



THE MODERN
JOB SEEKER'S
HANDBOOK

Strategic Job Searching

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Foreword

First and foremost, I'd like to thank God. For through Him, all things are possible. Secondly, I want to thank my wifey for life. Aida, none of this would be possible without your unyielding love, support, and belief in me. Lastly, I want to thank my children. Zuriya & Yohanna, you are my motivation, you are my why. All of my hard work and future successes are attributed to endeavoring to provide a life full of limitless opportunities for all three of you.

To you, the reader, the Modern Job Seeker. You are beyond worthy of, and truly deserve to find long-term career success, enjoyment, and fulfillment. This handbook was written with the intent of helping you to realize this, actualize it, and provide a blueprint for achieving it. Thank you for purchasing my book and allowing me to be a part of your employment journey.

Introduction

Searching for a job in the modern job marketplace is not something that should intimidate you, create anxiety within you, or stress you out. Yet for most, it often is. This applied to me for most of my adult life. Over the course of my professional career, I've applied to hundreds of jobs and have interviewed upwards of forty times. Since graduating from Occidental College in 2005, I've held eight full-time positions within six companies, across multiple industries. I found almost all of my employment opportunities, the way that most people find jobs in the 21st century. Searching and applying to every single online job posting that I was remotely qualified for, over the course of several days, weeks, and months. During this time period, I wasted a lot of time unintentionally re-applying to job postings, applying to jobs that I really wasn't interested in, and applying to jobs that I was both underqualified and overqualified for. Ultimately, my shotgun approach was effective because my job search eventually culminated in a new employment opportunity. However, it was anything but efficient. It was arduous, exhausting, and stressful. This was because my job search had no structure or strategy. It was driven solely by an urgent necessity to secure new employment as quickly as possible.

I was chasing the job I needed, not the job I wanted. Not taking into account long-term career success, enjoyment, and fulfillment. I had no plan or strategy for how this next job was going to allow me to progress my career towards achieving long-term career success or enjoyment. My only non-negotiable was that my salary would not decrease. Thankfully, I was able to level up from one company to the next. Meaning each new job came with both more money and more responsibilities than its predecessor. But that's only because of my ability to leverage past experiences to effectively sell myself to prospective employers during the interview process. However, it wasn't until I started my career in the staffing industry, did I truly begin to understand what an efficient and effective job search looked like. Especially given the technological resources, tools, and knowledge available to every job seeker, at little or no cost. To find the job you want, the one that will lead you on the path towards long-term career success and enjoyment, all it takes is understanding what you want, establishing your non-negotiables, and committing to follow a job search strategy. There are various job search strategies you can utilize. The internet is littered with articles and books on them. The key is finding the one that works best for you, and seeing it through.

In 2013, I accepted a position as Recruiter with Aerotek. For years, I successfully recruited candidates, trained recruiters, and sold staffing services in one of the largest job markets in the country, Los Angeles, California. I recruited across dozens of skillsets, qualifying job requisitions for numerous hiring managers, and creating application packages for hundreds of job seekers. I learned how to quickly and efficiently identify qualified candidates, and recruit them for my clients' open positions. And I gained tremendous insights into the hiring processes of companies ranging from single digit employee startups up to companies with hundreds of employees, spanning across several industries, all of them sharing an urgent need for qualified candidates, and placing immense value on referrals by internal employees or professional colleagues. This is why having strong professional and alumni networks are important.

During my tenure at Aerotek, I communicated with thousands of job seekers and interviewed hundreds of potential candidates. These interactions were with people across the spectrum of age, ethnicity, gender, social economic background, and level of experience. Some candidates had 30+ years of work experience, while some had no work experience. However, all were striving for long-term career success and enjoyment, yet unsure of how to find the right employment opportunity that would get them there. Some had amazing resumes, while some had no resumes. Most were somewhere in the middle struggling to condense years of experience into 1 – 2 pages. Some interviewed like they were a professional, while most just needed some fine-tuning. Occasionally, some required serious coaching. But all were searching for the confidence in themselves, and the words to adequately convey the value of their experience to potential employers. Above all else, each individual was searching for a new employment opportunity that would improve their standard of living. No matter who they were, or what they were going through, they were committed to securing a new employment opportunity.

What I came to realize is that everyone could use a job search strategist and employment advocate to support them in achieving their employment goals. Someone to help them write an impactful resume and cover letter. Someone to help them conduct their job search and prep for interviews. Someone to talk to and strategize with when things aren't going well at work. I know I personally could have used all of these several times throughout my career. After all, the average person will spend 90,000+ hours at work in their lifetime. Achieving long-term career success and enjoyment is what we all deserve and should be striving for. To accomplish this, leveraging previous work experience in order to level up into new employment opportunities is very important. As such, understanding the basics of resumes, cover letters, job searching, and interviewing are a necessity for every person in the workforce.

The strategies presented here are learned from professional training and osmosis, and a bit more through trial and error as a job seeker. This has granted me a unique perspective, which I'm leveraging to strategize and advocate for you. The process I explain here was built from several years as a job seeker, and a few years as a staffing professional, mixed with some long nights of industry research and professional development. It is the same process that I followed, which led me to a career path where I'm finding more success, enjoyment, and fulfillment than I ever have. The Modern Job Seekers Handbook is me sharing what I've learned and continue to learn along my own professional journey. My goal is to help thousands of job seekers find the long-term career success, enjoyment, and fulfillment they deserve.

Be sure to email TheModernJobSeeker@gmail.com to share any insights, suggestions, or your personal successes regarding the process. You can [visit our webpage](#) to join our community of Modern Job Seekers and gain access to exclusive content. Also, follow us on social media and share your success stories with our community of Modern Job Seekers. You never know who you will impact or how you will be impacted in the process.

Professional Housekeeping

Before we embark on this journey to find you the job you want, not just the job you need, we must discuss a few professional housekeeping items first. Now, to some of you, these might seem like common sense. If so, then you're one-step ahead of the game. For the rest of us, these items are essential to executing a successful job search and crushing the interview. First and foremost, you above all else must take pride in, and ownership of, your professional brand. Recruiters and Hiring Managers don't have the time to read in-depth the hundreds of resumes they receive weekly. Most only have time to skim for the highlights.

Nothing can get you disqualified quicker from a hiring search than a distasteful email account. So, the first thing you will need to create is a professional email account. Because nothing says hire me like receiving an application from bigbdaddylongstroke@gmail.com or twerkqueen69@aol.com. I don't care how impressive your resume and skills are, the hiring manager's perception of your professional brand isn't going to be a positive one. Here are a few professional email options to consider, utilizing combinations including your name:

- ❖ **First Name.Last Name@**
- ❖ **First Name_Last Name@**

- ❖ **First Name.Middle Initial.Last Name@**
- ❖ **First_Middle Initial_Last Name@**

This professional email account is where all of your professional online communication should be sent to and from. I suggest utilizing an email hosting service that also offers a connected calendar application, such as Gmail or Outlook. Once you've created your professional email account, you will want to go into your settings and create a signature to place at the bottom of every outbound email. You will want to ensure employers you email can easily access your contact info to follow up with you. Here is what I use as my email signature:

**Thank you,
Norm Williams Jr.
(555) 555 – 5555
email@gmail.com**

Another essential of a successful job search is having an up-to-date, straight-forward and grammatical error-free resume. There are several schools of thought on what a properly formatted and well-written resume looks like. From both my professional and personal experience, a professional resume will be less than two pages and include the following:

- ❖ **Name, Address, Contact Number and Email**
- ❖ **Professional Summary or Objective, & Skills**
- ❖ **Education, Certifications, & Languages**
- ❖ **Detailed Chronological Work History (previous 10 years)**
- ❖ **Highlight All Relevant Experience**
- ❖ **Professional Affiliations & Volunteer Work (optional)**

Additionally, having a cover letter is equally important. Not only will a well-written cover letter make you stand out amongst the other applicants, but also in some industries, recruiters and hiring managers will not even consider a resume without a cover letter. A great cover letter will allow you to specifically target the job and employer, leaving your resume to market your experience, skills, and qualities. Additionally, it will not repeat your resume, but will address the following in an engaging and thoughtful manner:

- ❖ **What about the job and company are attractive to you and why you want to work there.**
- ❖ **Relevant experience, unique skills, and qualities you'll bring to the job and company.**
- ❖ **Relevant educational background, certifications, and qualifications.**
- ❖ **Career goals as it relates to the job or company.**
- ❖ **Thank the reviewer for their time.**

It is imperative that both your resume and cover letter professionally represents you. If you have any questions or would like to receive more personalized assistance with your resume, cover letter or any other aspect of your job search, please visit us at TheModernJobSeeker.com or email us TheModernJobSeeker@gmail.com with your questions. You can also shoot over to our social media pages for additional content to help you craft a professional, well-written resume and cover letter.

Now that your professional email account is set up and resume is updated, you should create LinkedIn, Career Builder, Indeed, Monster, and ZipRecruiter accounts. LinkedIn is a social network for professionals across all industries. This will be the home of your professional brand, resume, and network, and where you will engage with potential employers. I mentioned earlier that having strong professional and alumni networks are extremely beneficial in your job search. I would highly suggest you spend some time completing your profile and upload the most professional picture you have. Start building your network of contacts and join groups that align with your past education, professional interests and any organizations you're a part of. Having a robust network of professional contacts prove extremely valuable throughout your job search.

Career Builder, Indeed.com, Monster.com, and ZipRecruiter.com are four of the largest online job boards and where I've found the most success identifying both jobs and companies, as well as securing interviews. There are several other online job boards out there; I advise you to use them and any other resources available to you. Just like in poker, you can never have too many outs. Upload your resume and complete your profile. BE SURE TO CREATE JOB ALERTS so you are notified via email whenever jobs you desire are posted. Explore all of the career resources each job board has to offer.

This next professional housekeeping tip is more aligned with crushing the interview. But I'm a firm believer that if you stay ready, you don't have to get ready. Your appearance and hygiene when you show up to an interview are paramount. I don't care if you are interviewing for the position of a warehouse worker or an electrical engineer. If you show up to the interview under-dressed, looking like a sloppy jalopy that smells like yesterday, you've wasted everyone's time, because no matter how the interview goes, no respectable company would want you representing them. Make the investment in professional interview attire. You don't need brand name or designer garments. A suit from Goodwill or blouse from a thrift shop is just as adequate as an outfit from Macy's or Nordstrom's. Above all else, the clothes must appropriately fit your body type. When you look good, you feel good and perform good. Here is my humble suggestion on appropriate interview attire:

- ❖ **Men: Dark Suit (black or blue), Dress Shirt (white or blue), Tie (match suit & shirt), Dress Socks, and Black Dress Shoes.**
- ❖ **Women: Dark Pants Suit or Dark Skirt (below the knee) with a Jacket/Sweater, Blouse, Stockings, and Closed-Toe Shoes.**

I cannot over-stress the importance of taking a shower the morning of your interview. If you wear cologne or perfume, wear a light layer only. Please don't overdo it on the smell-good. Some interview rooms are very small, so it'd be a shame to suffocate your interviewer to death before they can pass you on to the next round. Be sure your clothes are wrinkle-free, appropriate for your form, and help to present the best version of you! Also, grab some mints and keep your breath extra fresh. Your interviewer will appreciate it. Again, we'll cover this in more detail down the road when we get you ready to crush your interview.

There's Gotta Be Something More

Every new job search tends to begin when someone has that aha moment at work. When they say to themselves that there's gotta be something more for them than what they're doing. I've had a few, but my most recent aha moment happened just before I decided to leave the regimented comfort and stability of my corporate account management job to embark on a new career in construction management, an industry in which I had no educational training or professional work experience in. However, what I did have was a wealth of transferable skills, a general understanding of the construction process and a strong desire to learn.

At the time, I was employed by a prominent staffing firm, recruiting and selling staffing services to engineering and construction companies in Los Angeles for almost four years. I was making decent money, but not nearly reaching my potential. I was working really hard, but success was an inconsistent visitor sent only to taunt me on occasion. Basically, there wasn't much that excited me about my job. Like most of us, I was just going through the motions, working for the weekend. Although one of the few things I did enjoy and looked forward to was being on construction sites visiting clients or potential clients. Experiencing all of the trades' intense-singular focus on one goal and being able to witness their daily measurable results excited me. Learning all that I could about what they were building, how they planned to build it, and their daily responsibilities intrigued me.

The more I learned, the more it became evident that I was developing a passion for construction and wanted to learn how to manage projects in the field. But as I began to peel back the layers on why I was so drawn to construction, I realized that I really enjoyed building things, not with my hands, but with my mind. I've always excelled at planning, developing processes, managing timelines, organizational development, training, and interpersonal communication, which are skills that a good construction manager needs to have in order to

effectively deliver projects on-schedule and on-budget. So while still being employed with the staffing company, I began working part-time as an Assistant Superintendent for a small restaurant builder. Three months later, I became a full-time Assistant Superintendent.

For me, the feeling of “there’s gotta be something more” started well before I began to realize that something more, meant this radical career change. For several months prior, I felt as if I were meandering through a maze of mediocrity, waiting for something to pull me from the abysmal existence I was drowning in. Dramatic, I know, but I am a father of two daughters who both have an inherited flare for the dramatic... Not sure who they got that from more, my wife or I. My much-needed life raft came in the form of a conversation with my dad. After hearing the exasperation in my voice, as I laid it all out to him, he said, “Jr, why don’t you do for yourself, what you do for all the people you help get jobs? Put your thinking cap on, stop focusing on the problem, and figure out a solution.” Light bulb. So that is exactly what I did. I started by asking myself the same three questions I ask every job seeker during our first interaction: Why do I want to leave my current job? What do I want my new job to look like? What are my non-negotiables in accepting a new job?

Determining your Why, Wants & Non-Negotiables

In order to find the job you want, will enjoy, and will excel in, not just another job you need to get by, you should begin by objectively answering the following questions: Why do I want to leave my current job? What do I want my new job to look like? What are my top 3 non-negotiables in accepting a new job? The answers to these questions will help to build the foundation for your job search, interview strategy, and long-term employment satisfaction.

Why do you want to leave your current job?

“Simple, I’m unhappy here. I’m overworked, underpaid, and negatively appreciated, if there is such a thing.” I heard variations of this sentiment from job seekers regularly. Heck, I’ve even echoed parts of this statement myself. If you objectively look at the aforementioned statement as true, then the objective answer is that you’re the only one who controls your happiness. So you’re the one allowing yourself to be overworked, underpaid, and negatively appreciated, if there is such a thing, which leads to a series of questions: Why is this happening? Have the responsibilities you agreed to perform during the required hours at the pay rate offered changed since you began working? Or is this what you signed up for? Are you just burnt out, over it, and give no fucks? Then what succubus came along and devoured all of the joy from your world? Have you outgrown your role and company, and are ready for a new challenge? Then what is stopping you from making a change? The driving force behind why you’re unhappy and want to leave your current job is something that only you can answer and find the solution to. This is where it starts.

Also, part of this objective exercise is to try to look at your pain point from the company perspective. Is the company short-staffed and having a hard time finding qualified talents; therefore, requiring crews to work longer shifts and more days to meet production demands, while the employees’ hard work goes unacknowledged, creating resentment and discontent? Or it could be the company has changed aspects of employees’ roles that they’re not okay with and increased production goals, all to meet client demands in an ever-changing marketplace. As a result, they were forced to bring in an underqualified supervisor because they desperately needed someone in that role and hired the best available to them. The answer to this could be any number of infinite possibilities that are specific to your current employment situation. As the war saying goes, “In order to defeat your enemy, you must first understand them.”

Finding the root cause of why you’re no longer content with your current employment situation and seeking to understand what led you there, from both your own and the company perspective, will help you identify red flags in, and convert your experience into questions for, potential future employers. If you are able to step back and view your employment situation from an objective perspective, it will help provide clarity around the cause of your unhappiness and the factors leading to it. Which will help to lead you down a path towards finding long-term career success and enjoyment.

What do you want your new job to look like?

In November 2017, I had been working for a small restaurant builder in Los Angeles as an Assistant Superintendent for about 8 months. I was gaining valuable construction experience and my years of management experience proved to be a large value-add for the company. As such, my responsibilities quickly escalated and soon I was managing small projects and crews on my own. However, like many small businesses it was plagued by operational deficiencies, understaffing, and poor financial management. I knew this going in, but this was a job I needed to gain the experience required, to get the job I wanted. STRATEGY. The ship was sinking and everyone knew they'd most likely not have a job after the new year. Yet no one was really preparing to abandon the ship, except for a handful of us who were working on our own exit strategies. Knowing my professional background, many of my coworkers began turning to me for advice. I told them that they needed to quickly learn how to leverage their past experience to create a new opportunity.

What I mean by this, is to critically analyze your previous work experience. Assess what aspects of your previous jobs you performed well in and most enjoyed. Write them down and determine your desired job title. Then research for, and apply to companies that employ people who perform the job functions you are best at and most enjoy. This will allow you to further develop the professional skills you are strongest in. Helping you to towards finding long-term career success, enjoyment, and fulfillment. Hopefully, at the next company, you don't have to endure the things that made you discontent at your previous company. But if you do, get your Lebron on and take your talents to South Beach. Translation: Take the experience you gained and continue to progress your career elsewhere, where you will be more appreciated. Also, please do not take that previous statement as an endorsement for job hopping. That is one of the most tragic things you can do to your professional brand. I know it's not always possible, but, ideally, you should spend at least 18 – 24 months learning and growing with one company, before moving on.

About this same time, my five-month-pregnant wife and I decided to relocate our growing family from Los Angeles to San Diego, in a little less than three months, which presented me with the opportunity to find a much-needed new employer and attempt to level up again. Although I had less than ninety days to do so, I was fully confident that I could do it. Especially since it wouldn't be hard for me to determine why I wanted to get a new job, what I wanted that new job to look like, and what my top 3 non-negotiables were.

Since I had been building restaurants for the past eight months, I knew I wanted to stay in commercial construction. I didn't and still don't enjoy building restaurants, so I wanted to focus on companies that specialized in retail construction. I wanted the title of Superintendent, and the associated responsibilities. I wanted to work for an established and well-managed company that had at least 100 employees, with a good reputation in the industry. I wanted to have the upward mobility to become a Project Manager and beyond. The company would preferably be based in the San Diego area, but the work would often be outside of the area. An aspect I wasn't fond of, but extended traveling for projects is often required in this line of work. After a couple of weeks, I found a handful of companies who fit the mold I was looking for and began applying. I accepted an offer from the top company on my list, within 5 weeks of starting my job search.

As you think about what you want your new job to look like, be sure to consider how well it aligns with your experience, professional strengths, career development goals, salary expectations, employer quality preferences, and anything else that is most important to you regarding your professional brand. Just as determining why you're ready for a new employment opportunity, deciding what you want your new employment opportunity to look like, in advance of embarking on your job search, will help you focus on finding the job you want, not the one you need. This will lead you towards a path of long-term career success and enjoyment, which is ultimately what we all and should want.

What are your top 3 non-negotiables in accepting a new job?

A non-negotiable is described as something that is not open to discussion or modification. It cannot be bought, sold, exchanged, or transferred. This means that above all else, if a company does not readily offer you

these items, then it is not worthy of your consideration. It is not necessary to have three non-negotiables, you can have more or less. It is completely your personal preference. I tend to keep it at three because there are really only three things regarding my employment that are of great importance to me.

My first non-negotiable is that the company must offer a benefits package that includes reasonably priced-full coverage healthcare plans for my family, life insurance, and a 401K matching program. Providing for, and ensuring the wellbeing of, my family is my top priority. Therefore, I can't in good conscience accept a position that doesn't offer this. My second non-negotiable is that the company must meet or exceed my minimum salary threshold for the position offered. As a general rule, I tend to ask for \$5K – \$7K more per year than I'm willing to accept. My third, and final non-negotiable is that promotion from within and upward mobility must be endorsed by company leadership. I only want to be a part of organizations that value training and developing its employees into future leaders within the company, or marketplace at large.

As you think about what your non-negotiables are. Be sure to consider that this job must allow you to provide for, and take care of, yourself and family. Since ultimately you plan to leverage the experience you gain here to create a better opportunity for yourself, you should also seek to align yourself with employers that promote from within, offer training and development opportunities, have a set of core values or beliefs they follow, and definitely pay you what you believe you are worth. Your non-negotiables should be tailored to fit what works best for you.

If you have any questions about determining your why, wants, and non-negotiables, or would like to receive more personalized assistance, please [visit our webpage](#) or email us TheModernJobSeeker@gmail.com with your questions. You can also shoot over to our social media pages for additional content to help you determine your why, wants, and non-negotiables.

Online Research & Tracking

The key to any efficient and effective job search strategy is online research and tracking your findings. The amounts of information you will encounter can be daunting. Trying to remember details about every potential employer in your target marketplace, from websites, to company goals and objectives, to internal contacts, to who's hiring now and beyond can all be overwhelming, if you allow it to be. Spreadsheets are a useful tool you can utilize to track important data and stay organized. I suggest using Microsoft Excel, but any spreadsheeting software, as well as a pen and legal pad, will work just fine. I utilize one primary Employer Tracking Spreadsheet to capture information about the companies in my target market. It is valuable to also utilize a calendar application to track any engagement with a company including application submittals, interviews, follow-ups and any other key dates. This is why I suggested using Gmail or Outlook for your professional email, since they have accompanying calendar applications which are designed to help you stay organized. The ability to follow through is imperative in any job, and this starts during the application process, not once you get the job.

Employer Tracking Spreadsheet

I suggest using Microsoft Excel, but any spreadsheeting software, as well as a pen and a pad, will work just fine. For my employer tracking spreadsheet, I use 7 columns: Company Name, Website, Currently Hiring, Posting Link, Internal Contact, Notes, and Action Item. I've used my most recent job search for a Construction Superintendent as an example.

Company	Website	Currently Hiring	Job Posting	Internal Contact	Notes	Action Item
ABC Construction	www.abconstruction.com	Y	https://www.indeed.com/q-Construction-Superintendent-l-San-Diego,-CA-jobs.html?vjk=a54d6fasf	TBD	Just finished building the new Factory Outlet Store in Mira Mesa	Identify & contact someone on project team for the FOS in Mira Mesa
XYZ Builders	www.xyzbuilders.com	N	www.xyzbuilders.com/careers	Stan Lee / Superintendent	Stan is in my LinkedIn network and has worked there for 5 years & has been promoted	Contact Stan about learning more about XYZ Builders and referring me

If an employer has posted a job opening for a position I'm interested in, to an online job board or to their company website within the past 30 days, I consider them to be currently hiring, and mark those companies with "Y" for yes. Also, I copy and paste the link into the Job Posting Link column of my spreadsheet. Although the company may be well into the interview process, every company likes to have options. Especially if another qualified candidate is eager to get into the mix. Plus, if the candidate they select doesn't work out, your name is now in the mix for the next round of hiring. Adversely, if I don't encounter a job post during my prospecting, I mark those companies with a "N" for no, then add their careers or employment webpage link into the Job Posting Link column of my spreadsheet. Once you begin applying to jobs, you'll want to prioritize applying to companies who are currently hiring first.

In an effort to increase our chances of securing an interview. We should seek to identify an internal contact within our target organization. When I say "identify," that also means tracking down an email or contact number for them. The generic @careers or @jobs email accounts found on company websites don't count as internal contacts. But you will more than likely use them at some point. In today's modern job marketplace, companies value referral-based hiring, often offering some sort of bonus to an internal employee who refers a job candidate that successfully transitions into an employee. Ideally, you will have someone in your professional network who either works for your target company or knows someone who does. It will be much easier to engage this person to learn more about the company and seek an employment referral, than with someone you don't know. If an internal contact is willing to refer you for employment, this person becomes an advocate.

This is why it is very important to build a robust LinkedIn network. I implore you to spend some time building your LinkedIn network on the frontend of your job search. If you do have a solid network, you should focus on optimizing your profile for maximum exposure. If utilized properly, your network will continue to pay dividends long after you secured employment, providing opportunities for business partnerships, as well as sales or service contracts opportunities.

Given the number of companies you will be researching and internal contacts you may encounter, it will be valuable to take notes of anything you find interesting about a company, or that distinguishes them from their competition. In the example above, it is extremely valuable knowing that ABC Construction built the new Factory Outlet Store (FOS) in Mira Mesa. You can use this knowledge as leverage to identify and speak with someone on the project team, which gives you an internal contact that you could add to your professional network and hopefully flip into an advocate. This displays a variety of skills, the foremost being initiative. Great companies value initiative. You can also use the knowledge that ABC Construction built the FOS in Mira Mesa and who was on the project team, to display your industry knowledge and attention to local market opportunities when you

Speak with Stan at XYZ Builders. Which I assure you, he will find impressive whether he previously knew this information or not. But if you never took that note, who's to say you'd remember that tidbit of seemingly irrelevant information...

Maintaining a consistent level of organization is imperative to executing an efficient and effective job search. Believe me, initially, it is a painstaking task, but you will quickly see return on your time investment. It is easy to become overwhelmed by the sheer amount of companies on your list and the associated tasks that must be executed even before you begin applying to jobs. A lot of this anxiety can be dissipated by documenting and tracking regularly updated action items for each company. Each action item should progressively advance your job search with that company. In the example above, my action items are to identify and contact someone on the FOS project team at ABC Construction, plus contact Stan, a Superintendent at XYZ Builders, seeking to learn more about each company and flip these contacts into advocates. Ideally, my next action items for both companies would be to follow through on whatever items were discussed with the contact on the FOS project team and Stan, progressively advancing my job search at each company with each

Key Event Calendaring

The ability to follow through is imperative in any job, and this starts during the application process, not once you get the job. It is valuable to utilize a calendar application to track any engagement with a company including application submittals, interviews, follow-ups, and any other key items. To ensure timely follow-up and follow-through, I suggest using Gmail or Outlook for your professional email, since they have accompanying calendar applications which are designed to help you stay organized. I highly prefer and suggest utilizing a calendar, as opposed to tracking these items via your spreadsheet.

Let's imagine you've applied to 30 jobs, how are you going to keep track of when and where you applied, and when you should follow up for feedback on your application? From these 30 applications, you were able to secure 10 interviews, how are you going to keep track of when, where, who, and why, in regards to your interviews? Over the course of these 10 interviews, you were interviewed by 24 different people, how are you going to keep track of who to send, and who you've sent, thank you emails to, plus when to follow up with each for interview feedback? Maintaining a key event calendar will allow you to keep track of, and set alarm notifications for important job search events and milestones. Throughout your job search, you can utilize your calendar to keep track of:

- ❖ **Interviews, thank you emails & interview follow-ups**
- ❖ **Application submittals & follow-ups**
- ❖ **Any scheduled phone calls regarding your job search**
- ❖ **Any action items with deadlines**
- ❖ **Anything else you find valuable to track**

Each item should be created as an event, a time scheduled, a notification alarm added, and any pertinent information about the event included. Also, you should add your preferred calendar application widget to your cellphone home screen. This hyper visibility will truly help you stay organized and task-oriented when it comes to your job search. I feel confident that if you really thought about it, you could find a way to apply these organizational techniques to other aspects of your life.

If you have any questions about researching opportunities, spreadsheeting, and calendaring, or would like to receive more personalized assistance, please [visit our webpage](#) or email us TheModernJobSeeker@gmail.com with your questions. You can also shoot over to our social media pages for additional content to help you determine your why, wants, and non-negotiables.

Strategic Preparation Recap

As we learned, before beginning your job search, it's imperative that you take care of a few necessary professional housekeeping items, the foremost of which are ensuring that your resume and cover letter are

professional and well written. Plus, your email account should be something simple and professional. Preferably, it is hosted on a platform that has an associated calendar application. If not, you should consider Gmail or Outlook. Once you have a professional email account, plus an updated resume and cover letter, you should start building your LinkedIn network and fully optimizing your profile. I can't overstate how valuable having a robust LinkedIn network is. You should also create accounts on Career Builder, Indeed, Monster, and ZipRecruiter so that you can create saved job searches, save jobs, and track your job search history. Lastly, make an investment in your appearance and hygiene prior to the interview.

The key to any efficient and effective job search strategy is online research and tracking your findings. Because the amounts of information you will encounter can be overwhelming. I suggest utilizing a spreadsheet to track and capture valuable information about target companies in your job marketplace. Maintaining organization in your job search is a necessity. The ability to follow through is imperative in any job, and this starts during the application process, not once you get the job. It is valuable to utilize a calendar application to track any engagement with a company including application submittals, interviews, follow-ups, and any other key items. Also, you should add your preferred calendar application widget to your cellphone home screen, for increased visibility and easy access. Additionally, you should save your resume and cover letter to your phone as well.

If you've made it to this point and feel that all of this preparation is overdoing it, a bit much, or not necessary, trust me when I say that I understand. I've executed several successful job searches without this process. However, upon implementing this process, my job searches have become more efficient and effective. I've seen my total job search timeline from beginning to offer acceptance, decrease on average from 2 – 3 months, down to 4 – 6 weeks. This is a process that requires your commitment and follow-through in order reach optimal success – landing the job you want, not just the job you need. Hopefully, this job puts you on, or pushes you further along, a path towards long-term career success, enjoyment, and fulfillment.

Executing the Strategy

Now that you've determined your why, wants, and non-negotiables, as well as are prepared to track both company data and calendar key events, it's time to start prospecting for companies, and gain a better understanding of the employers in your target job marketplace. The first part of this exercise is solely about identifying, listing, and learning about each company. The goal of company prospecting and research is to identify all of the employers in your job marketplace that hire for your skillset. Whether they're currently hiring or not, is irrelevant at this point. This is all in an effort to gain a greater understanding of your job marketplace, the options available to you, and who will be the best fit for your long-term career goals. The second part of this exercise will be about how to engage internal contacts and the application process. The goal of engaging internal contacts is to learn more about the company and industry, and convert this person into an advocate.

Target Company Prospecting

There are numerous ways to prospect for target companies. This strategy focuses on Google, online job boards, and LinkedIn. I'm going to walk you through this process using my most recent job search for a Superintendent position in San Diego, as an example. Start with a Google search to get a general idea of how many potential employers there are in your job marketplace. So, my first search would be for "construction companies in San Diego". At the top of the page, it is going to give you a map and list of all construction companies Google can find in San Diego. Go through both the map and list, adding each applicable company and their website to your spreadsheet. I say applicable company, because some of the search results may not align with the type of company you're looking for. In my case, the search results included commercial and residential general contractors, as well as specialty trade contractors. Since I wanted to work for a commercial general contractor, I avoided adding residential contractors to my list. You will be tempted to start researching company websites. Do not give into this temptation just yet. This is solely about listing all potential employers in your job marketplace, and you want to do this as quickly as possible.

My next Google search would be for "superintendent jobs in San Diego". At the top of the page, it is going to list jobs in the Google job search box. Expand this box, then begin adding all of the companies you find and

their websites to your list. Once I've gone through Google, I go through each of my targeted online job boards and continue prospecting for companies there. I use "Superintendent" as my keyword and "San Diego" as my location, then add each company I encounter, and their website, to the list. I do this again for any variations of the target job title and any other job titles I'm interested in pursuing. In my case, I also used "Construction," "Assistant Project Manager," "Project Manager," and "Project Coordinator." Once you've created your list, alphabetically sort your list by company name, and remove any duplicates. Once you begin researching companies and discovering who best aligns with your professional objectives, those companies that do, will become your priority target employers and should be highlighted or moved to the top of your list.

Target Company Research

Once you've built your target company list, it's time to start the company research process. This is where you seek to learn more about each company on your target list, in order to assess how well they align with your wants, non-negotiables, and long-term career goals. As well as seek to identify an internal contact that could possibly be an advocate for you. Hopefully, while you were prospecting for companies, you located websites for each company on your target list. If you weren't able to, you will only be able to rely on how the internet perceives your target company. Then, you will have to discern for yourself the accuracy of the reviews and articles you encounter about the company. Please keep in mind that most online reviews are written after a negative experience. As you're reading reviews, try to identify trends in what the reviewers are saying about the company.

Making an assessment of your target company is easier when you have a company website to use as a roadmap. However, I've found that once I eventually learn more about those companies who don't have website, I'm less inclined to want to work with them. So, I tend to move these companies to the bottom of my list, even if they are hiring. I advise you to use your own discretion here. The process I follow for researching companies, starts with the company website. I review every section available, paying close attention to the About, Our Story, Mission, Our Team, History, Clients, Projects/Past Work and Careers sections. I, then, cross-reference what I learned on the company website with what reviewers say and how the internet at large perceives them, trying to identify trends and give myself as much data as possible. My aim is to make an assessment about how well they align with my wants, non-negotiables, and long-term career goals. Once you make your assessment, the companies that best align with your professional objectives become your priority target employers. They should be highlighted and sorted to the top of your list. Identifying an advocate and securing an interview at these companies should now become your top priority.

Concurrently, while researching your target companies, you should also be working to identify an internal contact at each. Someone who can validate your assessments about the company during an informational interview and possibly refer you for employment. An informational interview is where you meet, or speak, with someone currently employed at the company or in the industry you desire to work in, seeking to learn more about their role, the company they work for, and the industry at large. Ideally, this person will be in your LinkedIn, Facebook or alumni networks. These contacts will be the easiest to convert into advocates, who will help you get your resume in front of the right people. This is when having well-developed LinkedIn and Facebook networks, come in very handy.

In the search bar of each of the two aforementioned platforms, type in the company you're targeting, then, at the top of the results page, select people. Anyone in your network will appear first, followed by 2nd, 3rd, then unconnected contacts on LinkedIn. Add your chosen internal contact to your spreadsheet, including their name, position, and contact info. Next, you'll want to register for your high school, trade school, and/or college alumni database. Conduct a search for your target companies in that database, seeking to identify any internal contacts that can be added to your spreadsheet. If you completed an undergrad or post-grad degree, it may be worthwhile to visit the career center at your alma mater and discuss your job search with a career counselor.

At this point, if you've exhausted your professional and alumni networks, you're going to have to get creative to identify internal contacts. These folks will be less receptive to your requests than the two previous

groups. They are busy professionals who you don't know nor have a shared contact or experience with. So, if you're able to get their attention, make sure you're prepared to keep it. You can search the company website, cold-call the company, do more Google searching, search social media or anything else you can think of to identify an internal contact at your target company. Then, add your chosen internal contact to your spreadsheet. Most company websites tend to focus on highlighting senior company leadership. Rarely do they include the front-line hiring managers, whom tend to be more involved with day-to-day hiring tasks. Don't be afraid to approach these senior leaders, just make sure you have a solid strategy for how to engage them.

Engaging Internal Contacts

There is no magic formula when it comes to engaging internal contacts to solicit assistance. Especially if you have no personal or professional relationship with the person. Even if you're fortunate enough to have internal contacts in your professional network at each of your target companies, that is no guarantee that they will be receptive to your request. Time is a commodity that no professional seems to ever have enough of. So, don't take it personal if one of your target internal contacts doesn't respond to any of your communication attempts. Simply find another internal contact and repeat the process, call into the company's human resources department directly or proceed with your application process without an internal contact. But don't stop pursuing your goal of working in a company because you can't find an internal contact.

Once you've identified an internal contact you'd like to engage, you need to decide how you're going to engage them. Will it be via LinkedIn or another social media platform messaging? Or will you send them a well-crafted and personal email? Or will you call them directly? Personally, I believe the best methods are a direct call and an email. Use your discretion and choose the method that works best for you. Your communication to your target internal contacts should be short, concise, straight to the point and show deference for your target's time. Try to keep your email communication under, or as close as possible to, 150 words. Here is what my email to Stan, my target internal contact at XYZ Builders and LinkedIn 1st connection, would look like:

Hi Stan,

I'm an Assistant Superintendent with a small commercial builder in Los Angeles. I hope you don't mind me reaching out to you out of the blue like this. Since you're a 1st connection in my LinkedIn network and have successfully been employed at XYZ Builders for 5 years as a Superintendent.

I'm hoping you'd allow me a few minutes of your time to learn more about how you've found success as a Superintendent and what it's like to work at XYZ Builders. I understand you're very busy, so please let me know a good time for us to speak and I'll make sure I'm available. I'll follow up with you again at the end of the week, if we're unable to connect. I look forward to speaking with you.

I immediately let Stan know who I am and my credentials. I establish how we're connected and why I'm reaching out to him. Letting him know that I've done my research about him and his company, in the process. As well as expressing my ambition and desire to not only learn, but also be successful. I show deference to his time and submit to his schedule. I commit to following up again and set the expectation. Then I express my eagerness to speak with him. This script can be used for an email, voicemail and your opening when you actually speak with the internal contact. If this is an email, it is followed by my signature, which includes all of my contact info. If this is a voicemail, I thank him for his time and leave my name again and contact number. Repeat this process with every company and internal contact on the list.

If you were unable to identify an internal contact at a target company, I would advise you to call the company, and ask to speak to the human resources department or someone who handles hiring for your target position within the organization. Then modify the above script to look something like this:

Hello,

My name is Norm Williams, I'm an Assistant Superintendent with a small commercial builder in Los Angeles. I'm not sure if your company offers informational interviews. But would it be possible to speak with someone to learn more about your company and the commercial construction division?

It's intimidating to ask another person for help, especially if you don't know them very well. I can see how this can be especially terrifying for someone not in a profession that requires them to regularly engage with variety of people, through written and verbal communication. However, all of these engagement strategies mean nothing if you're not brave enough to execute them. No one enjoys making themselves vulnerable and stepping outside of their comfort zone. Very few people find security and comfort in searching for a new job. So, since you're already stretching the boundaries of your self-imposed limitations, why not stretch them a little more, increasing your knowledge, and what you're truly capable of?

Understand it may take several attempts before anyone you attempt to contact responds to you, if they respond at all. Let me remind you, having an internal contact or advocate at your target company is something that is very nice to have and will greatly benefit your job search. But you can certainly successfully land the job you want, without an advocate. It will just require a bit more creativity and a willingness to step further outside of your comfort zone. If you're seeking an advocate at a target company, don't complete their online application until after your informational interview. Don't forget to track important info, action items and events on your spreadsheet and calendar, respectively.

If you have any questions about target company prospecting and engaging internal contacts, or would like to receive more personalized assistance. Please [visit our webpage](#) or email us TheModernJobSeeker@gmail.com with your questions. You can also shoot over to our social media pages for additional content to help you determine your why, wants, and non-negotiables.

Application Process

After all of your self-reflection, professional housekeeping, online research, and data tracking, you've come to the final step of your strategic job search – applying to jobs. Hopefully, you've been tracking who is and who isn't currently hiring. Also, you've been inputting the job posting links you've come across into your spreadsheet for each respective company, as well as receiving job alert emails from the online job boards you registered with. This all will make it much easier to apply to your target companies. If not, you will need to revisit each company's careers or jobs page, and search job boards for their postings. Remember, don't complete any online applications until after your informational interview, or until you're instructed to do so by your advocate or an internal hiring decision maker.

Ideally, after your informational interview, you've validated your assessment of the company as aligning with your professional objectives. Also, you were able to impress the internal contact during the informational interview, converting them into an advocate. You'll know this because they offer to send your cover letter and resume, directly to the hiring manager for your target department and/or to human resources. Or because you asked them to help you get your resume in front of the right people, and they were impressed enough to agree. Either way, you earned an internal referral at your target company, bypassing the traditional application and review process. You may still need to complete an online application for the company; however, it won't be necessary to get your foot in the door and get noticed.

Inversely, if you were unable to secure an informational interview or internal referral, I would first ask you, how tenacious were you in your efforts? Did you try doing a walk-in? If not, I would advise you to put on your interview attire, print three copies of your resume and cover letter, then walk into your target employer. Modify and use the second script from above and see if you can speak with someone right then or schedule an informational interview for a later date. If you already tried this and were unsuccessful, then your only course of

action is to apply online and call 1-2 times each week, until a determination on your application package has been made. Either way, you must be tenacious and fearless in pursuit of what you WANT. As a wise man once said, “Closed mouths don’t get fed.”

Once you’ve officially submitted your application package, either online or directly to the company, you should be prepared to follow up with each company for feedback on your application package 1-2 times each week. During my job search, I documented when I applied to jobs and scheduled follow-up calls in my calendar. The first follow-up call is scheduled for a week later. Then additional follow-up calls are scheduled for the following week, on Tuesday and Friday. I repeated this cycle until I received an invitation to interview, or had my candidacy rejected. I will say it again, you must be tenacious and fearless in pursuit of what you WANT. This is something that should apply to all aspects of your life.

If you have any questions about the application process, or would like to receive more personalized assistance. Please [visit our webpage](#) or email us TheModernJobSeeker@gmail.com with your questions. You can also shoot over to our social media pages for additional content to help you determine your why, wants and non-negotiables.

Closing

Searching for a job in the modern job marketplace is not something that should intimidate you, create anxiety within you, or stress you out. Yet for most, it often is, because their job searches are regularly unorganized, erratic, and poorly executed. This applied to me for most of my professional career. There are a vast number of technological resources and tools readily available to make your job search more efficient and effective. There is no reason to approach your job search with apprehension, hesitation, or to be overwhelmed by it.

To find the job you want, the one that will lead you on the path towards long-term career success and enjoyment, all it takes is a commitment to following a strategy, understanding what you want, and establishing your non-negotiables. There are various job search strategies you can utilize. The internet is littered with articles and books on them. The key is finding the one that works best for YOU and committing to it. I truly and sincerely hope that the strategic job search laid out in this book works just as well for you, as it did for me. The Modern Job Seekers Handbook is me sharing what I’ve learned and continue to learn along my journey.

It was written in hopes of helping others to find long-term career success, enjoyment, and fulfillment. Thank you for allowing me to be a part of your journey. Please don’t hesitate to email TheModernJobSeeker@gmail.com with questions, comments, or for more personalized assistance. Be sure to [visit our webpage](#) and join our social media community of Modern Job Seekers to share any insights, suggestions, and success stories. You never know who you will impact, or how you will be impacted in the process. We can’t wait to hear from you!

**** Best of luck, and thank you again for reading *The Modern Job Seekers Handbook: Strategic Job Searching*.****