

The 3-Step 'Beat Unemployment' Plan March 11, 2014 by [Cheryl Simpson](#)

Have you been laid off, or fear you might be? Begin preparing now to limit the length of your unemployment and maximize your job search success. This 3-step "beat unemployment" plan works for job seekers at all levels of the spectrum, from entry-level workers to senior executives.

Related: [5 Things You Should Be Doing If You're Unemployed](#)

1. Define Your Job Search Strategy

The first step is to define your strategy. Here are some ways you can do that:

Define your target market

Before you can structure your job search, you have to define what kinds of positions you will search for – the titles, levels of roles, industries, and types of companies you will pursue. At this stage, you should also be defining your preferred geographic areas and commute ranges.

Clarify your search goals and timeline

When do you hope to land your new role? Is your expectation realistic and achievable? If you want to generate one or more job offers by a particular date, it will be imperative to plan backward to ensure your search is generating enough contacts and opportunities to make that happen.

Determine if the market you're targeting aligns with your goals and timeline

On average, it takes seven job interviews to produce one job offer, and 200-300 targeted opportunities to generate those seven interviews. This means that you need to have a minimum of 200-300 prospects to pursue in your search to be likely to catalyze interview invitations.

Choose and prioritize your job search methodologies

There are five primary job search methodologies to leverage in your search. Which of them best match your career goals, personality, target industries, and available search time?

- **Networking** has long been the #1 way to find and land new jobs at all levels of hiring spectrum. Leveraging this tactic fully means having a networking strategy that you implement methodically throughout your search. This is different than simply sending out random emails to people you know who you think may know about open jobs.
- **Direct outreach to targeted employers** is an often-overlooked search methodology, yet it's an excellent way to penetrate the Hidden Job Market (the 85% of jobs that are never advertised outside the hiring companies). By combining strategic networking and LinkedIn tactics you can find and get your foot in the door with companies in almost any industry in almost any location.
- **LinkedIn-driven networking** can supercharge your entire search. Once your profile is optimized and complete, craft a strategy for how to utilize LinkedIn to penetrate target organizations, gain influential contacts in key industries, and attract the attention of executive recruiters.
- **External recruiting firms** are an option for some job seekers and enable them to access open positions in the Visible Job Market (available jobs advertised outside the company). You'll need a strategy to get your candidacy noticed and to determine if you should target retained or contingency recruiters.
- **Online job boards** rely on the advertising of openings in the Visible Job Market. Sites like Indeed.com, SimplyHired.com, and the LinkedIn.com job board (which is actually SimplyHired.com) collect and enable you

The 3-Step 'Beat Unemployment' Plan [March 11, 2014](#) by [Cheryl Simpson](#)

to search open positions in one or more industries. While job boards appear seductively simple, note that you have maximum competition as you apply for open positions. Also note that when you do so your resume is parsed and analyzed by an Applicant Tracking System, which means that key word usage and age-proofing quickly become critical issues.

Map it out

Map your chosen methodologies to your available search time without disrupting your life balance. Once your plan is in place it is imperative to map it to your schedule. Most of us are so busy that the least addition to our to do list will throw our life balance out of whack. The problem is that job seekers need that balance to help them sustain wellness, focus, and interview-readiness throughout a search that can last for 1-2 years on average. For more ideas, [read these life balance suggestions for executives in an active job search](#).

2. Build Your Career Communications Portfolio

Step two is to build your communications portfolio. Here are some tips:

Select your career communications tools based on your job search strategy

Once your job search methodologies are clarified, you're ready to choose the career communications tools you will need. A new resume (why a resume isn't an effective networking tool) and LinkedIn profile are practically must-haves, but you may also need a bio or marketing brief for networking, one or more cover letters, or supplementary tools such as an interview PowerPoint presentation.

Define your career brand

In today's tight global economy, your career brand is more important than ever before. Detail yours and share it appropriately in each career communications tool you use in your search. Make sure you adapt your brand for usage in each tool in different ways.

Delineate and quantify your career achievements

Achievements are a necessity in resumes; without them, your document is incomplete. Remember that achievements are best highlighted in specific ways that detail the situation or problem you faced, the actions you took to resolve the situation, and the quantifiable results you achieved in doing so.

Determine which key words to infuse in your career communications tools

Keywords vary from industry to industry and role to role. As a result, you must tailor your resume for each new position you pursue with relevant key words. Additionally, your LinkedIn profile must be infused with key words.

Choose visual branding in alignment with your target market and career goals

Your personal brand can and should be conveyed in your career communications tools in words, but don't overlook visual elements as well. Visual branding refers to the use of color and formatting in your resume that makes it unique.

3. Implement Your Job Search Strategy

The third and final step is to implement your strategy. Here are some ways to get this step done:

Create a weekly job search implementation plan with metrics

An effective job search plan needs clear metrics to help fuel week-over-week achievement. If you're approaching the 200-300 targets suggested above, consider breaking that total down into weekly sub-goals that will allow you to exhaust your list in 3 to 6 months.

Craft a weekly LinkedIn action plan with metrics

May I suggest doing the same thing with LinkedIn? It's easy to overlook such features as company targeting, group discussion posts, and status updates, but each of these options can help supercharge your search when leveraged fully and consistently.

Analyze your job search implementation monthly and revamp as needed

By setting metrics to pursue in your search you can evaluate how it's unfolding. Without metrics, you won't know how to analyze your progress or identify aspects of your search that need improvement.

Perhaps most importantly, a job search plan such as this one helps you to reassess your progress at periodic intervals. If you find yourself getting too few interviews or job offers, for example, don't wait – get help from a Job Search Coach.

Read more at <http://www.careerealism.com/beat-unemployment-plan/#pcrW5Vj3l6gX3rJG.99>