

Secrets to a Successful Job Search

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Last month we wrote a blog for the website of the New York chapter of the [Association for Corporate Growth](#). For those who don't know, ACG is the premier association for middle market professionals (your correspondent is a board member).

The blog was on job searching; specifically, how job opportunities arise from networking. Based on the positive feedback, we thought we'd share it with our Lead Left readers.

For the past decade, employment in financial services has been brutal. Countless positions have been eliminated, with competition and regulation leaving few attractive options. As a careerist in the space, we try to be helpful to our job-hunting comrades.

We used to duck that responsibility. Finding a job is the most complex task we'll ever face in our lives, including finding a spouse. Matrimony can be deferred; employment, not so much. But we had no convincing narrative for a successful search.

Finally realizing the best defense is a good offense, we came up with a [one-page list of lessons](#) learned from observing and participating in the job game over a 30 year career.

Michael was my first test case. An equity analyst for 20 years, he seemed a beaten man. Out of work for 18 months, he was cycling through the same handful of tired references. Research jobs were scarce and getting scarcer.

A glance at his resume revealed typical banking stuff. Depressed for him, we scanned his hobbies and education, hoping for inspiration. To our surprise, he had graduated from a top law school, and then got a master's in public health. His first job was in hospital administration. An idea began to form.

"Start with this," we said, handing him our one-pager. "Forget your resume. This is your new road map. We're rebranding you a healthcare guy. There's a ton of demand for that. You don't need a job right now, you need information. Who's doing what in the sector. Get five healthcare references from everyone you know and meet. Let's get going!"

Michael no longer looked beaten. Every Friday, he emailed us (Secret #14) with a progress report. He was motivated and directed. Then one day, Michael called.

"I've got great news," he said. "I'm a partner in a PE firm specializing in healthcare investing!" Wow. "I did everything you told me," he went on. "It was like magic! I can't thank you enough." "Congrats!" we said. Then we laughed, "Can't believe it worked!"

That was two years ago. Since then we've handed out dozens of copies of [Secrets to a Successful Job Search](#). Finding a job is like losing weight: it's extremely simple and incredibly difficult. That's where our road map comes in.

Here are some excerpts:

- Job searching is not a casual process. You're either all-in or all-out
- It's not about people you know; it's who *they* know
- When you tell your friends about your new job, will they say "What?" or "Wow!"
- Network today as if you'll be jobless tomorrow
- If in doubt, do more of what makes you happy, less of what makes you unhappy

Remember, you may lose your job, but you are never unemployed. Your life's work is leveraging your network to build a career making full use of your powers along the lines of excellence.

[Secrets to a Successful Job Search](#) is free to all Lead Left subscribers. To subscribe, [click here](#).