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SERIES

THE  
NEW Executive  
JOB SEARCH

*Breakthrough Strategies, Secrets  
& Free Resources*

*Guide For The Perplexed*

**Dedicated to Your Job Search Success**

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**The Career Artisan Series -The New Executive Job Search - Guide for the Perplexed.**

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Are you sending out resumes but not hearing anything back? Perhaps you are having trouble getting anyone to follow up with you after the first interview, have been told you are overqualified, don't have enough experience, or are worried about age discrimination? Are you wondering how best to find executive level, including C-level positions? Maybe you are wondering why it is so difficult to get a recruiter's attention or worried that there are not enough jobs and too much competition. Maybe you are frustrated because you have been in a long job search and worry that is a red flag to potential employers . . . or maybe you long to change industries but don't know how or don't believe it is possible in today's job market.

No matter what your concerns are, this powerful e-book is going to enlighten you to some revealing facts about what really works in today's job market and educate you so that, from the moment you finish reading this, you will feel a new lease on life regarding your job search and the possibilities open to you.

Just be prepared—most of what you have been told about job searching IS misleading, skewed, or just plain wrong. I hope this little book helps you take control of your job search, as this information I am about to share with you has proved to be evergreen and is intended to expand your mind regarding job search myths and truths and how you can control your job search now through the rest of your career!

—*Mary Elizabeth Bradford, CERW, MCD*

## Table of Contents

- **Introduction: What is the New Executive Job Search?**
- **The Three Components of a Successful Executive Job Search**
  - o *Your Focus of Direction*
  - o *Your Marketing Collateral*
  - o *Your Job Search Strategy*
- **The Hidden Job Market: What is it and Why You Should Care**
- **Case Studies and Typical Job Search Problems**
- **Executive Resources**
- **BONUS: 5 Common Executive Resume Mistakes**
- **BONUS: 5 Job Search Shortcuts for Executives**
- **BONUS: How to Protect Your Privacy During an Executive Job Search Transition**
- **BONUS: The Executive Job Search: How to Choose Corporate Culture & Company Size – A Quick Guide**
- **About the Author**

## INTRODUCTION

### WHAT IS THE NEW EXECUTIVE JOB SEARCH?

Not so long ago, before the advent of the Internet, the typical executive job search strategy was to look in the business or trade journals for open positions, apply, and then interview. Or, you heard of an opportunity from a friend or acquaintance. Executives may have been working with recruiters who may have brought them a worthy position or two.

Then, with the rapid growth of the Internet, open jobs quickly migrated online and, by the early 2000's, a good majority of job seekers were applying for positions over the Internet. The rapid rise of applicants able to view and respond to a job—no matter where it was—created an enormous number of candidate submissions. In response, human resource departments tightened up job qualification parameters, created more rigid online application procedures, and integrated keyword scanning software to help them filter and qualify applicants. This affected executive level positions as well.

In my opinion, the birth pangs of this online evolution affected all parties. Jobseekers quickly noticed and suffered the effects of a colder, mechanical process with seemingly overnight competition. Decision makers within companies still secretly longed for the opportunity to hire organically through referrals and word-of-mouth—which they did—and still do.

This increased the depth and breadth of what is today called “the hidden job market.” And numbers aggregated from the Bureau of Labor and Statistics show (for example) that nearly 300,000 jobs with salaries over six figures are filled each month, but only approximately 20% of those jobs are advertised on job boards. And approximately 95% of job seekers are targeting those 20% of “advertised” jobs—creating an enormous bottleneck and prime hunting season for employers—the lowest-priced employee with the closest matching qualifications.

However, there is a small contingency with an incredible workaround to this problem . . . the 5% of job seekers who dare to take the initiative have access to over 250,000 six-figure jobs with very little, if any, competition.

Here is what [JobBait.com](http://JobBait.com) says about US hiring trends:

*\*Using salary data from the [US Census Bureau](http://US Census Bureau), we prorated this hiring by salary levels:*

- *4 million hires per month at all salaries*
- *400,000 hires per month at \$100k+*
- *31,000 hires per month at \$300k+*
- *9,000 hires per month at \$500k+*
- *1,800 hires per month \$1 million+*

*Most jobs are hidden. At \$100K, 75% are hidden. At \$300K, 90% are hidden.*

*\*Courtesy of JobBait.com. Used with permission.*

So how do you, as an executive in the job market, find these jobs? You simply forego the futile and arduous task of applying for jobs on job boards (jobs which they rarely, if ever get any response at all on, let alone an actual interview or the even rarer “job offer”) and you focus on what YOU WANT and WHO YOU want to work for and then YOU GO GET IT by contacting the key decision makers of those companies (and I mean the top brass) to let them know that you are available for hire.

***In other words, determine what you want and work backwards – instead of waiting for an opportunity to present itself for you to pursue.***

Perhaps you are thinking I have lost my mind. That it is crazy to claim that this strategy actually works in today’s tough job market . . . that you should just waltz out and fetch the job you want just . . . like . . . that (the nerve!). But wait—you need to know that this philosophy I am about to share with you is nothing more than marketing 101. And marketing 101 is largely evergreen AND, more importantly, the tougher the job market, the better it works. But job boards, recruiters, career pros, and related others in the industry don’t generally make money from teaching you marketing 101. Otherwise, everyone would probably be writing books like these to help you succeed in today’s job market and with your career in general. ☺

I will share more details in the chapters to follow on how you can adopt this philosophy for yourself and use it to focus on, find, and land your dream job—like so many of the thousands of executives I have helped over the years.

Here are a few more points that may surprise you and make you happy:

1. This philosophy will work over and over for you throughout your career.
2. This philosophy works for most executives in most industries throughout the world.
3. This philosophy is counter-intuitive and may initially push you out of your comfort zone. But that doesn’t mean it doesn’t work!
4. This philosophy works best in a tough job market and when the odds are against you (i.e., fired/laid off/long job search/industry change/physical relocation/too young/too old). The strategies I am about to reveal to you will keep these liabilities (which usually result in your disqualification from a pack of qualified candidates) from coming up.
5. This philosophy will teach you how to think like an entrepreneur, if you don’t already, and be the president of YOUR OWN career.

## THE THREE COMPONENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL JOB SEARCH



No matter what you are doing in your job search, what your goals are, or what your personal and professional situation is, I have found that there are three universal components to a job search that needs to be understood and arranged for your job search to have maximum success.

Unfortunately many people, not knowing any better, will spend weeks or even months poking around on job boards looking for something they believe they may be qualified for and/or like. When they read through the wish list of qualifications in any given posted job, the majority of them instantly begin to feel constricted in their potential opportunities and frustrated and deflated upon seeing that the majority of requested qualifications do not match their own. If job seekers have applied to 10, 20 or more job postings but have not heard a response back, they may feel marginalized and begin to form a lower opinion about their professional worth, the economy, and what they believe is an increasing shortage of available jobs.



In addition to this, many job seekers have been told that networking is the way to go and that they need to ask all of their friends, family, and generally everyone they have ever met if they know of any open positions or opportunities and pass out their resume to anyone who will take it. Many job seekers are told to broadcast that they are actively seeking a job on LinkedIn and other social and business networking sites. Although I agree that networking done right can be very helpful, I don't agree that job candidates should overexpose themselves.

If you think about it: who is the more attractive candidate? The one you want (and perhaps can't have?) or the one who is screaming from the rooftops that he or she is available? Which attracts you more—the sales person who is putting the hard sell on you and trying to “close” you (i.e. only cares about making the sale) or the more refined sales professional who is asking you questions to better understand your needs and, perhaps, provide you with a solution? Would you rather have a date with someone who is begging you to ask them out, or a wonderful individual you have your eye on who seems perhaps out of reach to you? I hope I am making my point because a component of what we are talking about here does involve human behavior and emotion . . . and you can't afford to overlook this.

Now, everything works some of the time if you do it enough and so these methods might yield you some small amount of success. But above and beyond my professional opinion, I can also show you that statistics prove that using these methods outlined above create a long and laborious job search with limited success. For example, most statistics show that job boards only represent about 15% of available positions and the majority of job seekers will go after this small number—which creates intense competition for a single job. Most statistics show that submitting resumes for jobs on job boards yields about a 1% response.

Here is an excerpt from [JobBait.com](http://JobBait.com)—a noted authority on marketing strategies for top executives and a resource of multiple reports on US economic growth trends and statistics:

**"Most executives find a job by networking."**

This is true, but is this what you want? With networking, you'll eventually get "whatever happens to come along next." You'll spend 12 to 18 months searching (on the average) and compete with thousands to prove that you'll do the best job at the lowest cost. Even if you get lucky and find a job fast, you will have missed 75% to 90% of your opportunities. Ironically, most executives take whatever happens to come along next, and 60%+ are not satisfied with their current job.

—Excerpt from **JobBait.com**

## **FIRST COMPONENT: YOUR FOCUS OF DIRECTION**

One of the first and most important steps you will take is allowing yourself to truthfully write out exactly what you want in your next position. If you are still in job board mentality you might find this exercise uncomfortable at first because you haven't thought you had any say in this. Additionally, you may need to take some time to think about the following items. If you have never given yourself permission to dream about your dream job before, it may take a while for your heart's desire to bubble up to the surface . . . so give yourself time.

You don't have to have an answer for all of these questions—but define as many as you can:

### **Your Ideal Company & Position**

**Industry:**

**Sub Industry:**

**Company size:** (small startup, mid-size or large, multinational corporation?)

**Location:**

**Salary:**

**Key Skills You Use:**

**Manage People? If So, How Many:**

**Company Philosophy & Style:** (Trendy? Flexible? Traditional? Systematic? Freethinking or unorthodox? )

**Here are a couple of other points to think about and write out:**

### **Your Career Goals**

This is a statement of where you want to go and your goals for the next three to five years.

It's really important to give yourself some time to focus on your answer and write it down.

It's amazing how often when we put career hopes and dreams on the back burner (i.e., in the back of our minds), we simply cannot have anything more than a foggy idea that is unfocused, not ready, not purposeful, and not exciting.

The simple ACT of committing to focus on what YOU want and writing it out is a powerful step forward on both conscious and subconscious levels. Simple, but powerful.

### **Your Driving Motivators**

What are your bottom-line needs that you have to meet in order to make your next career move? A different position, a new industry, more money, a new location, or more work-life balance? List your top three.

## SECOND COMPONENT: YOUR MARKETING COLLATERAL

The second component to a successful job search is what I call “your marketing collateral.” This is basically all your written information including your resume, your cover letter (or as I call it your unique value proposition letter), your website, your LinkedIn profile, and others. Once you have your focus of direction, you can create your marketing collateral—specifically starting with your resume. If you try to write your resume before you have established your focus of direction, your resume will not be a focused marketing document . . . nor will you have integrated the appropriate keywords and phrases into your resume that your ideal market and position requires.

### **A Word About Your Online Identity and Digital Dirt**

Digital dirt is the term used to describe your online footprint—including all the reviews, rants, videos, and/or social networking sites you are on. Many employers and recruiters do check out your online identity during the interview process so you want to make sure yours looks professional.

To check your “dirt” just Google your name in quotation marks and then research your results.

Do your best to clear, change, or delete anything you wouldn’t want a potential employer to see. Please use discretion and an alias if you are posting on forums and do not wish that information to be traceable to a potential employer.

### **Your Resume and Value Proposition Letter**

Your resume and your cover letter, or value proposition letter, has to be tailored to fit the position and the industry that you are focused on. This is one of the single most powerful and effective things you can do in your job search to get results.

Conversely, many people will generalize their resumes, especially after they have submitted it to several online jobs without hearing anything back. They will think their resume is too focused and they broaden their horizons by generalizing keywords and minimizing industries. I have not seen this to be an effective strategy.

You, the jobseeker, are much more likely to achieve the results you desire by first focusing on an industry and particular position and then crafting your resume FOR your target! You still may want to tweak your keywords for a particular position but you will be more clear on your target, your resume will never need generalizing, you will actually minimize any tweaking you might need to do and, overall, you will be more efficient and effective as you connect with companies you are interested in.

I have been an Internationally Certified Advanced Resume Writer for over seven years now. What I have seen that works in this economy is this:

Every word counts in your resume and all resumes are glanced at before they are read more thoroughly. If you ever have read a book or an article about your resume, what is that one thing

resume writers usually talk about? It is how to make your resume pass the “glance test.” Your resume must pass the glance test before it gets read! Thus, the visual design of your resume and the criticality of the keywords and the placement of text and bolded words and how you draw attention to your accomplishments is THE MOST IMPORTANT part of your resume.

So, when I write a resume I am:

1. Making sure I am writing to my client’s career desires.
2. Creating a design with maximum visual impact—paying attention to where they eye is going to bounce, from one bold set of keywords to a call out box containing a short testimonial to a bold checklist of brief accomplishments. My aim is to give the reader a framework of my client’s qualifications, the general size and scope of their accomplishments, and why they should be interviewed—all in a quick glance.
3. Crafting an interesting document to read—through the entire document. This involves creating a storyline the reader can follow that is interesting enough to hold the reader’s attention.

To summarize, your marketing collateral—your resume, your value proposition letter, and your written (email or hard mail) correspondence—should all be well written, clear, focused, and communicate your value—meaning the results you can bring to a company. Fluff, filler, long words, and big blocks of text may make you look pretentious and will most likely not get read.

Another piece of marketing collateral is your LinkedIn profile. One thing I see with jobseekers on their LinkedIn profile is they are using LinkedIn and their profile as a microphone to announce to the world their job candidacy. Now, yes, in some circumstances this may work to get you some attention and—although many career experts may disagree with me—my concern is that this tactic makes you look desperate and “hat in hand” looking and begging for a job.

No one wants that. I know you don’t want to do that.

So the question is: Do LinkedIn and other forms of online networking and resume blasting services overexpose you? Does it even really work? Well, I have some feedback I can give you. I am told by many jobseekers who have tried these methods that, not only did they fail to get any traction, they opened themselves up to a lot of junk mail and predatory calls and “job offers” that seemed shady or were not real. I think executives really do have to take a hard look at potential overexposure. I don’t believe in screaming from the rooftops that you are available.

Rather, I think making yourself look attractive, demonstrating your value, and selectively connecting with the companies and persons with whom YOU wish to converse is a far wiser and more effective strategy. There are ways to network and use LinkedIn that easily achieve this!

And, by the way, my professional opinion was born from helping hundreds of candidates as a recruiter, working closely with the presidents of my select client companies, helping thousands of executives through every step of their job searches, interviews, and salary negotiations and writing thousands of resumes. For 17 years I have been a sounding board for executives, listened to their problems and challenges, and helped them overcome those challenges and get what they initially thought was out of reach.

So any technique or philosophy I share with you is directly connected to my “boots on the ground” experience with job seekers in various levels of positions and industries. In other words, people like YOU!

### THIRD COMPONENT: YOUR JOB SEARCH STRATEGY

You have your focus of direction dialed in, your resume and other written and online documents looking fabulous and matching your area(s) of interest—congratulations! Now the third and equally important component of your successful job search lies in the job search strategies that you employ . . . to get employed!

These three strategies are like three legs of a stool. If one is missing—the other two legs are useless. So please, don't go to all the trouble to take care of the first two important components of your job search, only to use your focus and marketing materials to respond to jobs on job boards. It won't work.

I have written an in-depth explanation of why job boards yield such poor results in the following chapter. For now, let's focus on what works better than job boards.

What job search strategy, or combination of strategies, works best for you is going to depend on your job search goals and driving motivators. Here are a few points;

1. Direct mail (mailing a value proposition letter to a key decision maker in a company that YOU hand pick) works great in a variety of situations, but you must be able to define and refine your market so you can dial in on a particular group of companies. Some people have a top 25 or 50 list; others define a market (let's say retail headquarters of chains, about \$50 million in size) and send out thousands of letters through a service. Both ways can yield powerful results when done correctly.
2. If you have a great track record of promotion and achievement in your industry and wish to STAY in your industry, have a solid academic background and not too many jobs in the last 10 years, then you may wish to send your resume out to a list of recruiters that specialize in your industry. If you are wishing to vet opportunities as an interim executive or with a well-funded startup – a distribution of your resume to private equity/venture capital firms is a wise idea and a strategy that can bring impressive results.
3. If you are looking to change industries, you may wish to begin by conducting a series of informational interviews you land through research and networking. This allows you to gain access to the portal of people who have the knowledge, insider info, and access to other contacts that you will need to move forward into your new industry.
4. If you are changing industries or are well connected, you may wish to choose networking as one of your primary strategies. Networking can work in most job searches—but each job search is unique and I could probably craft about 20 different networking strategies for 20 different job searches. Having said that, if you have a lot of local contacts and you wish to remain in your current location, or powerful contacts in your industry – then networking, done correctly can be very helpful.

One of the strategies for tapping into the hidden job market is through what I call “growth opportunities,” which I will expand on in the following chapter. I happen to think finding and following up on growth opportunities is the absolute best way to find a great position no matter what your situation is. I have seen this method work over and over again for job seekers and there are not many reasons I can think of not to use this method in your job search.

5. I have found job boards helpful in the following instances: for researching industries, for keeping tabs on a particular company, hiring trends within an industry or with particular companies, or for applying to when you are in a highly specialized field in a niche market. However if you ARE in a specialized market, it should be relatively easy for you to isolate your market and use strategy #2, direct mail, to alert them of your availability.

If you are wanting to know how to create a better resume, how to tap into the hidden job market step by step, and learn various ways to network that are far more professional and gracious than frantically broadcasting that you are in a job hunt, you need to know that the other e-books in the Career Artisan Series cover all these topics. I hope this book inspires you to check them out. The information might very well change your life.

## THE HIDDEN JOB MARKET: WHAT IS IT AND WHY YOU SHOULD CARE

I love the hidden job market. I have built my career on showing professionals how easy it is to shorten their job search and getting more quality interviews and bigger offers using a very simple yet powerful system.

A question I often hear is “Isn’t tapping into the hidden job market just networking?” In short, no. It’s about going direct—and cutting out both “internal” and “external” middle men. Internal within the company (i.e., HR) and external outside the company (i.e., recruiters).

Let’s begin by dispelling a few other myths about the hidden job market:

**True or false: With all the jobs listed on the Internet today, I don’t need to concern myself with any “hidden” job market.**

**False.** That is, if you care about getting more than a measly 1 to 3% response rate from the resumes you send out using major job boards.

In other words, did you send out 50 resumes using job boards and you still haven’t heard anything back? Well, by these standards your only problem is you haven’t begun to send out enough resumes, yet . . . yikes!

The good news about these stats is that there are a whole bunch of job seekers out there who just started to feel a whole lot better about themselves. The bad news is that this proves job boards are a really depressing, hard, and painful way for the majority of us to land great jobs.

**True or false: I should only answer jobs that are advertised because I will look unprofessional if I send my resume to a company when I have no idea if they have an executive position that needs to be filled.**

**False.** Way back when I had my own executive recruiting firm I remember client companies telling me, “We don’t have any immediate needs right now, but if you find a superstar, please don’t forget about us—we want to see their resume!”

Not only do companies always make time for people who are “superstars” (and a lot of this has to do with the way you market yourself to them), but most companies go through **at least five steps to fill a position** before they will post the position to a major job board.

Think about it. If you have a key position that just opened up in your company, do pick up the phone first thing and call Monster? No, of course not!

You get on the phone to a few trusted colleagues. You look through your resume file to see if anyone fits the bill. You look to see if anyone already on board is qualified to be promoted or alert your staff to refer someone they might know. You launch an intimate grass roots campaign to try to fill this position waaaay before the general public is notified. And if after a few weeks, the position is still not filled, perhaps you contact a related association to post the job on their members-only job board or you contract a recruiter.



**True or false: I have heard the interview process is shorter and the salary package can be significantly higher with opportunities found in the hidden job market.**

**True!** Why? Because when you pursue unadvertised jobs you are almost always talking with the company key decision-makers right from the start. You have more creativity to sell your skills and build the value of who you can be to the company. And finally, because these interviews usually lack the formality of a full-blown human resource-driven candidate search, your competition is significantly lower AND the salary terms are less likely to be chiseled in stone. I have seen this play out in my clients' favor time after time!

So why should you care about the unadvertised market? Because for you, it means more job opportunities, more market leverage, less competition, shorter interview processes, and bigger offers. Golly, I can't imagine why anyone would want to keep pumping out resumes via the Internet when you can have all this control over your next career move!

Now I bet you are wondering precisely how to tap into the hidden job market. There are three strategies to quickly get you started focusing on and finding great jobs that will never see a major job board.

**Tip #1: You have to have a plan.**

As I have discussed in previous chapters, if you are going to launch a proactive job search (i.e. knowing precisely what you are looking for, then reaching out to get it) vs. a reactive job search (i.e. passively scanning posted jobs, waiting to find the one that fits you) then it's crucial you know the following things:

- **Your primary target markets**  
(e.g., biotechnology, pharmaceutical, medical devices)
- **Your primary positions**  
(e.g., sales executive, VP of sales and marketing, business development director)
- **Your geographic parameters**  
(e.g., can't leave Minneapolis, all of US, California only)
- **Your timeline**  
(e.g., need a job NOW, in the next 30 days, would like to make a change in the next 6 months)

**Tip #2: You have to pick three main job search strategies for tapping into your market.**

Again, just shoring things up for you. Now that you have your plan, you should be crystal clear on what you want! Here are just a few hidden job market techniques you can utilize:

**Growing/changing or moving companies:** These companies are expanding, merging, acquiring other companies, rolling out new products or services, or are moving. They are actively changing and/or growing and can offer you an opportunity to offer your skills and strengths to help them.

**Executive Recruiters:** Identify recruiters who are familiar with your industry or position. They often have contracts to fill positions the majority of which will never be advertised.

If you are radically changing industries, a recruiter may not be the best source for you as they will be looking for “a match.”

If recruiters are a good source for you, I use the best source in the country for emailing personal introductions to thousands of recruiters. You can contact me for information and pricing. However, I have provided a great free resource in the following chapter titled “Free Resources.”

**Direct company contact:** The secret here is in the numbers. Contacting a company directly (fully knowing they probably have multiple open positions that are not advertised) is a great way to take leadership and control over your job search. Are you interested in looking at the higher education market in your state or the top organic food manufacturers in the US? Or maybe the fastest-growing healthcare-oriented businesses in your city? All these “lists” are accessible to you and allow you to easily tap right into your market of focus!

Here is what my late mentor, Mark Hovind adds:

### **Send a letter to the CEO or Chairman at larger companies**

They might need you as a GM, COO or Division President. If you're the CEO of a small company, perhaps you would fit in as the EVP, COO or Division President of a larger company.

### **Send a letter to the CEO at smaller companies**

The incumbent CEO might be looking for a successor because of retirement, business expansion, or just because he or she wants to move on and open a new company. Or, the existing CEO may want to step back, step down, or step up as the Chairman. The reasons don't matter - what matters is that they need help more often than you'd expect.

### **Send a letter to the Money Brokers**

Reach out to the VCs, Investment Bankers, Holding Companies and others who invest in companies. There are more than 20,000 in the database, and they might need you for a portfolio company. If you have money to invest and/or mention that you're looking for a stake in the outcome, this can significantly increase your odds.

### **An accident of timing**

Sending a value proposition letter to the decision-makers most likely to hire you is an accident of timing with predictable and statistical odds (85% in 90 days). And, it's the only way to reach thousands of decision-makers at the same time ... when you're available.

*\*Courtesy of Jobbait.com*

**Tip #3: Manage your job search like a marketing campaign.**

Once you have your plan and have determined the best place to gather your resources and your general strategy, you must make a simple plan to move forward. Depending on your timeframe, pick the hours and days each week that you plan to invest in your next career move. Block out those times and stick to them! Honor your commitment to your job search just like you would honor your commitment to your present employer to show up on time each day.

**During your job search, keep things simple and focus on the actions you are taking, not the results!** This way you can celebrate your initial “successes,” which in the beginning are the completion of each of your daily and weekly goals. The results will unfold elegantly and abundantly and you will enjoy feeling that satisfaction of success whether you are investing in marketing yourself or basking in the warm glow of landing your third or fourth interview!

Be careful not to devalue the importance of this tip. This strategy is one of the main points to averting thoughts of despair and feelings of overwhelm.

In my book, *The Career Artisan Series—The Hidden Job Market*, I give step-by-step instructions for setting up and managing a very simple and effective job search to tap into the hidden job market. You can learn more about this in the free resources chapter below.

## CASE STUDIES

I would like to share with you the following real-life stories of professionals who utilized the hidden job market to land amazing jobs.

### **Success #1: Industry and physical move.**

Kay moved from Wisconsin to Memphis, TN, for family reasons. She didn't know a soul except for her relatives. Instead of asking them if they knew of any available jobs, Kay inquired about very specific industries and only asked her relatives if they had any contacts in those industries—with whom she might call for mentoring. She quickly got the name of a professional in the education market whom she called to share that she was new in town, looking into two industries, and his was one of them. Kay's contact was happy to talk with her and offer her guidance. At the end of the call, Kay asked him if he knew of anyone else in the industries she was exploring and he readily gave her a contact. She contacted him (a local government official) who interviewed her for a position that had not been advertised that next week. She landed the job, received a \$5K raise, securing a position in her new industry of choice. Kay achieved her goals AND a raise in less than 30 days.

\* Notice that Kay never asked for a job—she really was in “research gathering mode,” exploring her two target markets. Her contacts reached out to *her* by asking Kay if she would be interested in interviewing!

### **Success #2: Strategic move to international real estate site selection management.**

Jeff had his sights on commercial real estate site selection and project management for international franchises. His challenge was that he had only done small real estate deals of less than \$2 million. He located companies that fit his parameters and qualifications and put those companies that were growing fastest at the top of the list. Without getting discouraged, he left multiple messages for one of his key contacts. When he finally connected with him, his contact praised Jeff for his professional yet tenacious follow up. Jeff secured an interview and landed the exact position he wanted as well as a \$15K increase in his base salary. He now typically negotiates \$5 million to \$15 million deals.

### **Success #3: Moving into a higher growth industry.**

Kevin found an article about a growing biotech firm he was really excited about. He contacted the VP quoted in the article by sending a letter, a copy of the article he was referencing, and his resume. When Kevin called to follow up the VP stated that he was flattered by Kevin's approach and he had kept Kevin's letter and resume on his desk in anticipation of his call. Kevin was brought in to interview for a position they created specifically for him after he impressed the VP with a marketing idea for increasing revenue. Kevin was offered a position and a lucrative commission and bonus plan.

#### **Success #4: C-level executive wanting to slow down the pace and the pressure.**

Tom was a CEO with a large manufacturing firm. He was forced out after leading his company through a merger. Tom decided he still wanted to work but did not want the pressure of leading a company in a declining market, and he no longer needed his high six-figure salary. Tom found an industry that was growing and was very attractive to him. He isolated a group of small, growing companies, had his resume professionally redone to highlight his skills as an operations leader/COO, and created a strategy to connect with the companies of his choice and their key decision makers. Within six months he landed his ideal position in his geographic location of choice with a company he was truly excited about. He was coached on how to successfully answer questions regarding his salary shift so he would not be disqualified for being “over qualified” and making too much money.

#### **Success #5: From personal injury attorney to risk manager in a new city and state.**

Jan was a high-powered attorney in New York. She was getting married and moving halfway across the country. She did not wish to remain a partner in a law firm but wanted to change industries. After a certain time of due diligence, she chose the medical/risk management field. Jan had a lot of skills that she could transfer into those industries as a personal injury lawyer. Jan was changing industries, had to match a rather large salary, and wanted to research a totally new industry in a new location where she had no networking contacts! Jan made a plan to conduct a series of informational interviews with key players in her markets of interest. After a series of informational interviews, two turned into actual interviews. She was hired by a developer of healthcare facilities for the position of risk manager. It is interesting to note that the two candidates that were her competition for that position had significantly more risk management experience than Jan and were local and known in the community. Jan’s new boss (the company president) informed her that she was chosen over them because her enthusiasm for the position was far greater than the other two candidates. Jan attributed this to the coaching she received on interview techniques.

#### **Success #6: Construction VP gets a 10% raise, huge signing bonus, and finds a great position in a very depressed market.**

Dan was a construction vice president in Florida. He had been laid off and was looking for work for some months. Although he and his family wished to stay in Florida, the economy, and especially the construction market, had been extremely hard hit and he had spent months answering jobs on job boards with no response.

He had his resume professionally redone and was encouraged to first look in his own backyard for opportunities despite the economy and the lack of response he had originally received since that is where he wished to be and a company would not have to pay a large relocation fee to hire him. Because of the tough market, even though he was a potential candidate for a recruiter, he was advised to use specific strategies to tap the hidden job market first—as this would save the company the \$20K to \$30K recruiter fee—which would make Dan look more desirable and give him more negotiating power. Dan used two hidden job market strategies targeted to the Florida market and, in his own words; he outlines the results of his efforts:

**“After using your system I received three interviews in a single week in the hidden job market! I was offered an ideal position with a 10% compensation increase over my previous job. I was able to negotiate a \$23,000 signing bonus and full relocation package into the offer I received! It is a great job opportunity that is in line with my objectives, and one that I never went out to the job boards to try to find. I also have a new set of tools to help my personal networking and business marketing activities moving forward.”**

**–Dan, VP Construction, Florida**

**Success #7: Entry/Mid-level job seeker changes industries and location.**

Jackie lived in Michigan and had begun her career as an account executive but she quickly realized she didn't like it—although she did like the industry she was in—media and advertising. She didn't have her resume professionally designed because she simply could not afford it, but she did learn how to write a short, effective value proposition letter that sold her skills in her desired position (which was in more of an administrative support position). She targeted several companies in the area where she wished to relocate (Dallas, Texas). Within two months she had an offer which was \$14K more than she made previously, but she turned it down because the company was most interested in hiring her to stay in her previous role that she did not like: account management. She held out for, and received, a second offer in her position and industry of choice and negotiated \$7K more than her previous position. The company that hired her was based in Dallas. Jackie never answered a job on job boards, targeted small and mid-size companies, connected directly with top management of each company, and conducted a personalized direct mail campaign to get exactly what she wanted.

\*\*\*

In today's competitive job market, non-traditional job search methods are more important to your success than ever before. Don't wait for positions to be advertised on job boards so you can play the “job auction game” where companies bid for the lowest price help and people are moved through job screenings like cattle!

Honor your commitment to obtaining the best opportunity that fits you! Show off your value, worthiness to be interviewed, and your professional tenacity by taking the initiative to focus on what you want and then elegantly, easily, and confidently take a position of leadership and control to get it! I promise you are going to be inspired by the feeling you get of actually controlling your job search and definitely sweetening the outcome in your favor.

## EXECUTIVE RESOURCES

I want to give you some places that you can go to access great information for free. This is a short list but I hope it serves to give you a solid foundation of information that is trusted and true as you move forward in your job search.

### **Executive Resume Samples:**

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

Here you will get a good idea of what today's leadership resumes look like.

### **Executive Resume Packages:**

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

### **Online Executive How-To Job Search Coaching and Career Management:**

<http://www.maryelizabethbradford.com/success-store.php>

My popular success store for executive career management

### **Bimonthly Electronic Newsletter, The Career Insider:**

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

I have readers that have been on my e-zine for years because not only do I give effective job search secrets, I also report on growing industries where the jobs are. Subscription is complimentary and you can unsubscribe anytime.

### **Career Directors International**

<http://www.careerdirectors.com/jobseeker.htm>

The career services industry is an unregulated one. That is why it is my belief that if you are going to hire someone, be it a resume writer, job search coach, or other similar expert, they should be certified by an outstanding organization and this is my favorite, Career Directors International. It is run by veteran expert Laura DeCarlo, a highly respected voice and trail blazer in the careers industry. Certifications are tough to get and require the recipient to partake in several different kinds of ongoing industry participation to keep them. This is a good thing! Check out the CDI site for articles, videos, and resources.

### **The Riley Guide**

<http://www.rileyguide.com/>

I have used The Riley Guide for years for deep level research on every conceivable job search topic! Check out the A to Z index to search for exactly what you want and need. The Riley Guide is a directory of employment and career information sources and services on the Internet. It is primarily intended to provide instruction for job seekers on how to use the Internet to their best advantage, but recruiters and other career service industry professionals will find information here to help them also.

### **Rites of Passage at \$100,000 to \$1 Million+: Your Insider's Lifetime Guide to Executive Job-changing and Faster Career Progress in the 21st Century**

<http://www.amazon.com>

Available for the first time in paperback, this is a fully updated and revised edition of *Rites of Passage*. Originally published in 1988 with over 400,000 copies sold, this new edition is even more comprehensive, more personal, and presented with more humor and fun.

This is not your typical boring career book. It is an engaging, fun read that has proven effective in matching executive level people with executive level jobs.

Additional eBooks on the Executive Job Search:

[www.amazon.com/Mary-Elizabeth-Bradford/e/B004UMSH90/ref=ntt\\_athr\\_dp\\_pel\\_1](http://www.amazon.com/Mary-Elizabeth-Bradford/e/B004UMSH90/ref=ntt_athr_dp_pel_1)

Barnes & Noble Nook Books:

[www.barnesandnoble.com/s/the-career-artisan?keyword=the+career+artisan&store=e-book](http://www.barnesandnoble.com/s/the-career-artisan?keyword=the+career+artisan&store=e-book)



## BONUS: FIVE COMMON EXECUTIVE RESUME MISTAKES

I see it too many times.

Brilliant, forward-thinking executives missing out on fabulous job opportunities . . . just because their resume wasn't working for them like it should!

A resume is no place to cut corners on your job search . . . that's like going on a first date with someone you really like without getting all cleaned up. Yikes!

Here are five common resume mistakes to avoid:

### **Mistake number one: Too generalized.**

If you are an executive you must be able to communicate precisely what you bring to the table.

Here is a quick tip on getting specific: what is the ONE key area where you really shine? Is it your industry (that you plan to say in) or is it a function or a process? Once you have that written down, next write down your next two greatest strengths.

Are these keywords right at the top of your resume? They should be.

### **Mistake number two: Too long.**

Is your resume more than two pages? Under certain circumstances a three-page resume is acceptable (and of course a CV can be as long as you like), but generally you are better served to keep your resume no longer than two pages.

### **Mistake number three: Too garbled.**

Word economy is extremely important when it comes to writing your resume. Do you have a long list of bullet points under your job from the 1990s? Was the position you held at that time about four levels below where you are at now? If the answer is yes, that is a big red flag.

Perception is everything, and you really want your potential employer to see you as the leader you are now, not the manager you once were.

### **Mistake number four: Too plain.**

Have you looked at samples of executive-level resumes? How does yours measure up to them?

Boxes, arrows, and even small charts and graphs that demonstrate your accomplishments are quick, compelling, and effective strategies that garner positive attention.

Have you ever looked at a credentialed, experienced resume writer's website and seen the testimonials about how Mr. Executive couldn't get an interview until Mrs. Super-Resume Writer redesigned his resume? It works, and it's a wise (and often tax deductible) investment!

### **Mistake number five: Too boring.**

One of the most important things your resume should convey is your accomplishments. They need to be short, quantified, and highly compelling!

This is a tough one for most executives. One of the reasons is because at the executive level – so much has been accomplished that executives have trouble encapsulating all they have done. The trick is to write TO the position you want – and pick your accomplishments that best support your next role.

But you can begin by using a simple template that includes the following:

1. Problem.
2. What you did.
3. What happened when you did it?

I should add that your accomplishments should communicate what you are doing when you are at your very best and **LOVING** your job! This way you will be honoring your strengths and aptitudes authentically and attracting the right attention!

By avoiding these five mistakes you stand to secure more high quality interviews and reach your career goals more quickly and easily!

## **BONUS: 5 JOB SEARCH SHORTCUTS FOR EXECUTIVES**

A job search can quickly become a time-consuming and frustrating experience, without the right tools, planning, and resources. Making one mistake, such as “surfing the Internet” as your main medium for job hunting, can lead to countless hours of wasted time each week. Here are five simple steps to save yourself time, frustration, and wasted energy:

### **Step 1: Create your system.**

Use a simple system to map out (yes, actually write it out—so it’s “out of your head” and on paper!) your job search goals. Where you are going, what is motivating you, your thoughts on how you are going to get there, and what your ultimate goal is. Mapping out your plan and your strategy will keep you on track and focused—thus saving you wasted time and energy.

### **Step 2: Use a job aggregator.**

In other words, a beta search engine for jobs. Most high level positions will not be posted on job boards – but some will. Using a aggregator like indeed.com you can use one site for one search to find almost all posted jobs. Put in some job search keywords and set up several email alerts so opportunities come right to a dedicated email. Set it and forget it! Check your alerts a few minutes each day or every week – and don’t spend too much time here. You can also use these email alerts to get a bird's eye view of company movement and general economic indicators either in a geographic area or industry.

Understand that responses on any job board vary from 2% to 6% - so take this particular job search strategy in stride. With those odds, this is one critical area you really want to look to streamline your search and save yourself time.

### **Step 3: Set up systems to tap into the hidden job market**

Google maps can easily find companies, names and niche markets in any particular area for quick effective market research and to set up highly focused direct mail campaigns. Google news alerts is a fantastic piece of technology that you can use to gather information on companies, growing industries, M&A’s, corporate moves or expansions – virtually anything – saving you an amazing amount of time and putting you in control of your job search.

### **Step 4: Invest wisely.**

It’s easy to figure out where best to invest your time. Simply identify the top three areas where you are most certain to penetrate your market. It could be “like companies” in a technology business park, or a trade association, through social networking sites, or through a portal such as the top 10 executive recruiting firms. Once you have identified where to invest your time for the biggest payback, you can minimize the time you spend on other job search activities while you maximize your time in your key areas.

### **Step Five: Create a schedule.**

Create a modest “job search schedule” for yourself. Specifically, days and times each week you are going to devote to your career move. Why a “modest” schedule? Because you want to create a schedule you can actually keep and feel a real sense of achievement as you reach your weekly goals. You can always increase your commitment later! This technique works wonders during a career search. You will be amazed how accomplishing your job search goals in real time will motivate you as you move forward!

## **BONUS: How to Protect Your Privacy During an Executive Job Search Transition**

Embarking on a career transition involves exposing yourself to certain risks, including your activities being discovered by your current employer.

Although there are few ways to completely shield yourself from being found out, there are many ways to protect your privacy and minimize your risk across different platforms. Here are a few tips:

### **Your Resume**

Personally, I don't recommend uploading your resume to major career boards because I find a more direct and controlled approach brings higher quality opportunities. If you want to learn more about this, I write about job search strategies in [my e-books](#).

Additionally, posting your resume on a job board can bring you less than reputable propositions – including slick and highly convincing marketing companies that some say take advantage of job seekers with bogus job offers. If you do opt for posting to a major job board (and even if you don't), I generally recommend leaving your street address off of your resume. Your city, state and zip, along with your other contact information, is sufficient.

### **LinkedIn**

If your LinkedIn network includes your employer and team, be careful with your activity updates. Requesting lots of recommendations or updating your profile several times in a short period could be a red flag to your employer.

Ask for and give recommendations slowly, over a period of time if possible, instead of all at once. You can adjust your profile settings so your network isn't alerted when updates to your profile are made.

If you join any job search or recruiting groups, adjust your settings when you join so that the icon doesn't show up on your groups page.

### **Website**

Opting for a website which is a nice touch because it works for you 24 hours a day. If it includes your photo, an audio clip, or a video, it can create a strong first impression. Most D.I.Y. website and blog platforms allow you to password protect your site if you are worried about overexposure, and you can give out your password at your discretion.

### **Your Financials**

Sometimes during a job search interview process, your credit can be looked into as part of the screening. If you want to learn how to protect your credit and financial information, I wrote a detailed [blog post about it](#).

## **Secret Job Search**

My late friend Mark Hovind wrote about [the secret job search](#). I think this is both a safe and smart idea for high profile executives who mustn't get caught vetting new opportunities. Basically, Mark suggests recruiting the help of a friend (preferably another top executive, mentor, or past boss) to field interested parties for you. Once your friend gives you the basic info, you can decide if you wish to reveal your identity to the potential recruiter, private equity firm, venture capital firm, or company.

## **Executive Recruiters**

You may be working with a firm to send out a mass recruiter distribution for you, or you may be contacting top recruiters one-by-one. Whichever method you use, you can share both in your introductory letter to them and on the phone with a statement like, "I would appreciate you keeping this inquiry confidential."

If your company has reorganized, been bought by an investment firm, merged or acquired you could add, "I would not want to disturb my company for simply considering alternatives as a result of our merger, acquisition etc..." or, "My current position is secure and I would ask that my inquiry be kept confidential."

## **BONUS: The Executive Job Search: How to Choose Corporate Culture & Company Size – A Quick Guide**

Are you wondering if your next career move should focus on landing a position in a large multinational corporation, mid-sized company or a fast growing company or startup? Here is a quick guide to help you determine the best fit for you!

### **Traditional Corporate Culture**

- Hierarchical
- Follow Instructions and Procedures
- Delaying is Better Than Making Mistakes
- Clear Established Chain of Command
- Protect Yourself First
- Clear Boundaries
- Motivate Via Promotions
- Reporting Systems

### **Progressive Corporate Culture**

- Loose Structure
- Brainstorming, Suggestions and Ideas
- Trying New Approaches is Encouraged
- Taking Ownership
- Networking & Building Teams
- Entrepreneurial in Approach
- Needs People Who Are Not Afraid To Question
- Motivate by Giving Leadership and Independence and Freedom to Create
- Using Mentors

### **Benefits of Small Companies**

- Accessibility to Top Leadership
- Ability to Impact and Wear More Hats
- Recognition and Promotion Through Special Projects
- Rewarded for Taking Initiative
- More Flexibility to Perform Work and Be Compensated in Less Traditional Ways
- Freedom to Get Projects and Assignments Done
- Excitement of Being Part of Something New and Emerging
- Rewarded for Performance vs. Length of Employment

### **Benefits of Large Companies**

- More Opportunities Within the Organization
- Security (to a point)

- Working in a System With Channel of Command Compliments Some Personalities Best
- Prestige
- Stability
- Compensation and Benefits



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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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 founder and chief editor of [maryelizabethbradford.com](http://maryelizabethbradford.com), a site voted by FORBES in the Top 100 Career Websites.

**Mary Elizabeth** is a world class executive coach and confidential sounding board to top executives worldwide. She has 17 years of experience overcoming challenges exclusive to executives in career transition on topics including establishing thought leadership, securing outside directorships, C-suite entry, management consulting, industry transitions, overcoming liabilities, and more.



She is one of just a handful of career experts worldwide that has been awarded Career Directors International's coveted **Master Career Professional Lifetime Achievement Award** and **has been featured in major media including The Wall Street Journal, Businessweek, MSN, Readers Digest, PBS & NBC news affiliates.**

Her executive resume packages help professionals all over the world secure more interviews, get bigger offers, and land the jobs they want.

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 has served on multiple CDI committees and judging panels throughout the years. She obtained her certification as an **Internationally Advanced Resume Writer** and **Master Career Director** through CDI in 2005.

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