

# Accelerating My Job Search

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*First, I'll start by analyzing where I might be stalled in my job search.*

## **Where I may be stalled:**

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- 1. Ill-conceived or impractical strategy, e.g., targeting a role for which you lack key credentials or where there are fewer jobs than applicants or where the field/space/industry itself is being battered by economic headwinds
- 2. “Kitchen sink” or “red herring” resume and LinkedIn profile
- 3. Spending vast majority of job-search time trolling job postings and applying online; intermittent attention to job search processes such as attending professional networking events, conducting informational meetings, warm and cold outreach to people at your target employers, fellow alumni, etc. (it’s a numbers game!)
- 4. Rudimentary knowledge of LinkedIn functionality and/or not using LinkedIn proactively
- 5. Being 50+ and thus subject to ageism in the job market
- 6. Not offering readily-identifiable diversity and expertise in DEIA
- 7. Projecting a deflated attitude or lack of confidence; demonstrating less than professional practices (slow response to messages, not writing thank-you emails, etc.)

## **Three Next Steps After Today’s Presentation – I’ll do tomorrow, Tuesday**

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1) Purchase 3x5 neon index cards, and use one each evening, 5 days a week, to hand-write the **3 most important** things you will do for your job search the following day (keeps you strategic and gives you momentum)

2) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## Informational Meetings – Tips

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During your career transition or job search, you will conduct informational meetings during two different phases of your process:

**Phase 1** – when you have completed career reflection and are interested in more than one field or function, so you need to decide which is a better fit for you and which one is growing and needs more applicants

**Phase 2** – when you know exactly which field and function you are targeting and need to start building relationships within, getting inside information about, and obtaining referrals into the interview pools of your target employers

*Note: if you began your transition process knowing the job title/s you want, and the names of some target employers, you can proceed directly to Phase 2.*

*Note: Start with “low-hanging fruit” – people you feel comfortable asking for a meeting with – such as a friend’s spouse or a neighbor or a former colleague you were very friendly with – so that you get the hang of these meetings before you meet with key people in your field or occupation who are in a great position to give you referrals.*

### **Guidance for requesting informational meetings**

- Mention the name of the person who referred you, or your “fellow alumni” connection, in the subject line of the email
- Ask for a 10-minute Zoom meeting or a 20-minute in-person meeting
- Offer a Starbucks e-card or to bring a latte of their choice; this is an ETHICAL BRIBE
- Do NOT attach a resume (makes it seem like you’re looking for a job), but of course send them one if they ask for it, and if you do end up meeting with them in person, bring copies of your resume with you
- Thank them while scheduling, as you start the meeting, as you conclude the meeting, in a thank-you email afterwards, and again when you meet with someone they referred you to (aim for 7 thank-you’s – research shows that people don’t feel they’ve been thanked until they are thanked 7 times)

## **Templates for requests for informational meetings**

### **to someone in the field you're exploring:**

Subject of email: Andy Topshen Referral - Request for 10-minute Zoom or very brief meeting

Hello Jeannette,

I am a communications professional exploring career paths in external relations and community management, particularly in healthcare. Andy Topshen suggested that you would have some really interesting insights about this area. Would it be possible to meet with you on Zoom for 10 minutes, or in person for 20 minutes, so that I could ask you a few questions about your work? I'll be happy to send you a Starbucks e-card OR (better!) bring you the latte of your choice to thank you for your time. – Thank you for considering this!

Sincerely yours,

Julian Carnero

[email signature including name and pronouns, phone, email address, and short custom LinkedIn link]

### **to an alum of your university or graduate program or former employer:**

Subject of email: AmazingUniversity Alum – your work in wetlands

Hello Hugh,

You and I share the experience of having graduated from AmazingUniversity, and I noticed on LinkedIn that we are also in similar fields. I'm currently working as a research analyst at Forestry Research Labs and have been exploring the possibility of working in wetlands and coastal conservation. Is there any chance you might be willing to meet with a fellow alum to share your experience in this field? If you have, say, 10 minutes for a Zoom call, or ideally 20 minutes in person, so that I can ask you a few questions, I would be so grateful, and will send you a Starbucks e-card or (better!) bring you the latte of your choice to thank you for your time.

Thank you for considering this!

Sincerely yours,

Jamie Greenspan

[email signature including name and pronouns, phone, email address, and short custom LinkedIn link]

## **Guidance for conducting informational meetings**

- You lead the meeting and ask the questions
- Use the phrase "I'm in information-gathering mode"
- Take notes during the meeting (ask them if that's okay first, so they'll know what you're doing) and try to capture their exact wording in your notes to bring you up to speed on the latest jargon in the field
- Use questions on next page to guide your discussion
- Don't mention the word "job" – instead refer to exploring/building a career in XX or learning about how that employer is structured and what challenges they're tackling
- Wrap up promptly after 10 or 20 minutes (this shows them you respect their time) by saying "Thank you so much, [name]. This has been incredibly helpful and I'm looking forward to [doing the things they suggested]. Thank you so much for your time!"

- Thank them while scheduling, as you start the meeting, as you conclude the meeting, in a thank-you email afterwards, and again when you meet with someone they referred you to (again, aim for 7 thank-you's – research shows that people don't feel they've been thanked until they are thanked 7 times)

### **Sample questions to ask during informational meetings**

- I've read about your path on LinkedIn and seen your bio on [employer's] website, but I'm curious what first drew you to [what you are doing now]? *This helps you identify possible next steps for you and routes to this job (e.g., a class/program) you might not be aware of. An open-ended question like this one allows the person to talk – a lot.*
- What do you especially like about [what you are doing now]? *This helps you identify what specifically to mention and emphasize when you apply for jobs in this area, and will give the person positive memories of his/her meeting with you.*
- What do you wish you had known when you first started this work? *This helps you identify possible dealbreakers (if any) for you.*
- What do you think makes you good at [what you do]? *This is an example of what Steve Dalton calls a "fun and flattering" question that they will enjoy answering.*
- What changes are you seeing in this field (or in this employer)? Where do you see growth/challenges? What advice would you give someone like me? *This helps you become more knowledgeable about the landscape of your target field/occupation and also helps you be strategic by positioning yourself in the growing areas and/or as able to meet the new challenges that are surfacing.*
- Who else would be interesting to talk to about [this field]? *This helps you identify your next informational meeting targets. Be sure to offer to do the work yourself and save them the time, by emailing those individuals yourself. "Oh, great, thank you! Jill Conesco sounds really interesting! Would you be comfortable giving me her email address so I can contact her directly? I'll be sure to mention in the subject line that you referred me..."*

**An informational meeting, also called an informational interview, gives you AIR – Advice, Information, and Referrals that help you be added to an interview pool in the future.**

# Using AI Tools in Your Job Search

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A key success factor in your job search or career pivot will be regularly using the power of AI tools to hone every step of your process.

The three AI tools currently available are Open AI's ChatGPT, Google's Bard, and Microsoft's Bing. I have not used either Bard or Bing yet, so the following suggestions are specific to ChatGPT and it's worth noting that "best practices" for using AI tools are evolving DAILY and I expect to update this handout every month or so.

Accordingly, please take everything here with a grain of salt...!

Start here to sign up for an "account", which is free: <https://openai.com/blog/chatgpt>

Type "messages" or queries into the search bar to obtain the guidance you're looking for. Be very specific.

Use the introductory phrase "**Act as if...**" along with the phrase "**generate**" to request what you want. You can add in the phrase "**apply a framework**" to sharpen the specificity of the responses. You can also use the phrase "**evaluate**" when looking to sharpen, for example, elements of your narrative or your interview responses. And you can always follow the first response with "**what else do you need to do this?**", which will generate more feedback.

Here are a few examples of queries to get you started and to inspire your thinking. The more you use this tool, the more effective you will become. Start now...!

- 1) *What are the 10 most important key words and phrases in this job posting? [paste job posting] Then make sure those key words and phrases are found in both your resume and LinkedIn profile.*
- 2) *Act as if you are a job applicant with this resume [paste your resume] applying for this job [paste job posting here] and generate a cover letter for your application. [PLEASE NOTE: FOR ETHICAL REASONS, YOU MUST ONLY USE THIS AS INSPIRATION FOR YOUR OWN LETTER – NOT COPY IT WORD FOR WORD. In my experience, AI-generated cover letters are WAY too wordy and detailed.]*
- 3) *Act as if you have an interview for this job [paste job posting here] and generate some likely interview questions.*
- 4) *Act as if you are trying to get a [Research Analyst] job at [Pantone] and have scheduled an informational meeting with the [Research Director]. Generate some questions to ask in the informational meeting, applying a framework such as ["The 2-Hour Job Search" by Steve Dalton].*

- 5) *Act as if you are the hiring manager for this job [paste job posting here] and have asked the applicant “tell me about yourself.” Evaluate this answer based on its warmth and competence: [paste text of your personal narrative here in quotes]*
- 6) *Act as if you have the following resume and qualifications [paste your resume here] and would like to make a career pivot into [tech or whatever space you’re interested in]. Generate some job titles for which you’d be qualified, using the frameworks of [“What Color Is Your Parachute” by Richard Bolles and “The HBR Guide to Changing Your Career”]*
- 7) *Act as if you are a career counselor advising a mid-career professional with this resume [paste your resume here] and generate some job titles in [higher education or healthcare or fintech or entertainment or carbon sequestration or whatever your target space is] that this person would be qualified for. What else do you need to do this?*
- 8) *Act as if you are a hiring manager who has asked this behavioral interview question of an applicant “Tell me about a time when you disagreed with a colleague or boss and how you navigated that situation.” Please evaluate this answer [paste script of your CAR – context/challenge, your action, results – response here in quotes] based on its specificity, authenticity, and effectiveness.*