



FAST TRACK GUIDE

TO A PROFESSIONAL JOB SEARCH

**EXPERT ADVICE ON HOW TO ACQUIRE EXECUTIVE
JOBS, EVEN IN A DIFFICULT JOB MARKET**

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Happy About



“Fast Track Guide to a Professional Job Search” Book Excerpt

Expert Advice on How to Acquire
Executive Jobs, Even in a Difficult Job
Market

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Foreword by Richard Knowdell

This is a book for executives and professionals who are serious about taking charge of their careers and conducting a systematic and thorough job search. It is not a collection of sample resumes and cover letters; instead it offers clear explanations of how to develop and use job search resources effectively.

An experienced executive coach and business advisor, Joanie Natalizio offers very focused and practical advice to professionals seeking more satisfying careers.

Written in a clear and reader-friendly style, this book outlines each step in the process of understanding an individual's attributes, determining an appropriate career goal, and developing and executing a successful job search. Many of the recommended actions are accompanied by real-world examples from the author's executive coaching practice. Each chapter includes practical *Hot Tips* and a list of *Actions to Take*.

All executives and professionals have experience in planning, developing and implementing projects. The job search can be viewed as a *project*. Rather than giving the reader a bunch of sample resumes, cover letters or thank-you notes, Joanie provides clear objectives and brief real-world examples. The executive has the responsibility to take charge of the *project*.

Since some executives or professionals might need more assistance than is covered in this book, the author suggests that those individuals consult an employment attorney, a therapist or a career counselor.

As someone who has been in the career management industry for 39 years and has authored several books on the subject, I can vouch that the information contained here is vital to the success of any professional. If you are an executive or aspiring to be one, then this book is a must-have resource in your personal library.

**Richard Knowdell, Executive Director,
Career Development Network**

About This Book

If you consider yourself among the white-collar, professional, or executive workforce, then you've come to the right place for guidance on how to conduct a successful, professional job search. I wrote this book especially for you, to address the unique needs and concerns of professional job seekers, such as yourself. Yes, it's true there are a million job search guides on the market, and some are quite good. However, most of them are aimed at the population at large and are elementary, simplistic, or incomplete in addressing the needs of the professional worker. *Fast Track Guide to a Professional Job Search* aims to fill the gaps left behind by the other job search books by addressing *your* needs, answering *your* questions, and showing *you* how to position yourself in order to stand out among the well-qualified competition. The higher you climb, the tougher the competition. Let my expertise as an executive job coach guide you to your next winning position. If you are a part of the management, executive, or aspiring executive ranks and are even thinking about conducting a job search, this book is for you.

1 Understanding What a Job Search Is—and Is Not

Fast Track Guide to a Professional Job Search is designed to show you, step-by-step, how to immediately begin conducting a professional job search that will produce results fast. Conducting a successful job search has changed dramatically over the last ten years, due in great part to advances in technology. Keeping up with the best methods and techniques has become a science in itself. Couple that with the recent economic climate, and it has become more important than ever that your job search be well thought out and focused.

In a job search, time is money and it's best not to waste either with activities that don't produce results. In my private practice as a career coach and business consultant, I have worked with countless professionals, both in transition or currently employed but looking to make a career change. I have seen what works and what doesn't work and the most common mistakes people make when they conduct a professional job search. In this book, I will share with you the little known methods that can ultimately make the difference between a long, frustrating job search and a focused, successful job search. Each chapter includes easy to follow directions, convenient checklists, and hot tips designed to

highlight important information. I have intentionally designed this book to give you the information you need in a quick, concise yet thorough manner. I realize that the demands of a professional or executive career don't leave you a lot of discretionary time. Keeping this in mind, what you get here is quick and to the point. To borrow a line from detective Joe Friday, "Just the facts ma'am." Here you'll get the boiled down facts without skimping on the important content necessary for conducting a successful and productive job search.

There are many reasons why someone chooses to conduct a job search. In my practice, they often fall into one of three categories:

- Their current position is unchallenging or uninspiring
- They are looking for more opportunities for career advancement
- They have been laid off, let go, or *riffed*

All three are valid reasons for a job search. However, sometimes it's worth digging a little deeper into the "why," especially if someone was laid off or let go.

For example, if you were let go, was it due to poor job performance, a bad economy, or a violation of company policy? These are three very distinct issues. If it was for poor job performance, have you corrected course by updating your skills or improving your work practices? If you fell victim to a bad economy, have you examined ways in which you can recession proof your career the next time the economy takes a dip? Finally, if you were let go because you violated company policy, have you done all you can to mitigate the damage done to your reputation and career? In short, have you addressed the problem? If not, your job search may be in vain. Even if you are successful in landing a new job, how long will it be before history repeats itself? Just like a plant, if your career is not consistently fueled with nourishment, it can wilt and die. If there is a problem with your current job performance, personal or professional reputation, or current job skills, it's best to address the issue now and then make a clean start.

Take my client John, for example. When John walked into my office after being let go from a large corporation, he stated that he thought his management skills may have lagged behind his colleagues, which may

have contributed to his being let go. We assessed his current job skills and found that indeed there were gaps in the skills that John needed to continue his upward management career path. After determining what skills John lacked, we contemplated different ways in which he could acquire the needed skill set. It turned out that a two-week executive management seminar at a local, well-known university fit the bill perfectly. Not only did John end up acquiring much-needed skills, he also built a valuable network with other executives in the course and with the professors who taught the course. By adding his professors to his professional network, he not only maximized his course knowledge but also developed *go to* experts in this field for future guidance. To cut a long story short, John took the time to evaluate the circumstances behind his job search. By uncovering the problem, John was able to correct course, fix the issue and then move forward with what was, inevitably, a very successful job search.

John is just one example of how digging a little deeper and making some needed corrections, *before* you begin a job search, can do wonders to move your career forward. Of course, there are many other reasons that can interfere with one's career and cause it to steer off track. The important part to remember is that, before you start your job search, make sure there is nothing lurking around the corner that can sabotage or cause an unwelcome surprise in your job search. A little introspection can go a long way in producing a positive job search result.

If you are uninspired in your current position or feel a lack of opportunity to move your career forward, a new job may be just what you need to recharge your batteries. However, make sure your next opportunity is created through strategic planning and not through emotional impulsiveness. What I mean by this is that it is easy to know when you are ready to leave but harder to possess restraint in not jumping at the first opportunity that falls into your lap. Take some time to analyze why your current position or company became so uninspiring. Has the opportunity that you once thought was there now gone or was the opportunity there but you were passed over for it? I understand these can be tough questions to ask yourself, but trust me, they are necessary to move your career forward successfully.

Whatever your reason for wanting to conduct a job search, your chances of success increase when you work from a position of strength, not weakness. If there are problems to iron out, iron them out before you start your job search. Personal, professional, educational, or other, if something held you back in your last position, it is likely to hold you back in your next position too. The competition can be fierce as you move up the ladder—create the best possible opportunity for yourself to get to that next level and land a job that will challenge your skills, utilize your talents, and recognize your abilities.

What a job search is:

- Your chance to step up to the next level
- An opportunity to expand your experience, knowledge, and professional skills
- A fresh start to renewing and pursuing your career goals

What a job search is not:

- A substitute for psychological, marital, or career counseling
- An excuse to run away from something
- A reason to avoid personal responsibility



HOT TIP: If you feel any of the "What a job search is not" points apply to you, seek professional help before launching your job search. These are factors that are likely to interfere with any future job functions and should be resolved before pursuing employment changes.

Take Action—Items You Will Need to Conduct a Successful Job Search

- **One-inch binder with six dividers:** We will call this your *Job Search Binder*.
- **Portable file box with file folders or an electronic online file system such as box.net:** We are a mobile society. Make sure your job search can travel with you to your local coffee shop or networking event.
- **Medium to large size white board with markers:** This is great for keeping track of opportunities in the funnel.
- **Small note pad or pda that can fit into a breast pocket or purse:** Invaluable when you get an unexpected job tip.
- **Business card holder that can fit into a suit pocket:** This gives you the appearance of a true professional.
- **Work area with phone and computer access:** You must learn to treat your job search like a job. If you don't have an in-home office, create a space that is set aside specifically for your job search, shielded from any distractions.
- **Business card organizer:** During the job search process, you will likely collect a large number of business cards. Keeping them organized will be challenging. Don't let an opportunity slip by because you lost someone's card.
- **Personal email address that is independent of your Internet carrier or your business email:** Good ideas can include a Yahoo or Gmail address.
- **Personal business cards, thank you cards, and return address stickers:** A great way to brand yourself and be remembered. See "Job Search Documents" in Chapter 4 for more tips.



HOT TIP: If you hate organizing business cards by hand, try a business card scanner. They are compatible with most contact programs and portable devices and the information you store will be a great resource long after your job search is over.

7 Dealing With the Emotional Ups and Downs of a Job Search

No matter what the prior circumstances are that brought you to this point, a job search is an extremely emotional endeavor. Like most emotional experiences, the impact of a job search can run the gamut from causing slight anxiety to igniting full-blown panic. If you're lucky enough to be conducting your job search while you are still employed, the emotional impact might be less than say the person who has unexpectedly found himself or herself at the receiving end of a pink slip. For the people who were caught off guard, panic is the typical response. The unexpectedly unemployed are not only dealing with the emotional stress of losing their jobs, but they also have the added burden of figuring out how they are going to pay their mortgages, make their car payments, and put food on the table. When it comes to life's most stressful events, job loss ranks right up there with the death of a spouse and divorce.

When You Lose Your Job

It's important to acknowledge that everyone is wired differently and there is no one way to handle a job loss. Reactions and emotions may vary greatly from person to person. However, it

has been my experience with clients that the loss of a job, in many ways, mirrors the loss of a loved one (even if one did not *love* one's job). The first phase is **Shock**: "I can't believe this is happening." The second phase is **Pain**: "After I worked my a*# off for them, how can they do this to me?" The third stage is **Anger**: "F*^# them!" The fourth stage is **Sadness**: "What now?" The fifth stage is **Adjustment**: "I wonder what kind of opportunities are out there?" The sixth stage is **Reconstruction**: "I've got some things in the funnel." And the last stage is **Moving On**: "I'm signing my offer letter today and I start next week."

I fully recognize that not everyone goes through every stage. Perhaps you saw the elimination of your last position coming a mile away and, thus, you weren't exactly *shocked* when you got the news. Perhaps the first emotion you felt was *anger* not *shock*. It doesn't matter. There are no rules on how you should feel or requirements mandating that you experience every stage in order to come out the other side. Nevertheless, one thing is for certain and that is that you will likely feel many emotions surrounding your job loss and the ensuing job search. It's also important to remember that since none of us live in a vacuum, the loss of a job can have an emotional impact on our loved ones as well. It may add extra stress to a relationship or it may draw people closer together. Try to be sensitive to the fact that other people around you are feeling the emotional effects of your job loss too. If you need to, seek out counseling or a support group. Don't let the loss of your job be the catalyst for added stress in your personal relationships. Remember that unemployment is only a temporary situation. It will pass and when it does you will want to make sure your loved ones are still there encouraging you as you take on your next, new challenge.

The Inevitable Highs and Lows

Yes, a job search comes with an emotional price tag. There is the excitement of landing a long awaited interview and the disappointment of finding out, after making it through the interview, that they choose the other candidate. Depending on your industry and position, you might go through a few of these cycles or you might go through several of them. Here are a few tips for handling the emotional job search roller coaster:

- Always keep your job funnel full (see above). Never bank on a specific job opportunity coming through no matter how good things look to you. You will lessen your anxiety considerably if you know that you have other opportunities waiting in the wings if this one falls through.
- Don't burn bridges. As much as you would love to tell your ex-boss where to go...resist. Remember that whole six degrees of separation? Well in business it's more like 2 ½. If you've been let go, make sure your departure is professional. The exception to this rule is if you feel your termination is somehow unlawful. If that's the case, see a lawyer.
- Keep a schedule. This is especially true if you're in a job transition. Schedule ample time for your job search but also make time for recreation and exercise. You will be more productive, and better able to gauge your success, if you keep track of your time.
- Look for new ways to de-stress. A job search is stressful; there is no getting around it. You might want to give yoga, meditation, massage, soothing music, a hot bath, or a long walk a try as a way to melt away some of that job search tension.
- Make goals and reward yourself. If your goal is to make ten new connections this week, and you do, treat yourself to something nice.
- Do your best to not let the stress of your job search interfere with your personal relationships. Make time for others and remember that a job search will end at some point but your relationships will hopefully last a lifetime.
- If you don't find these tips adequate and you're still feeling overwhelmed, you may need to seek professional help.

About the Author



Joanie Natalizio, President of Defero Business Coaching and Seminars, has over fifteen years of combined experience in both business and executive coaching, and has worked at some of this country's top Fortune 500 corporations.

Along with her corporate experience, Ms. Natalizio holds a Master's degree in Counseling, and is an accredited Job and Career Transition Coach and a Certified Myers-Briggs Type Indicator Practitioner. She also serves as an Adjunct Professor at Anoka Ramsey Community College teaching Career Development courses.

Her specialty seminars including employee training and development, change management and one-on-one executive coaching make Joanie Natalizio one of the Twin Cities' most respected business advisors in the areas of professional executive development.

Getting “Fast Track Guide to a Professional Job Search”

(<http://www.happyabout.com/fasttrackjobsearch.php>)

“Fast Track Guide to a Professional Job Search” can be purchased as an eBook for \$14.95 or tradebook for \$19.95 at <http://www.happyabout.com/fasttrackjobsearch.php> or at other online and physical book stores.

Please contact us for quantity discounts sales@happyabout.info or to be informed about upcoming titles bookupdate@happyabout.info or phone (408-257-3000).

Happy About is interested in you if you are an author who would like to submit a non-fiction book proposal or a corporation that would like to have a book written for you. Please contact us by email at editorial@happyabout.info or phone (1-408-257-3000).

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<http://happyabout.com/42rules/jumpstartprofessionalservices.php>
- Communicating the American Way:
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"Joanie offers very clear, straightforward, up-to-date and helpful advice on how to land the right job for you. I especially liked the valuable Hot Tips after each chapter..."

Neil F. Anderson, @neilfanderson, Founder and President, The Courage Group, Inc.

"Not only will the executive learn how to take charge of his or her job search with this action-centered book, he or she will learn to navigate a myriad of career challenges one faces, especially in a difficult economy."

Victor C. Massaglia, M.A., Career Counselor, Career Center, University of Minnesota Law School

"Joanie Natalizio has hit a home run! Fast Track Guide to a Professional Job Search is a quick read that delivers both a refresher for the job search veteran and a complete checklist for the person just beginning a campaign."

John T. Wetzel, Ph.D., Industrial and Organizational Psychologist and 20+ year Career Coach

"Each chapter provides you with take action steps and insider hot tips so you'll be sure to get everything you need to know to conduct a successful job search. A book no professional should be without."

Barbara Rosenzweig, Owner, Dental People, Inc.

Joanie Natalizio President of Defero Business Coaching and Seminars, has over 15 years of combined experience in both business and executive coaching, and has worked at some of this country's top Fortune 500 corporations.



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