually jot down what they share with you pay attention to those keywords and phrases that match what you love to do the most. Let’s say, for example, you are a marketing manager who is an expert at product launches and they mention they just had a problem with their latest product launch and are looking for help there. Circle that challenge! You have just been given a BIG gift by your interviewer!

Tip Two: Dig by Asking More Questions about their Challenges

With the gift you have just been given, you want to ask more questions about their product launch challenge such as:

Why they think they were not successful with their product launch.

Who has tried so far to fix the problem.

What it would mean to them if the problem was fixed.

Tip Three: Seed the Interview by Frequently Mentioning Your Value

If you are a marketing expert, you will frequently share the results of your marketing efforts throughout the interview.

Plus, you can mention plenty of “before and after” stories. And the best ones clearly paint a before and after picture (and the worse the better—so don't hold back). Think of all the problems, challenges, and dire situations with past product launches you have taken on and how great things are now that you have helped them.

BONUS TIP: Make THEM an Offer They can't Resist

The point is to create an “offer” that's so irresistible, your interviewers think, “We have to hire this person!”

To do this, you need to offer something they believe they can't get anywhere else. Be creative!

Following the product launch example I have used, you could offer to fix the problem within a certain time. Or, as part of your interview, come in for a couple of hours and evaluate the product launch in more detail. Then you could offer some solutions (don't give too much away when you do this though—they have to hire you for that!).

Here are a couple more examples:

One of my clients quickly received a robust offer because HE offered to produce at least two potential solutions to a challenge the company was facing and he said he would do it in 60 days.

Another client of mine set up as part of her interview process a half-day on-site observation of the potential employer's media company. She then presented an outline of 10 ideas to improve their work environment and boost their ratings. They offered her a whopping \$100K over what she had previously been making. Even after she was let go from that previous position. I love it!

You will benefit from shifting the way you look at selling if it's from a vantage point of thinking you must be disingenuous, or that to "win" someone else must lose.

When you unburden yourself from these limiting beliefs, you will instantaneously feel more free to communicate to your interviewers how you can authentically help them and, by doing so, you will be removing the obstacles (including money, time, and your competition) that might otherwise stand between you and the job offer(s) you want.

BONUS #3

What Motivates Companies to Hire You?

Knowing what triggers a company's interest and quickly motivates them to sit up and take notice of you is powerful knowledge that you can use over and over again.

Of course, each situation is different, but the running themes that connect them are the same. Here are several motivators you can begin using to increase a company's interest in you:

Motivator One: You Can Solve a Problem They Have

Perhaps you read about it in a job ad or in a news article. No matter where, a company that has a challenge will appreciate your attention to it and willingness to be either a part of the solution or THE solution!

Motivator Two: You Have Little, if Any, Competition

Don't wait for a job ad to post on a major job board before you connect with your companies of choice!

Connect with a decision maker (not human resources) and express your interest and qualifications. Companies ALWAYS have a need for talented people across all departments—so why wait when responding to a job board ad means competing with hundreds of other resumes? Compounded by the fact that over 80% of jobs aren't even advertised!

Motivator Three: You Have a Really Impressive Resume

This is where hiring a resume writer really pays off. One of my clients told me he landed a great interview in a new industry he was targeting. When he got there, the first thing the interviewer told him was "I just had to meet the man behind this resume!" Needless to say, the interview went very well and he got the job!

A compelling resume is just one component of a successful job search, but it is a powerful help to have your interviewer "primed up" by impressing them with a resume that builds the excitement of meeting you!

Motivator Four: You are Enthusiastic

You will score BIG, BIG POINTS if, during your interview, you find an opportune time to say, “I am really impressed with your company and I can definitely see myself working here” or “I am really excited about this position” or even “I want this job!” Just think about it, would you want to hire someone who didn’t want to work with you? Of course not!

Motivator Five: You are Positive

There is no deal breaker like a string of negative questions and answers. People who are critical thinkers have to be especially careful about coming off too quiet or too questioning in interviews (my engineering, technology, and finance friends, you know who you are ☺).

You don’t have to be something that you are not, but take a little time to prepare for your interviews, putting a special focus on the positive responses you can give, PLUS (and this is a big plus) stories about your accomplishments! Critical thinkers and introverts can display their brilliance and their aptitudes just as easily as outgoing people as long as they take time to prepare for their interviews.

These are simple, but tried and true techniques that are easy to overlook, but pay off in more generous offers if you take the time to incorporate them into your job search strategy!

BONUS #4



5 Secrets to Using LinkedIn to Find Your Dream Job

Have you secretly been wondering what all the hoopla is over social networking sites like LinkedIn . . . but been too afraid to ask? Or perhaps you are in the midst of a job search and know using sites like LinkedIn should be part of your job search strategy . . . but you are not exactly sure how to go about it?

If so, you are going to love these 5 easy tips for using LinkedIn to create powerful networking connections, brand your image and quickly get you noticed!

Tip One: Create a Powerful Profile

It's free to join and, once you have, you'll want to create a profile that best highlights the skills and strengths you most want to showcase. Here are a few tips to setting up your account:

- Use a current version of your resume to post your profile.
- Your profile should contain those things you wish to be known for—and nothing more!
- Don't go back too far with your job history unless you have a really good reason for it.
- Have someone (friend, loved one, resume writer) edit and proof your profile.
- Use discretion with listing personal information . . . just like a resume.

Tip Two: Find Your Friends

You can search for old classmates, past companies, friends, or just try keyword searches in your area of interest. Invite friends and associates to connect with you and accept invitations from others to quickly grow your network (you will want to read LinkedIn's information about accepting others' invitations to help you decide whose invitations to accept). Bear in mind, the larger your network, the wider your audience and that is generally what you want.

Tip Three: Get Involved in Q&A

Easily search topics and offer answers to establish yourself as an expert. You can also ask questions to engage others and establish rapport. This small investment of your time will pay off abundantly in both the short and long term.

Tip Four: Join Groups

There are tens of thousands of groups and group forums on LinkedIn.

Forums give you an instant audience in a particular industry, networking group, alumni group, company, or geographic area! Currently you can join up to 50 groups.

You can post a question, post a news or blog article, or announce you are open to new career opportunities.

If you are a job seeker, don't forget to post your candidacy on the 10,000+ member recruiter groups. You will be casting a wide net, but stand to garner several positive responses. Just be clear about what your specialty is to make it easy for recruiters to identify potential interest.

Tip Five: Use LinkedIn's Group Email Feature

Sometimes LinkedIn will charge a user to connect with others, but not in group forums. Check out the member listings for your groups and email selected group members (in the group forums) absolutely free!

Being a member of LinkedIn quickly establishes your credibility, gives you an audience in an amazing choice of industries, and allows you to fully leverage yourself in the market.

BONUS #5

How to Keep Potential Employers from Checking Your Credit during a Job Search

Source: www.theworldprivacyforum.org

I found this information on the world privacy forum and I think it's an excellent bonus addition. I have had more than one client confide that their credit was less than stellar and they were afraid they were getting passed over for interviews/offers because potential employers were checking their credit.

If you suspect the same—you can “freeze” your credit. The article to follow explains how to do it.

By the way, the BEST way to overcome ANY liabilities you feel you may have in your job search is to learn how to tap the hidden job market. When you learn how to go direct—you sidestep most all of the prescreening and pre-qualifying that can disqualify you from interviews and offers. Please see my e-book on how to tap the hidden job market, which is part of this book series, to learn exactly how to do this.

A credit freeze (sometimes called a security freeze) lets you stop the disclosure of your credit report by a credit bureau.

The result of a credit freeze should be that neither you nor anyone else can open a new credit account in your name. (A freeze will *not* stop your existing credit cards from working.) A credit freeze can also prevent insurance companies or employers from obtaining your credit data. That's why if you are actively seeking new employment or insurance, you may want to think carefully about enacting a credit freeze unless you are currently a victim of identity theft.

The credit freeze is widely considered by consumer and privacy advocates as a potent measure to prevent some forms of identity theft. A credit freeze can be especially helpful to individuals who are having persistent problems with identity theft. Credit freeze is not for everyone, and not everyone has the right at this point to set a credit freeze.

The way a credit freeze works is that access to your consumer credit report and your credit score are locked when you put a freeze on the files. A lender or merchant will normally not issue new credit if it cannot access your credit report or score. The benefit of a freeze is that you can stop thieves from getting credit in your name. The downside is that you are also stopped from getting credit unless you “thaw” the freeze. You can unlock your security freeze by using a PIN to unlock access to the credit file. Some states require the “thaw” to take no longer than 15 minutes. Some allow longer times.

The ability to freeze your credit is available nationwide through the credit reporting bureaus. There is some variability in cost and details state-by-state due to variance in state law. (For information about which states have a freeze law, see “More about credit freeze” below.)

How to Opt Out:

Here are two ways to find out how to opt out for your state:

- The [World Privacy Forum’s Credit Freeze page](http://www.worldprivacyforum.org/creditfreeze.html) has a list of states that either have a credit freeze law, or have passed a law. Each state links to the official state information page about how to place a credit freeze, or to another information source for that state. Many of the official state information pages are excellent and provide tips and sample letters. Even if you are not in a state with a law, as of Nov. 1, 2007, you can still set a security freeze. <http://www.worldprivacyforum.org/creditfreeze.html>
- Consumers Union has an excellent and frequently updated page on all current state freeze laws and requirements, with a link on how to opt out for each state and sample letters. http://www.consumersunion.org/campaigns/learn_more/003484indiv.html

More about Credit Freeze:

See the FTC Credit Freeze page: <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/microsites/idtheft/credit-freeze.html>

See Consumer’s Union frequently updated page on all current state freeze laws and requirements, with a link on how to opt out for each state and sample letters. http://www.consumersunion.org/campaigns/learn_more/003484indiv.html

See the PIRG state freeze page: <http://www.pirg.org/consumer/credit/statelaws.htm> links to the state laws.

See California Office of Privacy Protection. Even if you don’t live in California, this is an excellent page to learn more about how credit freeze works. If you are a California resident, you will find sample letters ready for you to print out. <http://www.privacy.ca.gov/sheets/cis10securityfreeze.htm>

BONUS #6

What to Do when Companies aren't Saying Yes

I would like to share a personal story with you. I remember a couple of really lean months after I started my business. My husband and I would sit down at the table and I would start to tick off all the things I had done to market my business properly. "I have done everything right . . . so, what's WRONG!?" I would exclaim.

The truth of the matter was, I hadn't done anything wrong, per se, it just felt like that because I didn't have the number of clients that I had expected.

Interestingly enough, in all other ways I had succeeded in meeting all of my business goals and timelines. However, those achievements were overshadowed by the anxiety caused by not having a long line of clients waiting to work with me.

Turns out after about 6 weeks (which felt more like forever), I had plenty of wonderful clients.

You would think as a job search coach I would not fall into this trap! But the point is, when we are going through “the fire” it's easy to panic and quickly lose perspective.

When you are in a job search, it's not much different. There are highs and lows. Sometimes the phone never stops ringing; sometimes it may feel like all potential employers are purposefully avoiding you. Inevitably one wonders, "What have I done wrong?" No doubt, it can be a confusing time. So here are some tips that provide the job seeker with a very helpful dose of reality.

Tip One: Expect Peaks and Valleys

It's true. Every job search or career transition has its peaks and valleys. And yes, it's uncomfortable.

If you are experiencing a dry spell in your job search you need to look at a few things before you can accurately determine the cause. These include:

- Is your resume powerful enough to get you attention? Have you had it professionally written?
- Do you have a plan to focus on a particular industry and position? Does that plan include strategies that you are implementing?

- Have you investigated the health of the industry you are targeting? Is it in a growth mode or is it shrinking?
- Do you know how to tap into the unadvertised job market and, if so, have you been using those strategies consistently and persistently?
- Have you given your job search enough time? The average search in a good market can take 2 to 4 months for a mid-level professional and 6 to 12 months for a senior executive.

Tip Two: Get Realistic about Marketing Figures

Direct mail campaigns do the heavy lifting for you and I recommend them. They usually yield a 1% to 7% return.

Unadvertised job market strategies can take your positive responses to 20% to 60% in a good market and slightly less in a bad economy. Regardless, pursuing the unadvertised market beats out using large (major) job boards by a long shot. Large job boards are the toughest job market in which to compete. Period.

The bottom line: most companies are not going to respond to you. I am not trying to be negative, but rather to demonstrate that it doesn't mean you're not good enough or not doing something right. Job searching is marketing. Job searching is a numbers game. The solution? Check your search against tip #1 and then **increase your numbers**.

Tip Three: Don't get Down on Yourself

There are loads of things you can do that actually do help emotionally, mentally, and physically in a job search. A few of these include:

Use a coach to keep you motivated; make sure you are using the right techniques to leverage yourself in the market and to keep you on track with setting and reaching your weekly goals.

Work (i.e. job search) and life balance are incredibly vital! Set several hours aside each day to work on your job search and write out what your main activity is for each day. Take the rest of the day off (yes you heard me right!) to rest, relax, to be with your family, to enjoy sports or other activities, work on continuing education, read, or whatever else you like to do. This will keep you sane and balanced while you are waiting for your efforts to pay off.

Join a church group or a support group. The positive support helps, just trust me on this one.

If you hit a dry spell, remind yourself that it's not you and it's not personal. Getting depressed and feeling desperate is not the vibe you want to be taking into your upcoming interviews.

Do what you have to do. One executive client I know took a part-time job in a grocery store while he was looking for a full-time executive position. He said it helped him feel like he was still contributing monetarily to his family and just getting out and working part-time kept his head clear.

The wise job seeker and career changer know that dry spells in a job search don't signal the end of a career as it is known). They use the time to market even harder.

Remember that every marketing effort is an accomplishment in and of itself and does contribute to action, forward movement, and future activity. By looking at the situation realistically, using techniques to boost your activity, and keeping your focus on what you want (not what you are afraid of), you will maximize your leverage and move consistently forward to the results you want.

Want to Learn More?

Mary Elizabeth Bradford's e-books, programs, and products enable job seekers to increase their salaries, enhance their market appeal, and achieve results in their job searches . . . working *smarter*, not harder.

FREE Ezine: The Career Search INSIDER



In this FREE bimonthly ezine, Mary Elizabeth shares the most successful career search techniques written in a simple how-to format. These are the same techniques that help her clients move into their ideal careers, win more interviews, and get bigger offers! (A \$70.00 value)

You will learn:

- How to create interest from companies you want to hire you.
- Which markets are growing (and hiring)!
- How to simplify your job search and get more done in less time.
- How to create an interest-generating resume.
- Proven job search strategies that really work.
- Which steps to take (and which ones to skip) when you are changing careers.
- How to confidently use interview and negotiation techniques that significantly increase your income.
- . . . and any more ideas to help you secure the job you want! Register here now:

<http://www.maryelizabethbradford.com/freearticles.php>

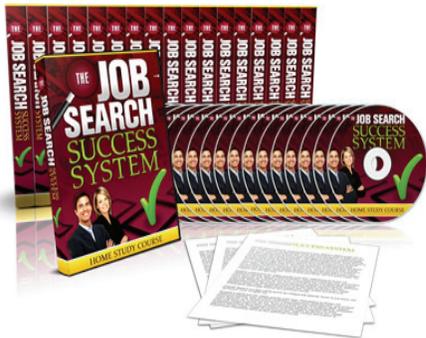


Resume & Cover Letter Package

Professionally written resume + job search coaching = success!

My clients enjoy shorter turnkey job searches, higher quality interviews, and bigger salaries . . . and you can too. There is no better value in the market today-and my services are backed with a money-back guarantee. I even offer an easy payment plan! This package is a tremendous value! Get the details here: <http://www.maryelizabethbradford.com/resume.php>

The Job Search Success System



Mary Elizabeth has shown hundreds of professionals at all levels how to land their ideal job in less time while maximizing their compensation, and she wants to share this vital information with you too! Learn how to easily set up a turnkey plan to find positions perfect for you in a current or new industry, tap into the hidden job market, use Internet techniques to research companies and industries, overcome job search challenges, and much more. You will have access to multiple live coaching calls each month, one-on-

one coaching, and a step-by-step coaching audios and corresponding worksheets that are yours to download and keep in your business library so you can use them throughout your career. [Get your Job Search Success System now](http://www.job-searchsystem.com/) and you can be on her very next coaching call!

About the Author

Mary Elizabeth Bradford, CARW, MCD

Author, speaker, Certified International Master Career Director, Internationally Certified Advanced Resume Writer, and past president of The LYNN Group Executive Recruiting Firm, Mary Elizabeth Bradford is a career-services industry expert and is known as “The Career Artisan.” She has 16 years’ experience providing expert career coaching, marketing, and branding for the mid- to senior-level job seeker.



Her resume and job search coaching “packages” help professionals all over the world secure more interviews, get bigger offers, and land the jobs they want. To date, she has coached over 600 professionals through their entire job search and now devotes her time to showing jobseekers the quickest and easiest ways to land great interviews and offers . . . by tapping the hidden job market and going directly to key decision makers.

She has designed resumes for nearly 1,000 professionals worldwide and completed more than 4,700 hours of “virtual” coaching.

Mary Elizabeth is the author of e-books: “Secrets of the Hidden Job Market . . . Revealed!” and “Phone Networking Secrets Revealed” and the new Career Artisan Series—Guide for the Perplexed. She is the publisher of the bimonthly ezine, *The Career Insider*. Her e-books have been lauded by both clients and colleagues as “powerful,” “comprehensive,” and “highly effective.” Her articles, ezine, and e-books have motivated and inspired readers in numerous print and online publications, including multiple law and business journals, including The Wall Street Journal and Business Week.

She regularly leads coaching programs and teleseminars, lighting the way for job seekers who want simple yet powerful systems for reaching their job search goals.

Mary Elizabeth is a member of the highly esteemed Career Directors International (CDI) and is one of only 10 recipients worldwide of their “**Master Career Professional Lifetime Achievement Award.**” She has served on multiple CDI committees throughout the years. She also obtained her certification as an **Internationally Advanced Resume Writer** and **Master Career Director** through CDI.