



Get the Job You Want Even When No One's Hiring

**Includes
Your Job
Search
Survival
Toolkit!**

**Take Charge of Your Career,
Find a Job You Love, and
Earn What You Deserve!**

Ford R. Myers

Get the Job You Want, Even When No One's Hiring

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and Earn What You Deserve!**

By Ford R. Myers

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 **WILEY**
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Praise for “Get The Job You Want, Even When No One's Hiring”

From the experts ...

“There are any number of things that can help us when we are faced with tough situations, but two that I think are the among the most helpful are setting expectations and presenting solutions that work in the real world. *Get The Job You Want, Even When No One's Hiring* does both and at a level of thoroughness that readers will appreciate even more.”

-- **Dave Opton, Founder & CEO, ExecuNet**

“If you feel alone in this tough and puzzling job market, this book is a must-have. Ford breaks down key job search strategies into short tactical chapters so you can start to generate results fast. No matter where you are on your professional journey, this book will show you step-by-step how to reinvent, reignite or reestablish your career!”

-- **Beverly Kaye, CEO/Founder Career Systems International and author of “Up is Not the Only Way”**

“In this timely and important book, Ford Myers teaches you how to be proactive and take charge in hard times. He is a master at transforming complexity into action and results. This down-to-earth, practical book makes making a living work. I highly recommend it!”

-- **Richard J. Leider, Founder, The Inventure Group and bestselling author of “The Power of Purpose” and “Repacking Your Bags”**

“*Get The Job You Want, Even When No One's Hiring* offers solid advice to help job seekers adjust their mindsets while improving their skill sets. This book provides the tools to get you on track and keep you moving forward during these challenging times. Ford Myers' street smart techniques will help you take control of your career and succeed in your job search!”

-- **Cheryl Bonner, Director, Penn State Alumni Career Services**

“Mounting a strategic job search can be confusing, especially when compounded by the emotional toll of job loss and an economic crisis. Myers' book explains how to find a job that fits your long-term career goals. Armed with renewed confidence and a strategic plan, a good job is attainable!”

-- **Robyn Greenspan, Editor-in-Chief, ExecuNet**

“*Get The Job You Want, Even When No One's Hiring* is the ultimate guide for helping job seekers find better, higher paying jobs in these extraordinarily difficult times. What makes this book different and truly valuable is that Ford Myers reveals insider secrets of the hiring process that usually only top Human Resource Managers and seasoned executives know. Equipped with these insights into the hiring process, you will be able to beat out your competition, land a better job, and earn more than you thought possible, even when it appears that no one's hiring!”

-- **Michael T. Robinson, Founder, CareerPlanner.com**

“Ford Myers' excellent *Get The Job You Want, Even When No One's Hiring* shows you clearly and realistically how to be one of the millions of people who land a job rather than the millions who lose a job. His book is loaded with practical wisdom, and should be required reading for anyone facing unemployment. I highly recommend it!”

-- **Jay Conrad Levinson, Author of the “Guerrilla Marketing” series of books**

Praise for “Get The Job You Want, Even When No One's Hiring”

From people just like you ...

An additional \$15,000 to my base salary ...

“The week after I learned the negotiating strategies in *Get The Job You Want*, I was offered a great job with a Fortune 100 company. Instead of taking the first offer they made, I successfully negotiated an additional \$15,000 dollars onto my base salary I could never have done this without the detailed instructions in this book!”

-- *Cynthia Metzger*

The structured approach I needed ...

“*Get The Job You Want* gave me the structured approach I needed to make my career change a reality. It helped me gain clarity about what I wanted, which built my confidence and dramatically increased my focus. When I was networking and interviewing, your book enabled me to communicate more effectively than I ever had before. And the ‘Job Search Survival Toolkit’ provided the specific items I needed to succeed in finding my new career!”

-- *Patrick Arkins*

A roadmap for success ...

“*Get The Job You Want* is the first job search book I've read that left me feeling more clear, instead of more confused. All the material is focused and efficient. I found the book to be amazingly practical and helpful, because the ‘Job Search Survival Toolkit’ really works. The system you've created is nothing less than a roadmap for job search success. Thank you for this wonderful career resource!”

-- *Elizabeth Frumin*

A \$4,000 increase in my starting pay ...

“Without your no-nonsense advice about the negotiation process, I'm sure I would have settled for the first salary figure offered to me. I used the strategies in *Get The Job You Want*, and the result was a \$4,000 increase in my starting pay, not to mention the non-salary factors I was able to get on top of that. Your book helped me negotiate the best deal for my new position!”

-- *Vanessa Christman*

Aced the interview and received an offer ...

“With *Get The Job You Want*, I felt more confident and prepared. I aced the interview and received an offer the very next day! The exercises were most enlightening, because they helped me identify my true professional purpose. I don't know how I would have gotten through my transition without this book. For me, it has been a life-saver!”

-- *Georgette Howell*

A pragmatic, efficient and manageable handbook ...

“From the first page, I knew that I needed *Get The Job You Want*. This book offered me proven solutions and insights that only come from years of experience working with job seekers. I found the book to be a pragmatic, efficient and manageable handbook for taking that next career step. I am truly amazed at what I accomplished, and I even got the job I wanted!”

-- *Susan Peters*

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Part I

The Psychology of Job Hunting in a Down Market

1. Yes, the job market is bad – really bad!

As of this writing, the United States is experiencing its worst economy since the Great Depression. The stock market just had the largest one-day drop in history and fluctuates wildly based on the daily economic news, which seems to get increasingly worse. Investors have already lost more than 7 trillion dollars, and the shockwaves of the credit crunch are reverberating across the country and around the globe.

Governments are being forced to bail out entire industries and invest directly into financial institutions to keep them afloat. Our very notions of government agencies and private businesses are in the process of being redefined.

Millions of U.S. citizens can't pay their mortgages or are actually losing their homes with an unprecedented number of foreclosures and bankruptcies. Parents can't pay their children's tuition bills. Entire retirement funds are being decimated on Wall Street.

The job market is weaker than it has been in at least 80 years. The U.S. recession has claimed almost 6 million jobs to date. 145,000 positions were recently eliminated in just one week; with nearly 650,000 jobs lost within one month. Unemployment continues to expand with more layoffs and downsizings. As the economy shrinks, debt soars, and the headlines proclaim one financial meltdown after another. Worst of all, it seems that no one's hiring!

Perhaps most startling of all, the United Nation's International Labor Organization estimates that the current financial crisis will add at least 20 million people to the world's unemployed – bringing the total to 210 million by the end of 2009.

So let me be clear – if you're feeling that something is very, very wrong with your quest to take charge of your career, find a job you love, and earn what you deserve – you're right. But it's not your fault. We are in the middle of a “perfect storm” and it's almost surely going to get worse before it gets better.

2. It's OK to feel frustrated, depressed, afraid, helpless or disoriented

No one knows what's going to happen next. For working people everywhere, these are very challenging times indeed. Everyone is concerned – even those who still have jobs. Some folks are terrified – especially those who have been out of work for a while.

If you're feeling frustrated, depressed, afraid, helpless or disoriented– you're certainly not alone.

These reactions are understandable, and to be expected. If you're feeling frustrated, depressed, afraid, helpless or disoriented – you're certainly not alone. You might even feel angry or victimized. Perhaps you're saying things to yourself such as, “This shouldn't be happening to me! I got a good education. I worked hard. I always did the right thing, and I don't deserve this. I never thought I'd be in this situation. Maybe this is what happens to OTHER people, but not ME!”

Sound familiar?

This is what I've been hearing from many of my career coaching clients in recent months. It's like a nightmare that we're all hoping to awaken from. Quite candidly, several clients have spent their recent career coaching sessions crying, and my office has been going through a box of tissues every few days. Believe me, *"I get it!"*

My clients need comfort and reassurance. My guess is that you do too. So, let me tell you the same things I've been telling my clients. It's OK to have all the reactions listed above, and any other emotions you might be experiencing. There's nothing wrong with you, and you didn't do anything to bring this fate upon yourself.

You're still a "good person," and you still have all the qualities, experiences and credentials you had before. Although it may be difficult to believe right now, this awful employment situation will come to an end, and your career WILL get back on track – eventually.

This awful employment situation will come to an end, and your career WILL get back on track.
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3. This has happened before, and it will happen again

How do I know you'll get back on track? Because I've been working as a Career Coach for many years, and my practice has gone through several economic downturns. Through it all, I've helped thousands of people take charge of their careers, find jobs they love, and earn what they deserve.

So here's a question for you: *Given how difficult things are now, how do YOU want to react and what do you want to do to improve YOUR career situation?*

I firmly believe that you have a choice, and that the choice you make will determine the outcomes of your job search. Some people will panic and “sit on the sidelines” – waiting for the situation to change. Others will remain in a state of denial, acting as though world events can't affect them. Still others will assess the employment situation for what it is, and then do whatever it takes to rise above their circumstances and create success!

What's needed is ACTION, and you don't have to take on the challenge alone. All the help, support, tools and resources you need are available to you. It's up to you to find and take advantage of them.

This book offers you a lifeline. If you're willing to adopt a new attitude, shift your assumptions, step a bit outside your comfort zone, try a few new behaviors, and use some new tools – you WILL get the job you want, even when no one's hiring!

4. Why your chances are better than you think

It may have been more accurate to entitle this book, “Get The Job You Want, Even When *You Think* No One's Hiring.” That's because it's a false assumption to say that “no one's hiring” – regardless of how bad the economy and job market may seem. The fact is that every company is hiring all the time, if you can offer precisely what they need when they need it!

The fact is that every company is hiring all the time, if you can offer precisely what they need when they need it!

I'm not talking about job openings that are posted on company web sites or on Internet job boards.

I'm not even talking about positions that are represented by executive recruiters. When it seems that no one's hiring, it is important NOT to focus just on "job openings." There will be few publicly-posted opportunities, and the competition for those few openings will be fierce.

Instead, you should work on identifying the particular needs, problems and challenges that companies face during a serious market downturn. If you can demonstrate to the employer how you would address their issues successfully – and in the process make their company more productive, efficient or profitable – you'll be able to land a good job in ANY economy.

Of course, this approach requires that you take full responsibility for your own career, and that you learn to sell your value in a compelling way. But this approach can also liberate you from the fear of facing unemployment every time the job market shrinks.

So, keep a close watch on your own assumptions. Study this book, and implement all the strategies I've outlined for you. While others are sitting on the sidelines, convinced that there are no good jobs to be had, you'll be out there getting the job you want. Rather than feeling helpless, you'll regain your sense of empowerment and control. *What a relief!*

5. The #1 secret to job search success

What you are about to read, study and work on *should be* taught in schools. But it's not. We go through 12 years of education, possibly 4 more years of college, and sometimes even 2-4 *more* years of graduate school – and not one day is spent on how to manage your career, find work you truly enjoy, and make sure you're well compensated for it. NOT *ONE DAY*!

Employers should teach this material, too. It's to every employer's advantage to make sure that their people are proactively managing their careers, are doing work they're well-suited for, and are equipped to perform at their full potential. But, of course, *they* don't teach these secrets and strategies either. Not even *ONE DAY* is spent teaching employees these vital skills!

This “insider's handbook” shows you all the things that are absolutely necessary to know and *should have been* taught in school or by your employer – but weren't. Once you understand and start to use these “secrets,” you'll have a powerful advantage at every point in your career. This is *not* just a book to help you get your next job (although it will certainly do that). It's a resource to help you *always* get the *right* job and manage your career in a much more effective way – *even in the toughest job market, even during a financial meltdown, and even when no one's hiring!*

This “insider's handbook” shows you all the things that are absolutely necessary to know and *should have been* taught in school or by your employer – but weren't.

You might be asking, “Where did all this material come from, and why should I buy into it?” After working at three of the nation's largest career consulting companies for almost 15 years, I saw the

need for a new approach – an approach that would combine the methods and resources of large outplacement firms with the personal attention and flexibility of small career counseling practices.

This new concept became my proprietary, 5-phase career success process called *Career Potential*SM – a process that consistently produces outstanding job search results.

Would you like to know the #1 secret of how to get a job when no one's hiring? Would you like to know the key – and sometimes the *only* – difference between people who are out of work for 3 months, and 3 years? It's simple: **Mindset comes before skill set.**

Want proof? In addition to the hundreds of frontline folks and mid-level managers I've worked with, I've also worked with dozens of very senior executives who earn salaries well into 6-figures. Regardless of the economy, regardless of the unemployment statistics from the federal government, and regardless of how "tough" the media keeps saying the job market is, these "high flyers" are rarely out of work for more than a few months.

Mindset comes before skill set.

Is it because they are more qualified than most? No. Have better job skills? No. Savvier networking strategies? No. Is it because they're smarter? No. Better "connected"? No. More "employable"? No, it's not that either.

The reason that many of my senior executive clients land jobs when no one's hiring is that they *expect* to get a job when no one's hiring. Their belief system is 100% wired to support their success – mindset comes before skill set.

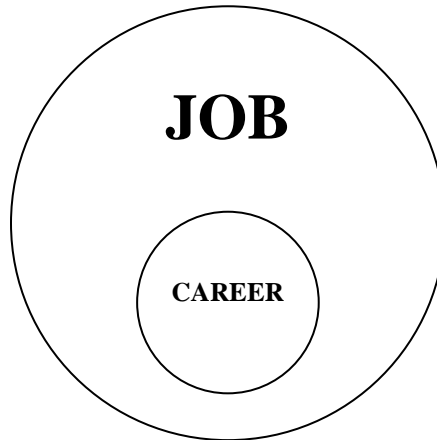
And the same thing applies to YOU! No matter where you are in your career and no matter what your salary level, if you have the right mindset, you'll *accelerate* your job search and *elevate* yourself over other candidates in all sorts of tangible and intangible ways.

The book you're holding in your hands right now provides you with both the mindset AND skill set to take charge of your career, find a job you love, and earn what you deserve. It was created to be the ONLY book you'll need to get you through this employment crisis, and to help you navigate successfully through the rest of your career.

Starting right this moment, you have access to all the same secrets, strategies, tips and tools that I share with my executive clients who pay premium coaching fees for this privileged information. I'm confident that, by leveraging all this material to the fullest extent, you'll produce the same kind of breakthrough career results my clients do!

6. Tough times highlight the difference between your job and your career

For decades, people thought that “doing their job” – and doing it well – was sufficient to ensure long-term career success, plenty of financial reward, and job security well into the future. Here is what that picture looked like:



In the model above, managing your career was only a tiny piece of the picture – something that rarely came into play. You would only think about career management when it came time to stop working for a time (in the case of parents wishing to stay home with children, for example), or under extremely unusual circumstances (such as when someone wanted to actually *change careers!*)

Today, working professionals may change careers 5-7 times before retirement. You read that correctly – they change *careers*, not *jobs*, 5-7 times! Many people are still only equipping themselves to deal with the old paradigm and are unprepared to navigate in the new reality of career management, which looks more like this diagram:



7. Most job hunting advice doesn't apply in a world turned upside down

You get your clothes cleaned when they're dirty. You pay your bills each month. You see your doctor once or twice a year. You send cards to family members at each birthday. So, why is it that most people (maybe even you!) don't integrate "careering" (savvy career management activities) into their regular routine?

Most individuals have a reactive – not a "proactive" – approach to their careers. Thinking that you only need to "fix your career when it's broken" (i.e., when you're laid-off, downsized or just plain miserable) is a very unfortunate misconception that will seriously limit your career success – both now and in the future when economic conditions start to improve.

Thinking that you only need to "fix your career when it's broken" is a very unfortunate misconception.

Maybe you're in **career transition** (laid-off, downsized, unemployed, between jobs, or changing industries); perhaps you're **under-employed** (not enough challenge, growth, or compensation in

your current job); or you might be **fully employed**, but dissatisfied (wondering if there's something better for you elsewhere, or concerned that you made some wrong career choices).

Whichever situation you find yourself in, there are proven (and sometimes contrarian) steps you can take to maximize your opportunities, and get the most from your chosen career. With the proper knowledge and support, you can make your career anything you want it to be, even in the midst of economic turmoil. That's what this book is all about!

8. You can't stop the storm – so learn to work in the rain

This book will help you change your thinking about your job search, especially when you're searching in the midst of market meltdowns and record joblessness. We'll debunk some of the most common – and most dangerous – misconceptions about career management from my 15 years of experience helping people just like you, in both good times and times of great economic disruption.

Even though this may be the most emotionally draining and financially challenging time of your life, we'll work together to get you back into a winning mindset with a concrete, positive plan to generate results as quickly as possible.

Then we'll dig into step-by-step strategies to get you grounded, focused and ready to embark on the systematic process of getting a job when no one's hiring.

9. How you can get a better job faster when times are tough

When times are tough and things look bleak, that's the time to push harder than ever. Let me show you why this is so. Are you depressed that you didn't "ace" your last job interview? Are you feeling like a failure because the job that looked so good went to another candidate?

When times are tough and things look bleak, that's the time to push harder than ever.

It's tempting to just "throw in the towel" and feel sorry for yourself, isn't it? Well, a lot of people are doing exactly that – they're "taking their foot off the gas" and coasting, or wallowing in self-pity and bad TV reruns. They're exhausted, tapped out and tired of the rejection they've been feeling in the job market.

When the job market is down and your competition has decided to "sit out" the rest of the game, that's the worst time for YOU to quit – because now you can have everyone's attention! There's actually much less "noise" out there for your message to compete against. Push now, and you'll be heard.

10. When no one's hiring, focus and clarity are more important than ever

When the economy is in bad shape, when unemployment numbers start to climb, and when no one's hiring, many well-qualified, highly educated and hard working people start to lower their sights. Any job becomes preferable to no job in the name of "paying the bills."

Getting another position (ANY position) as quickly as possible appears to make sense because of the old advice that “you can always keep looking” and “it’s easier to get a new job when you currently have a job.”

This is flawed thinking – and I’ve seen it backfire too many times not to warn you against it. If you take the first job that comes along, you’ll get complacent. Inertia and fear will set in. I understand that in the short term, it will feel a lot easier to go to a job each morning than to work hard on taking charge of your career, finding a job you love, and earning what you deserve.

As weeks turn into months and months turn into years, you may find yourself stuck in that job you took for the sake of “paying the bills.” Pretty soon, you will have lost your career bearings and with every passing day, the notion of “changing lanes” will become more unpleasant and scary.

As weeks turn into months and months turn into years, you may find yourself stuck in that job you took for the sake of “paying the bills.”

11. Your attitude and assumptions will dictate your career fate

When no one’s hiring, you need to be MORE selective in your job search. You need to focus like a laser on exactly the kind of work you would LOVE to do. You need to identify precisely the kind of company you want to hire as your next employer.

And you need to be crystal clear on the ideal work situation for you. Your attitude, assumptions, and beliefs alone will determine how far you carry this material – and how quickly. As Henry Ford said, “Whether you think you can or you think you can’t, you’re right.”

Your level of focus and clarity will come through in every phase of the job search that you’ll read about in the coming chapters. Hiring managers will be able to sense your focus, clarity, and commitment.

Unlike your competition in a job market where no one’s hiring, YOU will exude confidence, focus, and “fit” because you’ve laser-targeted the precise kind of job where you can do your very best work and deliver maximum value to your employer and customers. Mindset before skill set. Throughout the rest of this book, keep one thought in mind: **You can do this!**

12. Seven truths of career success, for both good times and bad

1. The most qualified candidate does not necessarily get the job offer

Many times, candidates with lesser qualifications get job offers simply because they’ve prepared and presented themselves in a more compelling way. In other words, they’re better self-marketers than the other candidates!

In a tight job market, being qualified is never enough. You must DEMONSTRATE to the employer that you're the best candidate for the job. Depending on your age and how your parents raised you, you may be operating under a “wishful thinking” mindset regarding the concept of *meritocracy*. This

would include the following cultural messages and ingrained assumptions that many of us had “drilled into our heads” by well-meaning parents and teachers:

- Getting good grades guarantees success in college and in life
- Being smart means that you’ll do better than people who are not smart (or at least not *as* smart as you)
- Hard work is its own reward – and is also the best path to other rewards
- Achievement and recognition go hand-in-hand. In other words, just do well and other people (teachers, professors, employers, bosses, the CEO) will recognize and reward you for it

In a difficult employment landscape, strong qualifications and accomplishments are *necessary, but not sufficient*, to find a job you love and earn what you deserve.

In a difficult employment landscape, strong qualifications and accomplishments are *necessary, but not sufficient*, to find a job you love and earn what you deserve.

Let’s say that you’re competing against another candidate whose qualifications are just as strong as yours. What is the hiring manager supposed to do? Well, the answer is obvious – they will be influenced by how good a job you do in **MARKETING, SELLING** and **POSITIONING** those strong qualifications.

At the end of the day, it’s the best self-marketer who gets the job. We’ll talk a lot more about self-marketing tools and strategies as we progress through the rest of this book.

But for now, don't be fooled into believing that the business world is a meritocracy – it's not. That can, obviously, be either good news or bad news, depending on how you've positioned yourself up to this point in your career. But don't worry – we'll boost your self-marketing skills to the point where you can land a great job regardless of the economic “weather,” unemployment news, or latest Wall Street implosion!

2. The best time to work on your career is when your job is secure

Even if you're very happily employed today, you never know what may happen tomorrow! To avoid a career disaster, you should incorporate the concept of “Perpetual Career Management” into your professional life.

Vital tasks like keeping your success stories up to date, or networking regularly with professionals in your industry, should be incorporated into your routine whether the economy is good or bad – and whether you feel you need to or not.

Here's a real-life example. A few years ago, I had a client who was in a senior-level sales and marketing position at a large manufacturing company. He had everything going for him with the employer – he was a member of the senior management team, he had been with the firm for 13 years, and he was consistently praised for his hard work and professionalism. Needless to say, he felt very comfortable and secure in his position. He never saw what was about to happen.

Due to an economic downturn and an eventual acquisition of the company, my client was suddenly let go on a crisp November morning. An hour later, he found himself sitting in his car in the parking

lot – asking himself over and over, “How could this have happened? I did such a good job for them!” And worst of all, my client was totally unprepared! He had none of the tools necessary to find another appropriate position within a reasonable period of time. Naturally, he felt concerned and scared. He later told me that toughest part was feeling completely helpless.

What does this mean for you? It means that you should consider adopting a different approach, the “Perpetual Career Management” approach – not only to avoid feeling helpless, but to truly take charge of your career once and for all. NOTE: We’ll be talking a lot more about “Perpetual Career Management” in Part V of this book.

As we said earlier, instead of focusing completely on your job, you should focus on managing your career – at all times, regardless of where the economy or job market happens to be!

That’s the key that will help you to chop months off your next job search, significantly boost your salary, get promoted faster, and never worry again about job security or layoffs.

Instead of focusing completely on your job, you should focus on managing your career – at all times, regardless of where the economy or job market happens to be!

3. Graduating from school is the beginning of your education, not the end

In good economic times or bad, you should always look for ways to advance your industry knowledge and professional qualifications. Attending seminars, reading trade journals, pursuing certifications, etc. – these activities should be a part of your ongoing professional development

process. It's imperative that every professional remain current in his or her field. No company wants to hire a candidate whose base of knowledge is out of date. Moreover, why would your *current* organization and *current* boss want to work with someone like that? NOT upgrading your knowledge and skills on a continual basis is a risk you can't afford to take.

As a professional, you should continually build your credentials, which will make you more attractive and marketable as a candidate – both inside your company and in “the outside world.”

NOT upgrading your knowledge and skills on a continual basis is a risk you can't afford to take.

Plus, in a down economy, the greatest asset you have to sell is your knowledge and intellectual resources. When business gets tough, the demand for people who can think strategically and deliver results goes UP, not down!

4. An employer's first offer is NEVER their best offer

Employers expect that you've done salary research, and they *anticipate* having dynamic negotiations with you. In fact, they'll often be *disappointed* and question your candidacy if you DON'T negotiate – even when no one's hiring. You might be tempted to think ANY job offer is great in a tough economy or that this is the WORST time to negotiate – but you'd be dead wrong.

Employers usually start with a low salary offer merely as a “trial balloon,” to see how you'll react – and there's almost always room to improve on the initial compensation offer, even in a tight job market. In a way, compensation negotiation is a game, with its own set of rules and guidelines.

We'll get into the detailed negotiation tactics you need later in this book, but for now, be aware that the first offer is merely a starting point. If you don't negotiate further, I guarantee that you'll be leaving money – and possibly a whole lot more – on the table.

5. Always research and be “plugged in” to the competition

Research and be aware of the competition – whether it be information about other companies or other professionals in your industry. Always know who they are and what they're doing. Endeavor to “know the competition better than they know themselves.” This will greatly enhance your competitiveness when jobs are hard to come by, and it will allow you to jump on opportunities that others might not yet be aware of!

If you don't negotiate, I guarantee that you'll be leaving money – and possibly a whole lot more – on the table.
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Here's an example of how important it is to be “plugged into” your competitors. One of my clients is the President of a small advertising agency. Her client base is solid, her creative work is excellent, and she makes a very good living in this role. But the thing that my client is most proud of is the fact that her firm is the envy of every small-to-medium sized agency in town.

Not because of the creative awards my client has won, and not because of how impressive her offices are – although these are certainly noteworthy achievements. The reason my client is so envied is that she always seems to get the most prestigious accounts and the most interesting assignments. My client also has a real knack for getting the best designers in the region to work for

her. The other agency owners in the region just stand around, shaking their heads in disbelief and frustration. “How does she do it?” they ask themselves, repeatedly.

Well, just between you and me – it’s not because my client’s work is so much better than the work of the other agencies. No, the way she keeps winning, over and over, is that her investigative research is superior to that of any of her competitors. She makes it her business to know what’s going on in her market – what company is doing what; which accounts are going where, who’s working for whom, what challenges or trends are affecting local companies – and all the rest. The bottom line is simply that my client is far more “plugged in” – and she has used this knowledge to beat out the competition, year after year after year!

So what does this mean to you? It means you should start to “research your way to success.” Read industry publications, trade magazines, your local Business Journal, your daily newspaper’s business section, *Business Week*, *Fortune*, *Forbes*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and so on. Pay attention to other local, regional, and national sources of “business intelligence,” such as web sites, newsletters, blogs, and radio or TV shows. Learn to frame your expertise, your ideas, and your value in terms that are relevant to the current business and economic landscape.

Learn to frame your expertise, your ideas, and your value in terms that are relevant to the current business and economic landscape.
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Connect with people, companies, and groups that you read about. If you can move and shake with the movers and shakers, so much the better. If you can’t – you should at least know what they’re

thinking, what they're concerned about, and what opportunities they see ahead. The more you know about the competition, the easier it will be to get a job when no one's hiring.

6. Networking is not as important as you think it is

It is *more* important!! Put time aside every week for active networking to maintain established relationships and develop new ones – both inside and outside the company where you work.

You should always be positioned to leverage your professional and personal contacts when the need arises. So, adopt the discipline of blocking-out time on your calendar specifically for networking activities – every week, every month, and every year, for the duration of your career!

I'll never forget a story I heard when I was facilitating a "job search team" several years ago. We had about 15 people in the conference room. After I conducted a brief presentation about professional networking, one of the participants asked if she could share a personal story.

She said that she had just been laid-off from her employer of almost 25 years! She had started at the company as an entry-level Customer Support Representative. On that same day, another individual started at the company in the same job. They discovered that they were just about the same age, and that their backgrounds were very similar, in terms of education, interests, family history, and so on. My client and this man worked well together for about two years, when he was suddenly transferred to another department, and at a higher level, within the company.

She didn't see him much after that, but she did occasionally hear about how well he was doing with the firm. Years passed, until eventually she was laid-off and wound-up at my office in need of career help. "By the way," she said, "that man who started at the company with me became, and is still, the President of that company!"

At the time of her layoff, on the other hand, my client had held the same position for which she was hired nearly 25 years ago. When I asked her to tell the group why she thought she had remained at the same level, while her colleague had moved up to claim the Presidency of their company, she said, without hesitation, "Oh that's an easy one. He was always a master networker. Me? I was just doing my job."

This story proves, without any doubt, how important it is to keep networking in both good economic times and bad – and to continually update your success file so that you can "promote yourself" to greater levels of responsibility!

Adopt the discipline of blocking-out time on your calendar specifically for networking activities – every week, every month, and every year, for the duration of your career.

7. If YOU'RE not managing your career, nobody is!

When I speak to audiences about career management strategies, I show a slide that has the following quiz on it:

QUIZ: Who is responsible for managing your career?

- Human Resources
- Executive Search Firm
- My Manager
- Career Consultant
- Recruiter
- None of the above

At different times and under different circumstances, perhaps any combination of these would have been the correct answer. But in today's economy, the answer is clearly "None of the above."

It doesn't matter what your Human Resources department says about "succession planning" or "leadership development" or "career pathing." It doesn't matter that you have great relationships with recruiting firms – perhaps even the one that connected you with your current position (remember: recruiters work for employers, not for candidates). It doesn't matter if you're working with the world's best Career Coach. It doesn't even matter if your boss loves everything you're doing, has big plans for you, and has nothing but glowing praise for you at every performance review.

The bottom line is that YOU, and *only you*, hold the keys to your career, your future, and your own brand of "employment security" – even if there is no longer such a thing as "job security" (and there isn't)!

13. How employers react when there are more workers than jobs

When there are many more workers than job openings, employers behave differently than they do in a healthy employment market. This is largely because the locus of control shifts from candidates to

employers – and employers will have the sense that they can “call the shots.” These dynamics can pose serious challenges for job seekers.

When there are many more workers than job openings, employers behave differently than they do in a healthy employment market.

Under these circumstances, here are a some of the typical challenges job seekers will face at many companies:

- Employers will generally cut back on spending, contract in size, and squeeze efficiencies out of existing facilities and resources.
- Employers will cut salaries and benefits of whatever job openings they still have, with the belief that they will be able to attract quality candidates for a lot less.
- Employers will take longer to make hiring decisions, with the belief that they can afford to be “picky.”
- Employers will expect candidates to provide greater value by offering more experience, skills, and accomplishments.
- Employers will want candidates to produce stronger business results with less resources and staff – but to work at the same or even lower-level titles than they did before.

- Employers will tend to curtail promotions, raises, bonuses, and perks – taking the position that “our employees are lucky just to have jobs here.”
- Employers will fill the few positions that do open-up internally, because this is much less expensive than recruiting and hiring candidates from the outside.
- Employers will expect their staff to be more flexible and to make greater sacrifices to keep their jobs, including more relocations, heavier workloads, and greater travel demands.
- Employers will re-deploy talent by transferring employees from one division or department to another, where they can have most impact.
- Employers will put greater emphasis on recruiting passive candidates (those who already have jobs), as opposed to considering unemployed candidates.
- Employers will reduce their investments in search firms and recruiting technologies, expecting that the best candidates will come to them.
- Employers will tend to focus exclusively on survival and “shareholder value,” and stop paying attention to employee morale and staff retention.
- Employers will fill job openings only with candidates whose background and experience precisely match those required by the position.

14. Twenty habits of highly effective job seekers in a down market

Even in a down market, job seekers and employees are NOT powerless or without recourse in dealing with the challenges listed above. In fact, you have more control over your career circumstances than you might think. Below are some specific strategies and tactics that consistently generate strong results for job seekers when no one's hiring. NOTE: there are 38 additional tips in the "Career Resources" section toward the end of this book.

1. **Network, network, network.** Continually increase your level of networking and keep expanding your contact database. Reach out to re-establish and nourish business and personal relationships. Offer to help others, even if they're not in a position to help you (because "what goes around comes around"). There is no substitute for connecting with people one-on-one. Stay connected and don't isolate yourself. Being out of work does not mean you have to be out of touch, so be sure to build and maintain your networking momentum.
2. **Seek help.** Get career support from a professional. A qualified Career Coach can better prepare you to land your next position. If career coaching is unaffordable, take advantage of the support provided by government programs, non-profit agencies, job search groups, college/alumni career centers, or faith-based missions for the unemployed and underemployed. If you're thinking of changing industries, get some career testing. If you are struggling emotionally, get help from a mental health service provider.
3. **Read career books and attend career seminars.** Take advantage of learning opportunities to improve your job search and career management skills. Keeping informed of business

trends will help you gain greater knowledge of the industries and careers that are poised for future growth. Stay “plugged-in” to the market and your field to ensure that you’ll be current, and to maintain your intellectual capital. Apply what you learn to generate stronger search results.

4. **Leverage technology.** Utilize web sites and online services to connect with your industry and to build greater visibility. Create a career web site, using tools like Visual CV and LinkedIn. Reach out through social networking sites, such as Facebook, MySpace and Twitter. Keep in touch with colleagues consistently via e-mail. In addition to leveraging career portals and job boards, learn how to use online tools like blogs, wikis, and virtual job fairs. Focus on optimizing your online identity.

5. **Differentiate yourself.** Position yourself as an expert by writing articles, giving presentations or teaching a class. Get involved in professional organizations, and assume leadership roles there. Do something noteworthy in your community that will garner special recognition and build your positive reputation. Focus on what makes you special, and “build your brand” within your industry.

6. **Use your “time off” wisely.** Pursue professional development by participating in classes, seminars, certifications and industry conferences. Take advantage of free and low-cost programs to enhance your credentials. Explore more of your world to generate new ideas. Do the important things that you never had time to do when you were working full-time. Enjoy the feeling of still being productive and making a contribution.

7. **Pursue a temporary, part-time or contract position.** Volunteer, provide pro bono work, take-on a consulting contract, or do an internship/apprenticeship. This tactic is especially useful for those who wish to pursue a career in a different industry. Keep yourself “in the game,” so you won’t lose traction in your career growth.

8. **Act with speed and urgency.** One way for you to get an edge over other candidates is to demonstrate that you’re more serious and more determined than the competition. Show-up earlier. Arrive more prepared. Move quickly and efficiently. Make an impression by being more responsive and assertive than the others.

9. **Take care of yourself.** Eat well, exercise, get plenty of rest. You’ll need to be healthy and vital to maintain the pace of an active job search campaign. Stay in close touch with friends and family. Keep-up with your interests, hobbies and activities. Follow your normal routines, even as you work hard on getting the job you want. Maintain balance in your life, and don’t let the job search become all-consuming.

10. **Be flexible and adaptable.** Consider shifting industries and/or being geographically mobile to open-up more career possibilities, even if you would not ordinarily choose these options. Rather than waiting for the perfect opportunity, offer your skills to other industries and lend your experience to different positions. Do whatever you need to do (within reason) to keep your career intact and earn a living.

11. **Improve/enhance all the documents in your career portfolio.** Now is the time to expand your career portfolio far beyond just the resume. You’ll need a one-page professional

biography, a collection of powerful accomplishment stories, a series of compelling cover letters, a page of professional references, a list of targeted employers, a “30-second commercial,” and other items. Craft a unified package that consistently conveys a highly-professional image.

12. **Identify industries that will emerge stronger when the market improves.** Research emerging opportunities and niches that will offer career growth, and position yourself to take advantage of these trends. If your field has collapsed, be sure to communicate your transferrable strengths and the tangible value you offer – rather than focusing on the “trade skills” from your old industry. Adapt to the realities of the changing work world, rather than holding onto your old career identity out of fear, resentment – or even nostalgia.

13. **Practice interviewing and negotiation skills.** In an ideal world, you would have been practicing your interviewing and negotiation skills while you were fully-employed – rather than waiting for a career crisis to arise. But now that the employment market is in crisis, it’s that much more important to polish and perfect these skills. Solicit the help of a partner to role-play with you, and switch roles as needed with the questions-and-answers. Practice with an audio-recording device, and listen to yourself as you continually improve your performance.

14. **Be patient, but persistent.** When the job market is bad, employers will drag-out the hiring process and your search is bound to take longer than usual. There is not much a candidate can do to “rush things,” so you’ll need to be patient. However, this does not mean you should “sit by the phone” waiting for the employer to contact you. You’ll want to pursue two basic

strategies: (a) Be persistent, but don't be a pest, as you follow-up consistently on every opportunity; and (b) Don't "put all your eggs in one basket." Instead, keep moving forward as you explore every appropriate opening you can find. One benefit of pursuing multiple positions is that if you don't get an offer, or if an employer never gets back to you, you won't feel "crushed."

15. **Focus on tangible results and practical solutions.** In a healthy job market, candidates can market themselves with their employment history, education and related assets. But when no one's hiring, there needs to be a relentless focus on tangible, positive results. The primary question in the employer's mind will be, "What can you do for me – now?" This means that you should zero-in and quickly identify the employer's most pressing needs and challenges – and then explain exactly how your relevant accomplishments will allow you to successfully address those issues in the short term.

16. **Work from a budget.** Instead of "going into a panic" or worrying that you'll lose everything you've worked for, do a detailed analysis of your financial situation and develop a family budget. You may discover that you're in a better financial position than you had thought. While you're in transition, cut-back on expenses and live as frugally as you reasonably can. Examine and update this budget on a weekly basis. This sort of discipline will pay-off by stretching your dollars and providing some peace of mind.

17. **Be kind to yourself.** Your experience of being out of work or looking for a new job will be determined by how you look at it. You have a choice. You can "beat yourself up," feel like a loser, and be riddled with guilt and shame. Or, you can look at your situation in a more

positive way. Realize that you are not to blame for the economic meltdown or the high unemployment numbers. You didn't do anything wrong, and you're still a highly-qualified professional. There is no longer the same stigma there used to be about being unemployed, as almost every family in America will be touched by layoffs and downsizings. Forgive yourself, forgive your ex-employer, and forgive the world. Move on toward a better career future.

18. **Pay extra attention to your personal image.** First impressions count. Make a deliberate, consistent effort to present yourself in the best light. Ask yourself, "How can I enhance my attributes in the following areas: Hair, Eyeglasses, Makeup, Hands, Clothes, Shoes, Accessories, Posture, Smile?" Now is the ideal time to stop and take stock of your appearance, and make whatever changes you feel could improve your job search results.

19. **Watch your attitude.** Job search is really "an inside game," especially when no one's hiring. That is, the outcome of your search will have much more to do with *how you think* than with the external circumstances of the job market. Avoid the "gloom and doom" messages disseminated by the media, and stay away from any negative people in your life who bring you down. Maintain a positive attitude, and never state anything negative or act desperate. Spend some time each day, focusing-in and "re-calibrating" your internal attitude. Even if you're out of a job, you probably have many other wonderful things in your life – so remember to be grateful.

20. **Be philosophical.** Think of the old saying, "Things happen for a reason." It usually turns out to be true. Look at the "big picture view" of your recent change in employment. If you're

like a lot of my clients, after a time you may come to see this as a “blessing in disguise.”

Many candidates go on to find jobs that are better than the ones they had before. Others take the opportunity to do career exploration, re-discover their professional passions, and make important decisions. While you certainly didn't ask to be forced into a job search by the economic crisis, try to find the “life-lessons” and new perspectives in this transition. Commit to yourself that, somehow, you will make this a rewarding and productive experience.

Conducting a successful job search campaign takes energy, discipline and career support. Despite the pressures you may face in today's employment market, you must stay focused on your goals and *search smart*.

By continuing to think strategically, and by consistently taking initiative, you'll inevitably get the job you want.

15. Hidden sources of career support, information and advice

When you're looking for a new job, there are obvious places you'd normally go to for help and support, including career web sites, job fairs, the want-ad section of your newspaper, and possibly your friends and family.

However, there is a wider array of resources available to you than you may think. Some of the hidden sources of career information, support and advice include the following:

- Government agencies (Federal and Municipal)
- Career coaches
- Non-profit agencies
- Job search clubs and groups
- College/alumni career centers
- Faith-based missions for the unemployed and underemployed
- Library business departments
- Free and low-cost career seminars and professional development programs
- Online employment and business databases
- Business books, magazines, newsletters, and blogs
- Industry-specific networking functions
- Business conferences and expos

When no one's hiring, you owe it to yourself to leverage all these resources and "leave no stone unturned."

Part II: From Desperation to Career Strategies for Tough Times

16. What do you really want to be doing when the economy turns around?

In this section, we're going to deal with the reality of your situation on two different levels: One is the short-term reality that you probably have a mortgage to pay, a family to feed, and bills that keep arriving in the mail. Two is that you really need to figure out what you want to be doing long-term, and where you'd like your true professional path to take you. The danger, of course, is that if you don't know where you're going, then any path will do.

Working in this sort of "reactive mode" is not a recipe for career success! But let's first deal with your short-term need to pay your bills. Until that's taken care of, the less urgent yet more important tasks will never get done.

17. The "Pay My Bills" Strategy

When the job market is tight and the economy is in a downturn, it generally takes a longer period of time to find the job you want. This may be fine if you have enough money in the bank to draw upon during your transition. But if you can't live on savings until you land your "real job," you'll probably want to do some sort of part-time or temporary work to tide you over.

This strategy – sometimes called the “bridge job” – has become common over the past few years, and it can be very effective for people at all professional levels. This approach often includes a “two-step” path, starting with an interim role, and eventually leading to the ideal position.

I recently worked with a successful executive who had been Senior Vice President of an industrial manufacturing company. He had an excellent education, including background as an engineer.

When he lost his job, he took a part-time position at a local paint store. The money wasn't great, but it was enough to help pay his family's bills. Having this part-time job also gave my client a sense of pride, because he was doing what he could to provide for his family, and he was making a contribution in the business world. He also enjoyed meeting new people and even doing a bit of networking with customers.

The job at the paint store gave my client the flexibility he needed to continue searching for the job he really wanted. The owner of the paint store tried on many occasions to promote him to full-time Manager. The answer was always, “No thank you.”

A key point for you to understand is that my client never confused the means with the ends. He kept his focus on finding the “real job,” and he eventually secured an excellent opportunity with more responsibility and higher compensation than he'd had at his last professional job.

In this case, my client's positive attitude allowed him to reach his goal through a two-step plan. By taking a part-time, flexible job, he did what he needed to do to get the position he really wanted.

My client didn't feel ashamed or embarrassed working in a position that was "beneath him." He saw this strategy as a practical necessity, and it worked for him. In fact, when he reflects back on his temporary job at the paint store, he smiles and describes it as a great learning experience!

If you're out of work now, what part-time or flexible work can you do to fill the gap until you land the job you want?

What about you? If you're out of work now, what part-time or flexible work can you do to fill the gap until you land the job you want? If you're fully employed but concerned about losing your job, what sort of opportunity could you pursue to earn additional income, should the need arise? Here are some interim strategies to find work and earn money:

Part-time or temporary job (retail stores, restaurants, business services, administrative, etc.)

Try to find a position in a field you genuinely like. If you enjoy shopping or love the products of a particular store, consider working in retail. If you have a passion for cooking or are knowledgeable about food, you might want to be a prep-chef at a favorite restaurant. If you have connections at business service organizations and can add value to their operations, try working at a company where your managerial contributions would be valued. Contact several "temp agencies" or go visit businesses in which you have an interest.

Teaching or substitute teaching (public or private schools, colleges and universities, technical or vocational programs, etc.)

The education that helped get you started in your career is still valuable. If you've been in the workforce for a while, you've no doubt gained skills to enhance your credibility. These

qualifications are often valued by schools and colleges. Experienced professionals are sought-after to teach classes and bring a “real world perspective” to their students. Contact the administration office of your local school system, or the employment office of universities and vocational programs in your area.

Consulting, contract or freelance assignments (*business operations, computer/technology, creative/advertising, etc.*)

Even before the economy and job market went sour, the work-world had changed. A growing percentage of the workforce had already moved into flexible assignments as consultants or contractors. If you have a background in one of the fields that naturally lend themselves to this work-style, try to get consulting or contract work. It can be interesting, challenging work, and it can also be quite lucrative. In some cases, these consulting or contract assignments turn into full-time job offers, after the company gets to know you! Contact outsourcing and contract employment firms in the fields that interest you.

Work for family or friends (*retail stores, services, small manufacturing operations, and every other type of business*)

Do you have relatives or friends who own or run businesses? Would you be comfortable working with them? In tough times, it is important to “put your pride aside,” and ask for help. But in this case, the “help” would be mutual. Your friend or relative would be the lucky recipient of your services, and you would be gainfully employed, working for someone you already know and like. Contact every friend, relative, or acquaintance who owns or runs a business, and ask about their needs and challenges.

Home-based work (*administrative, sales, computer work, creative assignments, bookkeeping, personal services, etc.*)

With the advent of Internet and computers, it is easier than ever to do “real work” from home. Some of this work can be enjoyable and lucrative! There is no longer a stigma about working from home, and in fact, you may find that the flexible, independent lifestyle suits you. From copywriting to doing proposals to preparing tax returns, there’s no limit to the options. Ask yourself what skills you have, and offer your services to appropriate companies and families in your area. Contact everyone in your network to offer your services and ask for referrals.

Odd jobs (*handyman, construction, painting, moving and hauling, yard work, plowing, etc.*)

Are you handy around the house? Do you have special equipment or tools? Do you have trade skills that you could offer to other people in your town? There is always a need for reliable, professional help in these areas. If you’re not afraid to get your hands dirty, you can earn “good money” providing these much-needed services to organizations and individuals. Contact everyone in your network to offer your services, and be sure to ask for referrals.

18. Why you can’t afford NOT to have a strategic plan

If you’re serious about getting a job when no one’s hiring, you’ll need more than determination, a strong mindset and a dash of luck – you’ll need a strategy and a system to implement that strategy.

The Career PotentialSM coaching process I use with my private clients involves five distinct phases. But to make it even easier to “get your hands around” this model, you can distill your strategic plan into two fundamental stages:

- **Preparation and Research:** You'll handle these phases primarily on your own. They involve introspective exercises, research, thinking, writing, planning, and the creation of your "Job Search Survival Toolkit." This stage is an "inside job."
- **Implementation and Activity:** You'll be out in the "real world," contacting new people, networking, having meetings, talking with recruiters, interviewing, negotiating, and ultimately landing a new position! This stage of the work is the "outside job."

This book is designed to help you get clear on your desired career path, create the best possible set of job search tools, and implement a productive and successful job search campaign. That's what we're about to embark upon – with you as the client and me as your "Virtual Career Coach." Haphazard job search activity without a strategic plan is nothing more than a recipe for disappointment and a prolonged period of "career pain."

You'll need more than determination, a strong mindset and a dash of luck – you'll need a strategy and a system to implement that strategy.

With the economy and job market in a tailspin, we want to get you headed in the right direction and fully-employed as soon as possible! Ready? Then let's get to work!

19. In a bad job market, you must work backwards to reach your goals

You want to take charge of your career, find a job you love, and earn what you deserve. Sounds good, but it can be difficult to know where to start, especially in a tough job market. There are

usually conflicting thoughts and feelings involved, and too often, the result is a kind of paralysis. In addition, most people simply lack the necessary resources, knowledge and skill to conduct an effective job search campaign on their own, especially when no one's hiring.

Although finding a better job or more satisfying career might feel like a very random and confusing experience, through this book, you'll learn the strategies you need to consistently produce excellent results!

20. Career success is an inside job

We need to go back, and start at the beginning. That means doing an "internal audit" of yourself. As I often tell my clients, career development is "an inside game." We go inside before we look outside.

If you want to achieve your career potential, you must first get totally clear on such questions as – who you are, what's important to you, what you really want and need, what your long-term goals are, what motivates you, what your professional preferences are – and more.

Only after you've gained clarity on these issues, does it make sense to "go out into the world" and manifest your own unique vision of career success. Getting into resumes, interviewing, negotiating, networking, and all the other typical job search topics before you've laid a strong foundation will only create frenzied activity without forward movement.

Perhaps you've already experienced this. It can be very frustrating, depressing, and – worst of all – de-motivating! As you work through the strategies and use the tools in this part of the book, keep in mind the following words of career wisdom:

“People don't succeed by migrating to a 'hot' industry or by adopting a particular career-guiding mantra. They thrive by focusing on the question of who they really are, and connecting that to the work they truly love. The choice isn't about a career search so much as an identity quest.”

– Po Bronson, *“What Should I Do With My Life?”*

21. The “Start at the Beginning” Strategy

To get your job search started on the right foot, it's important to build a solid foundation of self-knowledge and clarity. The exercises and questions on the following pages will help you to clarify some of the issues and values that are fundamental to your lasting career success. They'll also provide you with a uniquely personalized set of keys to unlock the door to a great job, even when no one's hiring.

It may seem to you that doing these exercises during a job market crisis will just delay the launch of your search. You may even feel that such introspection is a “waste of time.” If this is true for you, I urge you to reconsider. After working with thousands of clients in transition, I have seen consistent evidence that these exercises actually accelerate my clients' progress and get them to their career destinations much faster! I assure you that the time and effort you invest in these exercises will “pay off” in many multiples.

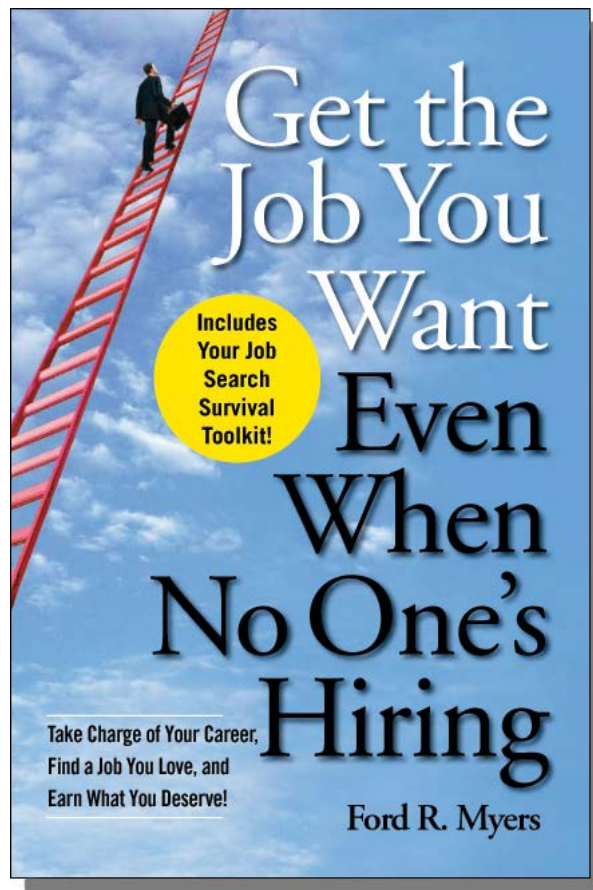
About the Author



Ford R. Myers is President of Career Potential, LLC. His firm helps clients take charge of their careers, create the work they love, and earn what they deserve! Career Potential also works with leading companies that are committed to developing and retaining premium talent. Ford has held senior consulting positions at three of the nation's largest career service firms. His

articles and interviews have appeared in many national magazines and newspapers, and he has conducted presentations at numerous companies, associations and universities. In addition, Ford has been a frequent guest on television and radio programs across the country. He is author of two books: *"The Ultimate Career Guide"* and *"Get The Job You Want, Even When No One's Hiring."* More information is available at: <http://www.careerpotential.com> and <http://www.fordmyers.com>.

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